

Ideas on how to bring Marathi culture home

The BMM2009 Philadelphia Young Adults committee surveyed the community to find and share ideas and resources to help us all bring Marathi culture home.

We hope that even after the convention is over, you will think about using some of these ways to bring more Marathi culture into your home. Many attachments are available using the links below. Please note that the BMM is not endorsing any of these sites and is not responsible for their content and accuracy.

Thanks to all who have submitted ideas to this list! This list is still a work in progress, and we will continue to update it as we get more ideas from the community.

COMMUNITY / FAMILY

- Attending Maharashtra mandal events. They are a great, local way to surround yourself and your family with Marathi community members and many different cultural activities such as dances, dramas, comedy, and music. Most mandals have great talent activities for kids to participate in. You will surely make lifelong friends. If you are new to attending mandal activities, start with a big one like Ganapati.
 - o *Here is a quote from a member of the next generation: "Mom and Dad took us to Marathi Vishwa events, where we mingled with our Marathi family friends. We participated in their activities. It allowed us to feel a sense of community without the pressure of having to speak proper Marathi all of the time."*
- Attending BMM conventions and/or MAIYTRA (for young adults) conventions
- Visit India & relatives
- Having extended family members such as grandparents live in the house or nearby.
- Call your Aji / Ajoba. (Need some tips on some things you can say in Marathi? The My Marathi CDs have some conversations you can start with. See link*)
- Give your kids Marathi names – most names have Sanskrit based meanings. Many sites are available by searching, such as: www.babynames.indobase.com
- Search for on-line communities, bogs, discussion groups such as those on Facebook.

LANGUAGE

- Ask your local Maharashtra Mandal if there are Marathi schools available for kids. Many young adults are still very close with the friends they made in Marathi school.
- If you are fluent in Marathi – speak Marathi in the house as completely and as long as possible. Even if your kids start to speak back in English as they get older, continuing to hear as much Marathi as possible helps retention.
- It is tough to bring some Marathi language into their kids' lives when all they hear outside is English? (even tougher when a lot of us don't feel like we are fluent enough ourselves to teach our kids Marathi)- but we can start with teaching them what we do know.

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* The My Marathi Cultural Tour and Arati/Prayer translations are available free for download at:

<http://mysite.verizon.net/vze1xqrx/mymarathi/freebies.html>

1. Try choosing as many key Marathi words/phrases as possible, to use in Marathi with them consistently.
 2. Say the same thing in Marathi and English so they learn both
 3. Get grandparents to speak Marathi as much as possible around the kids- they will most likely love that you asked them too
- For very young kids- there is a set of video CDs called parichishala: [www/parichishala.tv](http://www.parichishala.tv) (animated kids' VCDs with original songs sung to the tune of familiar English nursery rhyme to learn Marathi letters and words). These VCDs were made by members of our own BMM community, for the community.
 - For older kids / young adults – there is a set of interactive CDs called My Marathi as a resource for Marathi language self study. (These CDs were built by the next generation of our community for the next generation and is a non-profit project.) See this link: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze1xqrx/mymarathi/> for more info / demo.
 - www.matrubasha.com is a site with interactive games and printable activities for kids to learn Marathi. (has Marathi, Gujarati, and Hindi)
 - Check out - marathi radio station – eprasaran.com (need to understand marathi already but could be good for practice hearing Marathi)

RELIGION / HOLIDAYS

- Sharing simple Hindu prayers (morning prayer, before dinner prayer, before bedtime prayer etc. – printable translations with phonetic English & Marathi text can be downloaded – see link in footer*). Make it a part of a consistent routine.
- Taking the family to temple
- Keep a 'devArA' (small temple) in your home. (Ask your parents to help if you need help setting one up- they will be happy you asked)
- Performing puja at home- (steps of daily puja are described in the My Marathi Cultural Tour*)
- Celebrate holidays according to the Marathi calendar. My Marathi cultural tour file describes the Hindu holidays. You can also purchase a panchang calendar detailing the holidays for that year – these are available in English too, but you may have to get them from someone going to India.
- The two major epics of Hindu Mythology are the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. Each is made up of many stories teaching many different morals. One pivotal part of the story of the Mahabharat led to the reciting of the holiest of Hindu scripture- the Bhagavad Gita. You can find English versions of these works and explore. A brief summary is included in the My Marathi Cultural Tour*.
- Family participation in annual Ganapati celebrations- singing aratis. Arti / prayer translation handouts can be downloaded.*
- Researching the meaning of Ganapati or Diwali celebrations and doing a presentation or a fun crafts activity at your kids' school. That gives parents a chance to do some research, and get involved with the child. Such as for bhAU bheedz- making rAkhee as a craft project for Diwali or to make a lantern (AkAsh kandil), or making an image of Ganesh.
- Newer animated movies such as Ghatotkacha, Bal Ganesh, Dasha Avataar can help introduce more Indian Mythology

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MUSIC/ DANCE / ART / LITERATURE

- Marathi- dances these are since typical Maharshtrian dances.
 - o Folk dances (koLee)
 - o lavani - dances
 - o legim - dances
 - o phugaDee – 2 people hold hands and spin/rotate faster and faster
- To inspire young kids- there was a really famous show on TV in Maharashtra in early 2009 similar to American Idol called sA re ga ma pa – Little Champs. Search YouTube for video clips.
- Musical instruments- you can take lessons in these instruments
 - o Dol, peTee, sitar, tabla, tambora

FOOD

- Cook Marathi food at home- one resource for recipes is the Mom's kitchen cookbook available through www.bmmonline.org BMM Mart.
- Cook (or buy) special food items for festivals
- Don't forget the traditional staples that you might have grown up with such as...
 - o thup/sAkhar/poLee (you can great fresh poLees in desi grocery stores now), waraN/bAt - (rice and dAl), puraN poLee, sabudhANA, shrikhand, modak, Ambaras/pUree, Anarse, thalipeeTh

STUFF FOR KIDS

- Using Marathi pet names for your kids (sonyA, gunDU, etc). Also 'tai' for big sister, 'dAdA' for big brother
- Children's sayings/songs that 'everyone' knows (we are hoping to post some video to YouTube soon to demonstrate). Blank lines are where you insert the child's name.
 - o TALyA, TALyA, puranAchyA poLyA, bunditse IADU, ____-IA wADU (you recite while clapping your hands)
 - o ____ UbhA rAhilA, Amhee nAhee pAhilA (you recite when you are holding your child in a standing position, of if they stand on their own. This means – ____ stood up, I didn't see him!). For a girl insert Ubhee, rAhilee, pAhilee.
 - o Tho de re Tho de re Tho de re Tho (bring forehead close to the baby boy's forehead). For a girl you can say 'ga' instead of 're.'
 - o Ye re ye re pAUUsA, tulA deto paisa, paisa dzhAIA khoTA, pAUUs AIA moThA
- Make flash cards with Marathi letters / words and play games like memory. Or play find the hidden Marathi letters in this picture. Quote from the community... "I draw letters hidden a picture, and my son finds them. He loves this!"
- Share the games you build with other Marathi parents (we hope to post some on-line soon!)
- Put together prayer books as a crafts project
- At bed time, tell stories of Indian greats and Gods to your kids (some resources are below)

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- Amar Chitra Kata – stories – in comic book format. If you were a kid in the 70's, 80s you might have had the comics telling these stories www.amarchitrakatha.com
- Akbar / Birbal stories – famous kids stories teaching different morals. There are many sites you can search for if you google Akbar & Birbal, a couple sites you can try are www.dindima.com click on storytime -> witty tales, or www.infowareindia.net/akbarbirbal.html
- Chandamama- children's website with stories on Indian mythology. It is an interactive website for children of all ages with a collection of illustrated stories and comics. You may have read these when you were a kid. www.chandamama.com
- Put together supplemental homework. For example when your kid learns the Star Spangled Banner they simultaneously learn Jana Gana Mana, or when they learn the 50 states in the US they also learn the 28 states in India. This adds work to the parents too but might be worthwhile.
- Use Bollywood as a supplement to Marathi culture
- Volunteer in the temple / mandal
- Donate to worthwhile cultural organizations on your kids' birthdays (such as Cow Protection or to temple priests)
- A quote from our community...*"Our son participated in a play on Shivaji at Plymouth Balvihar. This has really helped him learn about history, values and most importantly our identity. Now, he wants to know more about Shivaji and we showed him historical marathi movies such as Bal Shivaji, Chhatrapati Shivaji by Balji Pendharkar. Shivaji played by Chandrakant was very impressionable. Now he can't wait to see the new serial on Zee Pravah..."*

HISTORY / FAMOUS FIGURES

- Wikipedia has a big list of famous Marathi figures in Politics, Activists, Reformers , Academics, Science and Technology, Cinema And Theatre, Literature, Music, Pop Music, Sports, Wrestlers, Business and Industry, Bureaucracy. See this link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_famous_marathi_people
- Some Maharashtra historical figures you can search the web for information: Shivaji, Lokmanya Tilak, Bhajirao Peshwe, Babasaheb Ambedkar
- Some famous Maharashtra actors/actresses/entertainers you can search for more information on are... Asha Bhosle, Lata Mangeshkar, Madhuri Dixit, Nana Patekar, Sonali Bendre, Amol Palekar, Pu. La. Deshpande - comedian

INDIAN / MAHARASHTRIAN GAMES

- hututu / kabaDee (almost like tug of war – you pull your opponent across to your side of the line during one breath as you say 'hututu...hututu...hutututu' or 'kabaDee... kabaDee... kabaDee...' continuously)
- carom – (similar to playing pool with flat discs instead of ball and cue)
- kho-kho – (almost like duck-duck-goose players sit a line alternating facing front/back. The tagger has to chase the tagee around the line until someone gets caught. You can tag someone who is sitting to relieve you – by tagging them and saying 'kho')
- badminton
- cricket

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RITUALS / CUSTOMS

Choosing a few Marathi cultural traditions to use consistently with the kids such as...

- Teaching respectful behavior with elders (using words like tumhee, tumhAIA...)
- Having tea is a big part of Marathi culture. You can make boiled tea with ginger.
- Marathi Home remedies- haLad dudh for sore throat (turmeric in warm milk), clove oil for toothache, lemon in warm water in the morning to cleanse your system
- Hang a toran (toraN) over the door - a toran is a decoration hung across the top of the entry door a welcome / good blessings.
- Some people hang limbu and mirchee over the door/corner of the door to ward away evil
- Wearing Indian clothes to Indian or non-Indian functions
- Marathis eat meals with their right hand only, and the left hand kept clean and free to serve, pass things or for whatever reason. If one is eating while sitting on the floor, one is usually sitting cross-legged (mANDee ghAIUn मांडी घालून).
- Performing namaskAr (नमस्कार) to show respect to an elder or when formally meeting someone new. namaskAr should be performed without shoes on and should never be performed in doorways.
- Many more cultural customs are listed and explained in the My Marathi Cultural Tour*

Some other notes from the community on what has / has not worked:

WHAT HASN'T WORKED:

- Forcing kids to participate
- Quote from a community member: *"Living in denial that we are not different from the genre.... Yes, its perfectly fine to be an American but know your identity!"*

WHAT HAS WORKED:

- Forcing kids to participate (within reason) – make it a mandatory part of their life to include certain cultural aspects into their lives and be consistent. Make it a comfortable part of everyday lifestyle instead of a 'forced' issue.
- 'Walk the walk' and set an example that parents are also trying. There should be no gap between what you practice and what you preach!
- Share your culture – such as teaching your kids' whole class about Diwali.
- Quote from a community member: *(All these efforts seem "to be working slowly but definitely. Even if we may not see the signs that it is working so early in life, our faith in our values tells us that we should practice it without any expectations."... "Passing the religious and cultural values to our kids is the single biggest contribution one can make kid's life. This natural desire to pass on some thing good becomes more prominent when one get married and have kids."*
- Quote from our community... *"Where there is a will there is a way!"*

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