

# THE CHURCH

## Session 1—The Bible

### Key Concepts

1. The Bible is the main source of the teachings of the Armenian Church and is used liturgically and sacramentally.
2. The Bible has relevance for us today.

### Objectives

- Students will
1. Complete two study sheets based on the Bible.
  2. Share feelings about their favorite part of Scripture.

### Background for Teacher

You will no doubt spend much of this first session explaining procedure. Make sure you fully understand the directions for each of the study sheets in the lesson. It is to be hoped that students will be familiar enough with the Bible to know where to look for the answers. These study sheets are not tests; students may use whatever resources available to complete them. If they know where to look for the right answer, they have learned quite a bit!

The Armenian Church encourages study of Scripture, the divinely-inspired word of God. The Church, however, sees herself as the final authority when it comes to interpretation. As members of an ancient church, it is important for us to remember that the Church existed before the Bible as we know it today. There were, of course, a variety of written materials used by the Church in the early years—Old Testament Scripture first, then the epistles and later what became known as the gospels. But these sacred works were written at different places by various authors. It was the Church that finally compiled and edited these writings (rejecting some as not inspired) into the collection we have today.

### Materials Needed

- Extra paper
- Divine Liturgy books
- Bibles
- Bible dictionary
- *The Sacraments: The Symbols of Our Faith* by Rev. Garabed Kochakian
- Bible concordance

### Procedure

1. Welcome students from their break. Catch up on any news, etc. Open with a prayer.

2. Introduce the mini-course on the Church. Explain that it will have eight sessions, each based on the eight units they have studied throughout their Sunday School years. Mention that the purpose of the course is review. Go over the directions which will apply for each session. Distribute material for the first session. Make sure students know that they should turn the study sheets over to you when they are completed.

3. Begin by asking students to share their favorite book from the Bible (or passage or verse). Have them explain why it is their favorite. You should also share your favorite.

4. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, have students begin work on their study sheets. Tell them they will have the rest of the class session to work on them. If any two students want to work on a study sheet together, remind them to first get your approval. Be sure that students know where the reference books are. Have extra paper on hand in case students want to make a rough draft before completing their study sheet. Remind them that if they cannot complete their work today, they may finish up at home and bring it in to you next week. Be certain that you record which students completed which study sheets.

Be available for questions and problems.

5. Ten minutes before the end of the class session, stop all work. Discuss: What problems, if any, did you have with the study sheets? Were they difficult? Easy? Ask volunteers to complete any of the following sentences (write on blackboard):

- I learned . . .
- I think the Bible . . .
- I wish that . . .
- In the future I will . . .

### Answer Key

#### Study Sheet #1

1. Accept all appropriate answers. For example: God is love, trinity, spirit, infinite, eternal, wise, powerful, holy, etc.

2. Accept all appropriate answers. For example: Bible, church, Sunday School, teachers, parents, pastor, friends, at retreats, from books, etc.

3. Genesis: God is the creator; God loves man and promises to save him.

Exodus: God has a plan for his people; God wants obedience to his law; God saves his people time and again.

Job: God is just in his dealings with man; God does

not cause suffering unjustly; God wants us to have faith in him and his judgment.

Song of Solomon: God loves Israel as a bridegroom loves his bride and/or Christ loves the church as a bridegroom loves his bride.

Mark: Gospel; God becomes man, preaches, teaches, dies and is risen.

John: Gospel; Jesus is Son of God, etc.

Acts: God sends the Holy Spirit to the church; he is in the early Church.

I Corinthians (Paul's epistle): God requires a certain life-style from his people.

Ephesians (Paul's epistle): God redeems man; God requires us to live a certain way.

Revelation: The kingdom of God will ultimately triumph over Satan.

4. Preparation: Psalms 100, 43.

Synaxis: Lections (prophets, epistles, gospel reading), Psalm 100.

Holy Sacrifice: Psalm 24:7-10, Psalm 148, Psalm 28:9.

Last Blessing: John 1:1-14.

5. Baptism: Psalms 22:10, 29:2-4, 34:19-22, 43, 51, 118:19-29, 131; Ezekiel 36:25-28; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:16-20; John 3:1-8; Romans 6:3-11; Galatians 3:23-29

Matrimony: Matthew 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; Ephesians 5:22-31.

6. Matthew 26:26-29 (communion is instituted); John 6:51 (bread as the body of Christ which gives life eternal); I Corinthians 11:25 (wine as the blood of Christ); I Corinthians 12:12-31 (We are all members of one body, the Church).

7. Answers should include the fact that (1) the gospel is venerated by the Church; it is on the altar at all times; it is carried in procession; it is kissed by the faithful; (2) in the synaxis portion of the liturgy, the Old Testament, the epistles, and the gospel are read every day (the friend entered church after the creed; therefore, missed these readings); and (3) the Bible is read throughout the badarak (see #4 above).

#### *Study Sheet #2*

1. Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

History: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

Wisdom: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

Prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Deuterocanonical: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, 1 & 2 Esdras, Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, Suzanna, Bel and the Dragon, 1 & 2 Maccabees, the Prayer of Manasseh.

2. a. Isaiah was the son of Amos and proclaimed his message between 742 and 687 B.C., the period when the Northern Kingdom was annexed to the Assyrian Empire and Judah was a tributary. Nothing is known about the early life of the prophet.

b. Isaiah attacked social injustice and exhorted his people to trust energetically in one God. Divine blessing would fall upon the faithful and righteous anger upon the faithless.

c. In the prophetic tradition, Isaiah blasted the depravities and vanities of his time; e.g., the treatment of orphans, empty prayers, etc.

a. Amos, a native of the small Judean village of Tekoa, preached during the period 760-750 B.C. Israel was at her largest in territorial size and the most prosperous she would ever be. Amos was a shepherd and a farmer.

b. Amos attacked the injustice, immorality and meaningless piety of a prosperous people. His harsh words brought him into conflict with the religious authorities of the time.

c. While Amos indicts Israel's enemies, his severest criticisms are aimed at Israel herself for sin and injustice. He warns of God's punishments.

See Bible references on students' study sheets, a Bible dictionary, or a survey of Biblical literature (the last two of which can be any standard ones available) for additional help in evaluating students' answers.

#### *Study Sheet #3*

1. TRUE or FALSE

a. F

b. T

c. T

d. F

e. T

f. F

g. T

h. T

i. F

j. T

2. a. John

b. Matthew

c. Luke

d. Mark

e. John

f. John

g. Luke

h. John

i. Matthew

j. Luke

3. a. 4

b. 2

c. 1

d. 5

e. 3

- a. 2
  - b. 4
  - c. 1
  - d. 3
  - e. 5
4. I Corinthians 13:1-13—The true meaning of love.  
Galatians 5:16-25—Walk with the spirit and bear the fruits of the spirit.  
Ephesians 5:21-6:9—Relations between husbands and wives and between parents and children.  
Colossians 4:5-6—Behavior toward non-believers.  
I Thessalonians 5:12-22—Do good to one another.  
I Timothy 6:6-16—The love of money, the man of God aims high.  
(Accept all appropriate answers.)