

Mission Together

Queen of the May: Liturgical Prayer



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS / CHAPLAINS

For centuries, Catholics around the world have set aside May as a month dedicated to Mary, Queen of Heaven. This title is afforded due to Mary's status as mother of Christ the King, and as one who through her faithfulness and perseverance, won the 'crown of righteousness'. To honour Mary in this special month, schools and churches have traditionally decorated Marian statues with Spring flowers and floral crowns, and held processions and Rosary recitals. In some countries, Muslims join in these Marian devotions. Mary is greatly honoured in Islam, as one who humbly submitted to God's will. Pope Francis also has a great personal devotion to Our Lady, making frequent reference to Mary in his homilies and messages. To young pilgrims gathered in Brazil, Pope Francis declared: "My dear friends, we have our model... May Mary teach us by her life what it means to be a missionary disciple."

LITURGY PLAN

Setting the scene

Please refer to our guide: *How to Pray with Children* missiontogether.org.uk/prayer-resources/

Opening hymn or recorded music

Our suggestion: *Bring Flowers of the Rarest*

Sign of the cross and opening prayer

Print the opening prayer on page 2 and ask a pupil to read.

Introduction

Print the introduction on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

Bible reading *adapted for children from NJB*

Print the Bible reading on page 3 and ask a pupil to read.

For an interactive interpretation see Appendix 1.

Bible reflection

See page 3. We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

Prayers of intercession

Print the prayers of intercession on page 4 and ask pupils to read.

Mission Together prayer

See to the right.

Crowning of Our Lady / Marian Procession *(optional)*

See Appendix 2 for activity ideas

Closing hymn or recorded music

Our suggestions: *Immaculate Mary*, or *As I Kneel Before You*.

Mission Together Prayer

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love
Now and forever. **Amen.**

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio, the Pope's charity for world mission.

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Opening Prayer

Reader: God our Father, today we honour Our Blessed Lady, Mary, Whom you chose to bring your Son, Jesus, into our world. We ask Mary, Queen of Heaven, to pray for us so that like her, we will say 'yes' to God's invitation to share the joy of Jesus with everyone. We make this prayer through Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

Reader 1: For hundreds of years, May has been a month dedicated to Our Lady. Around the world children like us make a special effort to spend time with Mary; they place crowns on the head of her statues or lay flowers at its feet, they pray the rosary or just sit silently with Mary, reflecting on how she bravely said 'yes' to God's plan to become the mother of Jesus.

Reader 2: Because Mary agreed to do what God asked, Pope Francis calls Mary the first missionary. A missionary is someone sent out with the important task of sharing the message of Jesus and the love of God with everyone, everywhere. Since he was a small boy, Pope Francis has loved and respected Our Lady. He says that Mary has taught him three important lessons.

Reader 3: The first lesson Mary teaches is how to know the joy of Jesus deep in our hearts and how to share this joy with others. The second lesson is how to help those in need, without delay, as Mary did. The third lesson is how to persevere by always remembering that God is with us. Mary reminds us that God gives us strength and hope. That is why we are not discouraged when we face problems or challenges. We trust that God will help us to cope and to grow.

Reader 4: Let us now listen to a reading from the Bible, which describes how Mary trusted in God's plan for her and agreed to follow it whole-heartedly.



Bible reading: From the Gospel of St Luke 1:26-38 (adapted from Jerusalem Bible)

For an interactive interpretation of this scripture see Appendix 1.

Reader: God sent the angel Gabriel to a girl who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel said, “Rejoice! So highly favoured. The Lord is with you.”

Mary was troubled by what the angel said. She wondered, “What does this mean?”

But the angel said to her, “Mary, do not be afraid; because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David. He will rule over the people forever. His kingdom will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen?”

The angel said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God.

Mary said, “I am the servant of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me!”

The Gospel of the Lord **R/ Thanks be to God.**

Bible Reflection: We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

Q. How do you think Mary felt when she was asked by God to undertake such an important mission? Try to imagine how you might have felt, or think back to the reading as it gave us some clues.

Possible responses: troubled, nervous, afraid, excited.

Q. Mary responded by saying that she would accept God’s plan. What does this show us about the kind of person Mary was (and the virtues she possessed)?

Possible responses: She was courageous, humble, faithful, helpful, respectful, honest.

Q: At the end of the reading, Mary says that she is God’s ‘servant’. Can you think of other times in the Bible when Mary showed herself as someone who served and cared for the needs of others?

Possible responses: When Mary cared for her cousin Elizabeth; at the Cana wedding; when she stayed with Jesus on Good Friday; when she stayed with the anxious disciples after Easter Sunday.

Mary was someone who paid attention to others. She listened carefully to them so she knew what they needed. Then, through her prayers, she would ask for the help of Jesus and God the Father. Mary still prays to help others, if we ask her, she will pray with us for people who need help today.

Let’s do that now as we make our bidding prayers together.



Prayers of Intercession

Reader: The response to our prayer is: **Lord, hear us.**

Reader: God our Father, you asked Mary to undertake a very important mission, to bring your Son, Jesus, into the world. We ask Mary to pray for us, so we too may be brave enough to be missionaries of God's love in our world today. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: God our Father, we pray for all children around the world who will be honouring Mary this May. We ask Mary to pray for all of us, so that we, like Mary, are not discouraged by the problems we face but do what we can to help each other. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: God our Father, we pray for our Muslim sisters and brothers who also honour and respect Mary. We ask Mary to pray for all of us, that we may all follow her example and say 'yes' to sharing God's love and mercy with everyone, everywhere. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: God our Father, as the mother of Jesus Christ the King, we now call Mary the Queen of Heaven. We ask the Queen of Heaven to welcome those who have died, and to pray with us for those on earth who miss their loved ones in heaven. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: God our Father, we pray for children overseas whom Mission Together helps: those who are scared, sad, lonely, or sick. We ask Mary to pray with us, that all children find hope in Your love and that we may always be ready to help our brothers and sisters around the world. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: We end our prayers by saying together the ***Mission Together Prayer.***

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love,
Now and forever. Amen.

Closing hymn or recorded music

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Appendix 1: The Annunciation (adapted from Luke 1: 26-38)



Narrator: God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel said:

Gabriel: “Rejoice! So highly favoured. The Lord is with you.”

Narrator: Mary was troubled by what the angel said. She wondered to herself:

Mary: “What does this mean?”

Narrator: The angel said to her:

Gabriel: “Mary, do not be afraid; because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David. He will rule over the people forever. His kingdom will never end.”

Narrator: Mary said to the angel:

Mary: “How will this happen?”

Narrator: The angel said:

Gabriel: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God.

Narrator: Mary said:

Mary: “I am the servant of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me!”

Narrator: The Gospel of the Lord

Everyone: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.



Appendix 2: Activities for May

Set up a May Altar

Set up a dedicated area in the school with statues, pictures, candles, and holy cards of Our Lady and her son, Jesus. Provide opportunities for children to take flowers to present to Our Lady's altar.

Crowning Our Lady

Traditionally, crowns for Mary – Queen of the May – are made from Spring flowers, but you can also make a crown from paper flowers. Usually there is a procession with the crown before it is placed on Mary's head. Pupils could sing a Marian Hymn as they process with the crown (we suggest *Bring Flowers of the Rarest*). Pupils can also carry flowers to place at Mary's feet as they reach the statue. It is tradition for the youngest child preparing for, or who has made their First Holy Communion, who crowns Our Lady's statue.

Prayers for May Crowning

After children have crowned Mary, say the Hail Mary together. Depending on the age of the children, you could also pray a decade of the Mission Rosary, remembering to make clear that we ask Mary **to pray with us** for children around the world.

Decade a Day

The Mission Rosary is made up of five different colours, each representing a different continent. During May, invite your school to pray a decade a day for children around the world. Classes could divide up the task, so that over a week your school prays the whole rosary. Download *How to pray the Rosary* guide and complementary *Prayers for the Continents* from our website. There you will also find links to our *Online Mission Rosary*, recorded over lockdown by children across the country.

Visit a Marian Shrine

As well as your own school May Altar, plan a visit to a Church or Shrine dedicated to Mary (you may be fortunate to belong to a parish under Mary's patronage). Many parish churches have replica Lourdes Grottos in their grounds. A crowning service could take place here, with the Parish Priest taking part too.

Plant a Mary Garden

One of the traditional ways to honour Our Lady, popular during Medieval times, is planting a Mary Garden. Traditional Mary Gardens would contain herbs and flowers representative of Our Lady, such as Bluebells (originally called 'Our Lady's Thimbles'), Ox-Eye Daisy (once called Our Lady's Star), Rosemary (Mary's nosegay) and Marigolds (Mary's gold). Other Marian plants and flowers can be found online.

If you undertake any of the above, please tweet and tag @MissioUK and #missiontogether

Marian Feast Days in May:

May 13: Feast of Our Lady of Fatima (Mission Together also have a Five Fact Assembly to mark this feast).

May 24: Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians

May 31: Feast of Mary's Queenship

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Fundraising ideas



Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio – the Catholic Church's official children's charity for overseas mission. Thanks to children in England and Wales, we can provide life-changing aid around the world in whatever form it's needed. That could be a new school, feeding programme, or a generator for a children's home. Mission Together helps all children, regardless of background or beliefs. That's how we show the all-embracing nature of the Catholic Church and the true meaning of 'mission'.

Fundraising is a brilliant way to involve everyone in raising money for Mission Together. Below are a few Lenten ideas but you can find other ways to get involved throughout the year by visiting our webpage <https://missiontogether.org.uk/fundraising-ideas/>

Please **share your** fundraising events with us @missioUK, adding the hashtag #missiontogether

Ideas for Summer term

Weeding Week: while the days are sunny and warm, why not raise money by weeding gardens? Ask for suggested donation, or sponsorship per bag of weeds. Children can work alone, with friends, or siblings. Maybe green fingered children could also offer to plant and prune too. Who knows if your Weeding Week might inspire the next Monty Don!

Open air cinema: a big sheet, a projector and some fairy lights and you can host a magical movie night under the stars! Charge people entry to come and see movies on your outdoor screen. Invite whole families and make a big picnic of it.

Sports day fun: host a football tournament, sports day or outdoor activity day. Charge people to attend and sell refreshments. Prize for the tournament winners!

Sponsored swim, walk or cycle: get everyone involved in some outdoor fun once the weather's better. Could you get sponsored to walk a certain distance, or hold a sponsored swim?

Scavenger hunt: this is a great team activity! Print off some sheets with things to spot on them. You can tailor the items to be outdoors, indoors or whatever suits your space and environment. Either get teams to tick the items off or take pictures to prove they've found them. Charge teams to enter and give prizes for the fastest finishers.

Big summer BBQ: hold a family barbecue, street party or big picnic at your school. Serve up food and treats, hold stalls with tombolas and raffle prizes, even set up some games like hook a duck or skittles and quoits. The great thing about these events is that they can be as simple or involved as you like. Sell tickets to attend.

Ideas that work all year round

Bake Sale: you know what to do :)

Mufti-day: charge pupils to wear their own clothes or come in themed costumes. You could make this themed around the colours of the mission rosary.

Helping angels: encourage children to take on extra chores at home, for a donation to Mission Together or contribution to the Red Box.

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