



21 Ways to Pray a Family Rosary

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Praying the Rosary as a family is a beautiful way to honor Our Lady and grow as a domestic church. However, in families with varying ages of kids and different attention spans and very busy schedules, it can sometimes be a real challenge to manage... and keep everyone in a prayerful mood, shall we say?

Here are 21 ideas we have compiled over the years for how to enliven your family rosary so you “pray it, not just say it.”

Spread the Rosary Out

Pray the 1st decade after breakfast, the 2nd decade before lunch, the 3rd decade in the afternoon, the 4th decade before dinner, and the 5th decade before bedtime. Mom & Day, you may decide that the schedules for your kids still at home may be so uncoordinated that each person should pray 4 decades of the rosary throughout the day, separately, then together pray the final decade of the daily mysteries when you are finally all together just before bedtime.

Have Kids Lead the Decades

Give your kids leadership in the family Rosary and take turns leading the decades. You pay attention better when different voices (including your own!) lead the prayers. This is also a great way to help kids learn and memorize the mysteries!

Gather a Bouquet for Mary

Gather flowers (real or fake) to represent each Hail Mary and have kids add them one by one to a vase at the feet of a Mary statue while the family prays the Rosary.

Explain the Stories

Prior to beginning each decade, take a break and explain the Scriptural story behind each mystery. This will help kids begin meditating on the mysteries as they pray.

Pray a “Decade a Day”

An idea created by Pope St. John Paul II, for his youth group: split the Rosary by assigning each person just one decade to pray, carefully and slowly. He called it “a living rosary” and as a group, they covered with non-rushed and focused prayer the entire rosary every day. For example, for a family of 5, each person is responsible for praying one specific decade, so that at the end of the day, an entire Rosary is completed with everyone’s help!

Choose Intentions

Before each decade, ask: “Whom would you like to pray for today? This breaks up and calls to mind our fellow members in the Body of Christ.

Turn Off the Lights

If your kids struggle to stay focused, minimize distractions by dimming or turning off the lights except those that can help direct attention to prayer. For night prayers, maybe turn off the lights and only leave on the light about your fireplace or on an endtable.

Pray a Scriptural Rosary

Before each mystery, read the appropriate Scripture passage and immerse your children in the Bible. Or before each “Hail Mary” prayer you can read one verse of Scripture from the Bible about the mystery.

Use Pope St. John Paul II’s Meditation

Use Pope St. John Paul II’s meditation style to stay focused by reading a reflection before each Hail Mary. He suggests several other ideas such as using great art, phrases during each “Hail Mary, etc.”

Pray in Latin

Mix things up by learning some of the repeated prayers in Latin.

Take a Rosary Walk

Put your kids’ energy to good use by going for a walk while you pray the Rosary. This is a great way to reflect on God’s beauty through nature while you pray.

Pray with Audio Rosary CD’s

Sometimes popping in an audio Rosary CD is a great way to engage kids with family prayers. Praying along with the voices of other kids will help your kids stay engaged and involved in the Rosary. It also works well for a rosary in the car (hard to hear voices from the back of the car, isn’t it?)

Use Prayer Journals

With prayer journals, kids can track their prayers and take ownership of their spiritual lives. These journals can include daily prayer lists, confession reminders, and space for reflection. Use them to write down thoughts, intentions and so on before and after each decade of the entire rosary—helps minds be open to inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

Invite Friends and Families

Strength in numbers! Gather a group of friends and family to pray the Rosary together. Then you can pray it like around the campfire: each prayer being led by a different person in the circle (just count carefully so when you know your are #11 and need to lead the “Glory Be”).

Utilize Car Rides

During daily rides to school or activities, utilize this time when kids are buckled in to pray the Rosary together.

Have Kids Lead Certain Prayers

For younger children who are perhaps not able to lead an entire decade, assign them to lead just the Our Father or the Glory Be or Fatima Prayer.

Pray a Candle Rosary

Using pillar candles for Our Fathers and votive candles for Hail Marys, light the candles as you move through the Rosary. In the end, you will have a beautiful light display of your prayers. One priest responded when asked how to engage boys especially, “Fire”. Light candles before, during, after—flames excite the spirit while calming the squiggles.

Create a Prayer Corner

Hang religious artwork, light candles and leave prayer journals in a specific place clearly marked for prayer. We, human creatures, react to our environment, so going to a place for prayer helps to move us out of the distraction in which we live.

Provide Coloring Books

Coloring books are a great way to help younger children stay involved during family prayer time. Anyone involved with young children knows that they actually listen better when they are doing something with their hands—better than when they are trying not to fidget! The coloring books for the rosary come out only when you pray the rosary. Don't just use random coloring books, but ones that reinforce the prayers and our Catholic faith.

There may be times when your kids will not be engaged in the family Rosary. Pray it anyway. Keep in mind that while your kids might not appreciate it now, they will one day remember seeing their parents faithfully praying the Rosary.