



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TARBIYA TIPS

By Principal Badiaa Wardany

TIP 4: Seize Ramadan's Teaching Moments

Volume 2, Issue 1
September, 2007

Ramadan is the holiest month of the year. Muslims worldwide show unity in spiritual, social and charitable activities. We look forward to this month to renew our obligations toward Allah (swt), and to reconnect with the usually-overlooked moments of devotion to our creator. We recharge our spiritual batteries in hopes of maintaining this devotion the rest of the year. Our day and nights should be defined by sincerity and closeness to Allah (swt). Among its blessings, Ramadan is loaded with "teaching moments"—opportunities for parents to highlight an important lesson for their children. Parents need to seize these moments and demonstrate to their children all the virtues of Ramadan so that they may become part of the family lifestyle year-long.

Mom and Dad...

Create a Ramadan atmosphere in your home. Create some family traditions they will look forward to each year—waking up for *suhoor*, read Ramadan storybooks, prepare a favorite treat to enjoy at iftar time, play a Qur'an CD, share about Ramadan in your home country, let your children decorate your home with festive lights and crafts.

Encourage your children to fast and reward them for it.

Younger children should be praised personally and publicly, if they fast even a part of the day. Make sure to reward your children with a special gift at Eid.

Train your children on portion control and not being wasteful.

Talk to your children about how fasting forces us to slow down and think about what we will eat, and naturally lets us feel "full" with modest amounts. This is an ideal time to shrink our meal portions and to only put on our plates what we know we will eat. Your children may even become more appreciative of leftovers!

Teach your children about sharing, generosity, and help them save some of their allowance to donate as "sadaqa" at the end of the month. Remind your children that we, alhamdulillah are deprived of food only until iftar time, but others have no choice but to go without, every month. Teach them early on that it is their responsibility to share of what they have with those who have not. Give each child a box or a jar in his/her room to deposit something which can be donated to an Islamic charity.



"TARBIYA" defined...

(Arabic)...To look after, nurture, to nourish, to help grow and flourish. *Tarbiya* implies a sensitivity towards the child under your care, his emotional and physical needs and capacities. It implies the ability to trust and not to stifle, to be firm when needed and even impose sanctions when necessary.

Don't just break your fast, break your bad habits. Help your children identify one bad habit they will work on breaking or one good habit they'll develop during the month—like cleaning their room or improving a homework routine.

Don't waste the month on trivial activities. Resist the temptation to pass the long fasting days and short nights on useless television/satellite viewing, internet chatting. Model for your children how to maximize each hour with enriching activities. Engage your bored, hungry son or daughter in spiritual or nurturing activities like reading Qur'an, making extra prayers, making *thikr* and *dua*,

but to go without, every month. Teach them early on that it is their responsibility to share of what they have with those who have not. Give each child a box or a jar in his/her room to deposit something which can be donated to an Islamic charity. You may even turn it into a friendly competition among siblings.

Take your children to Taraweeh prayers and Qiyam Al-layl. For those who live in non-Muslim countries, the nightly trip to the masjid to join the community for taraweeh prayers helps us to “feel” and “see” the Ramadan spirit around us. Older children may accompany their parents to late-evening prayers or even stay overnight at the masjid for the full experience—they will feel a great sense of accomplishment after standing with you in prayer all night. If you can’t get to the masjid, why not pray taraweeh at home? Give your older child a turn leading you in prayer.

Model how to show patience and self-control in tense or difficult times. We fast not only from food and drink but also from fighting and foul words. Try not to shout at your children or argue with your spouse and remind your children to do the same with their siblings.

tual or nurturing activities like reading Qur’an, making extra prayers, making *thikr* and *dua*, crafts, or helping you to prepare the iftar meal.



Ramadan is a precious chance for you to become, not only closer to Allah (swt), but also to your children.

Tarbiya Tips is a publication of:
Al-Arqam Islamic School
Sacramento, California
916.391.3333
Principal@
alarqamislamicschool.org