



Living the Church Year Lesson Plan: St. Sargis the Warrior of Christ

Ages 9-14

St. James of Nisibis (Sourp Hagop Mdzpnahayr)

Ages: 9-14

Length: 30-40 Minutes

Theme: "Faithful to Christ No Matter What"

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Learn the basic events of the life of St. Sarkis.
2. Understand why St. Sarkis is honored as a saint and martyr in the Armenian Church.
3. Recognize the virtues of courage, faithfulness, and witness.
4. Apply St. Sarkis' example to challenges they face in their own lives.
5. Appreciate the importance of standing firm in faith even when it is difficult.

Icebreaker Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask the students:

- Have you ever had to stand up for what is right, even when others disagreed?
- Was it easy or difficult?
- What makes someone brave?

Allow several students to share.

Transition: "Today we will learn about a man who was not only a brave soldier in battle but also a brave soldier of Christ."

The Story of St. Sarkis (10-12 minutes)

Tell the story in age-appropriate language:

St. Sarkis lived during the fourth century in Cappadocia, an area in present-day Turkey. He became a highly respected military commander because of his courage, wisdom, and leadership.

Sarkis served Emperor Constantine the Great, the first Roman emperor to become a Christian. However, after Constantine died, Emperor Julian came to power and opposed Christianity. To avoid persecution, Sarkis and his son, Mardiros, fled to Armenia.

Later, Sarkis entered the service of the Persian king, Shapur II. He soon became one of the king's most trusted generals because he was courageous and successful in battle.

Yet Sarkis was known for much more than military victories. He loved Christ deeply and openly practiced his faith. He shared the Gospel with the soldiers under his command, and many became Christians because of his example.

When King Shapur learned this, he ordered Sarkis to abandon Christianity and worship according to the Persian religion. The king even promised him greater power, wealth, and honor if he obeyed.

But Sarkis refused. His son Mardiros also refused. Neither father nor son would deny Jesus Christ.

Because of their faithfulness, both were executed and became martyrs. Later, fourteen soldiers who had become Christians because of Sarkis came to bury him. They, too, were martyred for their faith.

Today, the Armenian Church honors St. Sarkis not simply because he was a great soldier, but because he remained faithful to Christ until the end.

Understanding the Lesson (10 minutes)

Write the following on the board:

What Made St. Sarkis a Saint?

Ask students to identify qualities they heard in the story.

Possible answers:

- Courage, Faithfulness, Honesty, Leadership, Love for Christ, Loyalty, Sacrifice

Explain: "Many people are brave in sports, school, or even on a battlefield. But St. Sarkis teaches us about spiritual bravery. He chose Christ over power, money, honor, and even his own life."

Read Matthew 10:32

"Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven."

Discuss:

- How did St. Sarkis acknowledge Christ?
 - What risks did he take?
 - Why was his faith stronger than fear?
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Armenian Church Connection (5 minutes)

Explain:

St. Sarkis is one of the most beloved saints of the Armenian Church. He is remembered as a protector, a courageous warrior, and a faithful witness to Christ.

Many Armenian families pray for his intercession. His feast day reminds us that holiness does not belong only to priests and monks. Soldiers, parents, children, teachers, and students can all become saints when they faithfully follow Jesus.

Just as St. Sarkis guided his soldiers toward Christ, we should help our friends and family come closer to God through our example.

Reflection Questions (5 minutes)

Invite students to quietly think about these questions:

1. What quality of St. Sarkis impresses you most?
2. What would have been hardest about being in his situation?
3. When is it difficult for you to stand up for your faith?
4. How can you be a "soldier of Christ" this week?

Allow volunteers to answer.

Key Takeaways

Write these on the board:

Remember:

- St. Sarkis was brave in battle, but even braver in faith.
- He refused to deny Jesus Christ.
- He chose God over power, wealth, and popularity.
- His example inspired others to become Christians.
- God calls us to be faithful in our daily lives.

Closing Prayer

"St. Sarkis, faithful warrior of Christ, pray for us. Help us to be courageous when we face challenges, truthful when we are tempted to lie, kind when others are unkind, and faithful to Jesus in all that we do. May we follow your example and always choose Christ above everything else. Amen."

Memory Verse

"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

Take-Home Challenge: This week, do one courageous Christian act, such as helping someone, defending a classmate, telling the truth when it is difficult, or praying openly before a meal. Next week, be ready to share your experience.