Celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption with kids

What Is the Feast of the Assumption?

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15) celebrates the entry of Mary into heaven, body and soul. The belief that Mary's body (as well as her soul) was "assumed" into heaven was defined as a dogma (core belief of the faith) by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950, in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus,* but belief in the Assumption of Mary dates back to the earliest centuries of the Church.

Besides being supported by the constant tradition of the Church, belief in the Assumption is also justified on theological grounds. The early Church fathers asserted that it was fitting that God should not allow the one who was born without original sin (that's the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception there) to suffer the corruption of death (a consequence of original sin); Mary is therefore the "first fruits" of Jesus' saving action. Moreover, the Church said that it was fitting that Christ would honor the one who carried him in her womb and who gave him flesh. (The blood of Jesus, as Dr. Scott Hahn likes to point out, had its biological origins in Mary.)

Although the feast recalls an ancient event, it has important implications for people today. For one thing, it affirms the Church's belief in a bodily resurrection. Too often, we think of heaven as an abstract, non-material, spiritual existence. In actuality, the Church believes that we will one day experience communion with God and one another in a material, bodily way. (Although if the accounts of Jesus' resurrection are any clue, our resurrected bodies will be quite different from our earthly ones.)

By extension, the Assumption also affirms the dignity of our earthly bodies. Our bodies are essentially good, and are meant to be used for good, not abused or used only to pursue passing pleasures. That's a hopeful message in a culture that too often has little respect for the human body.

You can read a very interesting history of the feast of the Assumption or watch this video by Scott Hahn.

An Explanation for Kids

On the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (to use the fancy name for this day), we remember when Mary was taken ("assumed") into heaven, body and soul, after she died. You will not find this story in the Bible. However, a tradition handed down from the earliest days of the Church says that Mary died in Jerusalem and was buried in a tomb. But when the apostles opened the tomb again, her body was gone. Why would God take Mary's body and soul into heaven? In part because Mary is special to God: she said "yes" to becoming the mother of Jesus. But God also wanted to show us that one day, all of us will share in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Mary is the first person in the Church to experience
the resurrection in its fullness.

The Story of the Assumption for Kids

When the apostles heard
that Mary, the mother of Jesus,
was going to be taken from this world,
they gathered at her house
and kept watch with her.

And behold, the Lord Jesus
did not let the one
in whose womb he had dwelled
see the corruption of death;

but instead, he came with his angels
and took her up to heaven
as the beginning and image
of the Church coming to perfection,
and a sign of sure hope
and comfort to God's people.

—from The Illuminated Rosary

Celebrating the Assumption

Here are a few ways to celebrate the feast of the Assumption:

- In the dioceses of the United States, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is usually a holy day of obligation, meaning the faithful are obligated to go to Mass. If you can't make it to Mass for some reason, you can read the readings for the day at the USCCB website.
- Do you have an herb garden? It is traditional to bless herbs on the feast of the Assumption. You can find the Blessing of Fruits and Herbs on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary over at Catholic Culture, along with an explanation of this Germanic tradition.
- You can say the Glorious Mysteries of the rosary together as a family, or just the decade focused on the Assumption.
- Use art of the Assumption as an aid to meditating on the mystery; the Illuminated Rosary book, *The Glorious Mysteries*, contains eleven classical and modern artworks on the Assumption.
- If you need even more ideas for crafts, stories, and recipes for the Assumption, head over to Shower of Roses.
- Check out the *Sense of the Sacred: A Coloring Book for Young Illuminators* for several Marian coloring pages

Go to Mass!

The Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary is a Holy Day of Obligation which means it's an important feast day so be sure to attend Mass! Here are the Mass readings for the day, which you can preview with your kids. If you've watched the Scott Hahn video above, then you'll be all ready to show your kids how all the readings line up and interpret one another.

Crafts for the feast day

- This flower arrangement from Catholic Inspired is a great way to celebrate the Assumption.
- Or this simple craft from Real Life at Home to help explain the Assumption to kids.