

# A Church in America: The First Fifty Years

## Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyv Surpo, Amen. O Christ, Protector of all creatures, let your right hand be a shadow over me day and night, staying at home and traveling, sleeping and rising, that I may never fail. Have mercy upon your creatures, and upon me, a great sinner.

From "I Confess With Faith" by St. Nersess Shnorhali

## Chapter Checkup

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. The Turkish state which ruled for around 600 years was called the
  - a. Commonwealth of Turkey
  - b. Ottoman Empire
  - c. Soviet Union
  - d. North Atlantic Treaty Organization
2. Most of the Armenian Genocide occurred during
  - a. the Thirty Years' War
  - b. the War between the States
  - c. World War One
  - d. World War Two
3. The Bible gives good advice about how to feel about the Genocide:
  - a. fight back
  - b. know that those who suffer and die for their faith will be blessed but that promoting justice is also important
  - c. say bad things about those who insult us
  - d. work for justice in the world
4. The great Armenian musician Gomidas Vartabed was sent to study in Etchmiadzin because of
  - a. his great intelligence
  - b. his knowledge of the Bible
  - c. his beautiful singing voice
  - d. his talent as a painter

## A Church of Our Own



The earliest known Armenians came to America in the first half of the 1800's.

### WE INTERRUPT THIS LESSON FOR A SPECIAL BULLETIN:

Did you know that a few Armenians served as doctors  
and soldiers in the American Civil War?

The first Armenian-Americans often lived and worked together, since they spoke the same language. Another thing shared by these early immigrants was a love of their church. On Sundays, they would gather together to pray and sing our hymns. Without an ordained priest, however, they could not celebrate the Badarak they loved.

By 1888, there were about 1,200 Armenians in the United States. Some of them asked the patriarch in Constantinople (today, Istanbul) to send a priest who could celebrate our Divine Liturgy. The Patriarch sent Father Hovsep Sarajian, and the first Badarak in America was celebrated on July 28, 1889. After much hard work, the first Armenian Church in America was consecrated in Worcester, Massachusetts on January 18, 1891. Now the Armenians were really home!

Have you ever moved to a new place or gone to camp, or on a long trip?

Did you miss some things while away from home? Once you make them out of clay, list them here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4

### Faith Word

#### *Consecrate*

To dedicate someone or something to a sacred purpose

## Strangers in a Strange World

We began this lesson with the Prayer for Travelers in remembrance of the first Armenian immigrants to America. These men and women left behind everything they knew to move to a new land. They understood very little about the culture they were entering. The faith they brought with them from their church helped them make a better life here in America.

Today's Christians are a lot like people who leave familiar things to live in a place they have never seen. We were not present to see Jesus die on the Cross and then walk out of the tomb. We did not go to see him heal the blind or raise Lazarus from the dead. Our belief in these events comes from faith.

What is faith? How can we see it? Where does it come from? One place we can see faith is in God's Creation. We do not have to doubt that the sun will rise in the morning, or that snow is cold. God set up his world so we may depend on many things in nature. Even events such as earthquakes and hurricanes, which seem random, are the result of natural forces that come together in a consistent way.

We also see faith in God's Word. In the Bible, we see God's promises to us. We learn about the inspiring faith of others. We even see Jesus' perfect faith in the Father, which he followed all the way to the Cross.

# Our Armenian Way

Mgrtitch Khrimian was born in Van in 1820. From childhood, he loved the Bible and the Armenian language. Later in life he became a priest. After becoming the Prelate of Moush, then a bishop, Mgrditch Khrimian was elected Patriarch of Constantinople but resigned to pursue his literary activities. In 1878, upon his return from the Congress of Berlin he preached his famous “iron ladle” sermon. He described the meeting of representatives of different countries as all having an “iron ladle” and their best interests as all being in a big “pot.” The Armenians only had a “paper ladle” – they were powerless – and so they were unable to gain what was rightfully theirs.



Elected Catholicos of all the Armenians in 1892, he spent the rest of his life in Etchmiadzin. Lovingly called *Hayrig* (Father), he suffered for the miseries of his people and strived for their well-being, education, and intellectual awakening. He encouraged his flock to behave as one Armenian Christian family. He worked hard to help the Armenians build bridges of faith and love.

Because he established the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America in 1898, Khrimian Hayrig reminds us of the first Armenian immigrants to the United States who were able to unite their Armenian culture and church heritage with their new home, America.

## FAMILY FOCUS: For Parents



### Lesson Roundup

In today's session, your child learned about the early history of the Armenian Church in America. The students also explored the meaning and root of faith. In addition, the children read a selection about Catholicos Khrimian, who wished all Armenians to unite as one family in faith.

### Family Faith Activity

Try to perform at least one of the following activities with your family.

1. Say the Traveler's Prayer together before leaving on a family outing.
2. Put a map on the wall. Using the Diocesan website, [www.armenianchurch.net](http://www.armenianchurch.net), locate each Armenian church in the Eastern Diocese.
3. Depending on the season, rake leaves, plant flowers, or assist with some small task at church.

### A Parent's Promise

Yes, I read the Lesson Roundup \_\_\_\_ and tried at least one activity as a family \_\_\_\_.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_