



# **Poon Paregentan Assembly**

# **A Joyful Celebration Guidebook**

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### **Introduction**

This program is meant to be executed as a school-wide event and is designed for students of all ages. By creating this program, we hope to provide our Sunday school students with a fun and engaging group learning environment, allowing older students to share their knowledge and be teachers for a day.

During this celebration, students will share their knowledge, time, and talents with one another, spread the love of Christ, and prepare for Great Lent.

*Optional:* If there are no other events planned in your church on this day, we highly encourage inviting families to sign up for a potluck meal-sharing event to celebrate this joyous feast with the entire community after the Divine Liturgy.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Participants**

#### **1. Readers (x3)**

- Take turns reading the presentation for the younger students.

#### **2. Animators (x2 or x4 - male and female)**

- Dressed in traditional Armenian Taraz or Poon Paregentan characters' attire.
- Assist in presenting the program.
- Welcome parishioners into the hall.
- Motivate students to participate in dances, games, and activities.

#### **3. Instructors/Assistants**

- Help students during craft activities.

#### **4. Servers (if applicable)**

- If a potluck meal is planned, a few students or parents will assist in serving food during fellowship hour.
- A self-serving buffet is also an option.

# Presentation

## Poon Paregentan

*Note:* Please arrange according to your location setup.

The reception hall or the fellowship hall might be the best location for this event.

### Reader 1

Hello, everyone! It is such a pleasure to see you all here. Today, we're going to talk about a very special celebration in the Armenian Church called Poon Paregentan! Do you know what it is? *(Pause and allow answers.)*

Have you ever been to a really fun party? Maybe a birthday party, a festival, or a family gathering with lots of food, music, and games?

Well, Poon Paregentan is just like that! It's a joyful day of feasting, playing, and celebrating before we enter the season of Lent.

Let's say it together: Poon Paregentan! *(Encourage younger kids to repeat after you.)*

### Animator 1

What Does "Poon Paregentan" Mean?

### Reader 2

Good question! Poon Paregentan means "Great Good Living." The word "Poon" means "real" or "genuine". "Pare" means "good", and "gentan" means "living". So, Poon Paregentan literally means "The Real Good Living."

This is a time to be joyful, enjoy good food, and thank God for all His blessings. But it is not just about having fun—it also reminds us of a very old story from the Bible.

### Animator 2

What Story Is That? Kids, do you want to hear the story? *(Encourage an answer.)*

### Reader 3

Here is the Story Behind Poon Paregentan:

A long, long time ago, before we were born, before our parents were born, even before Armenia existed, God created the very first people. Do you know their names? *(Pause and let children guess—encourage them to say "Adam and Eve.")*

God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful paradise called the Garden of Eden. Imagine the most beautiful place you can think of—what would it look like? *(Pause and let some children share. Animators may whisper answers as hints if needed.)*

The Garden of Eden was the most beautiful place imaginable! It had huge trees full of delicious fruit, colorful flowers, friendly animals walking around, the perfect weather. But the best part was that God was so close—He was right there with them!

Adam and Eve never had to worry about anything. They had everything they needed, and they were truly happy. But then something happened... *(Create suspense.)*

**Animator addresses children:** Do you know what happened? (*Pause for responses—some children may say "the snake" or "the forbidden fruit."*)

**Reader 1**

Yes! Adam and Eve made a mistake. God told them they could eat from any tree in the garden except one—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But one day, a sneaky serpent tricked them into eating from it. The serpent told them, "If you eat from this tree, you will be as wise and powerful as God!"

Adam and Eve became tempted and ate the fruit. They disobeyed God, and at that moment, everything changed. They suddenly felt afraid and ashamed and tried to hide from God.

But can we really hide from God? (*Let the children answer.*) No! God sees and loves us no matter what.

Because of their mistake, Adam and Eve had to leave the beautiful garden. Life became harder for them—they had to work for their food, they felt tired, and for the first time, they felt sadness.

**Animator 1**

What does this have to do with poon barekendan?

**Reader 2**

Poon Barekendan reminds us of the joy and happiness that Adam and Eve had before they sinned. It is a time to celebrate the blessings God gives us, just like Adam and Eve celebrated in the Garden of Eden. This is our way of remembering God's many graces and being thankful.

**Animator 2**

What happens after poon paregentan?

**Reader 2 (continues)**

After this happy day, we enter a different time—the time of Great Lent. Great Lent begins tomorrow. This is a 40-day period where we prepare for Easter, the most important celebration for Christians. It is a time for Christians to grow closer to God. It is marked by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which help purify the heart and strengthen faith.

**Animator 1**

That's a long time—40 days!

**Reader 3**

Yes! It is a long time, but it is a good time. During Great Lent, we learn and grow. And here is how we do that:

- We fast and eat simpler meals (no meat or dairy) to remind us of sacrifice. Fasting means eating simpler meals and avoiding certain foods to practice self-control and focus on God.
- We pray more to grow closer to God. Prayer deepens our relationship with God, allowing us to reflect, repent, and seek His guidance.
- We do good deeds to help others. Almsgiving is about helping those in need, showing kindness, and practicing generosity. Together, these practices remind us to live humbly, grow spiritually, and prepare our hearts for the joy of Christ's resurrection.

**Reader 1**

Poon Paregentan is like the big feast before the fast! We celebrate today because tomorrow, we start a time

of reflection, prayer, and preparation for Easter through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

**Animator 2:** How Do We Celebrate Poon Paregentan?

**Reader 1**

By wearing masks or costumes—some people dress up in fun outfits, just like in a festival!

**Reader 2**

By feasting on delicious food—since Lent is a time of fasting, we enjoy all our favorite foods before it starts.

**Reader 3**

By dancing and playing games—it's a day of joy! People play traditional Armenian games and celebrate together.

**Readers together**

And of course, by going to church—many churches hold a special service for Poon Paregentan.

**Animators taking turns**

Kids, let's think about it and see what we remember from this lesson...Raise your hand if you know the answer:

- What does Poon Paregentan mean? (Answer: "Great Good Living")
- What is the name of the garden where Adam and Eve lived? (Answer: Garden of Eden)
- What did Adam and Eve do that made them leave the garden? (Answer: They disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit.)
- What do we do during Lent? (Answer: Pray, fast, and do good deeds.)

**Final Message by the Animators**

**Animator 1**

Poon Paregentan teaches us to be joyful and thankful for everything God has given us.

**Animator 2**

It's a reminder that God wants us to be happy, but He also wants us to prepare our hearts for Him.

# Games and Activities

## Crafts: Making Masks or Headpieces

Ages 5-13: Masks of friendly animals, fruit from the Garden of Eden, and Armenian cheerful characters (options below).

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper, white cardstock paper, paper plates, crayons/ colored pencils, yarn, wide craft sticks, scissors, craft sticks and glue.

### 1. Traditional Armenian-Inspired Masks

- Vishap (Dragon Mask) – A nod to Armenian mythology, representing strength and transformation.
- Sasuntsi Davit (David of Sassoun) – A heroic mask inspired by the legendary Armenian epic hero.
- Armenian Folk Dancer Mask – Features a smiling expression with traditional Armenian headdresses.

### 2. Joyful & Festive Characters

- Jester or Harlequin Mask – Represents fun and mischief, perfect for Barekentan's playful spirit.
- Sun & Moon Mask – A symbolic representation of brightness (joy of feasting) and reflection (upcoming Lent).
- Animal Masks (Lion, Bird, Fox, Bear, Ram) – Inspired by nature and Armenian folklore.
- Laughing & Crying Faces – One side happy (feasting), the other sad (fasting).
- Masquerade-Style Masks – Decorated with bright colors, feathers, and ribbons.
- Fruit & Food-Themed Masks – Grape, pomegranate, or wheat masks celebrating the feast before Lent.

### 3. Biblical & Thematic Masks

- Adam & Eve Masks – Representing life in the Garden of Eden before the fall.
- Angel Mask – Symbolizing purity and divine joy.
- Shepherd Mask – Connecting to Armenian history and biblical stories.



## **Will vs. Won't Game: Feasting vs. Fasting (Adaptation of the Happy vs. Sad Game)**

This interactive sorting game helps children (ages 5-10) understand the difference between the joyful feasting of Poon Paregentan and the more reflective fasting period of Great Lent. It encourages visual recognition and critical thinking while reinforcing the meaning of the two seasons. With this game, children will identify and categorize pictures into two groups: Feasting (Happy - Poon Paregentan) and Fasting (Sad - Lent).

### **Materials Needed:**

1. Printed or drawn images of various foods, activities, and emotions (see below for examples).
2. Two colored construction paper sheets labeled:
  - "During Lent I will"
  - "During Lent I won't"
  - Or one large piece of construction paper, folded in half like a book, with a divider line in the middle of the page (landscape format) and labels on both sides.
3. Glue sticks

### **For Instructors**

#### **Preparation:**

1. Print and cut out the pictures showing different foods, activities, and expressions related to what to do and not do during Great Lent.
2. Place the labeled sheets of construction paper on the table for each student.
3. Place glue sticks by the construction paper for each student.
4. Place cut-out images in the center of the table or an easily accessible area.

#### **Introduce the Game:**

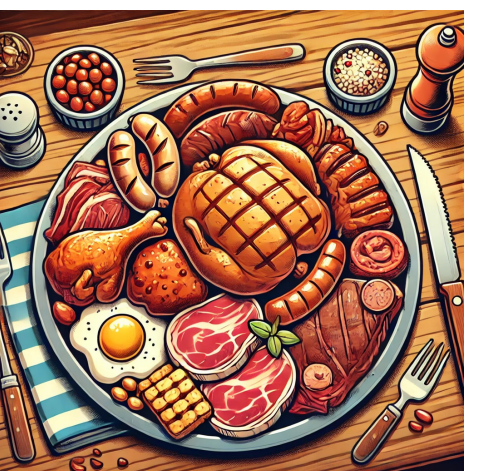
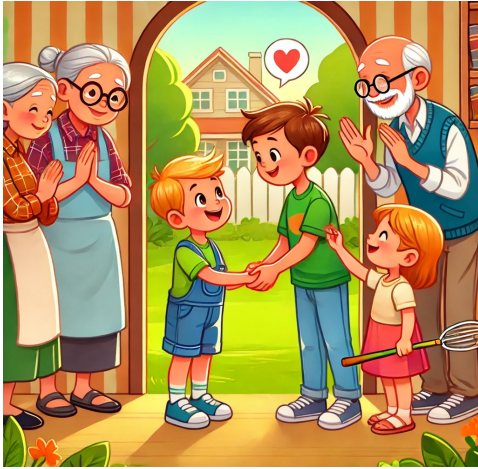
1. Gather the children in a circle and explain:
  - "Poon Paregentan is a happy time with feasting and fun before we enter Lent, which is a time to prepare our hearts for Easter. Some things make us feel happy and active, like celebrations and delicious food. Other things are quieter, like praying and simple meals. Today, we will decide which pictures show a happy feast and which ones show fasting. We will also decide what we will and won't do during Great Lent. From the pictures on the table, you will need to select as many as possible (but not the same) for both sides of your posters—some showing what you must not do and some showing what you must do during Lent."
2. Demonstrate the Sorting:
  - Hold up a few pictures and ask, "Is this a happy feast or a time of fasting?"
  - Show a picture of a party with food and ask, "Would we see this at Poon Paregentan or Lent?"
  - Place it on the corresponding "During Lent I will" or "During Lent I won't" section.

#### **Directions for Children**

1. Allow each child picks a picture from a pile.
2. They look at it and decide where to put it.
3. If unsure, they can ask for help or let the group decide together.
4. Animators and instructors can assist when needed.







## Craft: Hayr Mer Trifold (for ages 11-13)

Cut out the three prayers and glue to construction paper, making a trifold and decorate. Pray the prayers every night with your family throughout the season of Great Lent.

This can be used as a group activity. Students aged 8-10 can make these tri-folds for the younger students and give them away as gifts.

### **Hayr Mer** **(Lord's Prayer in Armenian transliteration)**

*Hayr mer vor hergeens es;  
Soorp yegheetsee anoon ko.  
Yegetseh arkayootyoonun ko;  
Yegheetseen gamk ko,  
vorbes Hergeens yev hergree.  
Uzhatz mer hanabazort, door mez aysor.  
Yev togh mez uzbardees mer,  
vorbes yev mek toghoomk merotz bardabanantz.  
Yev mee daneer uzmez ee portzootyoon;  
Ayl purgya uzmez ee chareh.  
Zee ko e arkayootyoon yev zorootyoon  
yev park haveedyans.*

*Amen*

### **Հայերեն** **(Գրաբար)**

Հայր մեր որ յերկինս ես,  
սուրբ եղիցի անուն Թո:  
Եկեսցէ արքայութիւնն Թո:  
Եղիցին կամք Թո  
որպէս յերկինս եւ յերկրի:  
Չհաց մեր հանապազորդ տուր մեզ այսօր:  
Եւ թող մեզ զպարտիս մեր,  
որպէս և մեք թողումք մերոց պարտապանաց:  
Եւ մի տանիր զմեզ ի փորձութիւն:  
այլ փրկեա զմեզ ի չարէ:  
Չի քո է արքայութիւն եւ զօրութիւն  
եւ փառք յաւիտեանս:

Ամէն

### **The Lord's Prayer** **(also known as Our Father)**

*Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.*

*Thy kingdom come,*

*Thy will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:*

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and  
the glory, for ever.*

*Amen*

ACTIVITY: Lent Promise Card for Families (free printable)

Activity and image from [www.faihandfabricdesign.com](http://www.faihandfabricdesign.com)

Keeping a Lenten promise, once you determine what it is, is always easier with the support of others. Great Lent Promise card is a good activity for each student of the Sunday school or each member of the family. With our promises well thought out, written down, and kept on the refrigerator (a visible location), we are hopeful it will help us to not only keep our own promises but support each other these next 40 days as we count down to Easter.

NOTE: If time permits, students can make several cards for their family members.

WHAT YOU NEED

- printable: Lent Promise Card
- cardstock (left over from our Love Notes)
- markers
- scissors
- stickers, glitter, embellishments, etc.

HOW TO MAKE

1. Print out as many promise sheets as needed so every family member has a copy
2. At the top, enter the name of the family member (mom, dad, Anna, etc.)
3. Cut out the promise sheets, fill them out, decorate, and add to your refrigerator door or another visible location for the duration of Lent. At dinner each night, talk about your progress. What has been difficult? What has been easy? What changes have you noticed about yourself as a result of your promises?

NOTE TO PARENTS

Mom or Dad: talk about Lent with your children. Explain how Lent is a period for us to prepare for Easter, and – just like Jesus prepared himself in the desert for 40 days – we will prepare ourselves, too. We prepare ourselves through acts of prayer, acts of fasting (giving up something), and almsgiving/charity (taking care of others). This helps us to turn away from distractions and focus on God. Be sure to encourage your children to come up with their own ideas on how they can fulfill their Lenten promise.



### **Poon Paregentan Dance Party & Mask Parade**

1. Musical Chairs
2. Play Armenian folk music and encourage kids to dance with scarves or ribbons.

### **Links to songs:**

1. [Paregentan Song](#) (Please note that this song is in Western Armenian)
2. [Sing-a-long Lord's Prayer](#)
3. [Fasting and Feasting](#)

### **Decorate a Feast Table (Optional, if applicable for the potluck Barekentan celebration)**

With the help of older students or adults, encourage children to arrange the tables for the family feast of Poon Paregentan. This will be their first act of service for the Great Lent period.