

Unit 3: GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

Lesson 3.1: Holidays and Family Traditions

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

Video Lesson: [Bread & Salt: Water Blessing](#) (Duration 4:08)

Christmas Craft: Paper Christmas Tree

Items needed: Square colored papers (can be any color or shades of green), scissors

**Students can make a few different size and color Christmas trees to set up as a composition.*

[Paper Christmas Tree video directions](#) (duration 3:46)

[Paper Christmas Tree step by step directions](#)

Words of the Week:

աւանդութիւն – avantootyoon – tradition

Սուրբ Ծնունդ – Soorp Dznoont – Christmas (Holy Birth)

նուէր/ընծայ nver/undza – present

Memory Verse:

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”

- 1 Corinthians 11:2

Lesson

Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

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

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տու՛ր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց եւ ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. 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 yev 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.

Lesson Body:

We all like celebrations and feasts. During the holiday season, right after Thanksgiving, as lights slowly appear on houses, Christmas trees glisten through the windows, kitchens become busy with holiday cooking and gifts pile up under the tree, our hearts fill with joy and anticipation. We count the days, using advent calendars and wreaths, and write lists to Santa Claus.

In Armenian families, especially in America, the Christmas season is a little bit longer and is full of many family traditions. We often say that Armenians celebrate Christmas twice: American Christmas on December 25th and Armenian Christmas on January 6th. This season is full of wonderful cultural and personal family traditions.

Q: What is a family tradition?

Traditions are special customs people follow and repeat year after year. A tradition is something that could have begun a long time ago, even before our great grandparents, which we follow and pass along. It is not just families who have many traditions, but different cultures do too. This means that they are only followed by a specific nation or group of people, such as Armenians. Some traditions are religious and are based on a belief or religion, just like the traditions of our church. And as we said, there are also family traditions that are special for the family members of a specific household who pass them on from generation to generation.

There are many Christmas traditions around the world. People cherish this time and looking forward for beautiful gatherings and celebrations. Many originated in churches, many in christian families, based on their customs or cultural customs.

Q: Can you think of any traditions your family does during Christmas?

Decorating a Christmas Tree – This tradition has come to us from Northern Germany. This custom became fashionable and started spreading around the world after Queen Victoria and German Prince Albert were sketched in the Illustrated London News standing with their children around a Christmas tree. This tradition is loved and followed by every Christian family, making our homes festive in anticipation of Christ’s birth. The evergreen tree, which never loses its leaves/needles in the dead of winter, is still alive, symbolizing everlasting life.

Christmas Carolling – Although, it is not an Armenian tradition, some families enjoy celebrating in their neighborhoods and churches. We sing and join the ranks of angels in rejoicing the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, just as the angels exulted and spread the good news.

Gift Giving - Passing on the tradition itself is a gift that holds culture, nations, and families together. Traditions are cherished and shared with love just as gifts of Christmas are.

Attending Candlelight Liturgy at Church/Jrakalooys – On the evening of January 5, families go to church for a Christmas Eve service to pray and celebrate. We attend this beautiful service, again, joining the angels in singing praise and worship. During that evening’s Holy Badarak, fire from candlelight is distributed to all the faithful, who take the flame home and spread the good news of Christ’s birth and the light of God entering the world.

Blessing of Water – We celebrate this tradition on January 6 at the conclusion of Holy Badarak. The priest blessing water is a symbolic commemoration of the “Baptism of Christ”. In the Armenian Church, the service is called CHURORHNEK. The Blessing of the Water celebration was originally performed in the Holy Land, at the river Jordan on Theophany, January 6. As the word spread of the beautiful ceremony in the Holy Land, churches outside of Jerusalem began to perform this ceremony by the riverside or at the seashore. Later, because of subsequent Islamic prohibitions under the Ottoman Turkish Empire, this and other public out-door rituals were henceforth accomplished within the confines of the churches.



Image from www.armenianchurch.ge

Video Lesson:

[Bread & Salt: Water Blessing](#) (Duration 4:08)

Christmas Craft:

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Soorp Dznoont – Christmas (Holy Birth)

նուէր/ընծայ - nver/undza – present

Read out loud:

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”

- 1 Corinthians 11:2

Review

Memory Verse Review:

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”

- 1 Corinthians 11:2

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. What do we call customs that are passed from one generation to another? (Traditions)
2. Who can have traditions? (Cultures, families, and religions)
3. What does the Christmas Tree represent? (Eternal life, because it never loses its leaves)
4. When do we celebrate Armenian Christmas? (January 6)
5. What does the flame from the candle on Christmas Eve remind us of? (How the light of God, Jesus Christ, came into the world)

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Life Application:

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

→ Traditions are important to who we are, because we continue to do what our ancestors did.

→ Traditions teach us about the past, but also help us create the future.

→ Traditions in our faith have been given to us from long ago and remind us of Christ, allowing us to worship Him the same way many generations have worshipped Him.

**As during past years, students were required to learn the Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali). Consider encouraging them to pray in Armenian. Feel free to alternate each week between English and Armenian prayers.*

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 keesher-ee, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sa-sanetsayts yev voghormya 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.

At Home

Memorize by next week.

MEMORY VERSE:

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- 1 Corinthians 11:2

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MAKE A CHRISTMAS CARD:

Make a cheerful Christmas card for your priest, teacher, friend or relative. Make it as colorful as possible.