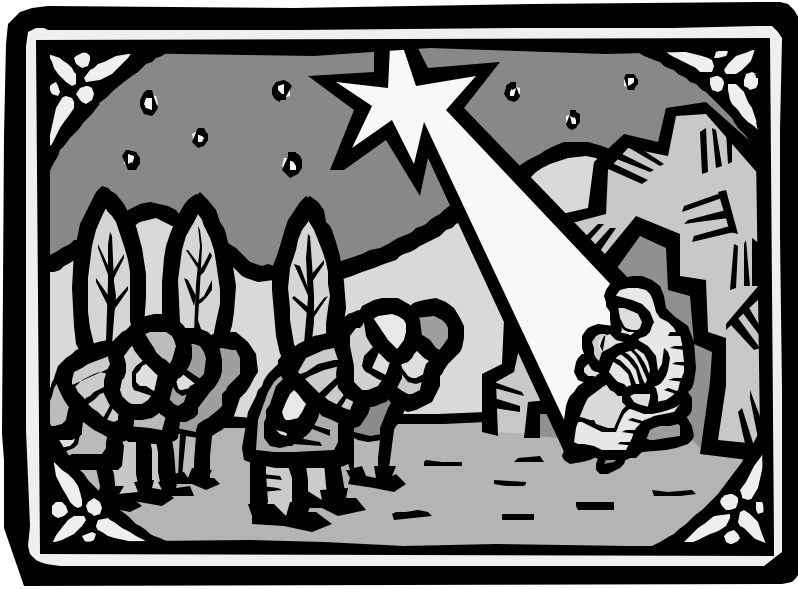


Praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary

By praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, we can meditate on the Advent and Christmas themes of hope, trust, waiting and anticipation, the presence of God in history, and changing relationships. Your family can hold its own family retreat throughout Advent and Christmas by putting aside time each week for Scripture, prayer and reflection. This guide for praying the Joyful Mysteries can form the basis for such a family retreat.



Praying the Rosary

Follow this simple process for praying the Rosary as a family:

Recite the following prayers together.

In the name of the father,
And of the son,
And of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
And born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And life everlasting. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hail Mary (three times)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
Is now,
And ever shall be,
World without end, Amen.

Choose which mystery or mysteries you will pray and follow this format:

- ❖ Scripture reading and family retelling of the story.
- ❖ Family reflection—relating the story or themes to family life and experience. We provide questions to help you with this.
- ❖ Praying the decade of the rosary.

The First Joyful Mystery

The Annunciation

Prayer Leader

The Annunciation marks the event when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce that God had specially chosen Mary to be the mother of God. Let's listen to what happened.

Scripture Reading

One month later 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." And the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-38)

Family Reflection

1. Together, retell the story that you just heard as if you were Mary. Who was there? Where? How? When? Why? How did you feel? Describe from Mary's point of view what she saw, smelled, touched, heard, etc.
2. Together talk about what Mary might have felt. How did Mary feel when the angel came to her (i.e., scared, bewildered, confused, curious, awestruck, surprised)? How did Mary feel when the angel told her that God had chosen her to be the mother of his Son (i.e., wonder, disbelief, trust, in awe of God's power)? How did she feel when the angel left her (i.e., anticipation, hope)?
3. Talk about times when family members have had the same feelings as Mary—share about recent experiences (i.e., when you felt in awe of God's power and presence, when you felt anticipation or the excitement of waiting for something to happen, when you felt hopeful, when you felt surprised). Share your stories.
4. You are now going to pray the first Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. As the family recites the prayer, meditate (think about) the stories you've just shared and how God is present. How does God want to be a part of your life? Mary chose God to be a part of her life. Do you?

Pray the Rosary

Our Father
Hail Mary (ten times)
Glory be to the Father...

The Second Joyful Mystery

The Visitation

Prayer Leader

When we pray the second joyful mystery, we meditate on the time when Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visited her cousin, Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist.

Scripture Reading

A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise.

Mary said:

With all my heart I praise the Lord, and I am glad because of God my Saviour.

God cares for me, his humble servant.

From now on, all people will say God has blessed me.

God All-Powerful has done great things for me, and his name is holy.

He always shows mercy to everyone who worships him.

The Lord has used his powerful arm to scatter those who are proud.

God drags strong rulers from their thrones and puts humble people in places of honor.

God gives the hungry good things to eat, and sends the rich away with nothing.

God helps his servant Israel and is always merciful to his people.

The Lord made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his family forever!

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she went back home. (Luke 1:39-56)

Family Reflection

1. Share the following historical background with the family. *In the time and place where Mary lived, travel was risky. If you did travel at all, it was most always with other people, in a caravan. People did travel to visit their families, just as we do today, but the report of Mary traveling alone into the "hill country" was highly unusual and improper. First of all, women never did anything alone. They either had to be always with a group of women or children or under the watchful eye of her father or other men of the household.*
2. The trip to visit Elizabeth must have been a hard one, over hilly and rocky terrain. Mary trusted in God's help and protection, and that trust enabled her to take the journey to visit her cousin. She knew that God would take care of her. How has God taken care of you this past week, month, year? How have you trusted in God?

Pray the Rosary

Our Father

Hail Mary (ten times)

Glory Be to the Father...

The Third Joyful Mystery

The Birth of Our Lord

Prayer Leader

The story of the birth of Jesus is full of action: Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem, looking for a place to stay, shepherds coming to visit . . . and it is full of symbols and images: stars, angels, manger, and so forth. Let's listen.

Scripture Reading

About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But an angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for

you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

"Praise God in heaven!
Peace on earth to everyone
who pleases God!"

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondered what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Eight days later Jesus' parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands. And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby. (Luke 2:1-21)

Family Reflection

1. Share your insights about the story you just read, using these questions to guide your reflection:
 - ♦ Put yourself back 2,000 years. If you could be a person, place or thing that was a part of the story of Jesus' birth, who or what would you be (i.e., angle, shepherd, Mary, Joseph, innkeeper, sheep, star, the donkey carrying Mary to Bethlehem)? Why?
 - ♦ Describe what you experienced (saw, heard, touched, tasted, smelled) from the perspective of the person, place or thing you choose. For example, if you were the star, what would you have seen and heard? If you were a shepherd, describe the night of Jesus' birth: What did you see? Where were you? What did you hear? What did you and your friends talk about?
2. Now look around your own home for symbols of Christmas which are images that remind your family of this Christmas story (i.e., manger scene or creche, particular ornaments on the Christmas tree such as the star, a lit candle, the hay or dirt in the family manger scene, pictures or statues of Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus, Christmas cards you have received this year). Gather a few of these symbols around the family as you prepare to pray the third Joyful Mystery.

Pray the Rosary

As you pray the third decade of the Rosary, think about and look at the symbols of Advent and Christmas that the family has gathered. Let these symbols be a reminder to you of that most awesome night when God entered into human history as a baby boy, Jesus.

Our Father
Hail Mary (ten times)
Glory Be to the Father...

The Fourth Joyful Mystery The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Prayer Leader

Mary and Joseph were Jewish, and a Jewish ritual is to take male children to the temple to be circumcised. Circumcision is the cutting off of skin from the private part of Jewish boys eight days after birth to show that they belong to the Lord. Listen to the reading from the Gospel of Luke.

Scripture Reading

The time came for Mary and Joseph to do what the Law of Moses says a mother is supposed to do after her baby boy is born.

They took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and presented him to the Lord, just as the Law of the Lord says, "Each first-born baby boy belongs to the Lord." The Law of the Lord also says that parents have to offer a sacrifice, giving at least a pair of doves or two young pigeons. So that is what Mary and Joseph did.

At this time a man named Simeon was living in Jerusalem. Simeon was a good man. He loved God and was waiting for God to save the people of Israel. God's Spirit came to him and told him that he would not die until he had seen Christ the Lord.

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to do what the Law of Moses says should be done for a new baby boy, the Spirit told Simeon to go into the temple. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God,

“Lord, I am your servant,
and now I can die in peace,
because you have kept
your promise to me.
With my own eyes I have seen
what you have done
to save your people,
and foreign nations
will also see this.
Your mighty power is a light
for all nations,
and it will bring honor
to your people Israel.”

Jesus’ parents were surprised at what Simeon had said. Then he blessed them and told Mary, “This child of yours will cause many people in Israel to fall and others to stand. The child will be like a warning sign. Many people will reject him, and you, Mary, will suffer as though you had been stabbed by a dagger. But all this will show what people are really thinking.”

After Joseph and Mary had done everything that the Law of the Lord commands, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. The child Jesus grew. He became strong and wise, and God blessed him. (Luke 2:22-35, 39-40)

Family Reflection

1. Imagine how Simeon must have felt when he saw baby Jesus in the temple—he had been waiting his whole life to see Christ, the Lord, and lo and behold, here he was—the baby Jesus!
 - ◆ Talk about what Simeon must have been feeling as he took Jesus in his arms and sang praises to God. Certainly one of those feelings was of great joy.
 - ◆ How has your family experienced joy because of Jesus’ presence in your home?
2. God kept the promise to Simeon—that Simeon would not die until he had seen the Christ. Simeon saw Jesus in the temple and praised God.
 - ◆ In the past week, how have the members of your family seen Jesus?
 - ◆ How have we praised and thanked God for his son?

Pray the Rosary

As you pray the Fourth Joyful Mystery, meditate on the joy your family experiences because you have seen Jesus alive in each other.

Our Father
Hail Mary (ten times)
Glory Be to the Father...

The Fifth Joyful Mystery

Finding Jesus in the Temple

Prayer Leader

This mystery of the Rosary depicts a situation that happens in everyone's life at some point—we grow up and our relationship with our parents changes. It's comforting to know that Jesus, Mary and Joseph experienced this challenge, too!

Scripture Reading

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for Passover. And when Jesus was twelve years old, they all went there as usual for the celebration. After Passover his parents left, but they did not know that Jesus had stayed on in the city. They thought he was traveling with some other people, and they went a whole day before they started looking for him. When they could not find him with their relatives and friends, they went back to Jerusalem and started looking for him there.

Three days later they found Jesus sitting in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was surprised at how much he knew and at the answers he gave.

When his parents found him, they were amazed. His mother said, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried, and we have been searching for you."

Jesus answered, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I would be in my Father's house?" But they

did not understand what he meant.

Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents and obeyed them. His mother kept on thinking about all that had happened.

Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people. (Luke 2:41-52)

Family Reflection

1. Describe the experience you just read about from the perspective of Mary, of Joseph, and of Jesus.
 - ◆ What were each of them thinking and feeling?
 - ◆ What about the people who were listening to Jesus in the temple? What were they thinking and feeling?
2. Talk about the relationships in your family right now.
 - ◆ How are things going?
 - ◆ Name some of the tensions you are experiencing, also name the ways that you are growing together and finding new ways to relate with one another. What is changing as your family changes?
3. Remind each other that as God was present to Mary, Joseph and Jesus, God is also present with you—blessing your family in the midst of growth, changing relationships, and challenges.

Pray the Rosary

As you pray the Fifth Joyful Mystery, meditate on God's presence and guidance in your family today, whatever the joys or struggles might be.

Our Father
Hail Mary (ten times)
Glory Be to the Father...