

The Church Celebrates

THE EXALTATION

UNIT

4

LESSON
FIVE

From Our Hearts to God

Jesus, your cross is _____

Amen.

Free Issue

MY WORLD



MULTINATIONAL FORCE WINS HOLY CROSS FROM PERSIANS

Special report — 628 AD — town of Karin, Armenia



Today Christians throughout the world celebrate the victory of their armies which have marched on the Persian Empire and won back the Cross of Jesus Christ.

A little history first, dear readers. In 610 A.D., the Persian King Khosrov with a large army attacked the Byzantine Empire.

Enthusiastic about the initial victory, in 614 A.D. the Persian army entered Jerusalem. Many people were killed and many people were imprisoned. The Persians entered the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and took the Holy Cross.

Three months ago, the Byzantine army led by the King Heracles fought

against the Persians to rescue the Holy Cross. The Armenian army regiment, led by Mzhez Gnounie, supported the Persian army. With the Lord's help, the Byzantine army won the battle. The Holy Cross was solemnly brought to our town today, from where it will be carried to Constantinople, and then to Jerusalem.

Huge crowds gathered by the roadside as the army passed through. As the soldiers lifted up the cross for all to see, people were seen crying, crossing themselves, and falling to their knees.

GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

"You must take up your cross each day and follow me." *Luke 9:23*
What do you think Jesus means when he tells you to take up his cross?

Getting Closer to God

The cross is used in many places and in many ways. Our priest blesses us with his hand cross. There is a cross on the altar. There are crosses all around the church. There are crosses in holy pictures. We wear a cross on a necklace.

A crucifix is a cross with Jesus on it. In the Armenian Church we see a crucifix during Lent and Holy Week, but most crosses in the Armenian Church do not have the figure of Jesus on them. The empty cross like the empty tomb on Easter morning shows us Christ rose from the dead and gives us a new life after our death – life with God in heaven.



Number the reasons you feel the cross is important starting with #1 as your most important reason. You do not have to number every line.

- It is beautiful.
- It reminds me of Jesus.
- It tells everyone I am Christian.
- It is the way criminals were killed during Jesus' time.
- It shows people that a building is a church.
- When I wear my cross I show others I am Christian.
- When I see others wearing crosses I know they are Christian.

Our Armenian Way

To celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a special service called Antasdan is performed. During this service the priest and altar servers lead us in blessing the four corners of the world.

After each of the four blessings, we join the priest and altar servers in singing "Amen, Alleluia."

ԱՄԷՆ. ԱԼԵԼՈՒԻԱ AMEN; ALELOOYA

U - - մե՛ն. _____ U - լե - լու - -
 A - - men: _____ A - le - loo - -

իս, _____ ա - լե - լու - իս ա - լե - լու - իս:
 ya, _____ a - le - loo - ya, a - le - loo - ya.

A cross is decorated with basil and flowers and the priest blesses the basil. After the service the congregation can take the basil home and use it to season their food that day.



Taking a **Closer** Look

Today we will make and decorate a cross with basil and flowers. Take it home and put it in your room for this week. Every day look at your cross and remember that Armenians took part in the efforts to bring Jesus' holy cross back to Christians.



Time to Celebrate

We can celebrate this feast day in our classroom. Choose classmates to be the priest, the deacon, the censor, two acolytes. The rest of the class can be the congregation.

The priest should lead the altar servers to each of the four corners of the classroom and holding the cross say:

Bless the world and make it holy by the sign of this cross.

The deacon should say:

Let us sing.

The censor should swing the incense as the class sings:

Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.



RESPONDING IN FAITH

Lord, your cross is special to us because it reminds us of your great gift to us, salvation. Amen

FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

Today our fourth graders learned the story of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; ask your child to teach it to you! The children decorated a cross with flowers and basil and then participated in a very abbreviated version of the Antasdan blessing service, which seeks God's blessing on the whole world.

Living Our Faith

1. Cook a dish with basil in it together this week.
2. Use your computer to research more information about the Armenian Church's Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Try the website of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church: www.armenianchurch.us.