# Index of Downloads

Guide to event downloads and how many copies to make of each

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Join Us for an Intergenerational Event

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

A presentation, a prayer service, and a variety of family activity centers for adults and children of all ages

Date:

Time:

Place:

- Bring your children or grandchildren and join your parish family to learn about Mary and celebrate her acceptance of God’s call.
- Grow in your understanding of Mary as Mother of God, as the Greatest of Saints, and as a model for our lives.
- Learn how to make your own rosary and prayer banner.
- Meet your fellow parishioners in a fun, prayerful, and interactive setting.

Please contact us if you plan to attend, providing us with the number of people in your group.

Phone:

E-mail:

Please RSVP by:
Greeting and Overview

Welcome! Today we have gathered to talk about a very special woman. Her name is Mary of Nazareth. When Mary was a young girl—maybe about as old as [name of teen-aged girl in the audience]—she was asked by God to become the mother of God’s only son, Jesus. What a big request for such a young girl! But Mary knew that she could handle it with God’s help. She loved God and trusted that whatever God asked of her, he would be sure to guide and support her in carrying out his will.

Though God was always with Mary, as he is with us, Mary still went through the joys and struggles of life that you and I encounter. She had a loving husband and relatives whom she cared about and visited even while she was pregnant. Who can tell me the names of her relatives? (Elizabeth and Zechariah) Elizabeth was pregnant at the time, too. Who was her child, the one who helped prepare the way for Jesus? (John the Baptist) Once Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had all the responsibilities that young parents today have. They had to feed him, protect him, and make sure he went to school. They had to teach him about his faith and about God the Father. What are some other things that you think Mary did to take care of Jesus? Who are people in your life who take care of you the way Mary took care of Jesus?

Mary was important to Jesus just as each person you mentioned is important to you. She helped Jesus become a loving and holy person just as our family helps us become who we are.

Guided Meditation

Let’s take some time now to place ourselves back in the time when Jesus was a child. Imagine that you go to school with Jesus and count him as one of your good friends. Your parents know Mary and Joseph and often get together with them to talk or pray or share a meal. To help us picture this in our minds, let’s make sure we are all relaxed and sitting comfortably. Take a deep

Continued on next page
breath in and close your eyes . . . now breathe out . . . feel yourself relaxing and clearing your mind of everything . . . take another deep breath in . . . and breathe out. Keep your eyes closed and imagine that you are a young person just returning from a trip to the city of Jerusalem with your family. You are walking on a hot, dusty road in the time of Jesus. Feel the gritty sand in your sandals and the sun warming your shoulders. Do you hear the noise of all the people and animals traveling in your caravan? Take a moment to use your imagination to look around you and see all the hustle and bustle. It’s noisy and crowded, and everyone is jostled as travelers guide donkeys carrying their belongings.

Now imagine that your friend Jesus’ mom comes up to you. Mary tousles your hair and says, “I need to talk to Jesus; I gather he’s been traveling with you.” You reply, “No, Mary, I haven’t seen Jesus since we left Jerusalem.” Mary’s smile is replaced with concern. “If he’s not with you, then he must be with other friends or relatives in our caravan.” You watch as Mary and Joseph ask others in the group. Where could Jesus be? No one seems to know. Now you are feeling frantic and worried for your friend. You can’t imagine how worried his parents must be. You search high and low for him. When Mary and Joseph decide to return to Jerusalem to look for Jesus, your parents send you along with them to help.

It’s a long walk back to the city. You wonder whether Jesus stopped to eat or play and got lost. He must be alone and scared. Finally, you reach Jerusalem and ask everyone you meet whether they have seen a 12-year-old boy named Jesus. It’s hot. You’re tired and worried about your friend. Suddenly you feel a cool breeze. You look up and realize that you are standing in the shadow of the huge and beautiful Temple. You remember how much Jesus loved being in the Temple before you left Jerusalem. You remember how peaceful it felt and how Jesus looked at home there. Mary and Joseph lead you inside the Temple gates. And then you see him! Jesus is sitting and talking with the teachers. You see relief in Mary’s face. Mary says to Jesus, “Son, why have you done this? Your father and I have been looking for you. We were so worried!” But Jesus says, “Why were you looking for me? Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?” You don’t understand what Jesus means by that, but
you are very happy that he is safe. Take some time to quietly talk with Jesus. Tell him how happy you are to see him. When you are done, open your eyes.

*Invite a discussion about the meditation.*

We’ve been on quite a journey with Mary and gotten to know her a little bit better.

✶ How do you think Mary felt when she was searching for Jesus? *(frightened, etc.)*

✶ Why was Mary worried? *(Jesus could have been hurt; she loved him; etc.)*

✶ When Mary found Jesus, how did she react? *(She was upset but relieved.)*

It must have been hard for Mary to understand Jesus sometimes, but he must have loved and respected his mother very much. The Bible says that after Jesus was found in the Temple, he went with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth “and was obedient to them . . . and Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.”

*Introduce the three main points of the event.*

Because Mary was Jesus’ mother and loved him dearly, we honor her and respect her and try to be like her. She has always had an important role not only in Jesus’ life but in the life of the first Christian community. Today we continue to look to Mary as the Mother of God, the greatest of the saints, and a model of following Jesus.

**Mary is the Mother of God.**

Mary is called the Mother of God because her son, Jesus, was God. The importance of Mary as Mother of God lies not only in that Mary was the woman who gave birth to Jesus, but in that she was the one who had faith in God and freely said yes to participate in God’s wonderful plan of salvation. In Mary was conceived the Savior of the world—God’s word became a living person in her and through her. Mary spent her whole life saying yes to God, never losing faith even when her Son suffered and died. As Mother of God, Mary is also our mother, the Mother of the Church, because she leads believers to Jesus just as she did during her life on earth.

*Continued on next page*
Mary is the greatest of saints.

We often refer to Mary as Saint Mary. Who can tell me what a saint is? *(a holy person, a model for us)* Out of all of the saints, Mary is the greatest. Can anyone tell me why this might be? *(She is the Mother of God; she was the first to believe in Jesus; etc.)* Mary is the greatest of saints because she always listened to God and did his will. She used her gifts from God and let everything that she said, did, or thought reflect her faith in and love of God. We pray the Hail Mary and other prayers not just to honor Mary but to grow in relationship with God.

When we pray Marian prayers or ask any of the saints for help, it is important to realize that we are not praying to Mary or the saints, but through them to Jesus. This is called intercessory prayer; because we are all united to God through Jesus, we intercede for one another as an expression of our unity. We care for one another by praying for one another. We can ask Mary and the saints to pray for us, too.

Let me give you an example from everyday life. *(Note: please adapt this example to your parish)* Let’s say Lance Armstrong is in town for a charity event. I really want to meet him and thank him personally for being such an inspiration to me. But I don’t know how to get in touch with him. My friend Jenn, who has been working with Lance on this charity event, says that she will speak to him on my behalf. In this case, I presented Jenn with my need, and Jenn interceded with Lance on my behalf. In the same way, we sometimes present our needs to Mary and the saints so that they may intercede with Jesus on our behalf. Because we are all united in Christ, we help one another out. As his mother and a saint close to his heart, Mary helps us talk to Jesus.

Mary is our model as followers of Jesus.

Mary, like all the saints, is our model as followers of Jesus. She is the most profound and enduring model of faith because, throughout her life, she said yes to God. She said yes when she was asked to become the Mother of Jesus, even though she knew it wouldn’t be easy. She welcomed God’s will in her life: offering her praise and thanks in times of joy, offering her wisdom and patience as Jesus was growing in his ministry, and finally, offering her
considerable strength when she had to face the most painful thing any parent could endure: the loss of her dearly loved child. In these and many other ways, she served God her whole life. We can look to Mary as an example of how to follow Jesus. She teaches us and guides us in our lives today. We only have to ask, and she is there, giving us a loving hug, or some wise advice, or the strength to face things we don’t feel strong enough to face alone.

Conclusion
We honor Mary today, and we are not alone. People of many different countries and religions honor her. She has been an inspiration to people throughout history. [If your parish carries one of the many names of Mary, you might want to speak further about the name of your parish, displaying any artwork or other resources your parish has that illustrate the name.]

Let’s think back to what we have learned about Mary.

1) Mary is the Mother of God, because Jesus is God and because Mary trusted in God.

2) Mary is the greatest of the saints. We can pray through her to Jesus.

3) Mary is our model as followers of Jesus.

Introduce the activity centers.
There are many beautiful prayers for Mary that you will learn today in your activity centers. In particular, you will have the opportunity to make a string of beads that will help you learn about Jesus’ life and the teachings about Mary. Who can tell me what that string of beads is? (The rosary) [If you have a large rosary, hold it up so all can see.]

In another activity center, you will have the opportunity to make prayer banners that celebrate Mary. Choose your favorite Marian prayers and symbols of Our Lady to create a reminder in your home of her great faith and love. [Hold up a completed banner.]

In the Story Wall Activity Center, you will see 10 illustrations of important events in Mary’s life. Pick up a story sheet and learn more about each event.
Discover how this extraordinary person can make each of our own lives richer and more filled with faith. If you would like, you will have a chance to tell your own “eleventh” story of how Mary has guided you in your life.

**Introduce the Take-Home Kits.**

Before you begin to work in the activity center of your choice, be sure to pick up one of these Take-Home Kits and write your family’s name on it. Each one is filled with resources that will tell you more about what the Bible and Church tradition teach about Mary. [Hold up a Take-Home Kit and give a short description of the items in it.]

Once we finish with the activity centers, we will all gather again for a prayer service. [If you are going to incorporate some of your parish resources (dance troupe, choir, etc.), this is a good time to introduce and thank the people who will be performing.]

**Transition to Activity Centers.**
Intergenerational Event—Mary

Take-Home Kit Labels—use Avery labels 5262

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

(family name)

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

(family name)

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

(family name)

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

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Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

(family name)

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

(family name)

Mary: The Yes That Changed the World

(family name)
Introduction

The Rosary is a central element in the prayer lives of Catholics throughout the world. Even some non-Catholics have found solace in praying the Rosary. This is not so surprising when we consider that repetition—especially in the comforting rhythm of prayer—is a natural human tendency, and the feel of beads on a cord is as soothing to the body as the repeated words of prayer are to the mind.

The Rosary is fundamentally a prayer that helps us to connect with God and to grow in relationship with him. Through repetition of prayers from our Catholic tradition, the use of our imagination to contemplate the mysteries in the life of Jesus and Mary, and the physical discipline of fingering each bead, our whole being is brought into prayer. Mind, body, and spirit are united in the act of opening oneself to God. To pray the Rosary individually or with our family is to recognize the inherent connectedness we have with one another through Christ our Lord.

The History of the Rosary

The string of rosary beads that we know today developed over time. Counting prayers on strings of beads or knotted cords is a practice that originated well before the time of Christ. It’s difficult to know exactly who first started this practice or when; however, archaeological evidence points to the Hindus in ancient India. They used a string of beads called a *mala* (which translates as “rose” or “garland”) to count repeated sacred words. Buddhists adopted this practice, and as Buddhism spread, so did the practice. Within Judaism, prayer beads were forbidden; however, the Jewish prayer shawl or *tallith* had a set number of tassels that could be used to keep track of prayers.

Within Christianity, there is some evidence that third-century Christians used pebbles or seeds to keep track of their prayers. In the sixth century, Saint Benedict encouraged his monks to pray all 150 psalms. In imitation

Continued on next page
of this practice, the common people would pray 150 Our Fathers using a string of beads to keep track. This string of beads was called a Paternoster, which is Latin for “Our Father.” It was not until the middle of the 12th century that the Hail Mary was used as a devotion. We don’t know how long it took to incorporate both the Hail Mary and the Our Father or how the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries came to be, but in 1568 the prayer was formalized as we know it today. In 2002, Pope John Paul II added the Luminous Mysteries.

Why, after almost 450 years, did Pope John Paul II add the five mysteries that make up the Luminous Mysteries, or Mysteries of Light as they are sometimes called? The pope, who had a special devotion to Our Lady, proposed the new mysteries because the existing mysteries did not account for Jesus’ life from the time of his Baptism to his passion. Since the Rosary is a prayer that helps us contemplate Christ, it made sense to include Jesus’ public life of ministry.

**You Are a Part of the Rosary’s History**

With all the challenges that families face, having a prayer that brings the family together with Christ can not only strengthen the family but be a powerful witness to the world.

The Rosary can be prayed anywhere—around the dining room table, in the living room, or on a road trip in the car—wherever the family can be at ease with one another. Each family member can take a turn at leading the Rosary. Each one of you can share your concerns or intentions before beginning or share your reflections on the mysteries afterward.

While the basic structure of the Rosary does not change, praying the Rosary can be adapted to your family’s needs. You can pray one decade each day or once each week. You can pray with one single mystery or reflect on a whole set of mysteries. There are many online resources which will give you further ideas. The most essential part of the Rosary is that you join together with your family united with God and reflect on Christ’s life and the faithfulness of his mother, Mary.
The Mysteries of the Rosary

Family Handout

When we pray the mysteries of the Rosary, we reflect on the special events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. For more resources and information about Mary and the Rosary, go to www.ChristOurLife.org/Mary or www.FindingGod.org/Mary.

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES
The joy of Jesus’ birth and the Father’s plan of salvation

- The Annunciation
- The Visitation
- The Birth of Jesus
- The Presentation
- The Finding of Jesus

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES
The Kingdom of God revealed in the person of Jesus

- The Baptism of Jesus
- The Wedding at Cana
- Proclamation of the Kingdom
- The Transfiguration
- The Institution of the Eucharist

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES
The culmination of God’s love and plan of salvation

- The Agony in the Garden
- The Scourging
- The Crowning with Thorns
- The Carrying of the Cross
- The Death of Our Lord

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES
The joy of the risen Jesus and our invitation to new life

- The Resurrection
- The Ascension
- The Coming of the Holy Spirit
- The Assumption
- The Crowning of Mary
A Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Family Handout

The praying of novenas is a time-honored Catholic tradition. This handout provides some basic information about novenas and a novena to Mary that you can pray with your family in preparation for a Marian feast or for a special intention.

What is a novena?

A novena is a prayer that lasts nine days. Why nine? It goes back to the time of the early Christian community when Mary and the disciples waited prayerfully for nine days from Jesus’ Ascension to the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts of the Apostles 1:12–14).

Why pray a novena?

When we have a special need or intention or want to celebrate a special feast, we may make a novena. Novenas may be made individually or with others. One of the most well-known novenas is prayed during the nine days before the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12.

How do we pray a novena?

Novenas vary widely in terms of the particular prayers, hymns, and scripture used. The commonality is in the fact that whatever format is used, it is prayed the same way each of the nine days.

What happens if we forget a day?

If you forget a day, don’t worry. Just continue the next day. There is nothing magical about praying a novena or superstitious about praying nine consecutive days. Novenas help us to get into the habit of, in Saint Paul’s words, “praying without ceasing.”

Continued on next page
A Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Family Handout (continued)

A Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary

❖ Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

❖ Sing a Marian hymn such as “Immaculate Mary,” “Hail Holy Queen,” “Ave Maria,” or another of your choosing.

❖ Pray Psalm 46. The psalm speaks of God’s presence with us in all things. The following antiphon is said by all at the beginning and end of the psalm. “You are the beloved Mother of God, O Mary, lead us to your Son.” Reverently read the psalm from the Bible. Each family member may take a section of the psalm.

❖ After the concluding antiphon, one family member leads the family in quiet prayer.

Leader: Let us pray: [Pause for quiet prayer.]

Great Mother of God
and mother of all the living,
as we honor you in your mysteries,
listen to our devout prayers
and stand by us in our every need.
We reverence you and worship your divine Son
who is the Savior of the world
and our living Lord, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

❖ Proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. Reverently read Luke 1:35,37–38 from the Bible. After the reading, take a few moments of silence to allow God to speak to you. Then pray the following response.

Leader: Blessed are you among women, O Mary

All: And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

❖ Pray the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) or a Marian Litany together.

Continued on next page
Lead the family in the concluding Novena Prayer.

**Leader:** We turn to you for protection, holy Mother of God. Listen to our prayers and help us in our needs. [Here we state our needs.] Save us from every danger, glorious and blessed Virgin.

Mary, Queen of All Saints [Make the Sign of the Cross.] intercede for us with the Lord.

**All:** Amen.

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¹ This Novena was adapted from *Novenas: Prayers of Intercession and Devotion*. Ed. William G. Storey. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2005.
Explore Marian Doctrine

Family Handout

There are important teachings about Mary that the Church has formally defined or declared. Consider learning and discussing one each week at Sunday dinner.

1. Mary is the Mother of God.
   - Mary is the Mother of God because she gave birth to Jesus who is God. She is also the Mother of God because she had faith in God and freely said yes to participate in God’s wonderful plan of salvation.
   - In the fifth century, the leaders of the Church affirmed this important mystery of our faith (Council of Ephesus, 431) and declared it a dogma (Council of Chalcedon, 451).

2. Mary is ever virgin.
   - Mary conceived of and gave birth to Jesus as a virgin. She remained a virgin for the rest of her life.
   - Since its earliest formulations of faith, the Church has held this belief about Mary’s perpetual virginity. In 649 the Council of the Lateran affirmed this belief as an important part of the Church’s teaching about Mary. Later councils reaffirmed it.

3. Mary was free from original sin from the moment of her conception and throughout her life.
   - We call this unique grace that God gave to Mary the Immaculate Conception.
   - This teaching is in accord with the Church’s faith and was proclaimed a dogma by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. This feast continues to be celebrated in the Church on this day.

4. Mary was assumed into heaven.
   - When Mary’s life on earth was completed, she was fully drawn into the life of God.
   - Pope Pius XII proclaimed Mary’s Assumption a dogma in 1950. We celebrate Mary’s Assumption in the fourth glorious mystery of the Rosary.
Celebrate the Feasts of Mary

*Family Handout*

Mary’s yes to God changed the world. Your family can honor Mary and remember her faithfulness, her courage, and her trust in God on her feast days. Here are some of the important feasts of Mary that we celebrate each year.

- Mary, the Mother of God—January 1
- Our Lady of Lourdes—February 11
- The Annunciation—March 25
- Our Lady of Fatima—May 13
- The Visitation—May 31
- Our Mother of Perpetual Help—June 27
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel—July 16
- The Assumption—August 15
- The Queenship of Mary—August 22
- The Nativity—September 8
- The Holy Name of Mary—September 12
- Our Lady of Sorrows—September 15
- Our Lady of the Rosary—October 7
- The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary—November 21
- The Immaculate Conception—December 8
- Our Lady of Guadalupe—December 12
Instructions:
Select a bag of supplies. Each kit will include 53 beads of one color for each Hail Mary, 6 beads of a different color for each Our Father, one crucifix, and a piece of cord with a dot marked six inches from one end.

Sort the Hail Mary beads into 5 groups of 10 and one group of 3. Put the 6 Our Father beads together. Stretch out the piece of cord, straightening out any kinks.

Steps:
1. Find the dot on the cord and tie a knot there. [See tip below.]
2. String 10 Hail Mary beads onto the long end of the cord. Slide them down so that they line up above the knot.
3. Tie another knot above the 10 beads, leaving a little space for them to slide.
4. Add an Our Father bead and tie another knot.
5. Continue the three previous steps until you have 5 sets of 10 beads, but don’t add the fifth Our Father bead yet.
6. Tie a knot at the end. Then, tie both ends together, forming a circle of beads. Pull that knot tight. Dab a little adhesive or clear nail polish on the knot to secure it.
7. Add one Our Father bead to the longer piece of cord.
8. Tie a knot, and then add three Hail Mary beads.
9. Tie a knot, add the last Our Father bead and tie another knot.
10. Secure the crucifix by tying a double knot. Pull the knot tight and dab a little adhesive or clear nail polish on it.
11. Once the adhesive or nail polish is dry, clip off the excess cords, hold your rosary, and say a prayer for your family.
12. You may wish to have your rosary blessed by a priest.

How to Tie Knots: First, determine where you want the knot to be. Second, make a loose knot near that point. Take the tip of a toothpick and, threading through the loose knot, press down on the spot on the cord where you want to place the knot. Then gently slide and tighten the loose knot around the point of the toothpick.
Rosary Activity Center
Family Handout: Diagram

Use this diagram with the instruction sheet to make a family rosary. The numbers on this diagram refer to the numbered instructions on page one of this handout.

1. STARTING knot
2. [repeat steps 2, 3, & 4 for each section]
3. Proceed this direction.
4. knots
5. six-inch starting cord [clip at step 11]
6. knot
7. double knot
8. knot
9. excess ending cord [clip at step 11]
10. knot
11. knot
12. knot
The Rosary is a prayer that engages both the hands and the heart. The feel of the rosary beads and the repetition of the prayers soothe and prepare us to open our hearts to God. Each mystery tells a story from the lives of Jesus and Mary. Praying the Rosary helps us share in their experiences.

1. Pray the Sign of the Cross and the Apostles' Creed.
2. Pray the Our Father.
3. Pray three Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father.
4. Think about the first mystery. Pray the Our Father.
5. Pray ten Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father.
6. Think about the second mystery. Pray the Our Father.
7. Pray ten Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father.
8. Think about the third mystery. Pray the Our Father.
9. Pray ten Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father.
10. Think about the fourth mystery. Pray the Our Father.
11. Pray ten Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father.
12. Think about the fifth mystery. Pray the Our Father.
13. Pray ten Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father.
Prayer Banner Activity Center

Family Handout

Mary is the Mother of God. In this role, she offers families inspiration, comfort, and prayers on our behalf. Place this banner in your home as a reminder to pray often and to turn to Mary for help.

Using the materials provided, create a family prayer banner.

- Measure three inches from the top of the banner. At the three-inch mark, fold over the top of the banner to create a flap. This flap is what you will use to secure the banner to the hanger.
- Ask your children to write your family’s name on the banner.
- As a family, select the Marian prayers and images you would like to put on your family’s banner.
- Cut out the prayers and images, then decorate them with the art materials provided.
- Glue the prayers and images onto the banner. Add any additional decorations you would like.
- Select a coat hanger and decorate it by wrapping the “shoulder” of the hanger in ribbon or yarn, making a bow at the “neck” of the hanger.
- Fold the flap over the bottom bar of the coat hanger. Staple the flap into place around the hanger bar.
- Bring the banner home and hang it in a prominent place. Pray the prayers with your family often.
Carefully clip out at least two of the prayers on these two pages and paste them onto your family prayer banner.

**HAIL MARY**
Hail Mary, full of grace,  
The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
own and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

**HAIL, HOLY QUEEN**
Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy,  
hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.  
To you we cry, the children of Eve;  
to you we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this land of exile.  
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,  
your eyes of mercy toward us;  
lead us home at last  
and show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus:  
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.
To Abraham and his children forever, the promise he made to our fathers, for he has remembered his promise of mercy, He has come to the help of his servant Israel, and has raised his holy child to prosperity, He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, He has scattered the proud in their conceit, He has shown the strength of his arm, in every generation, He has mercy on those who fear him, and holy is his Name, the Almighty has done great things for me, From this day all generations will call me blessed: for he has looked on his lowly servant; My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, My spirit rejoices in God my Savior; My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, Amen.
Prayer Banner Activity Center

Family Handout: Marian Symbols

Cut out and decorate your choice of symbols and paste them onto your family prayer banner.
Prayerfully read each story aloud to your family. For each one, find the corresponding event on the Story Wall. These moments in Mary’s life offer us the opportunity to learn from her and emulate her response to God. Mary teaches us how to lead our lives in faith and hope and love.

Annunciation

*Scripture Verses: Luke 1:26–38*

Mary was living in the town of Nazareth when she received a very special visitor. God’s messenger, the angel Gabriel, came to Mary! Gabriel said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you. God has found favor with you. You will be the mother of Jesus, the Son of the Most High.” Mary responded by saying yes! “I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

*Mary’s complete trust in God, her faithfulness, and her acceptance of God’s plan are beautiful examples of how we are to respond to God’s word to each one of us. Jesus, help us to say yes to you.*

Visitation

*Scripture Verses: Luke 1:39–45*

Mary had learned from the angel that her relative Elizabeth was also going to have a baby. Mary went on a difficult journey to see her. Elizabeth’s son would grow up to be John the Baptist, the prophet who prepared the way for Jesus. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s voice, she cried out, “Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” Elizabeth called Mary blessed because she knew that Mary was going to be the mother of God’s Son.

*Though Mary’s life is about to change dramatically, she still takes the time to celebrate with and help her dear friend Elizabeth. Jesus, help us to be as loving and generous as Mary is.*
Journey to Bethlehem

*Scripture Verses: Luke 2:1–5*

When Mary was close to giving birth, she and Joseph had to go on a journey to Bethlehem. The government required every family to return to their hometown to be counted for a census. Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because it was the home of Joseph’s ancestors, the family of David. When Mary and Joseph finally got to Bethlehem, the city was so crowded with people that Mary and Joseph could not find any place to stay.

*Mary and Joseph supported each other on this difficult journey and trusted in God that all would be well. Jesus, help us to support each other as a family even when things are tough.*

Birth of Jesus


Mary and Joseph found a humble stable to stay in. There, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in warm clothes and laid him in a manger. The Gospel writer Luke tells us that not far away there were shepherds keeping watch over their sheep. An angel came to them and told them that the Savior had been born! The shepherds were the first to hear the good news of Jesus’ birth. They went to the stable to worship the Savior. The Gospel writer Matthew tells us that a star guided wise men from the East to Jesus after he was born. Like the shepherds, the wise men also came to worship Jesus.

*The good news of the Savior’s birth was announced to humble shepherds and respected wise men alike. Jesus, thank you for coming to live among us and for teaching us that you came to redeem all people and all of creation.*

Flight into Egypt

*Scripture Verse: Matthew 2:13–23*

From the Magi, King Herod heard that a child had been born to a Jewish couple from the family of David. Herod wanted to get rid of the child because the child was the newborn king of the Jews. Herod was worried that this new king would challenge his authority. Because Herod couldn’t find Jesus, he ordered that all boys two years old and younger be killed. An angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him of what was happening. The Holy Family escaped to Egypt and stayed there until Herod died. Then they returned to Nazareth.

*Continued on next page*
Mary and Joseph became refugees so that they could protect their son. Jesus, thank you for all the parents and people who sacrifice to protect and provide for us.

**Finding Jesus in the Temple**

*Scripture Verse: Luke 2:41–52*

When Jesus was 12 years old, Mary and Joseph traveled with him to the holy city of Jerusalem for Passover. On their way back to Nazareth they discovered that he was missing. They returned to Jerusalem to look for him, and after three days they found him in the Temple. There, he was sitting with the teachers, who were amazed at his answers to difficult questions. Mary said, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” Jesus responded, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” Then he returned to Nazareth with them, “was obedient to them” and grew “in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.”

Following the path that God has set for us and for our loved ones can lead to separation, but separation can never break the bonds of our love for each other and for God. Jesus, may I always know how much I am loved.

**Wedding Feast at Cana**

*Scripture Verse: John 2:1–12*

Jesus’ public ministry begins with a miracle at the wedding of friends. In the course of the celebration, the hosts began to run out of wine. Mary, knowing the hosts would be embarrassed in front of their guests, tells Jesus, “They have no wine.” Jesus says “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” But Mary knew the good in Jesus’ heart and his love for others would not let their friends be embarrassed. So she told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Jesus asked for jars filled with water and then changed the water into wine. The disciples saw this and began to believe in him.

Mary encouraged Jesus to begin his public service to others. Jesus, help us to serve and encourage others.
Crucifixion

Scripture Verse: John 19:25–27

John’s gospel tells us that Mary was at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified and died. Before he died, Jesus saw his mother with the disciple John, whom he loved. He asked Mary to watch over John as a mother. Then Jesus asked the disciple to take care of his mother, and “from that hour the disciple took her into his home.”

Mary stood by her Son’s side till the end, and Jesus cared for his mother till the end. Jesus, help us always to stand by those whom we love through times of joy and times of sadness.

Pentecost

Scripture Verse: Acts 2:1–4

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, Mary and the disciples continued to pray together and take care of one another. On the day of Pentecost, Mary was there with the disciples when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and transformed their lives. After the Spirit came, they were able to preach boldly about Jesus and to give their lives for the Gospel.

Once again, Mary said yes to God’s call. Just as she brought Jesus into the world, so she continued to bring Jesus’ message to the world. Jesus, may we always say yes to you and preach your word.

Assumption

Through Church tradition, we believe that when Mary’s life on earth was complete, she was assumed, or taken, body and soul into heaven. Though this event is not found in scripture, it is a teaching of the Church defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950. Mary is given the gift of the fullness of life—body and soul—in the Risen Lord. Her lifelong trust and faith in God was rewarded. Mary anticipates our own ultimate union with God.

Jesus, may your mother, Mary, pray for us and guide us on our journey home to you.

To download this activity in storybook format, go to www.ChristOurLife.org/Mary or www.FindingGod.org/Mary
Intergenerational Event—Mary

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**Prayer Service: The Yes That Changed the World**

*Leader/Reader Script*

Provide a copy of this script to both readers. If you would like to incorporate liturgical dance, a choral performance, or any other special offerings your parish can provide, please feel free to adapt this script to include them.

**Leader:** By the example of Mary, the Mother of God, we learn how to follow Jesus. She is the first and greatest disciple, because she believed and trusted in God’s promise to her.

Today, we will sing the hymn “Immaculate Mary.” The refrain is “Ave Maria.” *Ave* means “Hail.” It is a way to greet someone. *Maria* is the same as “Mary.” So in the refrain we are saying “Hail, Mary!”

*To illustrate, you may want to sing the refrain: Ave, Ave, Ave Maria! Ave, Ave, Maria!*

Let’s stand now for a song of Mary.

*You may want to have a pianist or other musician play a stanza of the hymn first, so that the group will know the tune.*

**Song:** Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing,
Who reigns now in splendor with Jesus our King.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!

In heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim.
On earth we, your children, invoke your fair name.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!

*After the song, invite everyone to be seated.*

**Leader:** Listen now as we hear the story of the Visitation—Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, who was also going to have a baby soon.

**Reader One:** A reading from the Gospel according to Luke:

*Continued on next page*
During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” (Luke 1:39–42)

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Leader: We use the words of Elizabeth in the Hail Mary prayer.

Let’s all pray the Hail Mary together now.

All: Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women.
And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God.
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Leader: In the Hail Mary, we use one title for Mary—Holy Mary, Mother of God. Over the centuries people have also given Mary other titles that tell us why she is important in their lives. Let’s hear some of them now as we ask Mary to intercede for us with God. After the reader speaks each title, please say, “Pray for us.” We call this kind of prayer a “litany,” and this particular litany is part of the Litany of Loreto. Let’s stand now and join together in prayer.
Leader: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Leader: Let’s close now by singing “Immaculate Mary” again and praise Mary by saying “Ave Maria!”

Song: Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing,  
Who reigns now in splendor with Jesus our King.  
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!  

In heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim.  
On earth we, your children, invoke your fair name.  
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!
Prayer Service: The Yes That Changed the World

Family Handout

Please use this handout to follow the songs and prayers used in the prayer service.

Immaculate Mary
Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing,
You reign now in splendor with Jesus our King.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!

In heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim.
On earth we, your children, invoke your sweet name.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!

Hail Mary
Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women.
And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God.
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

excerpt from

The Litany of Loreto

Holy Mary Pray for us
Holy Mother of God Pray for us
Mother of Christ Pray for us
Mother most pure Pray for us
Mother of the Church Pray for us
Mother of the family Pray for us
Virgin most faithful Pray for us
Seat of wisdom Pray for us
Cause of our joy Pray for us
Health of the sick Pray for us
Help of Christians Pray for us
Queen of all saints Pray for us
Queen of peace Pray for us

Leader:  Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
    Amen.

1 Adapted from The Book of Catholic Prayer, compiled by Sean Finnegan (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2000).
THE STORY OF MARY

These moments in Mary’s life offer us the opportunity to learn from her and emulate her response to God. Mary teaches us how to lead our lives in faith and hope and love.

Mary was a young Jewish woman who lived in Nazareth in what is now Israel. The early traditions of the Christian community named Mary’s parents Anne and Joachim. Because of Mary’s faithfulness as a Jewish woman, we can imagine that her parents were also devout Jews and raised their daughter in accordance with their faith. Their tender care and devotion helped Mary to grow into the confident, yet humble young woman who would say yes to God.

Because of the time and area in which Mary lived, we can make some pretty good guesses about what her life was like. Mary was probably a peasant. Life in a rural village of the Middle East such as Nazareth would have been filled with hard work. Most women and many men were illiterate.

During this time period, Mary’s homeland was occupied by the Romans. It was a difficult life under Roman rule, filled with violence and poverty. The Jews looked for a Messiah who would liberate them from the oppressive rule of Caesar. Mary notes the injustice of the world around her in her Magnificat when she recalls God’s promise to “[throw] down the rulers from their thrones, but [lift] up the lowly.” (Luke 1:46–55)

As a woman deeply rooted in the Jewish faith, Mary trusted that God heard the cries of his people and would “remember his mercy.” (Luke 1:54) Too often we forget that Mary and Jesus were Jews. In her article “In Search of the Real Mary” theologian Elizabeth Johnson says that too often we “bleach” Mary of her Jewishness: “We’ve done this ethnically by turning her swarthy Jewish complexion into fair skin and blonde hair and blue eyes. But we’ve also done this religiously by turning her deeply rooted Jewish piety into that of a latter-day Catholic. She wasn’t.” This, Johnson notes, “does no honor to [Mary’s] memory.”

Mary would have been about 15 years old when she received God’s message that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. She said yes to God and became pregnant with God’s Son. This posed quite a problem in Mary’s society. Because she was unmarried, she could have been killed as an adulteress. An angel told Joseph that his betrothed Mary was pregnant with a child conceived through the Holy Spirit. Joseph listened to God’s messenger and did not leave Mary or shame her. Instead he married Mary and protected her. In the last month of her pregnancy, Mary and Joseph had to make a long and difficult journey to Bethlehem. After Jesus was born, they became refugees, escaping to Egypt to protect Jesus from Herod’s soldiers. They lived as refugees for a while until it was safe to return to their homeland and settle in Nazareth.

In this setting, Mary and Joseph raised Jesus to be a faithful Jew, aware of the injustices in the world, but believing in God’s justice, mercy, and love—believing that there is another way. By doing so, they changed the world.
Mary was living in the town of Nazareth when she received a very special visitor. God’s messenger, the angel Gabriel, came to Mary! Gabriel said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you. God has found favor with you. You will be the mother of Jesus, the Son of the Most High.” Mary responded by saying yes! “I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

Mary’s complete trust in God, her faithfulness, and her acceptance of God’s plan are beautiful examples of how we are to respond to God’s word to each one of us. Jesus, help us to say yes to you.
Mary had learned from the angel that her relative Elizabeth was also going to have a baby. Mary went on a difficult journey to see her. Elizabeth’s son would grow up to be John the Baptist, the prophet who prepared the way for Jesus. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s voice, she cried out, “Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” Elizabeth called Mary blessed because she knew that Mary was going to be the mother of God’s Son.

Visitation

Though Mary’s life is about to change dramatically, she still takes the time to celebrate with and help her dear friend Elizabeth. Jesus, help us to be as loving and generous as Mary is.
Journey to Bethlehem


When Mary was close to giving birth, she and Joseph had to go on a journey to Bethlehem. The government required every family to return to their hometown to be counted for a census. Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because it was the home of Joseph’s ancestors, the family of David. When Mary and Joseph finally got to Bethlehem, the city was so crowded with people that Mary and Joseph could not find any place to stay.

Mary and Joseph supported each other on this difficult journey and trusted in God that all would be well. Jesus, help us to support each other as a family even when things are tough.
Mary and Joseph found a humble stable to stay in. There, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in warm clothes and laid him in a manger. The Gospel writer Luke tells us that not far away there were shepherds keeping watch over their sheep. An angel came to them and told them that the Savior had been born! The shepherds were the first to hear the good news of Jesus’ birth. They went to the stable to worship the Savior. The Gospel writer Matthew tells us that a star guided wise men from the East to Jesus after he was born. Like the shepherds, the wise men also came to worship Jesus.

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Flight into Egypt

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Mary encouraged Jesus to begin his public service to others. Jesus, help us to serve and encourage others.
**Crucifixion**

*Scripture Verse: John 19:25–27*

John’s gospel tells us that Mary was at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified and died. Before he died, Jesus saw his mother with the disciple John, whom he loved. He asked Mary to watch over John as a mother. Then Jesus asked the disciple to take care of his mother, and “from that hour the disciple took her into his home.”

Mary stood by her Son’s side till the end, and Jesus cared for his mother till the end. Jesus, help us always to stand by those whom we love through times of joy and times of sadness.
After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, Mary and the disciples continued to pray together and take care of one another. On the day of Pentecost, Mary was there with the disciples when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and transformed their lives. After the Spirit came, they were able to preach boldly about Jesus and to give their lives for the Gospel.

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Jesus, may your mother, Mary, pray for us and guide us on our journey home to you.