

## PARENTS' PAGE:

### Ten Ways To Make God Real in the Armenian American Home

We give our kids piano lessons, karate, swim instruction, SAT prep classes, sports experience. But do we introduce them to the most important knowledge they can possess: the knowledge of God and that only in a relationship with him can true happiness be achieved, a happiness that can prevail over loss, failure, sorrow and whatever other trouble "flesh is heir to?"

1. Acknowledge God's presence in the world, simply. At a beautiful sunset, remark, "what a glorious world God made!"
2. Acknowledge our need for God. If you pass a car accident (where emergency vehicles are at work), say "Let's pray that no one is hurt, and that God helps everyone get through this." If a teenager expresses concern over some moral dilemma, say "You're going to think this is funny coming from me, but I'm starting to think it would help to consider what God would want us to do. . . ."
3. Make God part of family celebrations: At "firsts": loss of tooth, starting school, dating, driver's license, moving away from school, celebrate in a special way and always add, "I want to ask God's blessing also on this moment!"
4. Acknowledge God's presence at "transition" times. The most important ceremonies in our lives have to do with

transitions, helping us to get from one level to the next. All these small rituals—from bedtimes, to school graduations—are actually small-scale preparations for the ultimate transition, because they represent a way of easing the journey from the known to the unknown. Include a short prayer or Bible story at children's bedtime. Simple ideas: one thing you're thankful for; one thing you need God's help with; one person who needs your prayers. Rhyming prayer: upper elementary and middle school (you say a line; your child says one that rhymes with it).



5. Model God's importance to you. On Sundays, either attend church or help in the Sunday School. The Church is like the proverbial tree falling in the forest: does it make a sound if no one is there to hear it? The Church only exists when we are together!

6. Give cheerfully and generously. Let your children know that you give to charities, "with a glad heart!" Ask your children to give part of their allowance or part-time job monies to others. Help them choose the worthy cause. And always remember the church.
7. Acknowledge God at mealtime. Bow heads, hold hands, say formal or informal prayers, read a passage from the Bible, do something that says "God makes all things possible."
8. Before you attend a Holy Week service, read the related Bible passage. For example, on Holy Thursday, before the Washing of the Feet service, read *John 13*.
9. Acknowledge God on the great feasts set aside for him. Read the resurrection story (*Matthew 28*) before beginning your Easter dinner. Read the nativity story (*Luke 2:1-20*) before opening Christmas gifts.
10. Commit yourselves to God! (That takes one second to decide.)

The family is an intimate community of persons. Christian family life is a privileged locale for encountering God in everyday life.