

May Prayer Service



Many people create a small altar in their home or classroom during the month of May. The altar is traditionally dedicated to Mary, the mother of God as May is the Marian month when Catholics give special praise and honour to Jesus' mother Mary, gifted to us as our mother too.

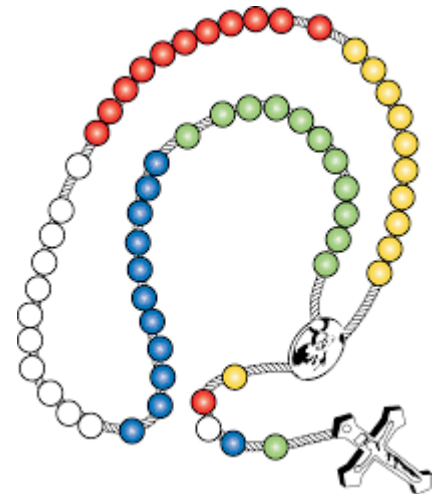
May is also the first month of summer, so altars which are created during this time are adorned with flowers that bloom at this time of year and with particular prayers, or items of devotion such as rosary beads to decorate this special space and to express our love and honour to Mary.

In schools, the class gather in daily prayer before the altar and in some instances, the class commit to praying a decade of the rosary each day throughout the month of May. Some schools visit a local grotto to pray to Mary. Others have the tradition of a May procession in the school grounds. It is a positive experience for children and creates faith-filled memories which honour Mary during the month of May.

Suggested Activity

In advance of the prayer service, each child is given a circular-shaped piece of light-coloured card. Having led the students in a time of quiet prayer and reflection, they are invited to write on each disc the names of people or special intentions they would like to remember in prayer.

In advance of the prayer service the discs are arranged in the shape of a set of Rosary beads in each classroom or assembly hall. During the service, the leader may draw the students' attention to the arrangement of the 'beads', focusing on their unity in prayer and how they are praying for one another and their intentions.



Prayer Space:

Make sure that you have a focal point in your home, classroom, school foyer.

Prayer table:

White cloth

Two large pillar candles (LED flameless candles are best suited in a school setting)

A Bible (Book of the Gospels)

A simple wooden cross

Fresh flowers

Statue of Our Lady

Rosary Beads

(A crown of flowers for Mary – this suggestion may be appropriate in a school setting where the crown of flowers will be placed on the statue during class prayer or a general school assembly.)

Service of the Word

Introduction: (Teacher or Student)

Welcome to our Prayer Service. During the month of May we honour Mary, the mother of Jesus. During the month of May we pray especially to her. Mary answered God's call to be the mother of Jesus. Today we honour Mary who followed the will of God all her life. Mary was faithful at the stable in Bethlehem, she was faithful on the flight to Egypt, and she was faithful at the foot of the cross. We pray today that we will follow Mary's example and listen to God and do what God asks with joy.

Opening Hymn: (A Hymn to Mary – suitably chosen and sung by the children/school choir)

Procession

During the procession:

A child carries a statue of Mary and places it in the Prayer Space.

Two children follow with candles - these are placed at either side of the statue.

(Please note: if wax candles are used, the children may carry them forward unlit, and the teacher lights them when in place.)

One child brings forward the wooden cross.

A child brings rosary beads and places it in front of the statue.

Two children bring 2 vases and place them on the table.

A child carries the Bible, opens it, and places it on the table.

Leader:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader:

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to honour Mary, our Mother. We ask for her prayers for our family, our world, and our lives.

We think about the times we ignored our parents when they need our help. (Pause)

We think of the times we say 'no' when we should have said 'yes'. (Pause)

Opening Prayer:

God our Father, we thank you for Mary, Mother of Jesus, and our mother, too. She always did what you wanted her to do. Help us to listen to you, and to do what you want with joy. We pray that we will see your Spirit in others as we celebrate your love and joy and we thank you for the gift of each other. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

O Blessed Mother of God and our Mother, too, protect our families and all the children of the world – especially the poor, the hungry, and those who are homeless. Teach us to remember that we are all brothers and sisters, children of God, now and forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reader 1:

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

(Isaiah 12: 4-6)

In that day you will say: “Give praise to the LORD,
proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done,
and proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things;
let this be known to all the world.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm: Here I am, Lord

Gospel Acclamation: Seinn Alleluia!

Reader 2:

Gospel:

(Luke 1: 46-55)

And Mary said, I sing with praise the greatness of the Lord, and my heart finds joy in God my Saviour. The Lord, who is mighty, has done great things for me. Holy is God’s name. God has destroyed the power of people who are proud and honoured those who are poor and humble.

God has given good food to hungry people and sent the rich away with nothing. God has come to help the people of Israel because of the promise made to Abraham and Sarah and their family forever.

This is the Good News of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

Or

Gospel:

(Luke 1:26-38)

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. The angel greeted Mary and said, “You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.” Mary was confused by the angel’s words and wondered what they meant. Then the angel told Mary, “Don’t be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High.

The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end.” Mary asked the angel, “How can this happen? I am not married!” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God’s power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. Nothing is impossible for God!” Mary said, I am the Lord’s servant! Let it happen as you have said.”

This is the Good News of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Student A:

Lord, help us to listen to God’s Word as Mary did and to cherish the Word in our hearts.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Student B:

We pray for all mothers and fathers who work hard to provide for their families. Lord, bless our parents for caring for us.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Student C:

We pray for our mothers and grandmothers and for all those who help us grow and teach us about you, especially our teachers. Lord, bless them for passing on the faith to us.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Student D:

We pray for our school: our school friends, our teachers, our families and all who help our school. We ask God to bless us all and keep us safe.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Student E:

We pray for the sick people in our parish and for all our relatives who are ill. Lord, bless them in their sickness.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Student F:

We pray that people may accept each other, love one another and help bring peace to our world.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Student G:

We pray for all those doing exams. Lord, keep them calm and guide them as they study.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Leader:

Father in heaven, listen to our prayers which we make invoking the intercession of Mary. Through her prayers deepen our love for you. We ask this in his name, for he is Lord for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Hymn to Mary: (Optional)

As the hymn is being sung, two children process up and place the crown of flowers on the statue or place the crown around the base of the statue.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Leader:

Litanies are simple, ancient prayers that use short statements as prayers for help, praise forgiveness, thanksgiving, or blessing. They also tell us something about the person we honour. Litanies help us focus our attention on the qualities the saint possessed in this life and in heaven. As we are led in this short prayer, we respond to each one together by saying:

Response: Pray for us.

Student: Holy Mary

All: Pray for us.

Student: Holy Mother of God

All: Pray for us.

Student: Mother of divine grace

All: Pray for us.

Student: Mother most kind

All: Pray for us.

Student: Queen of heaven

All: Pray for us.

Student: Queen of all saints

All: Pray for us.

Student: Queen of Angels

All: Pray for us.

Student: Queen of peace

All: Pray for us.

We honour Mary by praying a decade of the Rosary...

(Our Father, 10 Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father)

Final Prayer:

Leader:

Lord, we thank you for our time together to honour Mary. We pray that we will be faithful to her son, Jesus, as she was. Help us to listen to his holy Word always and live by it. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader:

We end our prayer together with the sign of the cross.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Closing Hymn: Lourdes Hymn

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Amoris.ie

