

WORLD MISSION ROSARY ACTIVITY

“Prayer should accompany the journey of missionaries so that the proclamation of The Word will be effective through God’s grace.” - Pope John Paul II

At the beginning of the presentation or activity, distribute the “fabric beads”. Discuss the missions, the importance of prayer, and the World Mission Rosary. (Below is suggested information for your discussion.) Then ask several volunteers to hold the rosary rope and invite the participants with beads to come up and place the “bead” on the rosary. Encourage them to be mindful of the mission area represented by their color bead and to consider how they can/will be missionary and share Jesus’ love with others. Embrace the World in Prayer!

Discussion Points:

Prayer is a very important aspect of the missions. The example of St. Therese of Lisieux clearly demonstrates this to us. Despite the fact that she never traveled to and served in foreign mission lands, she is the Patroness of the Missions because of her prayers and sacrifices in her cloistered Carmelite convent. She showed us that all Christians, not just those who travel to distant countries, are called to do the work of missionaries. Animating a missionary spirit begins with prayer. Every person is able to offer prayers. Prayers lead to sacrifices. Every person can offer up suffering (temporary or chronic) for those who suffer daily in mission lands. Every person can give up something with the intention of sacrificing for the missions. And finally all can offer material support to some degree, even those in the missions. (Call to mind the lesson of the Widow’s Mite; Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4.)

The World Mission Rosary was created by the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen in 1951 (national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith from 1950 to 1966). This rosary honors the work of the missions, conversions and world peace with special emphasis on each of the Earth’s regions, where prayers are needed.

The color symbolism of each decade calls to mind an area where the Church continues her evangelizing mission. When this rosary is said, one has embraced all continents and all people in prayer! In addition, five “Mission Mysteries” are suggested for meditation while reciting the World Missions Rosary.

ROSARY COLOR SYMBOLISMS

Yellow = Asia/Middle East/Orient—where the sun comes up and civilization traditionally began. *Mission Mystery: The Visit of the Magi.*

Red = The Americas/Latin America/USA/Canada—for the fire of faith that brought missionaries to the Americas. *Mission Mystery: Jesus talks with the Samaritan Woman.*

White = Europe—for the home of the Pope, shepherd of the world and his call for new evangelization. *Mission Mystery: Jesus heals the Centurion’s Servant.*

Blue = Oceania/Island nations of the world—for the ocean surrounding the islands in the Pacific. *Mission Mystery: Jesus sends out his disciples.*

Green = Africa—for its forests and grasslands. *Mission Mystery: The conversion of St. Paul.*

Additionally, explain the **MISSION MYSTERIES** for older participants:

YELLOW- ASIA

The First Mission Mystery, The Visit of the Magi. "Behold, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem" (Mt 2:1).

The Magi, astrologers of Persia's Zoroastrian religion, could read stars the way you and I read the newspaper. Around the year six BC, the planet Jupiter (signifying Kingship) aligned with Saturn (governing Israel) and, appearing as one large star in the sky, crossed the constellation Pisces (symbolizing birth). For the Magi, the heavens themselves announced a newborn king of the Jews.

The Mission Mystery of the Magi teaches us that all who seek God with an open mind and heart will be guided to the Lord.

RED - THE AMERICAS

The Second Mission Mystery, Jesus Talks with the Samaritan Woman. "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23).

Jesus scandalized his disciples by talking with the Samaritan woman. He rejected arbitrary barriers that separated people into "us" and "them." Samaritans were notorious for changing gods as often as this woman changed husbands. That explains her sudden interest in where Jews worshiped. Jesus assured her that, when worshipping God, spirit and truth mattered most. She left her water jar -- her deepest thirst quenched -- and became a missionary to her villagers and led them to Christ.

WHITE - EUROPE

The Third Mission Mystery, Jesus cures the centurion's servant. "I have not found such great faith even in Israel" (Lk 7:9).

There was no love lost between Jews and Romans who represented the ruling Empire. Jews were a proud but subjugated people. Each considered the other the enemy. Unlike the typical centurion, who oppressed the people, this Roman officer helped the Jews and even built a synagogue for them. Love for his servant who was ill enabled the man to reach out to Jesus for help. For Jesus, solidarity with human suffering knew no nationality. When people express solidarity with other races, religions or nationalities, both sides find liberation.

GREEN - AFRICA

The Fourth Mission Mystery, the Conversion of St. Paul. "Immediately he began to proclaim Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

Saul (later "Paul") of Tarsus was Christianity's sworn enemy and became one of its greatest advocates. His is the story of perfect conversion: not just changing religions, but changing his heart. The Risen Lord came to Saul, not while he was praying in the Temple or studying the Bible, but while he was tracking down and arresting Christians. "Why do you persecute me?" the Lord asked. Paul realized that when one persecuted Christians, he persecuted Jesus. Paul remains the greatest spokesperson for the teachings of Jesus. He transformed the Church from a small, persecuted sect of Judaism into a truly universal faith that embraces all peoples. This mission mystery compels us never to dismiss others as beyond God's reach, even those whose previous actions showed them to be our enemies.

BLUE - ISLAND NATIONS

The Fifth Mission Mystery, Jesus Sends out His Disciples. "Go, preach the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16:15).

The disciples could hardly contain their joy: Christ is risen! Life triumphed over death! This good news was too good to keep to themselves. Heedless of their own safety, the disciples spread out, unarmed and defenseless, empowered only by the Spirit of God. This was the original "Mission Impossible": Spread the Good News to the ends of the earth. Here is the mission mystery: from this ragtag group of disciples facing certain annihilation, Christianity spread and flourished throughout the world.