

Special Lesson - Great Lent

1. Poon Paregentan: Making Choices

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

Video Lesson: [Living Lent](#) (duration 2:13)

Class Activity: Have a class discussion about choices, what kind of choices we should stay away from and why. Do we need to do this only during Great Lent?

Paregentan Activity: Make a character mask of choice (king, queen, sun, flower, different animals, etc.)

Items Needed: Construction paper, white paper, paper plates, crayons/ colored pencils, tan yarn, wide craft sticks, scissors, and glue.

Memory Verse:

“For where your treasure is, there
your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:21

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 Armenians love to celebrate, party and share meals with our friends and family. Our church calendar is full of celebrations and events that bring us together. Paregentan is one of them, and the Armenian Church calendar has several days dedicated to this fun event. Paregentan is celebrated prior to fasting days, and the greatest one of them – Poon Paregentan or the Premiere Carnival comes before the Great Lent (50 days before Easter).

Q: What is Paregentan and why do we celebrate one of them so grandly?

Poon Paregentan or Premiere Carnival is the feast of gratitude and remembrance of all the blessings God has given us before we start our six-week journey through Great Lent. This period of Great Lent is a time of abstinence, strict fasting, and repentance for the faithful. Through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (helping the poor) we prepare ourselves to be worthy of Gods mercy and for Easter—the Feast of the Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

On these days of Paregentan, the angel’s words addressed to the prophet Elijah are fulfilled: *“Arise and eat, otherwise the journey will be too great for you”* (1 Kings 19:7). Following this advice, the Armenian Church allows her faithful to organize games, festivities, carnivals, and large, abundant meals to celebrate the feast, and the start of the Great Lenten spiritual journey.

During Great Lent, the altar curtains in the churches are closed in commemoration of the fact that after sinning, Adam was exiled from Eden and the doors were closed before him. Each Sunday during this period is named after an event in the Holy Bible that contains the message of the day and out spiritual journey towards Christ’s resurrection. These messages tell us stories of people and their choices and how those choices impacted their lives and lives of those around them. These messages are designed to teach us the word of God and the way He wants us to live our lives.

First Sunday - Sunday of the Eve of Great Lent - Humanity remembers our jy living in Paradise with God

Second Sunday - Sunday of the Expulsion - Humanity’s removal from Paradise because of sin

Third Sunday - Sunday of the Prodigal Son - We recognize our sinfulness and return to God

Fourth Sunday - Sunday of the Steward - We are given responsibilities in this life and must give account for them

Fifth Sunday - Sunday of the Judge - Reminds us that persistence in prayer produces spiritual fruits

Sixth Sunday - Sunday of the Advent - We preapre for Christ’s arrival next week at Palm Sunday

During this time faithful choose not to eat certain kinds of food, such as meat, milk products, eggs, or delicious sweets. This period of the Great Lent is also called “salt and bread” (սղիւաց/aghoo hats), as in the past during this time people only ate salt and bread. This reminds us that we need to be humble and grateful for having just enough to be content. Yet giving up just food or things is not enough. The 40 day period of Great Lent is a time of reflection and transformation. By knowingly depriving ourselves of life’s many pleasures, making the right choices in living a virtuous life and bowing our heads in humility and prayer, sharing what’s abundant in our lives with those in need, we can transform into a new, chosen people at Christ’s resurrection. Therefore, praying, fasting and almsgiving are the three important components of Great Lent which help lead us to transformation and new life.

Paregentan Craft Activity: Make a character mask of choice (king, queen, sun, flower, different animals, etc.)

Video Lesson: [Living Lent](#) (duration 2:13)

Class Activity: Have a class discussion about choices, what kind of choices we should stay away from and why. Do we need to do this only during Great Lent?

Words of the Week:

Մեծ Պահք - Medz Bahk - Great Lent
Տէրունական Աղօթք - Deroonagan Aghotk
- Lord's Prayer
Բարեկենդան - Paregentan - Good Living

Memory Verse:

“For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.”

Matthew 6:21



Poon Paregentan Celebration in Armenia
Image from www.qahana.am

Review

Memory Verse Review:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. When is Poon Paregentan? (The day before Lent begins, 50 days before Easter)
2. What does “paregentan” mean? (Good living)
3. What is the purpose of Great Lent? (To improve ourselves and make ourselves better people)
4. What three things do we focus on during Great Lent? (Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving)

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Բարեկենդան - Paregentan - Good Living

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

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Զրիստոս, 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.