

# Unit 1: THE GREAT BEGINNING

## Lesson 1.1 Special Lesson: Symbols of the Church - The Cross

### Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

#### For the lesson:

Christian Cross Variants demonstration sheet (print or show on your device. Found on fourth page).

#### For the craft:

##### **Craft Activity “Cross DIY Stickers”**

Assortment cross printable, markers, colored pencils, scissors, packaging tape, two-sided tape, parchment, or wax paper.

**Video Directions:** [DIY Stickers](#) (duration 3:38)

**Video Lesson:** [The Church of the Holy Sepulcher](#) (duration 3:33)

#### For homework:

*Mandatory item. 1 inch ring binder with a clear sleeve on the cover (required for personalization). This is meant to neatly collect all the work and materials of the year.*

### Words of the Week:

Խաչ = Khach = Cross

Կեանք = Gyank = Life

Մահ = Mah = Death

### Moral Character Focus:

Hope is trusting in God and what is to come, when everything around us says the opposite. The cross was a tool of death, destruction, and sorrow, but God transformed the cross into a tool and symbol of life, resurrection, and hope. The cross is a symbol of hope because horrible things happen to us in this life, but we have hope and trust that God will turn/transform them into blessings if we hand them over to God.

### Memory Verse:

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”**

**- John 3:14**

# Lesson

## Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

*\* As this is your first lesson of the year, consider creating name tags for the students. You can prepare this ahead of time. Then as you take attendance, you can distribute those to each student.*

*\*\* If necessary, as a Get-to-Know-Each-Other activity, you can ask students to introduce themselves by saying their name, age, and something that they like (ex. an activity food, favorite book, etc.). Feel free to apply your own ice-breaker or introduction method (depending on how many students are in the class, try to keep this within 5-7 minutes).*

*\*\*\* As during past years, students were required to learn the Wisdom Prayer, continue encouraging them to say it in Armenian. Feel free to alternate each week between English and Armenian prayers.*

### Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, ee paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

## Lesson Body:

During our daily lives, we often come across many items that represent something. Those items deliver specific information, give us directions, or represent something else. We use and see symbols at schools, in the streets and many other places. We even use symbols when we text each other (emojis).

Our church is also a place where we can see many objects that symbolize other things and give us a particular message. Those are Christian symbols and our priest uses them often. When we enter our church we are surrounded by them and even use them in our homes.

*\*Ask the children to recollect the items they have observed at the church. Ask them if they know what they mean or symbolize. Ask them what they know about the priest and the symbols he uses.*

Let's see in more detail a symbol by which Christians are identified.

**THE CROSS:** This is an international symbol that represents Jesus Christ and became a symbol of Christianity throughout the world. The cross, as a symbol of Christianity, was not often used until the beginning of the Byzantine Empire. Before then, instead of the cross, Christians used the fish as their symbol.

**Read out loud:**

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,  
even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”**

**- John 3:14**

**Words of the Week**

Խաչ = Khach = Cross

Կեանք = Gyank = Life

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Through the decades and centuries, as many more nations accepted Christianity and established churches, the appearance of the cross evolved, taking on a look, and meaning closer to that culture.

There are many different types of crosses. As all the crosses represent the same thing, they all tell different stories based on their shape and details. Some such crosses are the Eastern Orthodox Cross, the Catholic Cross, the Cross of Jerusalem, and the Armenian Cross.

Image from symbolsandmeanings.net



**Chi-Rho Cross:** This cross is considered one of the oldest and most prominent symbols of the early Christian era. This type of symbol is called Christogram, because it is created by combining letters of Greek alphabet X (Chi) and P (Rho) representing the name of Jesus Christ. These letters were chosen because they are the first two letters of the Greek word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Christos) meaning “the one who is anointed”.

According to tradition, one afternoon before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Roman Emperor Constantine saw the Chi-Rho symbol appearing over the sun following with the words that read in the Greek language “With this sign you will conquer”. That same night he was visited by Jesus in a dream and Jesus told him to use the Chi-Rho symbol as a defence against his enemies. Constantine had his soldiers draw this symbol on their shields and won the battle. A few years later he declared Christianity a legal religion in the Roman Empire. The miraculous appearance of this symbol helped Christianity become a widespread religion.

Image from symbolsandmeanings.net



**Jerusalem Cross:** This cross is also recognized as the Crusader’s Cross, the five-fold cross, and the cross and crosslets. It is believed that these five crosses are the symbols for the Five Sacred Wounds which Jesus Christ suffered during his crucifixion. They also represent Jesus and the four evangelists - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as Jesus and the four corners of the world.

During the crusader state, established by Godfrey of Bouillon in 1099, the Jerusalem Cross was adopted as the official coat of arms for the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. This cross is also found on the country of Georgia’s flag.

Image from clipart-library.com



**Crucifix:** The word crucifix comes from Latin *cruci fixus*, which means fixed to a cross. It is a form of cross with an image of Jesus on it. The crucifix is an important symbol for many Christian groups. The image of the crucifix is a commonly used form of the crucifixion in the arts. This symbol is especially important in the Catholic Church. It is also used in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, some Oriental Orthodox Churches (except the Armenian & Syriac Church), Lutheran, Moravian, and Anglican Churches.

The crucifix, commonly favored by the Catholic Church, emphasizes and reminds Christians of Jesus’ suffering and great sacrifice. Christians believe that His death, by crucifixion, brought salvation to humankind.

\*Show children some examples of crosses, such as the Jerusalem Cross, the Eastern Orthodox Cross, the Catholic Cross and the Armenian, Coptic, and Greek crosses. Have children recognize the Armenian cross and pinpoint the differences that make the cross recognizable.

# CHRISTIAN CROSS VARIANTS

[www.symbolsandmeanings.net](http://www.symbolsandmeanings.net)



Latin Cross



Crucifix



Greek Cross



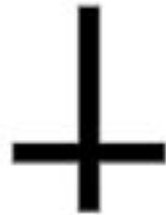
Saint Andrew's Cross



Saint Florian Cross



Orthodox Cross



St. Peter Cross



Greek Cross



Patriarchal Cross



Papal Cross



Cross of Lorraine



Tau Cross



Calvary Cross



Chi-Rho Cross



Tau-Rho Cross



Jerusalem Cross



The Cross of Salem



Ankh



Forked Cross



Celtic Cross



Sun Cross

**THE ARMENIAN CROSS:** The Armenian Cross is an empty cross and does not have the crucified body on it, symbolizing the resurrection of Christ. Each corner of the cross has budding flowers, showing that the cross is not a dead piece of wood, but a living tree, the Tree of Life. This same tree is alluded to in the book of Genesis (2:9; 3:22). This also means that if the cross is the Tree of Life, then Christ, which hangs from the cross, is the fruit of the Tree of Life. We receive and eat the fruit of the Tree of Life (Jesus Christ), every Sunday during the Divine Liturgy (*Soorp Badarak*) in Holy Communion. Sometimes the Armenian Cross also has vines, grapes and/or leaves growing from beneath it. This is just another way of emphasizing the cross as the Tree of Life.

Also, unique to the Armenian tradition are Khachkars, Armenian crosses carved into stone featuring complex floral designs and interwoven lines. Conveying themes of eternity and resurrection, they bring dead stone to vivid life, just as the death of Jesus Christ redeems all suffering through His grace and life-giving presence.

The Armenian Church celebrates the following four feasts dedicated to the Holy Cross: Apparition, Exaltation, Discovery, and Holy Cross of Varak.



Khachkar at Goshavank, carved in 1291 by the artist Poghos. Inna - originally posted to Flickr as 2009.03.08--10.23.43

## EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS: Brief Introduction

\*The Armenian Church observes the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the Sunday nearest September 14.

In early times, the most important Church in Jerusalem was named the Church of the Holy Cross, today also known as the Holy Sepulcher, or sometimes referred to in Armenian as *Soorp Harootyun* (Holy Resurrection). This is the church that was built over the place where Jesus was crucified. Every year, the people would gather, and the patriarch would take out a relic of the cross on which Jesus was crucified and would elevate it over his head for the people to honor and venerate. This ceremony is the origin of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The people were not being blessed with a symbol of execution, but one of victory, mercy, healing, forgiveness, and salvation – a symbol of God’s power over sin and death, over anything that hinders our communion with Him. The cross is the central symbol for Christians, not only as the instrument for the salvation of the world by the crucified Christ, but also as the constant witness of sacrificial love, the core of Christian life.

The cross, then, stands firmly during our trials – individual and global – reminding and encouraging us that sin/death/evil/chaos is not the final victor! The cross also tells us that we are loved in every circumstance of our life. But this does not mean we have permission to live any way we want. The cross demands of us and requires that we follow Jesus and embrace all that the cross accomplished. It means to love sacrificially, which is painful and selfless, but Christ-like.

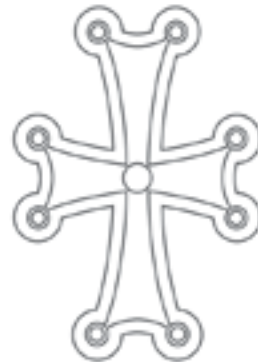
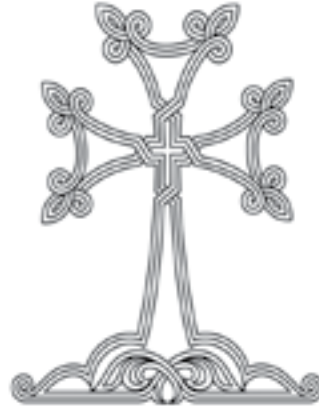
**Watch the video:** [The Church of the Holy Sepulcher](#) (duration 3:33)

### Craft Activity “Cross DIY Stickers”

**Items Needed:** Assortment cross printable, markers, colored pencils, scissors, packaging tape, two-sided tape, parchment, or wax paper.

**Directions:** Have the several copies of the cross assortment sheet printed. You can cut them in strips vertically and/or horizontally. Have students choose their favorite strip and color/design the crosses according to their preference. Feel free to play the video directions for the class or become familiar and explain the task verbally.

**Video Directions:** [DIY Stickers](#) (duration 3:38)



# Review

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## Lesson Review:

1. What is unique about the Catholic Cross and why?
2. How is it different from the Armenian Cross (emphasize the symbolic meaning differences)?
3. How many feasts are dedicated to the Holy Cross? Name them.
4. What was used as a symbol of Christianity before the cross?
5. What is the meaning behind the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross?

## Memory Verse Review:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” - John 3:14

## Moral Character Focus Review:

Hope is trusting in God and what is to come, when everything around us says the opposite. The cross was a tool of death, destruction, and sorrow, but God transformed the cross into a tool and symbol of life, resurrection, and hope. The cross is a symbol of hope because horrible things happen to us in this life, but we have hope and trust that God will turn/transform them into blessings if we hand them over to God.

## Life Application:

- Embrace your Christian faith and wear your cross with gratitude.
- Do not be embarrassed to be an example of a good Christian outside of the church.
- Establish a good habit of continuous prayer life.
- Attend church services with your family and celebrate the feasts.
- Don't be shy to share blessings, such as basil that is blessed during the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

*\*As during past years, students were required to learn the Departing Prayer, consider encouraging them to pray in Armenian. Feel free to alternate each week between English and Armenian prayers.*

### Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee hanel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

# At Home

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***Please complete the assignment and memorize by next class.***

## **PERSONALIZED BINDER:**

Three ring binder (share with parents to create this at home).

Directions: Use colored and/or printing paper to decorate a cover page for your binder and share some information about you. You can use stickers, cut-outs from coloring pages, photographs.

Information to Include (mandatory):

1. First Name and Last name.
2. Grade or name of the classroom.
3. Your or your family's favorite Bible verse.
4. Your favorite subject in school.
5. Your favorite activities.

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,  
even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”

- John 3:14

## **WORDS OF THE WEEK:**

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