



# ARMENIAN KHACHKARS SESSION PLAN

**Duration:** 60 minutes (or as appropriate for your curriculum)

## **Description:**

This project-based session is designed for children ages 8-14 during which they will be taken on a khachkar-making journey while exploring some fun facts about khachkars, including the symbolism of its four sides, Armenian blooming cross, eternity sign, some motives and much more.

In the culture of any nation, there are special symbols that cannot be met anywhere else. For Armenians, such symbols are khachkars, which are unique cross-stone monuments that reflect the Armenian culture and identity. Connecting both the past and the present, the Armenian khachkars continue to watch over the world's oldest Christian nation, making this unique art form a true Armenian cornerstone.

The plan and worksheets are downloadable in PDF format. If you have difficulty downloading the materials or are interested in a separate PowerPoint presentation, please reach out to us at [armate@agbu.org](mailto:armate@agbu.org) and we will be happy to help.

**AGBU Armat** is designed to bring youth together for monthly virtual meetups to connect and socialize with other children around the world in a secure social network environment. Guided by educational instructors, participants follow the traces of our history and culture, discovering new facts and hidden treasures of Armenia. Through engaging activities, they meet famous and entertaining guest speakers, build social skills, and create lasting friendships.

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## SESSION PLAN

# ARMENIAN KHACHKARS

**AGE** 8-12 **LANGUAGE** English **DURATION** 60 minutes

### PRE-SESSION ACTIVITY: 10 MINUTES

Prepare homemade play-dough prior to the session, following the steps mentioned in *Appendix 1*.

*You can skip this activity if you decide to use play dough or modeling air dry clay you have on hand. They will need three 3-ounce cans, preferably in light brown, yellow or orange.*

### MATERIALS

See **Appendix 1**

*water, flour, salt, lemon salt, cream of tartar, vegetable oil, liquid food coloring, vanilla, cup, measuring spoon, saucepan, flour sifter, wooden spoon*

### WARMUP ACTIVITY: 2 MINUTES

Ask a few warm up questions about khachkars:

*Do you know what khachkar is?*

*How is it translated into English?*

*Have you seen a khachkar? Where have you seen one?*

### MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY

Projector/TV/Smart board

PPT: See **Appendix 2**

### ACTIVITY THREE: 15 MINUTES

Screen the Armenian Khachkar PowerPoint presentation (refer to *Appendix 2*) to explore the history, design, uses, purposes and symbolism of Armenian Khachkars.

You can skip the PPT and share some important and interesting facts about Armenian Khachkars (refer to *Appendix 3*).

### MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY

Projector/TV/Smart board

PPT: See **Appendix 2**

PPT Script: **Upon request**

Fun Facts: **Appendix 3**

### ACTIVITY FOUR: 15 MINUTES

Now you're ready to create your own Armenian khachkar.

Have children follow the steps mentioned in *Appendix 4* to design their own khachkars.

### MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY

Let's Start Making a Khachkar

**Appendix 2**

*Homemade dough or air dry clay, plastic tablecloth or cutting board, plastic spoon, fork, and knife, chopstick or toothpick, plastic bottle cap and ruler*

## DO IT YOURSELF



## HOMEMADE PLAY-DOUGH

### Ingredients

- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup of flour
- ½ cup of salt
- 1 teaspoon of lemon salt **OR** 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon of liquid food coloring -light brown or copper or ivory (optional)
- ½ teaspoon of vanilla (optional)

### Some Tools You'll Need To Make the Play-Dough

Measuring cups, measuring spoons, saucepan, flour sifter, and wooden spoon.

### Step by Step Instructions

- Mix sifted flour, salt and lemon salt (or cream of tartar) together in a saucepan.
- Add a few drops of food color to water, then stir into the flour mixture.
- Add vegetable oil and stir.
- Heat your burner to medium/low and cook stirring until your play-dough starts to solidify. Don't worry about the lumps. You can work them out later.
- Once the dough starts gathering together around the spoon you know it's done. This may be 20-30 seconds (on a gas stove) or 2-3 minutes (on an electric stove).
- Remove the play-dough from the saucepan and put it on a plate to cool.
- Once it is cooled, knead the play-dough for a minute or two to get out any lumps.
- Put the dough in a ziploc bag and have it ready for the meetup session.



# ԽԱՉԲԱՐ KHACHKAR





**DID YOU  
KNOW?**







What are  
khachkars?



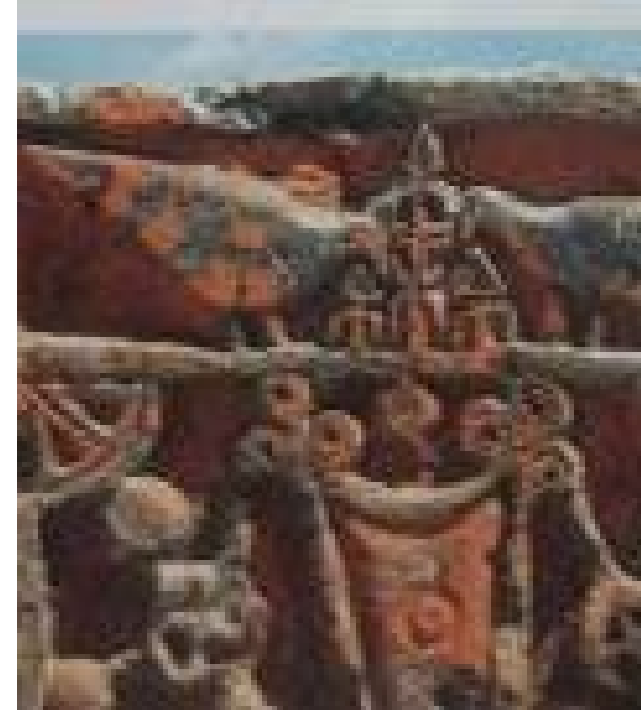


**Crown**  
symbolizes the kingdom  
of heaven

**The left side**  
forgiveness of sins

**The right side**  
distribution of grace

**The bottom part**  
fall of Hell



# Motifs & Ornaments

- Grapes
- Pomegranates
- Birds
- Animals
- Saints or humanlike images





## FUN FACTS ABOUT ARMENIAN KHACHKARS

### ITS MEANING

Khachkar consists of two words

**khach** and **kar**.

In Armenian «khach» means a cross, and «kar» means a stone.

### ITS HISTORY

The history of the origin of khachkars goes back to many years ago and is connected with the adoption of Christianity in **301 AD**.



### DID YOU KNOW?

There are khachkars in almost every corner of the world .



Khachkars are **only** carved by Armenian carvers or sculptors in Armenia and communities in the Armenian diaspora.

### SYMBOLS OF THE LIFE



The upper part of khachkars is called the crown. The right side is related to the distribution of grace, the left side, to the forgiveness of sins, and the bottom part symbolizes the fall of hell.



### THE ETERNITY SIGN

The sun or the **Armenian** eternity sign is often engraved at the bottom of the khachkar.



The cross is usually surrounded by different types of motifs and ornaments like grapes, pomegranates, animals, saints, or humanlike images.

Sprouting and blooming motifs of the cross— make the khachkar a version of the Tree of Life—are prominent features.

### ITS UNIQUENESS

Amongst so many khachkars in Armenia and all over the world, each has its own pattern, and **no** two khachkars are the **same**.

### THE OLDEST KHACHKAR!

The oldest surviving khachkar was found in **Artsakh, Vaghuh village**. This khachkar is actually 1,156 years old and was created in **866 AD**.



### THE SECOND OLDEST ONE!

The second oldest surviving khachkar, which was found in Garni village in Armenia, was created in **879 AD**.

### KHACHKAR VARBEDS

Khachkar carvers are called **varbeds in Armenian**. They choose the style and images of khachkars themselves.



## LET'S MAKE AN ARMENIAN KHACHKAR

### Materials and Tools Needed:

- some homemade dough or air-dry clay
- a plastic tablecloth or cutting board
- a plastic spoon and knife
- a chopstick or toothpick
- a plastic bottle cap
- a ruler



#### STEP 1:

Make a round ball.



#### STEP 2:

Cut the ball into 2 pieces using a plastic knife. Make sure that one piece is larger than the other one.



#### STEP 3:

Make two round balls.



#### STEP 4:

Mold the large piece into a rectangular shape. Don't make it thin. Have the bottom part straight and flat, so that the khachkar stands straight after it dries.



#### STEP 5:

Carve horizontal lines on the top and bottom of the khachkar with a ruler. Make the top a little wider and the bottom part narrower.



#### STEP 6:

Carve 2 vertical lines on the right and left sides without reaching the edges.



#### STEP 7:

Find the center of the khachkar. Carve the cross using your ruler and toothpick. Make a circle between the cross and the bottom line using the bottle cap.



#### STEP 8:

Carve the 4 sides of the cross to get triangular shapes - three small and one large. Now that you have the cross ready, let's design it.



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## STEP 9:

Carve 2 small and short lines to the corners of the cross with the toothpick.

10

## STEP 10:

Carve diagonal lines on both sides of the khachkar using your plastic knife.

11

## STEP 11:

Carve two pomegranates on the right and left sides of the cross.

12

## STEP 12:

Connect the pomegranates with curved lines to the upper part of the cross.

13

## STEP 13:

From the bottom of the circle carve some wave-shaped lines to represent the plants.

## STEP 14:

Carve 2 grapes under the wings of the cross.

15

## STEP 15:

On the top part of the khachkar, carve diagonal lines and make small halls inside.

16

## STEP 16:

Carve 6 semi-curved lines inside the circle to complete the Armenian eternity sign.

17

## STEP 17:

Get the small piece that you put aside and make a flat rectangular base and attach the khachkar to it.

18

## AND YOU'RE DONE!

Your unique Armenian Khachkar is now ready!

**WELL DONE!**