

Valedictory Address
May 17, 2009
Delivered by Katie Kalajian, Class of 2009

When I first came here for Sunday School, I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know much about God, the Bible, or being Armenian. The thing I did know is that I was ready to learn.

In first grade I was taught, by my dad, the *Hayr Mer*. This was the first of many important lessons to come. Learning the *Hayr Mer* at such a young age was essential, because it gave us twelve years to reflect upon what we are saying when we recite it.

Another year that had a huge impact on my Sunday School class was 4th grade. This is the year that Yn. Rosalie Papazian gave us our first Bibles. This ensured that we would always have something to turn to when we had questions about God or about what we believe in.

After a few years of learning the essentials of our beliefs, we went on to learn the *Badarak* with Ms. Rita (Vanerian Jury) and Mrs. Anita (Arslanian). At that time, I didn't realize how important learning the *Badarak* was. Now I can truly appreciate all those lessons because I am now able to follow what is going on in church. Learning the hymns, and especially the Nicene Creed has strengthened my beliefs and has helped me to become closer with God. I have come to find that one of the greatest things about learning the *Badarak* is that no matter where you go in the world, if you find an Armenian church, it will feel just like you're at home.

In addition to these religious teachings, my class was also able to receive some history lessons from Mr. Toumajan, and Armenian vocabulary throughout the years, thereby broadening my understanding of what it is to be Armenian.

I also learned how supportive our community can be when it comes to aiding the youth in their religious education, by donating their time, treasures, and talents to ministries such as the Sunday School, CASP, the St. Nersess Scholarship Fund, and many others. This has taught me to be a more generous person.

This year has also been a great success. My classmates and I have enjoyed the Bible studies, Armenian language classes, and community service projects, such as Habitat for Humanity.

Through all my years of Sunday School, the most important thing I learned, besides the fact that it's great to be Armenian, is that God will always be there for us, no matter what. Whether in church, at home, or off at college, God will be there, ready to listen to what we have to say.

In the Book of Joshua, Chapter 1, Verse 9, we are reminded to "Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."