

For St. James Sunday School Students – 2/14/2021

Parents, Students, Join the fun! -- Poon on Zoom

Sunday School continues with 1 p.m. Zoom connection

St. James Sunday School teachers hope **students and parents** can join us for a special Zoom connection this Sunday to celebrate **Poon Paregentan** -- a wonderful event in Armenian church tradition that translates as “Joyous Living Day.” Poon Paregentan invites the faithful to whoop it up ahead of the fasting, prayer and other preparations for Great Lent.

As this school year has unfolded, our No. 1 priority has been to keep you and your families safe and healthy, and this continues with **Zoom Poon 2021**. For our 22nd session of the 2020-21 school year, please join us at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 14, for a virtual get-together to talk about how we can celebrate Poon Paregentan today, and ready ourselves for commemorating the crucifixion and resurrection of our Savior on Easter. Your teachers also want to wish you and your family a Happy Valentine’s Day. Please join us:

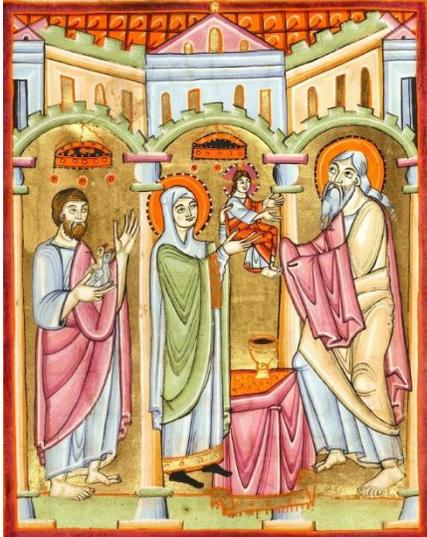
Meeting Link for 1 p.m. Sunday

<https://tinyurl.com/PoonOnZoom>

Please view this [video](#) showing the Armenian Dance Company of Chicago in a wonderful “flashback” to 2010. Your parents may recognize some of these gifted local dancers. We look forward to being able to celebrate Poon Paregentan in person again together soon!!



Today is The Presentation of the Lord and Poon Paregentan
Tomorrow, February 15, is the first day of Great Lent



As was the custom, Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus to Jerusalem to be presented at the Temple. For the full story, read Luke 2:22-40 (this Sunday morning Matins Gospel). An early Armenian custom associated with this feast combines Christian and pagan themes. Worshippers would light candles during the evening church service, carrying the flame out into the darkness (symbolically bringing light into the void). They would then take it home to light lamps or light a bonfire in the church courtyard. The festivities included dancing around and leaping over the fire. Newlywed women would step over it to scorch their skirts (a symbolic appeal for fertility)

Poon Paregentan does not actually fall in Great Lent. However, it is traditionally counted as the first step on the Lenten journey. *Poon* means ‘real’ or ‘true.’ Since every fasting period begins with a festival day or *paregentan*, this one is marked as the ‘true’ one, the most important. Great

Lent begins in the Armenian Church on Monday, the day after *Poon Paregentan*. .

Department of Christian Education/Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)/elisea@armeniandiocese.org

Bible Readings for Sunday, Feb. 14

From Today’s Readings

Luke 2: 41-52 During a family pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover, the 12-year-old Jesus wanders off to the Temple where his parents find him debating with the teachers. Understandably worried, they chastise their son; to their puzzlement, he reassures them that he is simply in his “Father’s house.” *Discuss/reflect: How much does Jesus seem to know about his mission? How much do his parents know? His mother “treasured all these things in her heart.” (v 51) What about your faith do you treasure in your heart?*

Galatians 4:1-7 Before Christ called us to him, we were just children, slaves “under the basic principles of the world.”(v.3) But with him, we came of age in God, self-aware, true heirs at last. St. Paul describes this process as an ecstatic invasion: God sends the Spirit into our hearts and we are inspired to call out “Father!”-- acknowledging this new relationship. (v.6) *Discuss/reflect: Where are you in your relationship with God? What do you need to do to “grow up?”*

Acts 7:47-50 Stephen is delivering the impassioned witness that will lead to his stoning. Alluding to the Temple, he assures his listeners that God is not bound by any man-made dwelling and that they should not - as their forebears did in shunning prophets and executing the

Righteous One, Jesus – “resist the Holy Spirit.” *Discuss/reflect: In what ways might you be resisting the Holy Spirit?*

Isaiah 24:21-25:8 With apocalyptic themes of judgment, devastation, and the defeat of death, Isaiah describes the ultimate victory of a God who has “done wonderful things...a refuge for the needy...a shelter from the storm.” *Discuss/reflect: Verse 6 pictures a banquet of the best food and drink prepared by God himself and served to all nations – a true eschatological (look it up!) vision and a great hope to harbor in these troubled times. Meditate prayerfully on 25:1-8.*



For a “flashback” video showing Chicago Armenians celebrating Poon in 2010, please click [this link](#):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zN2x7SHzuoE>



Happy Valentine’s Day!!!