

The Faith Journey

Lesson 1

Unit Three

What Now? On the Edge of Adventure

Here I Am, Lord

O Holy Spirit, you were a dove sent from on high, descending with a mighty sound and bright light, and armed the disciples with a fire that did not consume while they were waiting in the holy upper room. O, dove immaterial, beyond understanding, you know the depths of God and proceed from the Father, telling us about the awesome second coming of Christ, who is consubstantial with the Father. Blessing in the highest to the Holy Spirit that proceeds from the Father. The apostles drank from the cup of immortality and invited earth to heaven.”

“Arakelo Aghavno” (hymn for Pentecost)



without form

life eternal

equipped

that did not burn them

coming down

of the same substance as



One Step Back

In our last class we were able to catch a glimpse of Jesus through Matthew's eyes.

A. What reassurance was Matthew offering the early Jewish Christians?

B. Identify three reasons why the Hebrew people felt they were in need of a king.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. According to Oxfam, American farmers grow enough wheat, rice and other grains to provide every human being with 3,600 calories a day. That being the case, why do people still starve in countries throughout the world? As Christians, what do you think is our collective responsibility toward the poor? (Matthew 25:35- 36)



Matthew 26: 69-75

What do you think happened to make Peter go from courageously supporting Jesus to denying him three times?

When is it easy to follow Jesus and when is it difficult?



How do you suppose Peter felt after he denied Jesus and remembered that Jesus had predicted the denial?

There are only a few times that a story is recorded in all four gospels and Peter's denial is one of them (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22 and John 18). Why do you think that Peter's mistake is told over and over again?



Peter's Disloyalty is Our Problem, Too

Have you ever experienced a friend or family member disappointing you in your time of need? If so, you know that it is an unpleasant feeling. At some time in your life you will experience the pain of feeling abandoned and there will also be times when you are the source of disappointment to another. It's hard to determine which is worse, to be disappointed or to think that you have disappointed someone else—especially someone you love.

The disciples loved and believed in Jesus, but once again we hear how they messed up. First, they fell asleep instead of keeping a prayerful vigil with Jesus, then they ran away when the soldiers came to arrest him, and to make matters worse Peter denied that he even knew Jesus, just as Christ had predicted. How could Peter do it...and, right when Jesus needed him most? How alone and abandoned Jesus must have felt! Imagine, too, how Peter felt when Jesus' prediction came true. Situations like this can surely make us feel terrible. And we long to make things right again.

Like these good friends of Jesus, despite how hard we try, we don't always do the right thing. We've all been in a situation where we denied doing anything wrong, even though we were guilty. We may even blame others. Peter was wrong, and once he realized it, he "wept bitterly." We are often in the position that Peter was...it takes courage to stand up for the truth and for what we believe. We say we believe in Jesus and that we will do everything that he asks us to do, but our human limits hinder us from keeping our promises. However, like the apostles, we are loved by the Lord, so not only is he willing to forgive us, but he is willing to use us to fulfill his holy mission.



Behold, I Make All Things New... Yes, Even You!

The gospel of Matthew ends with two stories of the resurrected Jesus. In the first story he appears to the women at the tomb (28: 9-10). In the second story, that we will hear today, Jesus appears to his disciples – most of whom were nowhere to be found when the chips were down. He gives them a mission. Actually, he commissions them to continue his mission, telling them to “Go, then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (28:19) Imagine that! Despite the apostles’ disloyalty at the most crucial time in Jesus’ earthly life, he appoints them to take over his Father’s business. But they are not quite ready yet—there is a special gift that will be given to them, someone he calls a “Counselor.” (John 14:16) Here’s a clue...it’s one of those gifts that keep on giving.

Read Matthew 28: 16-20

Circle the letter that best indicates how you usually respond when faced with a new situation.

- When it comes to doing something new, I’m usually
 - just plain scared
 - very careful
 - daring
 - afraid of failing
 - afraid people will laugh at me
 - a follower
 - a leader
 - willing to try anything

- The thing I usually have to deal with when doing something I’ve never done before is
 - lack of confidence in myself
 - lack of faith in God
 - fear of standing all alone
 - fear of making a mistake
 - indecision
 - the impulse to rush in without sufficient planning
- Finish this sentence: If I knew I could not fail, something I would like to try in the immediate future is...

On the Edge of Adventure

“When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.”

Acts 2:1-4

Filled with the Holy Spirit

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:4 (NIV)

Based on Acts 2:1-21 (NIV)



O M D E D N W Q T H X X G E M
 U A Y N M H I B Q O O U K P Y
 W J U W E V B L V H N L O E O
 O O R I B A M O E E Z G Y N E
 S R N N C E G W T A T N U T I
 K P L D Y D M I R R Q J W E W
 M A N A E G L N O T H E R C S
 C U M L N R X G S L S Z Z O W
 V P L J H G S A H P P N H S X
 Y I C D Y N U M N P I Q D T U
 F P J G X K W A F X S R U R W
 T Z C B E X Y Z G S P S I Y B
 Z F I R E G P E S E E T N T Q
 D E C L A R E D G E A C M K Y
 L S G F K V Z C V M K L N J T

FIRE	PENTECOST	WONDERS	AMAZED
HEAR	OTHER	SPEAK	WIND
SPIRIT	BLOWING	TONGUES	HOLY
DECLARE	LANGUAGE	SOUND	FILLED



Our Armenian Way

The Armenian Church celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit fifty days after Easter on the Feast of Pentecost (*Hokekaloost*). But did you know that we all have our own “personal” Pentecost? Chrismation (we sometimes refer to it as confirmation; it follows immediately after baptism) is the anointing of nine parts of the body with holy muron or chrism and is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. Every time someone receives the sacrament of *chrismation* the gift of the Holy Spirit is given and through that gift God

changes us. With chrismation, we are now empowered to bear the fruit of a life in the Spirit (we’ll learn more about that later in this unit). Just like the apostles, we become better equipped to live our faith and share it with others. Of course, we are free to ignore that change and all those possibilities. Baptism and chrismation are just a *beginning*, an opening of a door. As we journey through life, we still need to keep choosing to step in.

How Do I Witness?

1. Luke writes of wind and fire. What do these images tell us about the Holy Spirit?
2. How do you think those who were in the crowd felt when they witnessed such an amazing event?
3. With the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples were able to become people they could never be without this power. How does the Holy Spirit empower us today?

Did you ever wonder how Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew were able to communicate with the Armenian people? The Armenian language was a gift from the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when the tongues of fire rested upon them!

*Spirit of God, true God,
who came down into the Jordan River and the Upper Room,
and filled me with the light of faith at my baptism,
make me pure once again with your holy fire
just as you purified the apostles with fiery tongues.
Amen.*

St. Nersess Shnorhali

