

The Blessed Virgin Mary • Monthly devotion for May

Back in the Middle Ages, many Catholics began observing special devotions around a particular theme each month. Today, many families are reviving this practice as part of the way they observe the liturgical calendar at home. By practicing monthly devotions, the core values of the faith will become more alive within your family. The beauty of monthly devotions is that there is no set way to celebrate. So, be creative, make it fun, and adapt your celebration to your own family.

Here are some ways to celebrate the popular devotion for May, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Talking with kids about Mary

In order for Jesus to be born, God wanted to prepare a special mother for him. From the moment that Mary was conceived in her own mother's womb (St. Anne), Mary was without the stain of original sin. Throughout her entire life, Mary never sinned and was always a faithful servant to God. This is why Mary is called "full of grace." God granted her every blessing he could to help prepare her to become the mother of Jesus.

God wanted to prepare Mary for a special task – but only if she was willing to accept it. Because God allows each of us to make our own decisions (free will), he left it up to Mary to decide if she wanted to become the mother of Jesus. And so Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." ([Lk 1:38](#))

Mary, with the help of St. Joseph, taught Jesus many skills and lessons, just like your parents do. The Bible tells us that Jesus, "went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient" to Mary and Joseph ([Lk 2:51](#)). In fact, Jesus did not even start his public ministry until his mother asked him to!

At the wedding at Cana, when Jesus was about 30 years old, Mary told Jesus that there was no more wine to celebrate the occasion. Because Mary asked Jesus to help, Jesus decided to perform his very first miracle: turning water into wine. Since that day, Mary has been a great intercessor for us. She will tell Jesus about our prayers, and she will pray that we come to know and love him more.

Feast days & Memorials

The following days can be connected to this month's devotion. Click to learn more.

[Ascension of the Lord](#)

[Our Lady of Fatima](#)

[Pentecost Sunday](#)

[Mary, Mother of the Church](#)

[The Most Holy Trinity](#)

[The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#)

Bible Verse

A take away for kids to memorize and/or include in their daily prayer.

The last spoken and recorded words in the Bible, from Mary, were said at the wedding at Cana. Just before Jesus asked the servants to fill the empty jars with water, Mary approached the servants and said:

“Do whatever he tells you.” ([Jn 2:5](#))

Prayer prompts

Questions to help propagate the faith with your children.

- How can we ask Mary to help us grow closer to Jesus?
- How can we say “yes” to God, as Mary did?
- What graces and blessings can we ask God for that will help us to grow in faith?

Live it

Incorporate this month’s devotion with the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Faith

Bring the tradition of the faith to your children.

During the month of May, many parishes and pilgrimage sites will host special events relating to Mary. For example, Mary/Eucharist processions, crownings of the Blessed Virgin statue, displaying a relic, parish rosary, etc. Encourage your children to take part in an activity near your home.

For those wishing to make a family pilgrimage, there are numerous places across the U.S. Here are a couple of links to help you seek out a site near your home:

[Catholic Shrines & Holy Places](#)

[Catholic Pilgrimage Sites](#)

Hope

Learn about God’s infinite mercy.

In 1871, France was in the midst of the Franco-Prussian War. Nearly two-thirds of France was occupied by the German army. A young man named Auguste Barbedette had left his home in France to battle against the Prussians. Auguste's two younger brothers, Eugene, 12, and Joseph, 10, prayed the rosary daily in hope that their older brother would return home safely.

On the evening of Jan. 17, 1871, in the small French town of Pontmain, Our Lady of Hope appeared to Eugene and Joseph. In the night sky, the two boys saw Mary smiling at them, and they were filled with a sense of joy and peace. Mary was wearing a crown and a blue cloak that was covered with gold stars.

The boys' parents could not see Our Lady. Doubting that the apparition was not real, the parents called for the local teacher, Sister Vitaline; she too, could not see Our Lady. And so, Sister Vitaline called for two other girls to come to the apparition site. Not knowing why they were being summoned, the two girls immediately proclaimed that they saw Our Lady of Hope and described Mary exactly as the boys had done. No adult, not even a priest or a sister, could see Our Lady, for she was only visible to the children.

Our Lady of Hope appeared for three hours before vanishing. A banner appeared beneath Our Lady, which read, "But pray, my children, God will hear you in a little while." The Franco-Prussian War ended 11 days later, and Auguste Barbedette would return home safely.

Charity

Help the church to grow within your own community.

As we celebrate the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we also pay tribute to our own mother, on Mother's Day. For many of us, we will also recognize the many sacrifices and gifts of love that our grandmothers and godmothers have given to us,

too.

During the month of May, lead your children in a special prayer for Mary and for all of their earthly mothers. Begin by saying the Hail, Holy Queen, followed by a Hail Mary for each 'mother' your children wish to pray for.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope.

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary

[Leader]: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God

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

For additional prayers relating to Mary, consider [The Catholic Family Book of Prayers](#).

For more information about monthly devotions, see the [Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: #20, #32, #190-191](#) and the [Catholic Encyclopedia: Special Devotions for Months](#)