

Come to My Garden



WE PRAY TOGETHER



Hanoon Hor yev Vortvo yev Hokvooyn Srpo.

Dear Father in Heaven, you made the trees, the flowers and the plants. Help us to care for them and our planet Earth. Amen.



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Ani's grandmother loved the flowers in her garden, especially the sweet-smelling red rose which she called the Angel's Kiss. In her garden, grandmother also planted vegetables. On one of her daily walks, she noticed that the green beans were almost ready to be picked. She thought to herself, "I will make a tasty stew with the beans and invite my friends to join me."

Grandma's friends came the very next day. They could smell the perfume of the rose. They also noticed another delicious smell coming from the kitchen. It was the green bean stew!

When the meal was ready, grandmother and her friends sat down to enjoy it together.

They said the prayer before meals. In her heart, Grandma thanked God for his gifts — her friends, the beautiful rose and the green beans from her garden.

This was a special meal. What made it special?



GOD'S WORD TO US

God said, "Let the earth grow plants and flowers, grass and trees." And so it was. God saw that it was good and he smiled."

Genesis 1:10-11

WE LEARN ABOUT GOD

Close your eyes and imagine how many trees and plants and flowers there are on earth. God made them in different colors, sizes and shapes. These are his gifts to us. He would like us to take care of them.

What are some things we can do to keep the earth beautiful?



OUR ARMENIAN WAY

Blessing of the Fields Antasdan

The Armenian Church has a beautiful blessing service called *Antasdan*. Many years ago, the priest and the people actually went out to the fields.

The priest blessed the four corners of the land, and they prayed for rain to make the plants healthy and plentiful.

The priest also prayed for the people, the villages, the churches, the priests, the Catholicos, and the country of Armenia.

WE CELEBRATE



Now, instead of doing the Antasdan service out in the fields, the priest blesses the four corners of the world in church.

One special Sunday when that happens is called the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On that feast day, the priest holds up a large cross decorated with basil and flowers.



FAMILY PAGE

SHARING OUR FAITH

Today the children learned that trees, flowers and plants are gifts from God and that we are his caretakers on earth. It is our responsibility to make sure that the trees and plants grow and the flowers bloom. Each in its own way brightens and nourishes our lives.

The children also learned about a special service in the Armenian Church called Antasdan, the blessing of the fields.

LIVING OUR FAITH

With your child, become caretakers of the earth. Encourage your child to share with you some of the discussions we had about caring for the earth and the Antasdan service.

From the following, choose an activity to do with your child:

1. Take a nature walk to enjoy the beauty that surrounds us in our daily lives. The Antasdan service was originally done outside, in the fields. Your walk together can be symbolic of that old Armenian tradition.
2. Plant and care for a flower and/or vegetable garden, remembering especially to plant basil.
3. Plan and plant a butterfly garden. Certain flowers and bushes are known to attract butterflies.
4. Feed the birds. Take out books from the library to identify birds that come to your garden. Make a birdbath available. Build a nesting box.
5. Pray before and after meals to thank God for his many gifts.

