

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Armenian Church Curriculum

WE BELIEVE

The Holy Trinity and the Creed

Grade Level: Grades 1 through 3

Ages: 6 to 9 years old

Duration: 5 Days

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

C O N T E N T S

Day 1: The Holy Trinity — One God in Three Persons

Day 2: God the Father — Creator and Loving Father

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

Day 4: The Holy Spirit — Our Helper and Guide

Day 5: The Church and Our Faith — What We Believe Together

Each day includes:

- *Story-Time Script*
- *Digging Deeper Questions*
- *Bible Class*
- *Memory Verse*
- *Child's Prayer*
- *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 Armenian Church, in accord with the original Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, teaches that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The Filioque addition ("and the Son"), accepted in Western Christianity (Roman Catholicism), is not part of the Apostolic tradition. All Creed references in this curriculum reflect the original text without the Filioque.

Bible Class and Orthodox Teaching Sections: 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. Each day's Bible Class also includes an "Orthodox Teaching" section drawn from the original documents. These are theologically accurate but written at an adult reading level. They have been formatted in this document as Teacher Background Notes, preparation material for the teacher, not content to be read aloud to students in this age group. Teachers may draw on these notes when answering questions or deepening their own understanding.

Two-Tier Prayer Structure: Each day includes a short, child-friendly prayer for students to say together (one line at a time), followed by the traditional prayer from St. Nersess Shnorhali for the teacher to read or pray with the children. Students are not expected to memorize the Shnorhali prayers.

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

The Holy Trinity

One God — but never alone. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity: One God in three Persons — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They will learn how the Trinity is present in Scripture and in our worship, and how each Person of the Holy Trinity loves us and works in our lives.

MAIN IDEAS

- The Holy Trinity is One God in Three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- We do not worship three gods, we worship ONE God who is three Persons.
- We see the Holy Trinity together at Jesus' baptism: the Son in the water, the Spirit like a dove, and the Father's voice from heaven.
- Every time we make the Sign of the Cross, we proclaim our faith in the Holy Trinity.

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>)	Becoming close to God and living with Him forever, because Jesus saved us.

MEMORY VERSE

"I am with you always."

— **Matthew 28:20**

Teacher Note: Write this verse on the board in large letters. Read it together three times, then cover one word at a time until students can say it from memory.

CREED INTRODUCTION — THE NICENE CREED

Teacher Note: Today students are introduced to the Nicene Creed as a whole. Keep it simple: show them the shape of the creed and let them feel its rhythm. Each article will be explored in depth on Days 2–5.

"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."

The Creed has four main sections: one for the Father, one for the Son, one for the Holy Spirit, and one for the Church. This week, each day we will open one of them.

STORY-TIME SCRIPT

Teacher Note: *Aim for about 10–12 minutes of active storytelling. Speak with energy. Pause, make eye contact, and let children echo key phrases back to you.*

Fr. Mashdots: Welcome, dear explorers! Today, we're on a very holy adventure: to learn about the greatest mystery of our faith: the Holy Trinity!

Ayp: What's the Holy Trinity? It sounds really big!

Pen: I think I heard it at church. Isn't it about God being three and one?

Fr. Mashdots: You've got it, Pen (Ben)! The Holy Trinity is ONE God, but He is THREE Persons. He is the Father, the Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We don't worship three gods. We worship ONE God who is always Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Ayp: But how can He be one AND three?

Fr. Mashdots: It's a mystery! Even the wisest people in the world can't fully explain it. But God showed us it's true. Want to hear how?

Ayp: Yes!

Fr. Mashdots: When Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, something amazing happened. Jesus was in the water. The Holy Spirit came down like a gentle dove. And God the Father's voice came from heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"

Pen: So, all three were there at the same time!

Fr. Mashdots: All three together in one moment! That's what we call the Holy Trinity. And every time we make the Sign of the Cross, we remember all three. (Slowly demonstrate.) In the name of the Father... and of the Son... and of the Holy Spirit. One name, one God.

Ayp: So, when I make the Sign of the Cross, I'm talking to all three?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! And all three love you. The Father made you. The Son saved you. And the Holy Spirit lives inside you right now. You are never alone, for the whole Trinity is with you.

Pen: That is the most amazing thing I've ever heard.

Fr. Mashdots: It is! The Holy Trinity isn't just something to learn, it's someone to love. Now let's discover more this week!

DIGGING IN

Teacher Note: Ask these questions one at a time. Accept all answers warmly. For Grade 1, let children answer in simple words or even just nod.

What is the Holy Trinity?

One God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Is the Holy Trinity easy to understand?

No, it's a mystery we believe by faith, because Jesus showed it to us.

Where do we see the Holy Trinity together in the Bible?

At Jesus' baptism: the Son in the water, the Spirit like a dove, and the Father's voice from heaven.

How do we show our faith in the Holy Trinity every day?

By making the Sign of the Cross and praying in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

TEACHER BACKGROUND — ORTHODOX TEACHING

In the Armenian Church, Jesus' Baptism is called Theophany, which means "God revealed." All Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are made known at once: the Father speaks from heaven, the Son is baptized, and the Holy Spirit descends as a dove.

Jesus did not need baptism for Himself, He is sinless. Rather, He sanctified the waters by entering them, so that those waters could become the waters of our own Baptism. Baptism is not merely a symbol, but a sacrament that truly saves us by joining us to Christ.

This is excellent background for answering student questions, but should be simplified when speaking to children in Grades 1–3.

Bible Passage

Matthew 3:13–17 — The Baptism of Jesus

Bible Class Script

Fr. Mashdots: Welcome back, explorers! Today's Bible story shows us something wonderful: all three Persons of the Holy Trinity together in one moment!

Pen: Is that the baptism story?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! Let's read it together. (Read Matthew 3:13–17 from an illustrated children's Bible.) Jesus is in the water, that's God the Son. The Holy Spirit comes down like a dove, that's God the Holy Spirit. And a voice from heaven says "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased!" that's God the Father!

Ayp: One God, three Persons — all together!

Fr. Mashdots: Exactly! This is how we know the Trinity is real. Jesus showed it to us. And when YOU were baptized, you were baptized in the name of the same Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You became part of God's family!

Our Prayer Together

Teacher Note: *Have children fold their hands and repeat each line after you.*

*Dear God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
thank You for loving me.
Help me to know You, love You,
and follow You always.
Amen.*

Traditional Prayer (for the Teacher)

TRADITIONAL 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

The One who made everything — and loves you more than you can imagine.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will learn that God the Father is the Creator of all things and our loving heavenly Father. They will understand that He is almighty, uncreated, and always cares for us as His beloved children.

MAIN IDEAS

- God the Father is uncreated and all-powerful.
- He made everything out of love, both visible and invisible things.
- He is our Heavenly Father who cares for each of us every single day.
- Jesus taught us to pray to God as "Our Father."
- Through Jesus, we become children of the Father and live under His loving care.

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 աներևույթ	Things we cannot see, like angels or our souls.

(an-er-e-vooyt)	
Providence նախախնամութիւն (nakh-a-khuh-nam-oo-tyoon)	God's loving care over all creation, every single day.

MEMORY VERSE

"Our Father who art in heaven."

— **Matthew 6:9**

Teacher Note: *This verse is part of the Lord's Prayer, which children may already know. Connect it to what they learned about the Father's love.*

CREED ARTICLE — FIRST ARTICLE

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

This means: God the Father made everything — all we can see (stars, oceans, animals, us!) and all we cannot see (angels, souls, love, and kindness). He made everything out of love, and He still takes care of it every day. He made YOU and He loves you very much.

STORY-TIME SCRIPT

Teacher Note: *Use big, warm expressions when talking about the Father's love. Pause and make eye contact, especially when saying "He made YOU." Let it land personally for each child.*

Fr. Mashdots: Welcome back, explorers! Yesterday we learned about the Holy Trinity. Today we're going to zoom in on the First Person, God the Father!

Ayp: So, the Father is the first Person of the Holy Trinity?

Fr. Mashdots: That's right! God the Father is the source of everything. He is almighty, which means He has all power. And He is uncreated — He was never made. He always existed.

Pen: What did He do?

Fr. Mashdots: He is the Creator of everything! He made the stars, the planets, the oceans, the animals, and us. The Bible says God made the world just by speaking and everything appeared!

Ayp: Even things we can't see?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! The Creed says He made things "visible and invisible." That means He created angels, our souls, and even things like love and joy that we feel inside us.

Pen: Why do we call Him "Father"?

Fr. Mashdots: Because He loves us like the best father ever, only even better! He made us, cares for us, and wants us to live with Him forever. When Jesus taught us to pray, He said, "Our Father who art in heaven." (Pause.) Can you say that with me?

[Children repeat: "Our Father who art in heaven."]

Ayp: So, we really are His children?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! Through Jesus, we become children of God the Father. He watches over you, provides for you, and never stops loving you — even when you make mistakes.

Pen: That makes me feel really special.

Fr. Mashdots: You ARE special. Each of you is made in God's image. The Father knows your name, your heart, and every hair on your head. He loves you more than you can imagine!

DIGGING IN

Who is God the Father?

The First Person of the Holy Trinity, the Creator of heaven and earth, and our loving Father.

What did God the Father create?

Everything: things we can see like animals and trees, and things we cannot see like angels and souls.

What does "almighty" mean?

It means God is all-powerful, there is nothing He cannot do.

Why do we call Him "Father"?

Because He loves us, cares for us, and wants us to live with Him forever.

B I B L E C L A S S

TEACHER BACKGROUND — ORTHODOX TEACHING

In the Orthodox Church, God the Father is called "Father" because He is the eternal source of the Son and the Holy Spirit. He created the heavens and the earth — all things visible and invisible — out of His infinite love.

He is not a distant ruler, but a personal, loving Father. Through Christ, we are adopted as His children. When we say the Lord's Prayer, we are speaking to the one true God who watches over us with mercy and care.

God the Father cannot be seen (He has no body), but He is always present and near.

Bible Passage

Genesis 1:1–31 | Matthew 6:9–13

Bible Class Script

Fr. Mashdots: Hello again, explorers! Today, let's talk about the One who made everything — God the Father.

Pen: Did He really make the whole world?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! The Bible says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." He made the stars, the oceans, mountains, animals — everything! (Open the illustrated Bible to Genesis 1.) Let's look at what He made on each day...

[Walk through the days of creation with pictures. Let children call out what God made.]

Ayp: He made us too?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes — and He said it was VERY good! You are made in the image of God. That means you are made to love, to be kind, to create — just like Him.

Pen: But if God is so big, how do we know Him?

Fr. Mashdots: Great question. Jesus taught us to call God "Our Father." That means God isn't far away — He is close. He listens to us, just like the best dad ever.

Our Prayer Together

Teacher Note: *Have children fold their hands and repeat each line after you.*

*Heavenly Father,
thank You for making me
and for loving me every single day.
Help me to love You and trust You.
Amen.*

Traditional Prayer (for the Teacher)

TRADITIONAL 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

He came from heaven, lived among us, died for us, and rose again — all out of love.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will learn that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became truly human to save us. They will understand that Jesus is one Person — truly God and truly human, perfectly united — and that His life, death, resurrection, and ascension are the heart of our salvation.

MAIN IDEAS

- Jesus Christ is the Son of God, one Person, truly God and truly human, perfectly united.
- He was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. This is the Incarnation.
- He took on a real human body, soul, and mind.
- He lived without sin, died for us on the Cross, and rose from the dead.
- He ascended into heaven and will come again in glory.
- His Kingdom will never end.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Jesus Christ Յիսուս Բրիստոս (<i>Hee-soos Krees-dos</i>)	The Son of God who became truly human to save us.
Incarnation մարդեղութիւն (<i>mar-tegh-oo-tyoon</i>)	God becoming man in the Person of Jesus, truly and not in appearance only.

<p>Resurrection</p> <p>յարութիւն (<i>ha-roo-tyoon</i>)</p>	<p>Jesus rising from the dead on the third day.</p>
<p>Ascension</p> <p>համբարձում (<i>ham-par-tsoom</i>)</p>	<p>Jesus returning to heaven in His glorified body after His Resurrection.</p>
<p>Savior</p> <p>փրկիչ (<i>pur-geech</i>)</p>	<p>The One who saves us from sin, demons, and death.</p>

MEMORY VERSE

"I am the resurrection and the life."

— **John 11:25**

Teacher Note: *Connect this verse to the Resurrection story. Ask: "What do you think Jesus means when He says He is the 'life'?" Accept all answers warmly.*

CREED ARTICLE — SECOND ARTICLE

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten... God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father...

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... of His kingdom there is no end."

Teacher Note: *Armenian Christology: Jesus Christ is one Person with one nature — truly God and truly human. Avoid "two natures" (Chalcedonian language). Use: "Jesus is one Person, truly God and truly human, perfectly united." See Theological Note at the front of this document.*

STORY-TIME SCRIPT

Teacher Note: *Children connect with the story arc: birth → Cross → resurrection → reunion. Emphasize joy and love throughout, and be gentle when speaking about the Cross, frame it as the ultimate act of love, not graphic suffering.*

Fr. Mashdots: Welcome back, young explorers! Yesterday, we talked about God the Father. Today, we meet someone very special — Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

Ayp: Jesus is God's Son!

Pen: And He came to save us!

Fr. Mashdots: Yes, to both! Jesus is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is God. And here is the most amazing part: He became a human being, just like you. He was born to the Virgin Mary as a real baby in Bethlehem.

Ayp: So, God was really a baby?

Fr. Mashdots: A real baby! He cried, He got hungry, He laughed, He grew up. He was truly human. And He was also truly God, perfectly united in one Person. We call this the Incarnation. God came to live with us.

Pen: Why would God do that?

Fr. Mashdots: Because He loves us SO much. Sin and death had separated us from God. Jesus came to heal that and to bring us back. He lived without ever sinning, then died on the Cross to take away sin and destroy death. He gave His life for us.

Ayp: That makes me feel sad.

Fr. Mashdots: I understand. But wait, because the story does not end there! Three days after He died, Jesus rose from the dead! He was ALIVE again because death could not hold Him. He appeared to His friends. They ate with Him, talked with Him, even touched the marks in His hands.

Pen: He came back to life?!

Fr. Mashdots: Really and truly! This is what we call the Resurrection and what we celebrate on Easter. And then, after forty days, He went up to heaven. That's the Ascension. He sits now at the right hand of the Father. And one day, He will come back again.

Ayp: Will we see Him?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! And even now, we can meet Jesus in prayer, in the Bible, and most especially every Sunday in Holy Communion. He is with us always.

Pen: Jesus really is amazing.

Fr. Mashdots: He sure is. He is our Savior, our Friend, and our King. Let's always remember how much He loves us!

DIGGING IN

Who is the Second Person of the Trinity?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

What is the Incarnation?

When God the Son became a real human being, born of the Virgin Mary.

What did Jesus do for us?

He died on the Cross and rose again to save us from sin and death.

Where is Jesus now?

He ascended to heaven and is with the Father, and He is still with us in prayer, Scripture, and Holy Communion.

TEACHER BACKGROUND — ORTHODOX TEACHING

In the Armenian Church, Jesus Christ is the Only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, not created. He became truly human through the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, taking on a full human nature: body, soul, and mind.

The Armenian Church teaches miaphysitism: Jesus is one Person with one nature, at once truly divine and truly human. We always adhere to St. Cyril of Alexandria's formula, "one incarnate nature of God the Word." His Resurrection was real and bodily, not symbolic. He ascended with the same body and will return to judge the living and the dead.

Avoid the phrase "two natures" (Chalcedonian language). Use: "Jesus is one Person, truly God and truly human, perfectly united in one nature."

Also remember, we do not believe in penal substitutionary atonement. We do not believe that Jesus had to die on the cross to satisfy God the Father's anger for sin, His wrath or His need for justice. That is a very Protestant idea that does not exist in any Apostolic Orthodox Church. Orthodoxy views Christ's crucifixion as Christ overcoming death and uniting humanity to God, viewing sin as an illness to be healed rather than a legal debt.

Bible Passage

Luke 2:1–20 (Birth of Jesus) | Matthew 28:1–10 (The Resurrection)

Bible Class Script

Fr. Mashdots: Hello again! Today we're reading two wonderful stories about Jesus — His birth and His resurrection. Let's start at the very beginning.

[Read Luke 2:1–20 from an illustrated children's Bible.]

Ayp: I know this! It's the Christmas story!

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! Jesus was born as a real baby in Bethlehem. The angels sang and the shepherds came because God had come to be with us. Now let's skip to the most important moment.

[Read Matthew 28:1–10.]

Pen: He rose from the dead! The tomb was empty!

Fr. Mashdots: The tomb was empty because Jesus was alive! He had conquered death. This is what every Sunday we celebrate, because Jesus is risen and with us always.

Our Prayer Together

Teacher Note: *Have children fold their hands and repeat each line after you.*

*Lord Jesus,
thank You for loving me,
for dying for me,
and for rising again.
Help me to follow You every day.
Amen.*

Traditional Prayer (for the Teacher)

TRADITIONAL 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.*

C R A F T S

Cross Craft can be found in the Crafts Packet

DAY 4

The Holy Spirit

Our Helper, Comforter, and Guide — God living in our hearts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, fully God and not created. They will learn how the Holy Spirit works in the Church, through the apostles and saints, and in each of us through Baptism and Chrismation.

MAIN IDEAS

- The Holy Spirit is God, not a force or a thing. He is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.
- He is uncreated, perfect, and eternal.
- He spoke through the prophets, helped write the Bible, and works in the Church today.
- At Pentecost, He came down like fire and gave the apostles courage to preach.
- He lives in us through Baptism and Chrismation, helps us pray, and guides us to become holy.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Holy Spirit Սուրբ Հոգի (Soorp Ho-kee)	The Third Person of the Holy Trinity, our Helper, Comforter, and Guide.
Uncreated անէղ (an-egh)	Has always existed, not made or created.

<p>Pentecost Հոգեգալուստ (Ho-ke-ka-loosd)</p>	<p>The day the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles like fire.</p>
<p>Apostle առաքել (a-ra-kyal)</p>	<p>A special messenger of Jesus, sent to share the Gospel.</p>
<p>Saint սուրբ (soorp)</p>	<p>A person who loves God with their whole heart and follows His ways.</p>

MEMORY VERSE

"The Holy Spirit will teach you all things."

— **John 14:26**

Teacher Note: Ask: "What kinds of things do you think the Holy Spirit teaches us?"
Guide toward: how to love, how to forgive, how to be brave, how to pray.

CREED ARTICLE — THIRD ARTICLE

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

This means: the Holy Spirit is God, not a force or a symbol or an idea, but a Person of the Holy Trinity. He has always existed. He helped the prophets speak, came down like a dove at Jesus' baptism, and came to the apostles at Pentecost. He lives in us too!

STORY-TIME SCRIPT

Teacher Note: *Children may be confused by the idea of an invisible Person of God. Use the wind analogy: "You can't see the wind, but you can feel what it does: the leaves move, your hair blows. The Holy Spirit is like that: invisible, but you can feel His love and help."*

Fr. Mashdots: Welcome back, explorers! Yesterday we learned about Jesus, the Son of God. Today, we meet the Third Person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit!

Ayp: Is the Holy Spirit like a ghost?

Fr. Mashdots: People used to say "Holy Ghost," but "Spirit" is better! He's not spooky at all. He is God, just like the Father and the Son. He is holy, powerful, and full of love.

Pen: But I can't see Him...

Fr. Mashdots: That's true! But can you see the wind?

Ayp: No, but I can feel it, and I can see the leaves moving!

Fr. Mashdots: Exactly! The Holy Spirit is like that. You can't see Him, but you can feel what He does — in the kindness you feel in your heart, in the love you have for others, in the courage to do what's right. That's the Holy Spirit at work!

Pen: When did the Holy Spirit begin?

Fr. Mashdots: The Holy Spirit has always been. He helped write the Bible and was present at creation. But there was one very big day. After Jesus went to heaven, something amazing happened to the apostles...

Ayp: Pentecost!

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! The Holy Spirit came like wind and fire. The apostles were filled with courage and started speaking in languages they had never learned, so people from everywhere could hear about Jesus!

Pen: Does the Holy Spirit come to us, too?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! When you were baptized and anointed with holy oil called Myuron, the Holy Spirit came to live in your heart. He is your helper, your comforter, and your guide. You can talk to Him anytime.

Ayp: I want to listen to Him more.

Fr. Mashdots: That's a wonderful goal. When you feel the urge to be kind, to forgive, to love — that is the Holy Spirit nudging your heart. Listen to Him!

DIGGING IN

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Third Person of the Holy Trinity, not created, always existing, and fully God.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

He helps us pray, understand God's Word, love others, and become holy.

When did the Holy Spirit come to the apostles?

At Pentecost, like wind and fire, giving them courage to preach in many languages.

How do we receive the Holy Spirit into our lives?

Beginning at Baptism and Chrismation, and by continuing to pray and listen for His guidance.

B I B L E C L A S S

TEACHER BACKGROUND — ORTHODOX TEACHING

In the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Holy Spirit is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. He is not just a helper or a symbol — He is fully God. He proceeds from the Father (not from the Son, the Armenian Church does not accept the Western Filioque addition). He was sent by the Son to the apostles on Pentecost. The descent of the Holy Spirit marks the birth of the Church's public mission. Through Chrismation (Holy Myron), every Orthodox Christian receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow in holiness and live as children of God.

Bible Passage

Acts 2:1–4 — The Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Bible Class Script

Fr. Mashdots: Hello again, young explorers! Today's Bible story is one of the most exciting in the whole New Testament. Let's read it together.

[Read Acts 2:1–11 from an illustrated children's Bible.]

Pen: Wind and fire?! That's incredible!

Fr. Mashdots: The Holy Spirit came with power! And suddenly the apostles had courage they never had before. They went out and told everyone about Jesus. That is what the Holy Spirit does — He gives us strength, love, and courage.

Ayp: Does He still do that today?

Fr. Mashdots: Yes! He came to YOU at your Baptism and Chrismation. He lives in the Church. He is with us in prayer, in the Bible, and in the sacraments. We are never without Him.

Our Prayer Together

Teacher Note: *Encourage children to place a hand over their heart as they pray — the Holy Spirit lives in us!*

*Holy Spirit,
thank You for living in my heart.
Help me to be kind and loving,
and to follow God every day.
Amen.*

Traditional Prayer (for the Teacher)

TRADITIONAL 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 Creed and Our Faith

What we believe - together, as God's family.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the Nicene Creed as the Church's statement of true faith. They will learn how the Creed helps us stay united in belief, pray together with the whole Church, and follow Christ more deeply.

MAIN IDEAS

- The Creed is a prayer that says everything we believe about God.
- It teaches us about the Trinity, creation, salvation, and eternal life.
- Saying the Creed unites us with the Church, the saints, and one another.
- The Church is one, holy, universal, and apostolic.
- We believe in one baptism, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life with God.

WORD BANK

Word (Armenian)	Definition
Creed դաւանանք (<i>ta-va-nank</i>)	A statement of what we believe about God and our faith.
Faith հաւատք (<i>ha-vadk</i>)	Trusting 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 (ye-ge-ghe-tsee)</p>	<p>The family of God, made up of all who follow Jesus.</p>
<p>Judgment դատաստան (ta-da-sdan)</p>	<p>The final time when Christ sees how we lived, with love and faith, or without.</p>

MEMORY VERSE

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

— **Matthew 16:18**

Teacher Note: *This is a powerful verse for closing the week. Discuss: "What does it mean that nothing can destroy the Church?" Help children see that the Church (the Body of Christ) and their faith is stronger than anything that tries to shake it.*

CREED ARTICLE — FOURTH ARTICLE

"We believe also in only One, Universal, Apostolic, and Holy 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."

This means: There is one true Church, one family of all who follow Jesus. We are baptized once and our sins can be forgiven through repentance. One day, everyone who has died will rise again. And those who love God will live with Him forever in joy and peace.

STORY-TIME SCRIPT

Teacher Note: *This is the last day, so make it feel like a celebration! Recap the week warmly and let children feel how much they have learned. The goal is love and belonging, not perfect theology recall.*

Fr. Mashdots: Explorers! We've made it to our final day! What an amazing week. We've learned about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Today, we're going to talk about what ties it all together: the Creed and the Church!

Pen: I hear the Creed at church! We all say it together.

Fr. Mashdots: That's right. The Nicene Creed is a very special prayer that says everything we believe about God. It was written a long time ago by holy bishops who wanted to protect the truth and pass it on to us, and to you.

Ayp: So, it's like a map of our faith?

Fr. Mashdots: Exactly! The Creed shows us who God is and how much He loves us. It talks about the Father who made everything, the Son who saved us, and the Holy Spirit who lives in us and makes the Church (the Body of Christ) holy.

Pen: Why do we say it at church every week?

Fr. Mashdots: To show that we all believe the same thing. When we say the Creed, we are standing together with the apostles, the saints, and every Christian who has ever loved Jesus. It is how we stay united as God's family. When we say the Creed, we put our hands together (palm to palm), showing that the Church is united, with our fingers straight (not folded) and our thumbs crossed.

Ayp: What does the end of the Creed say?

Fr. Mashdots: It says we believe in the Church, in one baptism, in forgiveness of sins and being able to change, in the resurrection of the dead, and in the Kingdom of Heaven and life everlasting. In other words, God's story has a beautiful ending, and we are all invited.

Pen: I want to say the Creed with more heart from now on.

Fr. Mashdots: That is the most beautiful goal. Remember: the Creed isn't just words, it's our way of saying "Yes!" to God with our whole heart, every single week.

Ayp: Thank you, Fr. Mashdots (Mashtots). This was the best week ever!

Fr. Mashdots: Thank YOU, explorers. Now go live what you believe!

DIGGING IN

What is the Creed?

A prayer that tells everything we believe about God and our faith.

Why do we say the Creed at church?

To show we are all united in the same belief with all Christians, everywhere and always.

What does the Creed teach us?

About the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Church (the Body of Christ), and our hope in eternal life.

Why is the Creed important?

It helps us stay strong in our faith and remember the truth God has given us.

BIBLE CLASS

TEACHER BACKGROUND — ORTHODOX TEACHING

In the Armenian Orthodox Church, we believe in one, holy, universal (catholic), and apostolic Church. This means the Church is united, guided by the Holy Spirit, founded on the apostles' teaching, and open to all people.

We believe in one baptism and for the forgiveness of sins. At the end of time, all people will be raised from the dead (a physical resurrection, not just spiritual) and stand before God in judgment. Those who have loved and followed Him will enter eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

When explaining judgment to children in Grades 1–3, emphasize God's mercy and love rather than fear. The goal of judgment language at this age is to encourage living faithfully, not to frighten.

Bible Passage

Acts 2:41–47 (The first Church) | Matthew 28:18–20 (The Great Commission)

Bible Class Script

Fr. Mashdots (Mashtots): We've made it to our last Bible class! Today's stories show us the Church being born and Jesus sending His people out.

[Read Acts 2:41–47 – the first Christian community.]

Ayp (Ayb): They prayed together, shared meals, helped each other... that sounds like our church!

Fr. Mashdots (Mashtots): Exactly! The Church has always been a family. Now let's hear Jesus' final words to His friends.

[Read Matthew 28:18–20 – the Great Commission.]

Pen (Ben): "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." That's the Trinity again!

Fr. Mashdots (Mashtots): You noticed! The Trinity is at the heart of everything: creation, salvation, the Church, and even how we send people out into the world. That's the faith we carry. That's the Creed we say. And it's ours forever.

Main Ideas

- The Church is the family of God, guided by the Holy Spirit.
- We are joined to the Church (the Body of Christ) through Baptism.
- The Church is one, holy, universal, and apostolic.
- We believe in one baptism and for the forgiveness of sins.
- We believe in the physical and real resurrection of the dead and eternal life with God.

Our Prayer Together

Teacher Note: *Close the week by having all children say this prayer together. Invite them to make the Sign of the Cross as they say the first line.*

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dear God, help me to believe in You, to love You, and to follow You always. Amen.

Traditional Prayer (for the Teacher)

TRADITIONAL 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.

CRAFTS

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