

Unit 3: GOD'S GREATEST GIFTS

Lesson 3.1: Holidays and Family Traditions

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

Video Lesson: [The Story of Christmas](#) (duration 9:58)

Craft Activity: Scrap Ribbon Tree Ornaments

Items needed: straight sticks or cinnamon sticks (6-inch long), ribbons, hot glue gun, twine, scissors

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, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, 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, 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 all wait and count days, use 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, religious, and family traditions.

Q: What can be a family tradition?

Traditions are special things people do 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.

Decorating a Christmas Tree – This tradition has come to us from Northern Germany. It 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 almost 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 like to celebrate in their neighborhoods and churches. We sing and join the ranks of angels in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, just as the angels rejoiced 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 then 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.

Q: Can you think of any traditions that is special for your family during Christmas?

Video Lesson: [The Story of Christmas](#) (duration 9:58)

Words of the Week:

Սուրբ Ծնունդ – **Soorp Dznoont** – **Christmas (Holy Birth)**

աւանդութիւն – **avantootyoon** – **tradition**

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



Image from www.lovetoknow.com

Fun Facts about Christmas:

1. Santa Claus would give advice and fresh, seasonal and dry fruit as gifts.
2. Fire is brought home from church as a blessing (Armenian tradition).
3. Many families around the world, including Armenian families, practice a tradition of lucky coin in gata and kufté (for safety, the coin can be replaced with a walnut or an olive).
4. People have been sending Christmas cards since 1843.
5. Tinsel was originally made with real silver.
6. It takes about 15 years to grow a Christmas tree.
7. Traditional Christmas colors are red, gold and green? Green is a symbol of life and rebirth; red symbolizes the blood of Christ, and gold represents light as well as wealth and royalty.

Craft Activity: Scrap Ribbon Tree Ornaments



Craft idea and image from www.firefliesandmudpies.com

Directions:

1. After gathering supplies, invite kids to tie the scraps of ribbon down the twig or cinnamon stick.
2. For best results, bunch the ribbons close together. The ribbons will bend and slightly overlap. Gently tug them into place until you are satisfied with their placement.
3. Use sharp scissors to trim the ribbon scraps into the shape of a Christmas tree.
4. If desired, melt the edges of the ribbons with a match so the ribbon doesn't fray.
5. Hot glue or tie a loop of twine to the top of the tree.
6. If desired, top the tree with a wooden star, yellow button, or primitive metal star.
7. Your Scrap Ribbon Tree Ornament is complete!

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

Words of the Week Review:

աւանդութիւն – avantootyoon – tradition

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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)

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.

* *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 ծանապարհ, 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.

At Home

MEMORY VERSE:

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MAKE A CHRISTMAS CARD:

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