

## Unit 2: Be-Attitudes

### Lesson 2.1: Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

#### Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

#### Scriptural Reference:

Matthew 5:2

#### Activities:

*\*Choose based on time available. Instructions and supplies listed below.*

Opening Activity: The Heavy Burden Game

Interactive Discussion: Proud vs. Humble Scenarios

Activity 1: "Open Hands Craft"

#### Words of the week:

աղքատ - agh-kad - poor

Երանութիւն - yer-an-oo-tyoon - beatitude

խոնարհ - kho-narh - humble

#### Objective:

Children will understand that being "poor in spirit" means humbly knowing we need God. They will see that Jesus values hearts that are not proud or boastful, but open, honest, and trusting in Him.

#### Moral Character Focus:

**Knowledge:** Children will learn that to be "poor in spirit" means to recognize we need God's help and not to think too highly of ourselves.

**Understanding:** Children will understand that God blesses those who humbly come to Him with open hearts, not those who are proud or self-centered.

**Application:** Children will identify ways they can be humble in everyday life, such as asking for help, not bragging, or trusting God when they feel small or unsure.

**Values:** Children will value the beauty of humility and dependence on God, learning that true strength comes from relying on Him, not from pretending to have it all together.

#### Memory Verse:

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

**- Matthew 5:3**

# Lesson

## Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՛ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ գիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն:

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

*\*Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

## Lesson Body: Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

Have you ever heard the word ‘beatitude’ before? It’s a special word that means ‘blessing’ or ‘happiness.’

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ talked about this with His followers. A long time ago, Jesus went up on a mountainside. A huge crowd of people followed Him because they wanted to hear Him teach. Jesus sat down, and His disciples and all the people gathered around Him. Then Jesus began to teach them about how to live truly happy and blessed lives.

He gave them eight special teachings called the *Beatitudes*. Each one begins with the word ‘Blessed,’ which means ‘happy’ or ‘favored by God.’ These aren’t just any kind of happiness, like when you get a new toy or eat your favorite dessert. This is a deep, lasting joy that comes from being close to God.

The Beatitudes are like a treasure map showing us the way to God’s kingdom. Today, we’re going to learn about the very FIRST beatitude, which is like the foundation of all the others.”

**Q:** *Why do you think Jesus wanted to teach people how to be truly blessed and happy?*

## Opening Activity: The Heavy Burden Game

**Materials Needed:** A heavy box or bag filled with books, several smaller, lighter items

### Instructions:

- Show the children the heavy box and ask for a volunteer to carry it across the room alone
- Watch as they struggle (be ready to help if needed!)
- Then invite 2-3 other children to help carry it together
- Discuss: “Was it easier alone or with help? Why?”

**Transition to Lesson:** “Today we’re going to learn about what Jesus meant when He said, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’ It’s about knowing we can’t do everything alone. We need God, and we need each other. Let’s discover what that really means!”

Have you ever tried to carry something way too heavy all by yourself? You think, “I’ve got this!” but a few steps in, it slips and falls. Then someone offers to help, but only when you admit you can’t do it alone. That’s what it’s like to be poor in spirit.

When Jesus says “blessed are the poor in spirit,” He doesn’t mean people with no money. He means people who know they need God. They don’t pretend to have all the answers or act like they’re the best. Instead, they trust God and ask for His help. That is humility.

**Words of the Week:**

աղքատ - agh-kad - poor

Երանութիւն - yer-an-oo-tyoon - beatitude

խոնարհ - kho-narh - humble

**Memory Verse:**

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

**- Matthew 5:3**

## Proud vs. Humble

### The Proud Person says:

*“I can do everything by myself!”*

*“I don’t need anyone’s help!”*

*“I’m better than everyone else!”*

*“I never make mistakes!”*

This person fills their heart so full of themselves that there’s no room for God to come in.

### The Humble Person says:

*“God, I need Your help!”*

*“I don’t know everything, but You do!”*

*“Thank you for loving me even when I mess up!”*

*“Please teach me and guide me!”*

This person leaves room in their heart for God to enter and work.

**Q:** Which person do you think Jesus is talking about when He says ‘blessed are the poor in spirit’? Why?

### A Story: The Monk with Empty Hands

Long ago, there was a kind, humble monk. He didn’t have much money or fancy clothes, but he prayed often, helped the sick, and shared what he had with the poor. Every morning, he would kneel in prayer and say, “Lord, I am nothing without You. Please fill my empty heart with Your love.”

The monk had a small garden where he grew vegetables. When the harvest came, he didn’t keep it all for himself. He gave most of it away to families who had less than he did. When people thanked him, he would smile and say, “Don’t thank me. Thank God, who gives us everything.”

One day, a proud man came to visit the monastery. This man was very wealthy. He wore expensive robes and had servants carrying his belongings. He looked at the simple monk and said, “I don’t understand you. Why does God seem to bless you more than me? Look at me! I have more things, more knowledge, and more strength! I’ve built a big house, I have many servants, and everyone knows my name. Yet you, with your simple life, seem to have more peace and joy than I do. Why?”

The humble monk smiled gently. He held out his hands, palms up, completely empty, and said, “My friend, look at my hands. They are empty. I come to God with nothing but my need for Him. But you, you come to God with your hands already full of yourself,

your accomplishments, your pride. How can God fill hands that are already full? God fills what is empty. He blesses those who know they are poor without Him.”

The wealthy man stood there quietly, thinking about the monk’s words. Slowly, he began to understand. All his life, he had been trying to fill himself with things, praise, and power. But none of it had brought him the peace he was searching for.

**Q:** What do you think the wealthy man learned from the monk? What does it mean to come to God with ‘empty hands’?

Jesus says these kinds of people, the ones who come with open hands and humble hearts, are blessed. Why? Because they already belong to His kingdom. When we know we need God, we open the door for Him to come into our lives and make us truly rich in love, peace, and joy.

Let's see what this looks like in real life? You show this kind of heart when you do these things:

**At Home:**

- You admit when you're wrong and say "I'm sorry" to your parents or siblings
- You ask your mom or dad for help with homework instead of pretending you know it all
- You thank God before meals, remembering that He provides everything we have
- You don't argue back when you're corrected because you know you're still learning

**At School:**

- You congratulate a friend who did better than you instead of feeling jealous
- You raise your hand and say "I don't understand" when you need help
- You include someone who is lonely instead of only playing with popular kids
- You share credit with your group instead of taking all the glory for a project

**With Friends:**

- You listen to others' ideas instead of always insisting yours are best
- You apologize when you hurt someone's feelings
- You ask for forgiveness when you make a mistake
- You celebrate when good things happen to others, not just to you

**In Your Heart:**

- You pray every day, asking God to help you be better
- You read the Bible knowing you need God's wisdom
- You go to church ready to learn, not thinking you already know everything
- You thank God for His gifts instead of thinking you earned everything yourself

**Q:** Which of these is hardest for you? Why do you think humility can be difficult sometimes?

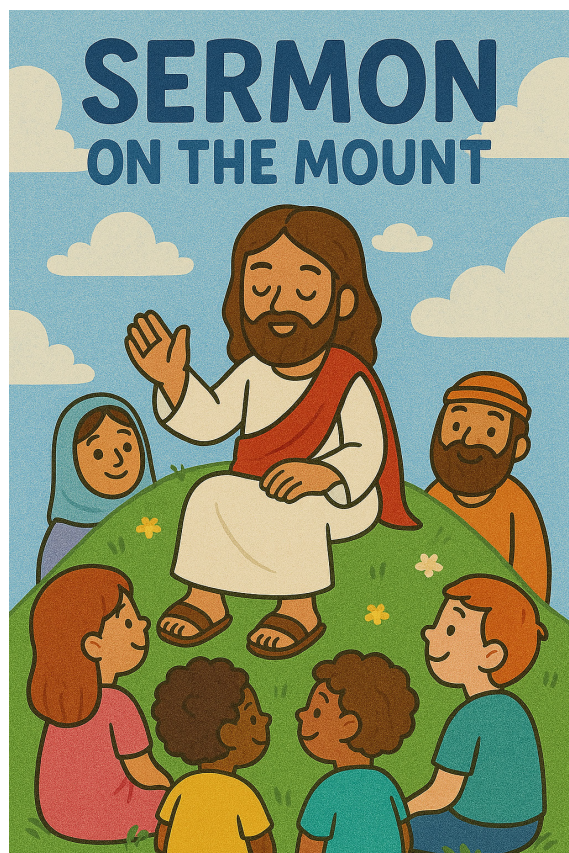
## The Armenian Church and Humility

In the Armenian Church, we have many beautiful traditions that teach us humility. Have you noticed that we often kneel or bow during services? That's not just a tradition. It's a powerful sign of humility. When we bow our heads, we're saying to God, "You are great, and I am small. I need You."

Our saints understood this very well. St. Gregory the Illuminator, who brought Christianity to Armenia, spent many years in a deep pit, suffering and praying. Even when he became the leader of the church, he remained humble. He never forgot that everything he had come from God. St. Mesrop Mashtots, who invented the Armenian alphabet, could have been very proud of his great accomplishment. But instead, he gave all the glory to God. He said his gift was from God, not from himself.

These saints teach us an important lesson: to be high in God's eyes, we must be low in pride. The lower we bow before God, the higher He lifts us up in His kingdom.

**Q:** Have you ever noticed someone at church being very humble? What did they do that showed humility?



## Interactive Discussion: Proud vs. Humble Scenarios

Present these scenarios to the children and discuss together. After each one, ask: "Is this showing pride or humility? What could the person do differently?"

### **Scenario 1:**

Maria got an A on her math test. She walked around the classroom showing everyone her paper and saying, "I'm so smart! I bet I'm the smartest one in the class!"

**Discussion:** How could Maria celebrate her success in a humble way? (Possible answers: Thank God for helping her, thank her teacher, offer to help others who are struggling)

### **Scenario 2:**

Aram's soccer team lost the game. Instead of blaming others, he said, "We all tried our best. Let's practice together and get better for next time."

**Discussion:** How did Aram show humility? What might a proud person have said instead?

### **Scenario 3:**

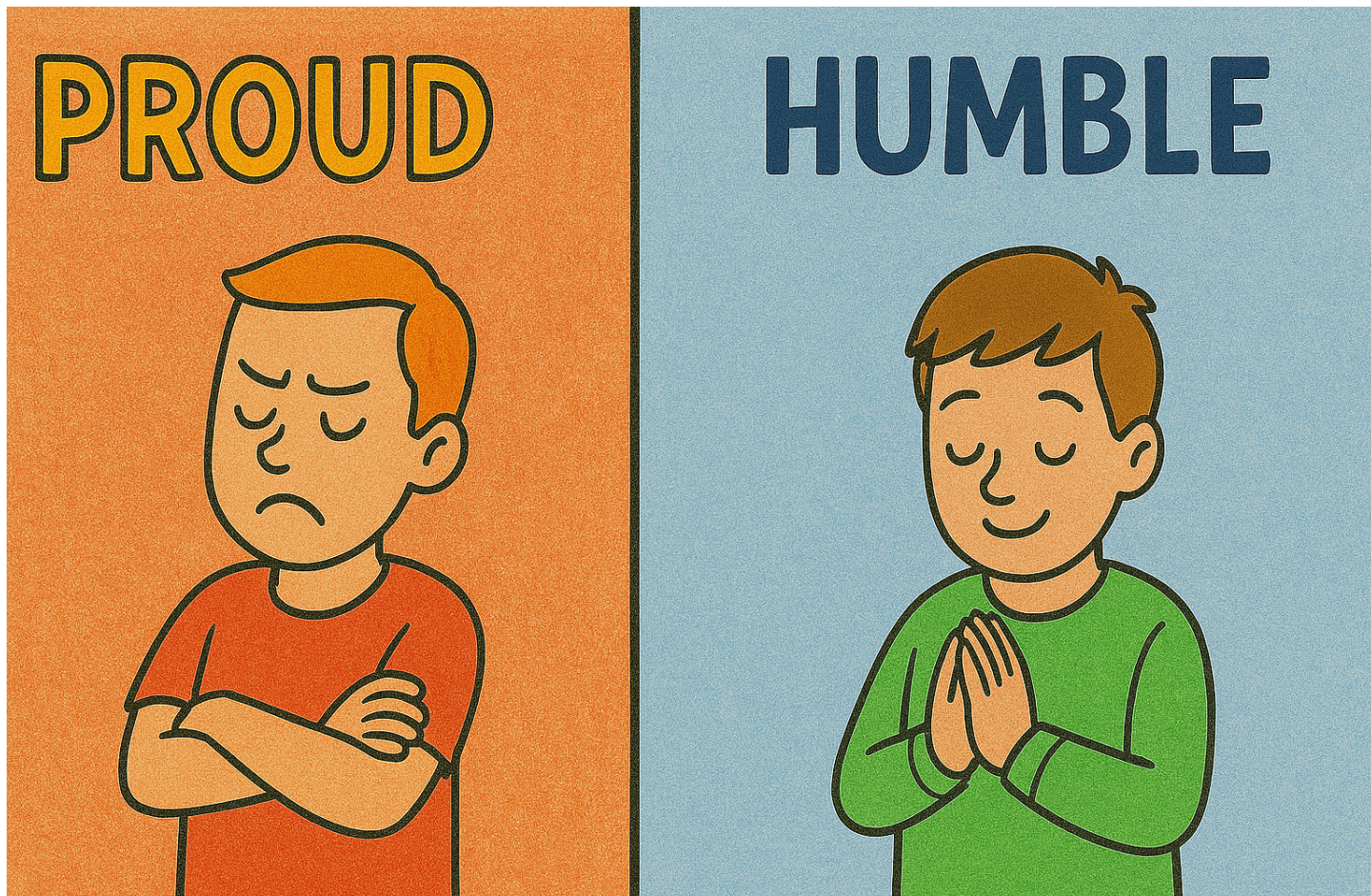
Sophia's little brother broke her favorite toy by accident. She was upset, but she remembered that she makes mistakes too. She forgave him and said, "It's okay. I know you didn't mean to."

**Discussion:** How did Sophia show she was poor in spirit? Why is forgiving others a sign of humility?

### **Scenario 4:**

During art class, the teacher praised David's drawing. David said, "Thanks! I'm the best artist in the whole school. Everyone else's art is terrible compared to mine!"

**Discussion:** What's wrong with David's response? How could he accept the compliment humbly?



## Activity 1: "Open Hands Craft"

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper, scissors, markers or crayons, glue, printed memory verse strips.

**Instructions:**

- Have each child trace both of their hands on construction paper and cut them out
- In the center of each hand, write something they need God's help with (examples: "being patient," "being kind," "forgiving," "feeling brave," "not bragging," "saying sorry")
- On a separate strip of paper, write the memory verse: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* - Matthew 5:3
- Glue the hands on a larger sheet of paper with the verse below
- Around the hands, draw or write ways they can show humility this week
- Decorate the page with drawings or stickers to show God's love (hearts, crosses, doves)

**While crafting, discuss:**

- "Why is it good to come to God with empty hands?"
- "What does it feel like when we ask God for help?"
- "How can these hands remind you to be humble this week?"

# OPEN HANDS CRAFT



# Review

## Memory Verse Review:

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)*

## Words of the Week Review:

աղքատ - agh-kad - poor

երանութիւն - yer-an-oo-tyoon - beatitude

խոնարհ - kho-narh - humble

## Lesson Review Questions:

1. What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”? *(It means knowing we need God and being humble, not proud)*
2. Who are the people Jesus says are blessed in this verse? *(Those who are poor in spirit, people who are humble and trusting in God)*
3. Why is being proud not the same as being poor in spirit? *(Pride fills our hearts with ourselves. Humility makes space for God)*
4. How do we act when we are humble? *(We ask for help, don’t brag, say sorry, and trust God)*
5. What did the monk in the story say about empty hands? *(He said God fills what is empty. We must come to God with need, not pride)*
6. What does kneeling or bowing in church teach us? *(It shows humility and reminds us that we need God)*
7. How can you be poor in spirit at school or with friends? *(Let others go first, admit mistakes, pray for help, and don’t show off)*
8. What kind of people belong to God’s kingdom, according to Jesus? *(The poor in spirit)*

## Life Application

### **What are we going to do with what we have learned today?**

This week, choose one way to be “poor in spirit” by admitting you need help instead of pretending you can do everything alone. Try asking God each morning, “I need You today, please help me,” or let someone else go first, or say “I’m sorry” when you make a mistake.

*\* Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

### **Close with prayer:**

**Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն**

**Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev vog-hormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.**

**O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.**