

6. Snack. 10 min.
7. Ask children to find the picture of a priest writing a prayer. Read from *Our Armenian Way*. Say: “St. Nersess was a priest. He wrote prayers, and music and poetry.” Read the prayer, explaining the meaning of the words. Ask the children to repeat the prayer, line by line, after you.
8. Now say: “I am going to read you a story that Jesus told to help us understand how much God loves us. It is called The Parable (which is a story) of the The Lost Sheep.” Read *We Celebrate* . Say: “With this story, Jesus was trying to tell us that God loves us. When we are in trouble and need help, he will help us just like the shepherd who saved his lamb.” 5 min.
9. Go to the mural and say: “On the mural, I have drawn some hills. First, you are going to help me add some things to the mural. Using brown paper, cut out some rocks and glue them on the mural. With your green crayon, draw some grass on the mural.” Give out two lambs to each student and say: “We are going to glue cotton on to their bodies, but before we do that, I want you to take a black or brown crayon and color their faces and ears. Then you can glue some cotton on to the bodies. When you have finished gluing the cotton, place one of your lambs, using masking tape, somewhere on the mural.” Once the lambs are on the mural, say: “Who can tell me how the story began? (Place a shepherd on the mural.) What happened next?” Ask a child to place one of the lambs on the mural near some rocks. Say: “What was the shepherd’s problem? What did he decide to do about it? Did the story have a happy ending? At dismissal, I will give you a shepherd to take home with your lamb so that you can tell your family the story of The Lost Sheep.” 15 min.
10. Teach and sing the song, “Tender Shepherd.” 5 min.
11. Story Time: “Winds and Waves Listen” Conclude story time. “The disciples were wondering, ‘Who is this man who is ruler of all of nature?’ Sometimes we too ask questions like this, and here in Sunday School we learn some very good answers about who Jesus is.”
12. Dismissal. 10 min.

Lesson 13: We Prepare for Christmas

Key Concepts

1. *Heesnag* is the fifty-day period before Christmas.
2. Advent or *Heesnag* is a time of preparation for Christmas.

Objectives

During this session, students will

1. Examine the display table.
2. Listen to a story and discuss ways their families prepare for Christmas.
3. Retell the story of Mary’s visit to Elizabeth.
4. Discuss ways to prepare for Christmas.
5. Recall, with help, the meaning of Advent or *Heesnag*.
6. Make a *Heesnag* chain.
7. Recite the Advent rhyme.

Materials Needed

1. On the display table, place a manger scene – large plush figures are best; a picture of Mary and Elizabeth (may be found in a Bible or you can use the student text), Christmas cards; Christmas lights; a small Christmas tree; *Heesnag* chain.
2. For the *Heesnag* chain, cut 50 strips of paper 3"x 9", 49 red and green and 1 gold or white; prepare several links in advance for demonstration; star stickers; thin markers; stapler. You may want to get parent volunteers for this project. Check a church calendar for the beginning of the Advent season. Each week until Christmas, you'll have the children remove seven links from the chain. You can change the number in the Advent rhyme to correspond to the number of links left on the chain. Remove seven of the links today. The gold/white link represents Jesus and Christmas day. Consider hanging the removed links in the classroom in groups of seven.
3. A Children's Bible.

Procedure

1. Welcome children warmly and direct them to the display table. Encourage them to look carefully at the *Heesnag* chain (do not identify it).
2. Stand to say the opening prayer together. 10 min.
3. Move the children to the story corner. Referring to the picture on the first lesson page, say: "I wonder what these two children are doing? Any ideas?" Read from *Our Life Together*. Then ask: "So what *were* these two up to? After children answer, continue: "Yes, they were getting ready for Christmas. What happened long ago that we celebrate on Christmas?" (Use the manger scene to retell the Christmas story in its basic details: Jesus was born in a stable and lovingly placed in a manger by his mother Mary and father Joseph. Angels announced the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, to shepherds in the fields. A bright star over the stable guided the three wise men to where they could find the blessed baby, etc.)
Continue: "But let's back up to the time when Mary learned she would have a baby. What did she do to prepare? The first thing she did was share this good news with someone she loved, her cousin Elizabeth (you might want to ask if the children have cousins they are close to). Let's read about it." 5 min.
4. Read *God's Word To Us*.
5. Snack. 10 min.
6. Return to and read *We Learn About God*. "People prepared for the birth of Jesus in different ways. What are some of the ways *you* might prepare for Christmas?" Discuss the list and ask for additional ideas. 10 min.
7. Read or teach *Our Armenian Way*. Then ask, "What does Advent mean? (Something's coming.) What do we try to do during Advent or *Heesnag*? (Pray more, read the Bible, be as good as we can be.)"
8. "Now we are going to make an Advent chain like the one in our lesson. It will help us remember that there are 50 days during the period of *Heesnag*." Read the Advent verse.
Say: "Here we have strips of red and green paper and one gold (white). The gold (white) one will remind us of Jesus and the day he was born. I am going to give each of you some paper strips. On each strip, you can place a star sticker or you can draw something you see at the Christmas season like a candle, an ornament, a Christmas tree, a cross. When you finish, bring the strips to me, and I will give you some more." Distribute strips among children. As they bring their strips to you, staple them in a chain of links to make an Advent Chain.

When the Advent Chain is completed, add the gold or white link and teach the Advent verse.

The children can move in a circle, each holding a part of the chain, while they recite the verse. Gather the children around you as they help you remove seven links from the chain. Hang these on a wall in the classroom. Each week, seven links will be removed from the chain and the verse recited, naming the number of days left for Christmas. 15 min.

9. Story Time: “Who Is My Neighbor?”

Conclude story time by saying: “Jesus taught us this beautiful lesson about what a truly good neighbor is. Let’s try to be good neighbors this week.”

10. Dismissal.

10 min.

Lesson 14: Jesus Is Born!

Key Concepts

1. God is with us always.
2. God sent us Jesus, his son, as a sign of his love.

Objectives

During this session, students will

1. Examine the contents of the display table.
2. Explore the concept of “gifts of love.”
3. Listen to the story of God’s gift of love, the birth of Jesus.
4. Share birthday celebrations.
5. Describe how the Armenian Church family celebrates Jesus’ birthday.
6. Hear St. Gregory of Nareg’s prayer about angels.
7. Make a guardian angel.
8. Recite a line from the prayer by St. Gregory of Nareg.
9. Recite the Avedis Chant.

Materials Needed

1. On the display table, place a sample of the angel (see Appendix) to be made by the children; a manger scene; books or pictures depicting the Holy Family and the shepherds receiving the good news; Christmas paraphernalia.
2. Crayons; colored pencils; glitter; scissors. Precut guardian angels out of heavy-stock paper. Make copies of the line from the St. Gregory of Nareg prayer (see Appendix) to be glued on to the angel’s robe.
3. A Children’s Bible.

Procedure

1. Welcome children warmly and direct them to the display table. Encourage them to look carefully at the objects. Pointing to each figure in the manger ask, “Who is this?” Identify the figures if the children do not know.
2. Stand to say the opening prayer together. 10 min.
3. Move to the story corner. Read *Our Life Together* and talk about the photos of parents and infants and a birthday celebration.