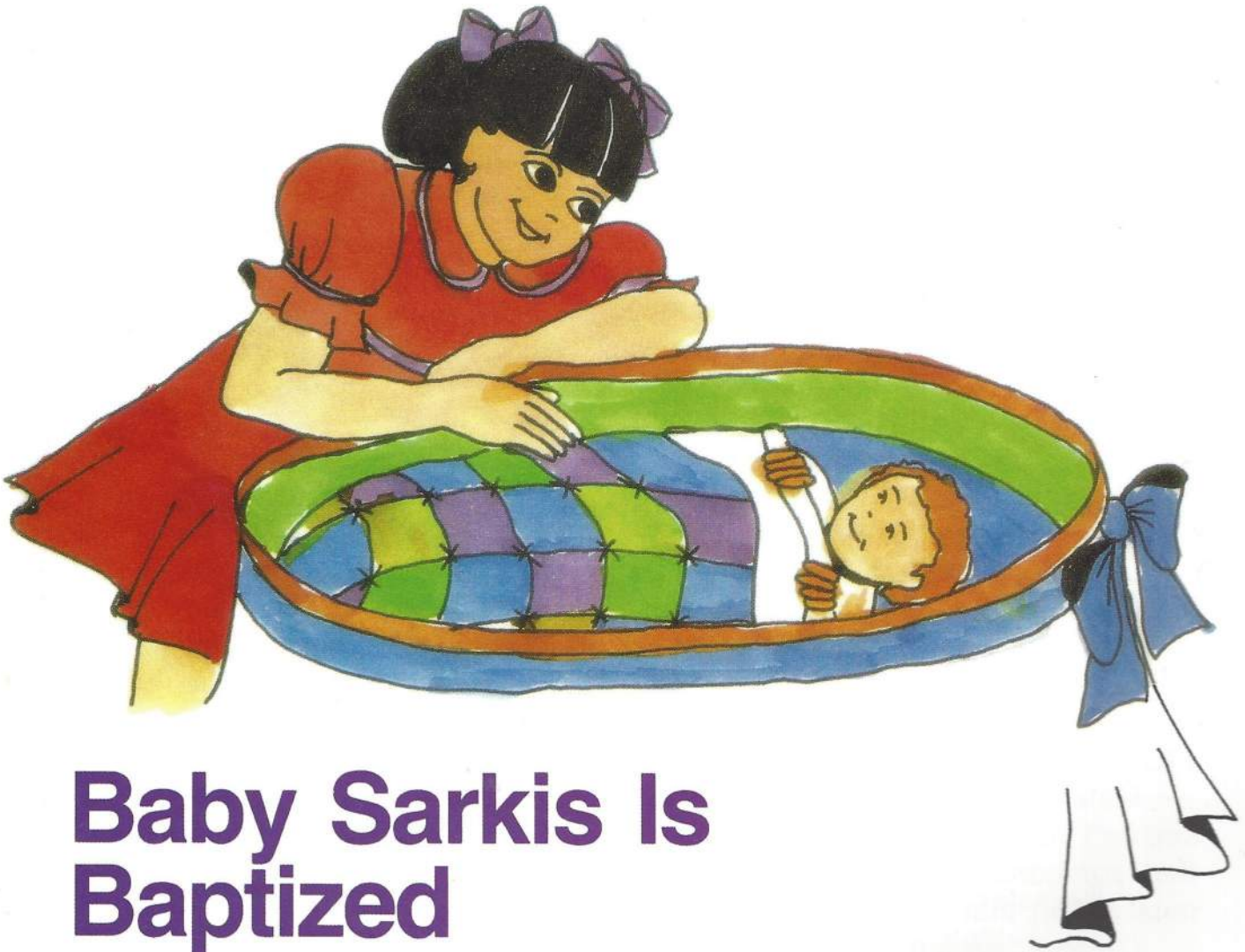


# BAPTISM



## Baby Sarkis Is Baptized

Once there was a little girl named Melanie. She lived with her family in a house in a big city. She had a mother and father, and a grandmother, but no brothers or sisters. She had friends and playmates who lived near her. She missed not having any brothers or sisters. She would ask her mother, "Why do other children have a sister or brother? Why can't I have one?" And her mother would only

say, "Someday, Melanie, you'll have one too."

Melanie was very excited when her mother surprised her with the news, "Melanie, we're going to have a new baby in a few months." How happy she was! That was good news to hear. She told her teacher and classmates in school the very next day.

The weeks passed slowly, but Melanie tried to be patient. She tried not to ask her mother too often, "When will the baby come?" Finally, one night her mother woke her and said, "Melanie, daddy and I are going to the hospital now, grandma will help you get up in the morning and get ready for school." When Melanie woke up the next morning, she rushed downstairs. Grandma told her the big news. "You have a baby brother, Melanie. And his name is Sarkis."

Sarkis was a noisy baby at first. He seemed to cry all the time. And mommy and daddy paid so much attention to this noisy little boy that Melanie was sorry she had wanted a baby. Sarkis was so little, too. Melanie didn't think he would ever be much fun. But one day he learned to smile, and Melanie enjoyed that. Melanie liked making Baby Sarkis laugh, and her mother was happy that Melanie was so helpful.

One day mother told Melanie, "This Sunday we will have Baby Sarkis baptized at church. After the service we will all come home and have a party. "What is 'baptized?'" asked Melanie. "It means that we will bring Sarkis to church and make him part of God's family," said mother. "Did you have one for me? And a party too?" "Oh yes," said mother. "In fact, your godparents, Aunt Virginia and Uncle Michael, came from Boston for the occasion. They will be Sarkis' godparents too. It was such a special day. You looked so nice in your baptismal dress. And you didn't even cry very much when Father Gregory put you in the water."

Melanie tried to imagine what Sarkis' baptism would be like. She couldn't remember anything from her own. But it was nice to think that someone would come all the way from Boston for the day. It must mean that it was pretty important.

On Sunday, Melanie and her parents got up early and got ready for church. Melanie wore her new red dress. Then mother got Sarkis ready. "What will he wear for the baptism?" asked Melanie. "Aunt Virginia will bring a new white suit for him," answered mother.

When they got to church, all the relatives were already there. Melanie hugged and kissed her grandparents and godparents and cousins. Der Nersess, the priest, met them at the door. Soon the service began. Melanie didn't understand very much but she saw

