

2019
TRY PRAYER!
It Works!
CONTEST

This year's theme, **Mary, Mother of the Church**, will help your family explore how Mary isn't only the Mother of Jesus, but also Mother to us all. Reflecting on a few biblical stories, you'll see how Our Blessed Mother's important role in the Church flows from her deep connection with her Son and from there into our own homes.



FAMILYROSARY.ORG



FAMILY ACTIVITY

MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

Inspired by our founder, Venerable Patrick Peyton, the *Try Prayer! It Works Contest* focuses on Father Peyton's message: "The family that prays together stays together." To enhance family prayer in your home, we've included a family-faith experience that takes you and your family through a reflective, enriching journey.

Our goal is to bring the Church's teachings to life around the dinner table with discussion prompts, reflection questions, prayer ideas, and creativity! Let Mary inspire you in writing, drawing, filming, or painting to express how Mary shows her love for you and your family.

Dear family,
Tonight we encourage you to take time during or after dinner to go through each of these steps, contemplate the prompts and finish in prayer together.

■ STEP 1: LIGHT A CANDLE

Begin by choosing someone to light a candle for the center of the table. Encourage everyone to breathe in a moment of silence. Put away all your daily worries for this short time. Choose to focus on the people sitting around you. Once you feel the room is settled, continue on to the next step.

■ STEP 2: OPEN WITH PRAYER

Ask someone to open with a prayer through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother. Use the prayer we provided below or create your own!

Lord, thank you for gathering us together tonight. Please gently guide our conversation to become a fruitful and growing experience. We ask this through the intercession of Our Mother, "Hail, Mary, full of grace the Lord is with Thee; blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is

the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

■ STEP 3: FAMILY REFLECTION

Once you've finished the opening prayer, invite another family member to read these biblical examples of Mary's Motherhood:

We see how Mary is a Mother from when she's first introduced in **The Annunciation** (Luke 1:26-38). Her "Yes" to God to be Jesus' mom is our perfect model of what it means to have strong faith even when something unexpected happens.

Her natural motherly grace shows us how much she cares for others. In **Mary's Visit to Elizabeth** (Luke 1:39-45) we're taught to love at all times and always want the best for the people around us. Just like she cared for her cousin Elizabeth, she cares for each of us and will be by our side whenever we're in need.

Mary's confident command to the servants at the **Wedding Feast in Cana** (*John 2:1-11*), "Do whatever he tells you," shows us her thoughtfulness and the power of her intercession or asking someone in heaven to pray with and for you. Like a wise mother, she observes what's going on, takes charge and gives clear direction to always follow Jesus.

Even in suffering we learn from Mary. While she stood at the foot of the cross, watching her only Son experience pain at **The Crucifixion** (*John 19:25-27*), she joined in his sacrifice and suffering, surrendering to God's plan. Rather than running away or becoming angry, Mary stayed,

Through these biblical examples we see that Mary is at the beginning and end of the Holy Spirit's mission to bring us to Jesus, Our Savior. God chose to accomplish each of these great mysteries with Mary. He didn't have to do things this way, but He did. If God desired to include her, there is a purpose for it: to give us a compassionate mother, trusted companion and role model.

■ STEP 4: FAMILY DISCUSSION

Each of the stories about Mary show us what qualities a great mother figure and every Christian should have: a strong faith, a caring and loving attitude, a confidence in leading her children to Jesus, and an unceasing dedication to her family.

Dive a little deeper and explore these qualities as your family discusses these questions together:

a) In the Annunciation, Mary's "yes" to God is more than just agreeing to being

Jesus' mom but ours too. **Have you seen Mary at work in your life?** How has she been a mother to you and your family?

b) When Mary visits Elizabeth, we see how caring for others is very important. **Can you think of a time when someone tried to make you smile?** Have you ever done that for someone else?

c) At the Wedding Feast in Cana, Mary uses her strong voice and influence. **Do you ever pray through Mary and ask for her powerful intercession?** When and why?

d) Mary experienced a deep pain at Jesus' Crucifixion. Watching her only Beloved Son sacrifice himself must have been difficult, but **Mary remained strong**, trusting and treasuring the truth of the Word of God. **Do you see this quality in someone you know?** Who and why?

■ STEP 5: GET CREATIVE

Decide as a family what your *Try Prayer!* *It Works!* Contest entry will look like:

a) Pick a story or two in the Bible about Mary and write a poem describing what mothering qualities she shows us!

b) Draw an example of how Mary is the Mother of Jesus and all of us!

c) Interview someone in your life who mirrors Mary's Motherhood and creatively write about their story!

d) Record the skit found at **FamilyRosary.org/Try Prayer** in 2 minutes.

Whatever creative route you decide to pursue for this project, we encourage you to brainstorm with your family! Refer to the Contest Guidelines and Contest Rules or visit **FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer** for more information.

■ STEP 6: CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Lord, thank you for this engaging conversation and family reflection. Please help each of us live our lives for God, just like Our Blessed Mother did. Give us the confidence to seek the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, at all times.

With these prayers and those on our hearts, we say together the prayer that Jesus taught us, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY:

If you want another fun activity to engage your family, **go to FamilyRosary.org for an interactive skit.**

Thank you for taking the time to reflect with your family! We encourage your family to have similar daily conversations to strengthen your faith. As Father Patrick Peyton said, "The family that prays together stays together." For daily reflection questions and topics, visit our blog at **Blog.FamilyRosary.org**.

We look forward to your contest submission! You're always in our thoughts and prayers at the Father Peyton Center in North Easton, Massachusetts, USA.

Blessings to you and your family,

Father Willy Raymond, C.S.C.
President, Holy Cross Family Ministries

AWARDS:

Each first place winning entry will be awarded \$100.00 USD, and each sponsoring institution of the first place winners will receive \$100.00 USD.



Winners from previous Try Prayer! It Works! Contests