

Lesson objective

To help children understand the special nature of a rosary, its use as an aid for prayer, and to specifically introduce the Mission Rosary as a symbol of prayer for the continents.

Useful facts

- The tradition of the rosary goes back to the third century when monks used prayer ropes to help them pray.
- The structure of the rosary developed between the 12th and 15th centuries when it got the name *rosarium* meaning 'rose garden' or 'garland.'
- The term rosary was first used in 1597.
- When saying the rosary we meditate on the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous mysteries of Our Lord's life.
- Pope St John Paul II added the Luminous Mysteries in 2002.



Introduction

Show the children a regular rosary and ask them if they know what it is called and what it is used for. Elicit that the rosary is used to help us pray and think about Jesus. Point out the cross and ask the children what it means. Elicit that it represents Jesus on the cross and introduce the term 'crucifix.' Explain that the rosary is very special and that we should treat it with respect, so that when they are given a rosary they know to look after it.

Explain that you are about to show the children a very special rosary then produce the Mission Rosary. Ask the children to identify how it is different from the other rosary and encourage them to recognise the different colours. Tell the children that this colourful rosary is called the Mission Rosary and that it is made of all these colours for a particular reason. Explain that when we pray the Mission Rosary, we are using it to help us pray for all the children around the world, because each colour represents a different continent.

Ask if the children know what a continent is and explain that it is a group of countries, usually separated from other continents by the sea. Bring out a globe or map and invite the children to explore it by indicating some countries and continents on it.

Explain that we need to pray for children around the world, so that they may have a better education, better access to healthcare, that their welfare is taken care of and they enjoy a better standard of living overall. Make it clear to the children that this is why praying the Mission Rosary—and remembering other children as we do so—is so important.

Activities

Below are some suggested Mission Rosary Activities you might like to try with your class.

Early Years

Explain to the children that we are now going to think about children in different continents. To do this, invite them to join in singing the song *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*. Change the lyrics of the verses to 'He's got children in Africa...' with each verse focusing on a different continent. Before each verse, pause for a moment and introduce the children to the continent. Indicate the continent on a map or globe and name a couple of countries in that continent. Then, if possible, produce an item from that continent to represent it, for example some African clothing or an Asian instrument. Perhaps ask the children to guess what the item is and what it is for. Explain where it comes from and give it to a child to hold, wear, or play. You may like to pass it round the circle during the song. Do this with the items one at a time at the start of each verse. Finish by singing a verse with the lyrics, 'He's got the whole world...'

Middle school

Explain to the children that we are now going to think about children in different continents. Begin by saying the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, just like at the start of the rosary. You may like to have given out the Mission Rosaries by this point so that the children can use the beads. When you come to the start of each decade, point out the colour and explain which continent that represents. Indicate the continent on a map or globe and name a couple of countries in it. Then, if possible, produce an item from that continent to represent it. Ask the children to guess what the item is and then invite a child to hold it, wear it, or play it. Pray one of the Worldwide Prayers for that continent together. Do this with each continent in turn and finish with the Missionary Children Prayer. You may like to play a game where the children form a circle to become a physical rosary. Go round the circle naming the continent then the prayers said in order: Our Father, ten Hail Marys and the Glory Be.

Upper school

Explain to the children that we are now going to use the Mission Rosary to think about children in different continents. Begin by saying the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, just like at the start of the rosary. You may like to have given out the Mission Rosaries by this point so that the children can use the beads. When you come to the start of each decade, point out the colour and explain which continent that represents. Ask the children to indicate the continent on a map or globe and name a couple of countries in it. Then, if possible, produce an item from that continent to represent it. Ask the children to guess what the item is and then invite a child to hold it, wear it, or play it. Pray one of the Worldwide Prayers for that continent together. Do this with each continent in turn. You may like to ask the children to contribute their own prayers for each continent or to write a prayer for children around the world in the Mission Rosary template we have supplied, which can be found online.