

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Armenian Church Curriculum

W E B E L I E V E

The Holy Trinity, the Church, and the Creed

Grade Level: Grades 4 through 6

Ages: 9 to 12 years old

Duration: 5 Days

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

C O N T E N T S

Day 1: Holy Trinity — One God in Three Persons

Day 2: God the Father — Creator, Provider, and Father of All

Day 3: Jesus Christ — The Son of God, Our Savior

Day 4: The Holy Spirit — Sanctifier and Life-Giver

Day 5: The Church — One, Holy, Universal, and Apostolic

Each day includes:

- *Catechism Class*
- *Creed Article*
- *Theological Explanation*
- *Class Outline (Teacher's Guide)*
- *Memory Verse*
- *Closing Prayer*
- *Bible Class with Discussion Questions,*
- *Crafts*

THEOLOGICAL NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Miaphysite Christology (Day 3): The Armenian Church teaches that Jesus Christ is one Person with one united nature, at once truly divine and truly human (miaphysitism). The original lesson used the phrase "fully God and fully man," which reflects Chalcedonian theology not held by the Armenian Church. This has been corrected throughout Day 3 to: "truly God and truly human, one Person whose divine and human natures are perfectly united." Teachers should avoid "two natures" language and instead say: "Jesus is one Person, truly God and truly human, perfectly united."

The Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Father (No Filioque): The Nicene Creed as used in this curriculum reflects the original Nicene-Constantinopolitan text, in which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only. The Western Filioque addition ("and the Son") is not part of Apostolic theology and does not appear anywhere in this curriculum.

Theotokos (Day 3): The title "Mother of God" (Աստուծաձիհն, Asdvadzadzeen) is used correctly in this curriculum. The Armenian Church affirms this title as a statement about the Person of Christ, that the one born of Mary is truly God and truly man, consistent with miaphysite theology mentioned above.

Bible Class: Each day includes a lesson explaining the Holy Trinity in relation to the Nicene Creed. There is also a Bible Class that helps reinforce that day's lesson.

The Use of Analogies: Please refrain from using analogies such as ice, steam, and water; masks; Neapolitan ice cream; or roles when describing or explaining the Holy Trinity. These lead to heresy and become more confusing. Understanding the Holy Trinity is confusing; hence its designation as a mystery. A perfect example of this, which keeps us humble in our search to understand the Holy Trinity, is the story of St. Augustine. It was around the year 415, and St. Augustine was walking along the beach on a bright, sunny day. He was frustrated, having taken a break from working on what's become known as one of his greatest doctrinal contributions to the Church, *De Trinitate*, or "On the Trinity." The subject matter had left him bleary-eyed and in need of fresh air.

It was in this moment, as the frothy tide rushed out, that a little boy caught St. Augustine's eye. The freckle-faced child had a determined, furrowed brow. He was clearly up to something, running back and forth, back and forth, between the Mediterranean Sea and a tiny hole in the ground.

"My son," St. Augustine called over the crashing waves, "What are you doing there?"

The boy held up the pink shell he was using to move water, “I’m trying to fit that great big ocean into this tiny hole,” he yelled, pointing assertively at the sand.

St. Augustine smiled, charmed by the child’s innocence, his bright eyes, the way sunlight shone in his curly hair. He then followed the boy to kneel beside the tiny hole, watching him spill out a few meager drops.

“My silly child,” St. Augustine broke the news gently, turning the boy’s skinny shoulders to face the sea. He then spread his own arms wide, “You could never fit this great, magnificent ocean into that tiny hole!”

The child didn’t flinch but responded quickly: “And you could never possibly understand the majesty of the Holy Trinity and place it into your limited mind.” Then in a flash, the boy disappeared.

Over the centuries, many great thinkers have speculated about this story. We can never understand these mysteries all at once” (much like the ocean – where scientists discover new life all the time). But if we open our minds to God, he reveals himself to us bit by bit.

DAY 1

Holy Trinity

One God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that the Holy Trinity is One God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They will learn that these three Persons are uncreated, eternal, equal in divinity, and always united in love and purpose.

KEY CONCEPTS

- The Holy Trinity is One in essence/nature and Three in Persons.
- God the Father creates, the Son saves, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies, but they always work together.
- The Trinity is not a division of God but a perfect, eternal communion of love.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Holy Trinity Սուրբ Երրորդութիւն (<i>Soorp Yerr-ort-oo-tyoon</i>)	One God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Mystery խորհուրդ (<i>khor-hoort</i>)	A truth we believe by faith that is too great for our minds to fully understand.
Salvation փրկութիւն (<i>pur-goo-tyoon</i>)	Healing and freedom from sin and death; becoming close to God and living with Him forever through Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

— **Matthew 28:19**

Teacher Note: *Have the class repeat the verse together three times, then invite volunteers to try it individually.*

THE NICENE CREED — FULL TEXT (OVERVIEW)

Teacher Note: *Today students are introduced to the Creed as a whole. Each article will be studied in depth on Days 2–5. Do not try to explain every line today but introduce the structure and let familiarity begin.*

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten, that is of the essence of the Father. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Who for us humanity and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate, was made human, was born perfectly of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. By whom He took body, soul, and mind, and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance. He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven with the same body, and sat at the right hand of the Father. He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreate and the perfect; Who spoke through the Law, prophets, and Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles, and dwelt in the saints.

We believe in One, Holy, catholic, and Apostolic Church; in one baptism, in repentance for the remission and forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead, in the everlasting judgment of souls and bodies, and the Kingdom of Heaven and in the everlasting life.

THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

The Holy Trinity is a mystery revealed by God. We do not worship three gods but One God in three Persons. The Father is the Source; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. These Persons are distinct but share the same divine nature. Because God is Trinity, love exists within God Himself from all eternity, and He invites us to share and partake in that love.

CLASS OUTLINE – TEACHER'S GUIDE

Teacher Note: *Total suggested class time: 45 minutes. Time estimates are given per step. If a discussion runs long, trim Steps 5–6 rather than rushing the Creed reading in Step 4. Have a whiteboard available to write answers down.*

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer (3 min)

Say: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together. Help us learn more about You today. Amen.*

2. Introduction: What is the Holy Trinity? (5 min)

Ask: *Have you heard the words "Holy Trinity" before? What do you think it means?*

- Write answers on the board. Affirm curiosity and correct gently where needed.

Say: *Today, we are learning about the Holy Trinity: One God in Three Persons.*

3. Teaching the Trinity (10 min)

- Write on the board: FATHER — SON — HOLY SPIRIT.
- The Father is the Creator. He made heaven and earth.
- The Son is Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who became human to save us.
- The Holy Spirit is the Life-Giver. He fills our hearts and helps us become holy.

Ask: *Are they three different gods?*

Answer: *No, three Persons, but One God.*

Activity: *Hold up a triangle. "Like this triangle has three sides but is one shape, God is One in Three Persons." (Note: all analogies for the Trinity have limits. This illustrates oneness, not the distinctness of the Persons.)*

4. Reading the Nicene Creed Together (10 min)

Say: *The Nicene Creed is our Church's statement of faith. Everything we believe about God in one prayer. This week we will study it article by article. Today, let's read it together for the first time and notice its shape.*

- Read the full Nicene Creed aloud slowly and reverently (see text above). Remind students: palms together, fingers extended, thumbs crossed.

Ask: *How many sections do you notice in the Creed?*

Answer: *Four — one for the Father, one for the Son, one for the Holy Spirit, and one for the Church and eternal life.*

Say: *Each day this week, we will open one of these sections. Today, we focus on the Trinity itself. The articles come alive starting tomorrow.*

5. Experiencing the Trinity (8 min)

Ask: *Where do you see or hear the Trinity in church?*

- Guide toward: in Baptism, in the Sign of the Cross, in the blessings of the Divine Liturgy (Holy Badarak), in every prayer that begins and ends with the Trinity.

6. Review Questions (5 min)

Ask: *Who is the Father?*

Answer: *Creator of all things.*

Ask: *Who is the Son?*

Answer: *Jesus Christ, our Savior.*

Ask: *Who is the Holy Spirit?*

Answer: *The One who lives in us and helps us become holy.*

Ask: *Are there three gods?*

Answer: *One God in three Persons.*

B I B L E C L A S S

Scripture Focus

Matthew 3:16–17 (Baptism of Jesus) | John 14:16–17 (Promise of the Spirit) | Genesis 1:1–2 (Spirit at Creation)

Bible Lesson

In the story of Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16–17), we see all three Persons of the Holy Trinity present at once: Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven. In John 14, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1, we read about the Spirit of God moving over the waters at creation, and God the Father speaking (this is the Word of God – Jesus). These passages reveal how the Holy Trinity has always been working together – in creation, salvation, and the ongoing life of the Church.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see each Person of the Trinity in the Baptism of Jesus? Give examples.

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

This moment is called a Theophany, a visible revelation of the Trinity.

- God the Father speaks from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- God the Son (Jesus) stands in the water, being baptized to fulfill all righteousness.
- God, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove upon Jesus.

The Three Persons are distinct yet act in perfect unity: the Father confirms the Son, and the Spirit glorifies Him.

2. Why is it important that God is Three Persons in One?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

Because it reveals that God is love from all eternity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together in love. If God were only one solitary Person, there would be no eternal relationship of love within God Himself.

Each Person of the Trinity also participates in our salvation:

- The Father sends the Son.
- The Son dies and rises for us.
- The Holy Spirit comes to live in us and make us holy.

3. How do we experience the Holy Trinity in our lives as Orthodox Christians?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

- In Baptism: we are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- In the Divine Liturgy: every prayer begins and ends with the Trinity.
- In the Sign of the Cross: each time we make the sign, we declare our Trinitarian faith.
- In daily life: the Holy Spirit helps us live like Jesus and return to the love of the Father.

CLOSING PRAYER — ST. NERSESS SHNORHALI

*I confess with faith and worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
uncreated and immortal Essence,
creator of angels, humans and of all that exists.
Have mercy upon your creatures,
and on me, a manifold sinner. Amen.*

CRAFTS

Dowel Rod & Ribbon Banner Craft and Bible Craft can be found in the Crafts Packet

DAY 2

God the Father

Creator, Provider, and Loving Father of All

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that God the Father is the Source of all things, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the loving Father of all. He is the First Person of the Holy Trinity, who sent His Son to save us, and the Holy Spirit to live in us.

KEY CONCEPTS

- God the Father is uncreated, all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-loving.
- He is the Source of the Son and the Holy Spirit within the Trinity.
- He created everything visible and invisible.
- He is our Heavenly Father, not distant, but close and personal.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Father հայր (hayr)	The First Person of the Holy Trinity, the Creator of all things.
Almighty ամենակալ (a-men-a-gal)	All-powerful; there is nothing God cannot do.
Creator արարիչ (ar-ar-eech)	The One who made everything in heaven and on earth.
Invisible աներեւոյթ (an-er-e-vooyt)	Things we cannot see, such as angels, souls, and spiritual realities.

Visible

Էրեւելի

(yer-ev-el-ee)

Things we see, like trees, mountains, stars, animals, and people and the resources used to make other things, like cars, houses, and clothing.

MEMORY VERSE

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God — and that is what we are!"

— **1 John 3:1**

CREED ARTICLE — FIRST ARTICLE OF THE NICENE CREED

"We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible."

EXPLANATION OF THE CREED ARTICLE

This part of the Creed is short but dense with meaning. We believe in one true God — not many gods, but one God who is our loving Father. He is almighty: there is nothing too big or too hard for Him. God the Father made everything: the sky, the stars, the oceans, animals, people, everything in heaven and on earth, both the things we can see and those we cannot (like angels, souls, and spiritual realities). He made all of this out of love, and He continues to care for it every single day. He made you, and He loves you deeply.

THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

In the Armenian Church, we believe that God the Father is the fountainhead of the Holy Trinity. He did not come from anyone, but He always existed. From Him the Son is eternally begotten, and from Him the Holy Spirit proceeds. He is not distant or harsh, but loving and close. Jesus reveals Him to us as "Our Father," and we are invited to be His children through Christ.

CLASS OUTLINE – TEACHER'S GUIDE

Teacher Note: *Total suggested class time: 45 minutes. Begin by reviewing Day 1 and the Creed as a whole. Today focuses on Article 1: God the Father.*

1. Welcome and Sign of the Cross (3 min)

Say: *Welcome back! Who remembers what we talked about yesterday?*

- Allow students to review. Affirm answers and gently correct where needed.

2. Transition to Today's Focus (5 min)

Say: *Today we begin breaking down the Nicene Creed article by article. The Creed is a statement, a declaration of what we believe. Today, we study the First Article: God the Father and His work of creation.*

Say: *The Creed has four main sections. Interestingly, we also have four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; through which the Holy Trinity is revealed to us. The Creed is structured to reflect the work of each Person of the Trinity.*

3. Exploring the First Article (8 min)

- Read the First Article of the Creed aloud (see above).

Say: *This may be the shortest article, but it's full of meaning!*

Ask: *What does it mean that God the Father is "almighty"?*

Answer: *All-powerful, nothing is too hard or too big for Him.*

Ask: *What does it mean that He made things "visible and invisible"?*

Answer: *He made both what we can see (trees, stars, oceans) and what we cannot (angels, souls, love, kindness). He also made the resources used to make those things, such as the materials for buildings and clothing.*

4. God's Personal Love in Creation (7 min)

Ask: *What do you think it means that God created you specifically and still cares for you?*

- God the Father created every part of you: how you look, think, feel, and act.
- He did not just make you and walk away. He continues to love and protect you every day.

Activity: *Turn to a neighbor and name two things God has created and how He continues to care for them. (10–15 seconds, then share with the group.)*

5. God Provides What We Need (5 min)

Say: *God doesn't just create people, but He creates everything we need to live: family, food, water, clothing, the Church, and the sacraments.*

Ask: *Can you name two things God has given you that you are thankful for?*

Say: *Everything good in our lives comes from the Father's love.*

6. God Protects Us (7 min)

- The Father guards us from danger and evil, even when we don't realize it.

Ask: *Why does He do all this?*

Answer: *Out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy. Not because we earn it, but because He loves us.*

Ask: *Do we do anything to deserve God's love?*

- Just as a father loves his child for who they are, not for what they do, so God loves us because He made us.

7. Jesus in the Father's Plan (5 min)

Say: *Even though the First Article is about the Father, we remember that Jesus is part of the Father's plan from the beginning.*

- Sending His Son, Jesus, is the fullness of the Father's loving care.
- The work of creation is not complete without salvation — and both come from the Father's love.

8. Wrap-Up Discussion (5 min)

Ask: *What have you learned about God the Father today?*

Ask: *What are some ways God cares for you?*

Ask: *How can we thank God for everything He has done?*

- Encourage students to pray, come to Church, and love others as a response to the Father's love.

BIBLE CLASS

Scripture Focus

Genesis 1:1–2 | Psalm 103:13 | Matthew 6:9

Bible Lesson

From the very beginning, God the Father created the world with love. He watches over all creation and is especially close to people. The Psalms say, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him." Jesus teaches us to call God "Father," because He cares for us as the most loving parent imaginable.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that God is our Father?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

It means that God loves us, made us, and takes care of us like a good and perfect Father. He created us in His image, calls us His children, and wants to be close to us. He listens to our prayers, forgives us when we repent, and never abandons us.

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God — and that is what we are!"

— 1 John 3:1

2. How does God show His love for us?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

- He created the whole world for us.
- He sent His only Son, Jesus, to save us from sin, demons, and death.
- He gives us the Holy Spirit to live in us.
- He gives us the Church, the sacraments, our families, and all that we need.

Even when we make mistakes, He is always ready to forgive us and draw us back to His love.

"God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us."

— Romans 5:8

“As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.”

— **Psalm 103:13**

3. Why did Jesus teach us to pray to the Father?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father so we could speak to God with trust, love, and closeness — just as He did. Jesus is the Son of God, and He came to bring us into that same loving relationship with the Father. When we pray to the Father, we grow closer to Him and learn to rely on Him for everything.

“Our Father who art in heaven...”

— **Matthew 6:9**

CLOSING PRAYER — ST. NERSESS SHNORHALI

Heavenly Father, true God,

who sent your beloved Son to seek the lost sheep.

*I have sinned against heaven and before you; receive me as the prodigal son,
and clothe me with my former garment, of which I was deprived by sin.*

Have mercy upon your creatures, and on me, a manifold sinner. Amen.

CRAFTS

Earth Craft can be found in the Crafts Packet

DAY 3

Jesus Christ, the Son of God

The Incarnate Word — Truly God, Truly Human, Our Savior and Judge

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who became human for our salvation. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, truly God and truly human, united in one Person and one nature, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Jesus Christ is the Only-Begotten Son of the Father, eternally begotten, not created.
- He became truly human through the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit, while remaining truly God: one Person, one united nature.
- He suffered, died, rose again, ascended, and will return in glory.
- He is our Savior (Purgeech) who heals us from sin, death, and the power of evil.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Jesus Christ Յիսուս Բրիստոս (Hee-soos Krees-dos)	The Son of God who became human to save us.
Incarnation մարդեղութիւն (mar-tegh-oo-tyoon)	God becoming man in the Person of Jesus, truly and not in appearance only.
Resurrection յարութիւն (ha-roo-tyoon)	Jesus rising from the dead on the third day.

<p>Ascension համբարձում <i>(ham-par-tsoom)</i></p>	<p>Jesus returning to heaven in His glorified body after His Resurrection.</p>
<p>Savior փրկիչ <i>(pur-geech)</i></p>	<p>The One who saves (heals and frees) us from sin and death.</p>

MEMORY VERSE

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, shall live."

— **John 11:25**

CREED ARTICLE — SECOND ARTICLE OF THE NICENE CREED

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten, that is of the essence of the Father. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

Who for us humanity and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate, was made human, was born perfectly of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. By whom He took body, soul, and mind, and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance.

He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven with the same body, and sat at the right hand of the Father.

He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end."

THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

Jesus is not a created being. He is eternally begotten of the Father before all ages: "God from God, Light from Light." He took on a true human body, soul, and mind through the Virgin Mary, becoming truly human without ceasing to be truly God. The Armenian Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches teach that His divine and human realities are united in one Person and one nature, not divided or mixed. His Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension are the very foundation of our salvation. His Second Coming will be glorious, bringing the final judgment and the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

Teacher Note: *Armenian Christology (miaphysitism): Jesus Christ is one Person with one united nature — truly God and truly human. Avoid the phrase "two natures," which reflects Chalcedonian theology not accepted by the Armenian and Oriental Orthodox Churches. See Theological Note at the beginning of this document.*

CLASS OUTLINE — TEACHER'S GUIDE

1. Welcome and Sign of the Cross (3 min)

Say: *Welcome back! Who can tell me what we talked about yesterday?*

- Allow students to share. Affirm answers and transition to today's topic.

2. What is Salvation? (5 min)

Say: *Today we talk about the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, and how He brought salvation to the world.*

Ask: *Does anyone know what "salvation" means?*

Say: *Salvation, in Armenian *վրկուրթիւն* (purgootyoon), means healing and freedom: healing from sin and death, and freedom from the grip of evil. Christ heals us and frees us. Because in our Church, sin is like an illness that needs to be cured and Christ is that medicine.*

3. Reading and Unpacking the Creed (10 min)

- Read the Second Article of the Nicene Creed aloud (see above).

Ask: *What does this part of the Creed tell us about Jesus?*

Explain: Jesus came down from heaven because He loves us and wanted to save us. He truly became human, not in appearance only, but in reality. This is called the Incarnation. He was born of the holy Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit. That is why we call Mary Աստուածածին (Asdvadzadzeen), the Mother of God: because the One born of her is truly God. Jesus took a real body, soul, and mind, just like us. But unlike us, He was both truly human and truly God, in one Person, united perfectly.

4. What Did Jesus Do for Us? (8 min)

- Read: "He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day..."

Ask: *What does this mean for us?*

- Jesus died on the Cross and rose again to save us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.
- His death and resurrection give us the ability to rise from the dead on the final day.

Say: *The current death we see when someone dies (grandparent, friend, or someone else) is not eternal, but it is temporary. Christ makes new and eternal life possible for all of us.*

5. The Resurrection and Ascension (7 min)

Say: *Jesus rose again on the third day, but that is not the end of the story!*

- He ascended into heaven with the same body and sits at the right hand of the Father.
- He will come again to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will never end.

Ask: *What does it mean for us that Jesus is alive in heaven right now?*

Answer: *He is present with us, and He will come again in glory.*

6. Eternal Life (5 min)

Ask: *Who or what are we now, because Jesus died, rose, and ascended?*

- We are adopted as children of God and freed from the power of sin and death.
- We are no longer slaves to sin, but heirs of the Kingdom.

Ask: *What does "eternity" or "everlasting" mean?*

Answer: *Forever, without end.*

7. Wrap-Up Discussion (5 min)

Ask: *What did we learn about Jesus today?*

Ask: *From what did He save us?*

Ask: *What are you most thankful for about what Jesus did?*

CLOSING PRAYER — ST. NERSESS SHNORHALI

*Son of God, true God,
who descended from the bosom of the Father,
and took on flesh from the holy Virgin Mary for our salvation;
crucified, buried, and raised from the dead,
ascended in glory to the Father;
I have sinned against heaven and before you;
remember me like the penitent thief
when you come into your kingdom.
Have mercy upon your creatures,
and on me, a manifold sinner. Amen.*

BIBLE CLASS

Scripture Focus

John 1:1–14 (The Word became flesh) | Luke 2:1–20 (Birth of Jesus) | Matthew 28:1–10 (The Resurrection)

Bible Lesson

The Bible tells us about Jesus from His birth to His resurrection. The Word who was with God from the beginning became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). He lived a perfect life and offered Himself for our sins. His resurrection is our hope — and our beginning.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus come to earth?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

Jesus came to earth to save us from sin and death and to bring us back to God. He became human so He could heal our broken nature, show us how to live in love, and make it possible for us to become children of God.

“For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven...”

— Nicene Creed

2. What happened on the Cross?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

On the Cross, Jesus died willingly for our sins, offering Himself as a perfect sacrifice of love. He took on all the pain and death caused by sin and destroyed its power through His crucifixion. The Cross is where God's love conquered death.

“Be mindful, Lord, and have mercy and bless your holy, catholic and apostolic Church, which you have saved by the precious blood of your Only-begotten, and have freed by the holy cross.”

— Armenian Divine Liturgy, page 37

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree.”

— 1 Peter 2:24

3. What does it mean to rise again?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

To rise again means Jesus came back to life in His real, glorified body on the third day after He died. He conquered death, not just for Himself, but for all of us. His resurrection is the beginning of new life for the whole world.

“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and through His resurrection granted us life.”

— Resurrection Hymn of the Armenian Church

4. How do we meet Jesus today?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

- In the Church — His Body on earth.

- In the Holy Scriptures — where He speaks to us.
- In Holy Communion — where we receive His true Body and Blood.
- In prayer — when we open our hearts to Him.
- In one another — when we love and serve each other.

“Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there among them.”

— **Matthew 18:20**

C R A F T S

Cross Craft can be found in the Crafts Packet

DAY 4

The Holy Spirit

Sanctifier, Life-Giver, and Comforter

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity — not a force or symbol, but God Himself, active in the Church, in our lives, and in making us holy.

KEY CONCEPTS

- The Holy Spirit is uncreated, divine, and equal with the Father and the Son.
- He lives in us through Baptism and Chrismation (the anointing with Holy Myuron after Baptism).
- The Holy Spirit teaches, guides, comforts, and helps us live as faithful Orthodox Christians.
- He was present at creation, descended at the Baptism of Jesus, and came to the apostles at Pentecost.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Holy Spirit Սուրբ Հոգի (Soorp Ho-kee)	The Third Person of the Holy Trinity who helps, teaches, guides, and sanctifies us.
Uncreate անեղ (an-egh)	Has always existed. Not made or created.
Pentecost Հոգեգալուստ (Ho-ke-ka-loosd)	The feast on which the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles fifty days after the Resurrection, giving them the power to speak many languages and preach the Gospel.

<p>Apostle անարքայալ (a-ra-kyal)</p>	<p>A special messenger of Jesus, sent to preach the Gospel to the world.</p>
<p>Saint սուրբ (soorp)</p>	<p>A person who loves God with their whole heart and follows His ways.</p>

MEMORY VERSE

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things."

— **John 14:26**

CREED ARTICLE – THIRD ARTICLE OF THE NICENE CREED

"We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreate and the perfect; Who spoke through the Law, prophets, and Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles, and dwelt in the saints."

THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter and Life-Giver, proceeding from the Father. He was present at creation (Genesis 1:2), descended upon Jesus at the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13-17), and came upon the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). He speaks through the Scriptures and dwells in the Church, guiding us in truth. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us. He makes us holy and works in us through the sacraments, prayer, and every act of love.

CLASS OUTLINE – TEACHER'S GUIDE

1. Welcome and Sign of the Cross (3 min)

Say: *Welcome back! Yesterday, we talked about salvation through Jesus Christ. Today, we will learn about the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity.*

Ask: Which Person of the Holy Trinity does the work of making us holy?

Answer: The Holy Spirit!

2. Introducing the Holy Spirit (5 min)

Say: Today, we will study the Third Article of the Creed, which is about the Holy Spirit. He is not a force or a symbol. He is a Person of the Holy Trinity, and He is God.

Teacher Note: Theologically, the Holy Spirit is studied after the Son because He is the One who brings us to faith and without Him we cannot even confess "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). You may share this with older or more curious students as a bonus insight, but it is not required for the lesson flow.

3. Reading the Third Article (8 min)

- Read the Third Article of the Nicene Creed aloud (see above).

Ask: What does it mean to say, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreated and the perfect"?

Explain: The Holy Spirit is God, just like the Father and the Son. He was not made; He has always existed. He is perfect, holy, and full of love. He is not a thing or a force, but a Person of the Holy Trinity.

4. The Holy Spirit in Scripture (10 min)

- Walk students through each appearance of the Holy Spirit in the Bible:
 - The Holy Spirit at Creation (Genesis 1:1–2): Before the world was created, the Spirit of God moved over the waters. God's Holy Spirit was present at the very beginning of creation, and the Holy Spirit gives life and brings order out of chaos. Simply, the Holy Spirit was with God from the beginning. **Discussion Question:** *Why do you think the Holy Spirit was present at the very beginning of creation?*
 - The Holy Spirit Gives Wisdom to Bezalel (Exodus 31:1–5): God filled Bezalel with the Holy Spirit to help build the Tabernacle beautifully and skillfully. The Spirit gave him wisdom, creativity, and craftsmanship. God continues to give people talents and gifts for good purposes. **Discussion Question:** *What talents or gifts do you think God has given you to use for good?*
 - The Holy Spirit Comes Upon Samson (Judges 14:5–6): The Spirit of the Lord gave Samson great strength. Samson defeated a lion through the power God gave him.

- True strength comes from God, not ourselves. **Discussion Question:** *What does it mean to be strong in God, not just strong physically?*
- The Holy Spirit Speaks to Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1–10): Young Samuel heard God calling him during the night. Samuel learned to listen carefully to God’s voice, and children can also hear and follow God. **Discussion Question:** *What are some ways we can become better at listening to God?*
 - The Holy Spirit Comes Like a Dove at Jesus’ Baptism (Matthew 3:16–17): The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove, signifying that Jesus is His beloved Son. The Holy Spirit brings peace and shows God’s presence. **Discussion Question:** *Why do you think the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove instead of another animal?*
 - The Holy Spirit Leads Jesus in the Wilderness (Luke 4:1): After His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There, Jesus prayed, fasted, and overcame temptation. The Holy Spirit helps us make good choices. **Discussion Question:** *What are some temptations children your age might face today?*
 - The Holy Spirit Comes as Wind and Fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4): The disciples heard a mighty wind and saw tongues of fire above them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began preaching boldly in many different languages. The Holy Spirit gives courage and power. **Discussion Question:** *How did the disciples change after receiving the Holy Spirit?*

5. The Holy Spirit in Our Lives (10 min)

- **The Holy Spirit helps us pray.** When we are sad, worried, or confused and do not know what to say to God, the Holy Spirit helps us pray from our hearts.
- **The Holy Spirit helps us choose right from wrong.** When we feel tempted to lie, cheat, or hurt someone, the Holy Spirit guides our conscience to choose what is good.
- **The Holy Spirit gives us courage.** When we stand up for someone being bullied or tell the truth even when it is difficult, God gives us bravery.
- **The Holy Spirit comforts us.** When we feel lonely, afraid, stressed, or hurt, the Holy Spirit brings peace and comfort to our hearts.
- **The Holy Spirit helps us grow good qualities.** When we show patience, kindness, self-control, or love toward others, the Fruits of the Spirit are growing in us.
- **The Holy Spirit helps us understand God’s Word.** When a Bible verse suddenly makes sense or speaks directly to our lives, the Holy Spirit is teaching us.

- **The Holy Spirit unites the Church.** When Christians pray, worship, serve, and love one another together, the Holy Spirit brings unity to God’s family

6. Wrap-Up Discussion (5 min)

Ask: *What did you learn about the Holy Spirit today?*

Ask: *How have we seen the Holy Spirit at work in the Bible?*

Ask: *Where does the Holy Spirit work in your life today?*

B I B L E C L A S S

Scripture Focus

Genesis 1:1–2 | John 14:26 | Acts 2:1–4

Bible Lesson

The Holy Spirit is present from the beginning. In Genesis, He moves over the waters at creation. In John, Jesus promises He will teach and comfort us. In Acts, He comes at Pentecost with power. The Holy Spirit is not a figure of the past, but He is still actively working in our hearts and in the Church today.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit come to the apostles?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

The Holy Spirit came to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Resurrection. In Acts 2:1–4, a sound like a mighty wind filled the room, and tongues of fire rested on each of them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages. This fulfilled Christ's promise and marked the beginning of the Church's worldwide mission.

2. What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

- Dwells in us beginning at Baptism and Chrismation.
- Unites us to Christ and helps us grow in holiness.

- Gives us spiritual gifts: wisdom, courage, faith, and more.
- Comforts and strengthens us in times of weakness.
- Guides us in prayer and helps us understand Scripture.
- Produces in us the fruits of the Spirit: love, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23).
- Preserves the truth in the Church and works through the sacraments.

3. Where do we hear about the Holy Spirit in the Divine Liturgy?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

The Holy Spirit is invoked many times throughout the Divine Liturgy (Holy Badarak):

- During the Epiclesis (pages 33-34): the priest asks the Holy Spirit to descend and make the bread and wine into the true Body and Blood of Christ.
- At Baptism: the water is blessed in the name of the Trinity.
- At Chrismation: the seal of the Holy Spirit is placed upon us with the Holy Myron.
- At Confession, Holy Matrimony, and the Holy Orders: the Spirit is invoked to restore, unite, and empower.

CLOSING PRAYER — ST. NERSESS SHNORHALI

*Spirit of God, true God,
who descended on the river Jordan,
and into the Upper Room;
who enlightened me by the baptism of the Holy Font,
I have sinned against heaven and before you.
Purify me again with your divine fire,
as the fiery tongues purified the Holy Apostles.
Have mercy upon your creatures,
and on me, a manifold sinner. Amen.*

CRAFTS

Dove Craft can be found in the Crafts Packet

DAY 5

The Church

One, Holy, Universal, and Apostolic - The Body of Christ on Earth

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the meaning and importance of the Nicene Creed as the summary of Orthodox Christian faith. They will learn why we say it, what it teaches us about the Church, Baptism, resurrection, and eternal life, and how it connects us to all believers across time.

KEY CONCEPTS

- The Nicene Creed summarizes our entire faith: Trinity, Church, sacraments, and eternal life.
- The Church is One, Holy, Universal (catholic), and Apostolic.
- Baptism is received once; we participate in Christ's burial and resurrection and makes us members of God's family.
- The resurrection of the dead and eternal life are our hope and our destination.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Creed դաւանանք (<i>ta-va-nank</i>)	A statement of what we believe.
Faith հաւատք (<i>ha-vadk</i>)	Trust in God and believing what He has revealed to us.
Orthodox ուղղափառ (<i>oogh-gha-par</i>)	Right-believing; the true way to worship and follow God.

<p>Church եկեղեցի <i>(ye-ge-ghe-tsee)</i></p>	<p>The family of God, the Body of Christ, is made up of all who follow Jesus.</p>
<p>Judgment դատաստան <i>(ta-da-sdan)</i></p>	<p>The final reckoning when Christ will judge all souls according to how they lived.</p>

MEMORY VERSE

"On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

— **Matthew 16:18**

CREED ARTICLE — FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE NICENE CREED

"We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church; in one baptism, in repentance, in the remission and forgiveness of sins; in the resurrection of the dead, in the everlasting judgment of the souls and bodies, in the Kingdom of Heaven and in the life eternal."

THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

The Nicene Creed was finalized in the fourth century (AD 325 and 381) by the Church Fathers at the First and Second Ecumenical Councils (Nicaea and Constantinople). It is prayed at every Divine Liturgy and other church services. This final article moves from the Trinity to its fruit: the Church, Baptism, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Together, these four articles form a complete portrait of our faith.

CLASS OUTLINE – TEACHER'S GUIDE

1. Welcome and Full-Week Review (8 min)

Say: *Welcome back, everyone! Let's start with what you remember. Who wants to be brave and share something from this week?*

- Allow free responses. Guide the review toward these points:

2. Reviewing the Full Nicene Creed (5 min)

Say: *Today we review the entire Nicene Creed and focus on the final article – about the Church, Baptism, resurrection, and eternal life.*

Explain: The Creed is organized into four articles: the first three teach about each Person of the Holy Trinity; the fourth teaches about the Church and what we look forward to.

Ask: *How is the Creed organized?*

Answer: *Four articles – one for the Father, one for the Son, one for the Holy Spirit, and one for the Church and eternal life.*

3. What is the Church? (8 min)

Ask: *Describe the Church in your own words.*

- Write their responses on the board.

Say: *The Church is not four walls and a dome. The Church is the Body of Christ, all those who belong to Him and are united in faith, sacraments, and love.*

- The Church is One: there is one true Church, not many competing churches.
- The Church is Holy: it belongs to God and is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It is made of people who are sinful, but the Body of Christ is holy.
- The Church is Universal (catholic): Jesus loves all people, and the Church is for everyone, not just Armenians.
- The Church is Apostolic: it began with the apostles and continues through our bishops and priests to this day.

4. What Does the Church Do? (5 min)

Say: *Why do we go to Church? What happens there?*

Explain: In Church, we hear God's Word, receive the Holy Mysteries (sacraments), and, most uniquely, we physically encounter God in Holy Communion. There is nowhere else in the world where we physically receive God's Body and Blood than in the Divine Liturgy (Holy Badarak).

Ask: *What else do we receive at Church that helps us grow closer to God?*

5. **Baptism, Repentance, and Forgiveness** (6 min)

Ask: *How many times can we repent and ask for forgiveness?*

Answer: *As many times as we need; for God's mercy never runs out. But repentance is sincere: we truly want to change and not repeat the sin.*

Ask: *How many times can we be baptized?*

Answer: *Only once. Baptism cannot be repeated.*

- When we are baptized, we are made new, participate in Christ's burial and resurrection and are adopted into God's family.
- Baptism is the beginning of our new life in Christ.

6. **Resurrection and Eternal Life** (7 min)

Say: *The Creed ends with our greatest hope: the resurrection of the dead and eternal life.*

Ask: *What does "eternal life" mean?*

Answer: *Living forever with God: without pain, without sadness, only the fullness of His love and joy.*

- When Jesus comes again, everyone will rise from the dead and come back to life.
- God will judge how we lived: did we follow Him, love others, and do what is good?
- Those who love God will live with Him forever in the Kingdom of Heaven.

7. **Wrap-Up Discussion** (6 min)

Ask: *What are the four characteristics of the Church?*

Answer: *One, Holy, Universal (catholic), and Apostolic.*

Ask: *Why do we go to Church?*

Ask: *What is unique about what we receive in the Divine Liturgy?*

Ask: *What are we looking forward to on the final day when Jesus returns?*

- Encourage students to pray, receive Holy Communion, and love others as their daily response to the faith of the Creed.

CLOSING PRAYER — ST. NERSESS SHNORHALI

*Righteous judge,
when you come with the glory of the Father
to judge the living and the dead,
do not enter into judgment with your servant;
but save me from the eternal fire,
and make me worthy to hear
the most blessed call of the righteous
for those who will enter to your heavenly kingdom.
Have mercy upon your creatures,
and on me, a manifold sinner. Amen.*

BIBLE CLASS

Scripture Focus

1 Peter 3:15 | Romans 10:9 | John 17:20–21

Bible Lesson

The Creed is more than words, it is a way of life. If we truly believe in Jesus and the Holy Trinity, we follow His teachings, love others, and remain faithful in the Church. Jesus prays in John 17 that all believers may be one. The Creed helps us live in that unity and truth, not just on Sundays but every day.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you believe about God?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

We believe that God is One, but Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- God the Father created everything out of love.

- God the Son, Jesus Christ, came to save us from sin and death.
- God the Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us become holy.

God is loving, all-powerful, and close to us — and He wants us to live with Him forever.
“God is love.”

— **1 John 4:8**

2. Why is it important to stay faithful to the Church?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

Because the Church is the Body of Christ and it is where we encounter God in the most direct way possible.

- We hear the Word of God.
- We receive the Holy Sacraments: Baptism, Holy Communion, Confession, and more.
- We physically receive Christ's Body and Blood; this happens nowhere else in the world.
- We are part of a family that helps us grow in faith and become saints.

3. How can you live what the Creed teaches?

TEACHER REFERENCE ANSWER:

- Believe with your heart and live it with your actions.
- Pray every day to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Love others, because all people are made in God's image.
- Come to Confession and trust in God's mercy.
- Receive Holy Communion often and keep learning about your faith.

The Creed is not just a recitation; it is a promise to live as a follower of Christ.

“Faith without works is dead.”

— **James 2:17**

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

— **Matthew 5:16**

C R A F T S

Baptism Craft and Nicene Creed Craft can be found in the Crafts Packet