

The Children who Prayed for Peace: The Story of Fatima in Five Facts



LEADER'S NOTES

This presentation lasts up to ten minutes. It has been written so that it can be pupil-led with older children guiding the younger ones. The readings on the slides have been written so that several readers may participate.

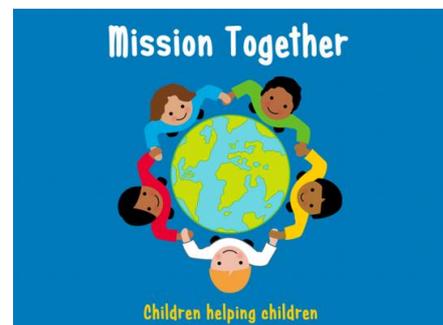
For slides two to six we suggest that the reader reads the **Fact headline** on the slide before reading the narrative below. After clicking and asking the question, allow time for children to respond. The responses are our suggestions and children may have their own ideas.

Although not essential, you may like to have a rosary beads and mission rosary beads to show.*

SLIDE ONE

Welcome to your Mission Together assembly!

In the **Mission Together** logo you can see that children are holding hands together and smiling. They are 'children helping children' and they look like they are giving the whole world a great big HUG! When children help children, through their prayers and by being kind, the world feels God's love in a special way.



The story we are going to hear is about three children who lived over 100 years ago in Portugal. The children lived during a very sad time when many countries around the world were fighting one another. It was a terrible war that lasted for four years and it is known as the First World War.

Lucia was ten years old and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta were nine and seven when something wonderful happened to them that would remind us all how important it is to pray.

SLIDE TWO

FACT ONE: Jesus' mother Mary appeared to Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta.

Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta were very poor, and their parents could not afford to send them to school. So instead of going to school every day the three children went out to the fields near their home in Fatima to look after their families' sheep.



One day when the children were in the fields, they saw a beautiful lady standing by a tree. The children described her as “more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light”. The lady told them not to be afraid. The lady was Mary, Jesus’ mother.

Occasionally we might feel afraid. At these times we should remember the words Mary spoke to the children, “do not be afraid”. These are the same words Jesus said to his followers many times.

Click for question.

What things can we do to help us feel less afraid?

Pause for children to respond.

We can pray or just sit quietly and be still with Jesus. We can talk to our families, our teachers, and our friends about our concerns. We can write a poem or a prayer or draw a picture about how we feel. We can play with our friends or go outside and get some exercise.

SLIDE THREE

FACT TWO: Mary said to them, “Pray the rosary every day for peace in the world and for the end of the war.”

Mary told the children that she had come from heaven to ask them to do something special. She asked the children to:

“Pray the rosary every day for peace in the world and for the end of the war.”



The rosary is a prayer we say to ask Mary to join our prayers with hers. Mary is our mother and, when we ask her, she brings all our concerns to Jesus to help us.

As the rosary is made up of many Hail Marys people often use rosary beads like the ones on screen to help them count their prayers.

Click for question.

Will you pray for peace?

Pause for children to respond.

The world still needs our prayers for peace. There are wars going on today and grown-ups continue to fight one another. Maybe you have heard about it?

Many children must flee their homes, their families and friends to travel to safety, like the girls in the photograph who fled their homes in Syria.

Our prayers can help them.**

SLIDE FOUR

FACT THREE: Big crowds gathered to join the children to pray for peace.

Our Lady appeared to the children several times after that first meeting. Word spread quickly and each time the children met with Mary to pray, huge crowds gathered in Fatima.

Even though nobody else could see Our Lady, many people came from all over Portugal to join the children to pray the rosary for peace. A year later, the war ended.

Click for question.

Who will you ask to join you to pray for peace?

Pause for children to respond.

We can ask our parents to pray with us, or a grandparent. We could even ask a brother or sister to join in. Why not make a special invitation with the date, place and time for them to pray with you for peace? Perhaps some of us at school could get together regularly to pray for peace.**

The photograph on screen shows children from St Joseph's Primary, Todmorden. Each week pupils are led in prayer by the school's chaplaincy team members.



SLIDE FIVE

FACT FOUR: 100 years after Mary had visited the children, Francisco and Jacinta were made saints.

Sadly, just after the end of the war, Francisco and Jacinta died. Lucia grew up and became a nun. That means that she left her home in Fatima and went to live with other women in a convent, where she spent her days praying. She was 97 when she died.

In 2017, Francisco and Jacinta were made saints by Pope Francis. This means that the Church believes that these two little children are now with Jesus and Mary in heaven. They are known as Saint Francisco and Saint Jacinta.***

Today there is a huge church in Fatima and people from all over the world come to see the place where Our Lady appeared to the children.

Click for question.

Today children all over the world pray the mission rosary. Can you join them?

Pause for children to respond.

If you have one, hold up a Mission Rosary beads.



Today children all over the world pray a special kind of rosary. It is called the mission rosary, like the one you can see on the slide. The five sets of coloured beads represent the five continents of the world: Africa (green), the Americas (red), Europe (white), Oceania (blue) and Asia (yellow).

As children pray on the colourful beads, they remember children who are living in that continent and how we all belong to one worldwide family with a loving Father in heaven. Perhaps we can join them?

SLIDE SIX

FACT FIVE: Children are important members of God’s worldwide family.

Just like you, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta loved to play and run about. But they soon realised that they had been given a very important job to do – one that Our Lady had given to them – humble, poor shepherd children – and **not** to the grown-ups!

Even though it was sometimes difficult for them to concentrate they tried very hard and often prayed together.

[Click for question.](#)

How will you show children everywhere that we all belong to God’s family?

Pause for children to respond.

Children around the world who support Mission Together pray for other children and share what they have so that children living in poverty overseas may be safe, happy and healthy; and that they might know how much God loves them.

Remember, all of us have an important part to play in bringing God’s love to other children and remember there are Mission Together children around the world who pray for us too, like the children on the slide who live in South America, Asia and Africa. **

SLIDE SEVEN

Before we end this assembly, we will hear something Jesus said to remind us how much he loves children and values our friendship.

‘Jesus said, “Let the children come to me. Anyone who is like these children belongs to God’s kingdom.”’

St Matthew 19:14 (adapted)

Jesus loves to hear children’s prayers. Jesus also wants children to pray with his mother, Mary, for peace, just as Lucia, Saint Francisco and Saint Jacinta did all those years ago.



SLIDE EIGHT

Let's end this assembly by beginning our prayers for peace, as we say together one Hail Mary followed by the Mission Together Prayer shown on the slide.

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



LEADERS' NOTES

This presentation has been prepared by Mission Together, the Pope's children's charity for world mission. Mission Together encourages children to help other children, through sharing what they have and by praying for children living in poverty overseas. 97% of money raised by children for Mission Together goes towards its work with children. Although all projects are Church-backed, Mission Together follows Christ's example – helping everyone in need, regardless of background or belief.

*To order mission rosaries and for information on how to use them to pray for God's global family, please visit: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/mission-rosary>

** The photograph shows some of the children around the world who are supported by Mission Together internationally. To find out more please visit: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/teachers-resources/>

***Like Francesco and Jacinta, Lucia devoted her life to loving God. But, unlike them, she has not yet been recognised by the Church as a saint. This is because she died in 2005 and it takes many years to become one. One element needed to be a saint is that a special favour or miracle has been granted through their prayers and intercession and this has not happened yet for Lucia. Nevertheless, all three children are a good example for us on how to live our lives well.

+Thank you to artist Nancy Gazella, who kindly gave us permission to use the icon of the children of Fatima. To see more of Nancy's work, please visit <http://www.nancygezella.com>