Want to pray the Rosary with your family? Try starting with a decade a day

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3 MIN READ

Many have heard the saying by the Servant of God Venerable Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., that “the family that prays together stays together.” The family rosary has been a staple of Catholic home devotions for centuries — and for good reason. It teaches us, especially children, the basic prayers of our faith. It covers the essential moments in the life of Christ, encapsulating the Gospel story. It helps us to start to spend time with God in meditative prayer. In short, the rosary is a wonderful way to ask for God’s help and Mary’s intercession.

However, many can find it difficult to pray the rosary. Attention spans seem to be shorter, perhaps due to the multitude of screens that surround us. Commercials every few minutes, video games and smartphones all contribute to problems with concentration. For many, silence can seem unnerving when we are constantly being stimulated. Add to that the noise of younger children, and praying a family rosary especially can be challenging. So how can you, and your family, pray the rosary together?

One way to be successful is to not try to start with a full, five-decade rosary. Instead, perhaps try to pray one rosary over the course of the week. You can pray at a family altar where images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary are enthroned. Keep rosaries there for the children. Begin on Sunday with the opening prayers of the Rosary: the Sign of the Cross, the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, the three Hail Marys and Glory Be. Then from Monday through Friday, pray one decade a day. On Saturday, pray the concluding prayers: the Hail Holy Queen, final prayer, prayers for the pope’s intention, and the Sign of the Cross. Thus, over the course of the week, the family can pray one full Rosary while spending just a few minutes each day. Over time you can increase the number of decades prayed until you are praying the entire rosary on a daily basis.

This can easily be enhanced. Each family member can be asked for what intention they are offering the decade. You can add Scripture readings or introduce a relevant line from Scripture for each Hail Mary. You can use pictures, colouring books, spiritual meditations or music. In addition, you can add other prayers for morning or night, or other devotions such as a litany or novena. Such devotions are a treasure chest of ancient Christian prayers just waiting to be rediscovered. At a time when many are attracted by “mindfulness,” we seem to ignore the long history of Catholic meditative prayer. There is an added bonus that praying part of the Rosary gains a partial indulgence and a plenary indulgence is granted to those who pray the whole Rosary in a family group. These can be offered for the deceased members of the family.

This manageable method is a great way to learn how to pray the Rosary and to make it a regular part of your family’s spiritual life. It will teach your children how Catholics pray. And it will bring your family together, making Christ the centre of your home. It will help your family to truly become a “domestic church,” where your hearts are united, with Mary, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus