

9 WAYS TO PRAY THE ROSARY WITH KIDS

At some point along the way in their religious education at home, your child will learn the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," and "Glory be to the Father." And, at some point they will learn about the Blessed Mother. You will be the judge when the time is right to introduce the Rosary and there are a number of neat ways to do this with little ones. What follows are some great ideas you might want to consider. Make prayer fun and a part of your child's day from the start. You (and they) will never regret it!

(Editor's Note)

About a year ago, I started trying to figure out how to make a daily rosary plausible with my young family. At that point, our kids were 4, 2 and newborn. The 4 y/o was super crafty and energized by new things while the 2 y/o would destroy anything that crossed her path, especially a fragile rosary.

So, if I wanted to make this rosary thing work, I was going to have to get creative.

We've tried to complete the prayer in many shapes and forms over the past 365 days, here's a brief roundup of a few of them:

1. Sing it

If singing is praying twice, can we just sing 5 Hail Mary's and call it a decade? Just joking of course, I would NEVER use this excuse when it is 11 PM and my kids just want to go to bed and never pray again for another minute for the rest of their lives. Never. (The sarcasm is pretty thick here, I wonder if my readers are picking up on it.)

However, I did find it helpful to turn that last Hail Mary of each decade into a song. Each of the previous 9 Hail Mary's lead up to what they love, the singing part, which makes the process a little less droning and a lot more joyful.

2. Rosary Flowers

When I first started trying to figure out this whole "rosary with toddlers" thing I made an urgent appeal to my friends on Facebook. One told me about [Rosary Flowers](#). I'm no crocheter, but I loved the idea so we whipped up some fake flowers made of pipe cleaners and tissue paper and told the kiddos to place them in a small basket after each Hail Mary. We told them that each prayer was gift we gave to Mary so, naturally, we placed the basket underneath the image of Our Lady. Bonus points if you can teach them about St. Terese the Little Flower while you try this method.

3. Rosary Garden

This one is a dream of mine. In some not-so near future I'd like to purchase a couple of acres of flat land and create a *Rosary Garden*. Each Our Father would be a solid Oak tree and each Hail Mary a Skyrocket Juniper. Together, these trees would circle around a bed of flowers representing each mystery. I haven't figured out which flowers would represent which mystery, but you get the idea. The goal would be to attract people to walk around the "living" rosary and pray together at each tree.

On a smaller scale, you can do this with your own garden if it is big enough. Plant 10 of the

same plant, flower, tree in a sequence and use those as your rosary beads. We haven't done it yet with out family, but someday, who knows, my dream might come true.

4. Draw it with Sidewalk Chalk

Loved this one, especially for my 2 y/o. We use sidewalk chalk at least twice a day in the summer and circles are a hot shape to draw when you are a toddler. So, we draw them big enough to jump into and on each jump, we pray to Our Lady. Not only do they get the spiritual charge-up, but they get tired enough to want to take a nap afterwards. Parenting Win.

5. Make it Edible

In lieu of an actual rosary, we put 11 pieces of food into a bowl, one for the Our Father and ten for the Hail Mary's. Each child would hold the piece of food in their hand while they led that particular prayer. Once they finished, they could dig in while the other child would lead the next prayer.

This worked out really well in helping the kids learn how to say the prayers. If they didn't say the prayers, they simply didn't eat their food. Make sure to not use big portions as the recitation of the Hail Mary tends to go quick and if your kid is still munching down on an apple slice when it is their turn to lead the prayer, things get weird.

Instead, use any small food especially

- M & Ms
- Pieces of small fruit like grapes, strawberries, blueberries etc.
- Cereals like Lucky Charms (marshmallows alone is an awesome recommendation), Cheerios, Cinnamon Toast Crunch etc. But don't go too tiny (like Fruity Pebbles) or too not-tasty (like Raisin Bran), they'll learn to hate the rosary for life. Oh, and animal crackers work well too.

6. Handmade Cocoa Puff Rosary

The best cereal to use is by far Cocoa Puffs. In fact, with Cocoa Puffs, a needle and a thin string you could even make your own rosary and bite each Hail Mary off as you go. Genius points if you can figure out how to make a 2 y/o make one of those though.

7. Use Sacred Art

PB & Grace publishers has a REALLY cool series of books out called [*The Illuminated Rosary: Pray the Mysteries of the Rosary with Sixty Works of Sacred Art*](#). I am purchasing these as soon I can because I used to go to the trouble of finding Sacred Art of each mystery and saving them to my iPad photos to show to my kids as we prayed. If there is ONE thing that can make our prayer time go completely chaotic, it is the introduction of an iPad into the service.

These books change all of that. Check it out:

8. Use Your Fingers

We oftentimes find ourselves away from the house (or too lazy to get the rosaries off of the shelf) and we have the kids use their fingers to keep track of the prayers. They like this from time to time. The tired and baddy-eyed versions of us do to.

9. Go the Traditional Route

The rosary itself is a thing of beauty. The Blessed Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said, *“The Rosary is the best therapy for these distraught, unhappy, fearful, and frustrated souls, precisely because it involves the simultaneous use of three powers: the physical, the vocal, and the spiritual, and in that order.”*

With toddlers, all of those powers are constantly in formation, but that physical side of our prayer life is one that children so often respond to best. Unfortunately, it is also the part that adults so often neglect.

Go to the nearest Catholic religious goods store and have your toddler pick out the rosary he/she likes best. It can be [big](#), his/her favorite color, it can even be [basketballs](#). Once it is in their hands, teach them to handle it with care and how to use their fingers to count each prayer as you go. You’ll find that the rosary alone is indeed quite effective. In fact, our family no longer does any of the other methods previously mentioned in this blogpost because we found that kids love their rosaries more than the food and activities we offered them!

Note that we still are only on a decade a day. Our kids simply can’t handle a full-on 5 decade rosary at this point. We do, however, hope that we are laying a firm foundation for their future prayer habits. We are praying as a family and that is always such a challenge, but one that we willingly (and only sometimes grudgingly) accept. Our goal is to imitate the Holy Family and the rosary helps us do that better than any other method.

What about you, how do you pray the rosary with your family? Or, do you do any other awesome prayers with them?

From an article by TJ Burdick (from the Aug 18, 2015 Blog of "Everything Else Mary, Parenting, Teaching")