LESSON 48: THE ROSARY

Instruction for Faith Educators		
For Basic Level / Age 9	:	Cover points 1 to 12
For Intermediate Level / Age 12	:	Cover points 1 to 12
For Advanced Level / Age 15	:	Cover points 1 to 14

Revision from previous lesson:
In the previous lesson, we learned about the Liturgy of the Hours, which is the official prayer of the Church that is to be prayed by all clergy and religious of the entire Catholic Church each day. We are still on the topic of prayer, and in this lesson, we will be learning about the Rosary.

Current lesson:

1. Over the centuries, the 150 Psalms of the Old Testament's Psalms of David (or "Psalter") became central to the cycle of prayer in the early Church, especially among monastic communities. As manuscripts of the Psalms were largely restricted to these communities and, indeed, as few people were able to read, a simpler form of prayer, which mirrored the recitation of the Psalms, was devised. The Lord's Prayer was repeated 150 times, and sometimes pebbles or knotted cords were used to keep an accurate count, but a ring of beads known as the crown or "corona" became popular.

2. In the 12th century, with the growth in popularity of Marian devotion, the Hail Mary came to replace the Our Father as the prayer most associated with beads and the repeated recitation of the Hail Mary became known as the "Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary".

3. The 150 Hail Marys were subsequently subdivided into 15 decades by the young Carthusian monk, Henry Kalkar (1328-1408), with each decade referring to an event in the life of Jesus and Mary. The Dominican, Alanus de Rupe (1428-1478) further divided the episodes in the history of salvation into the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries. He also attributed the origin of the Rosary to St Dominic and so spurred the Dominican Order to make the Apostolate of the Rosary their special concern.

4. In his encyclical *Octobri Mense* (1891), Pope Leo XIII stated that the Rosary has its origin from Our Lady herself "by her command and counsel" to Saint Dominic. Pope Leo XIII taught: "That the Queen of Heaven herself has granted a great efficacy to this devotion is demonstrated by the fact that it was, by her command and counsel, instituted and propagated by the illustrious St Dominic, in times particularly dangerous for the Catholic cause." This tradition has been depicted in many paintings.

5. The Dominican Pope, St Pius V, did much to further the spread of the Rosary which became one of the most popular devotions in the Church. It was the same Pope St Pius V, who in 1569 officially approved the Rosary in its present form with the Papal Bull, *Consueverunt Romani Pontifices*. The Rosary had been completed by the addition of the second half of the Hail Mary and the Glory Be at the conclusion of each mystery.

6. The Hail Mary incorporates two passages from Saint Luke's Gospel: the Angel Gabriel's greeting at the Annunciation, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee", and Elizabeth's greeting at the Visitation, "Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb". In the mid-13th-century Western Europe, the prayer consisted only of these words with the single addition of the name "Mary" after the word "Hail", as is evident from the commentary of Saint Thomas Aquinas on the prayer. The petition "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." appeared in the 15th century and was included in the Catechism of the Council of Trent in 1566.

7. In October 2002, Pope Saint John Paul II added a further set of mysteries to the meditations of the Rosary - the Mysteries of Light or Luminous Mysteries. These were first proposed in 1957 by St George Preca, Malta's first native saint, who was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007.

8. **Joyful Mysteries** of the Rosary (prayed on Mondays and Saturdays)
   A) The Annunciation of the Lord to Mary
      Mary is chosen to be the mother of Jesus. Read Luke 1:26-38.
   B) The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth
      Elizabeth recognizes Mary as the mother of our Lord. Read Luke 1:39-56.
   C) The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ
      Jesus is born and laid in a manger. Read Luke 2:1-20.
   D) The Presentation of our Lord
      Jesus is presented in the Temple of Jerusalem. Read Luke 2:21-40.
   E) Finding Jesus in the Temple at age 12
      Jesus is found discussing God's laws in the temple. Read Luke 2:41-52.

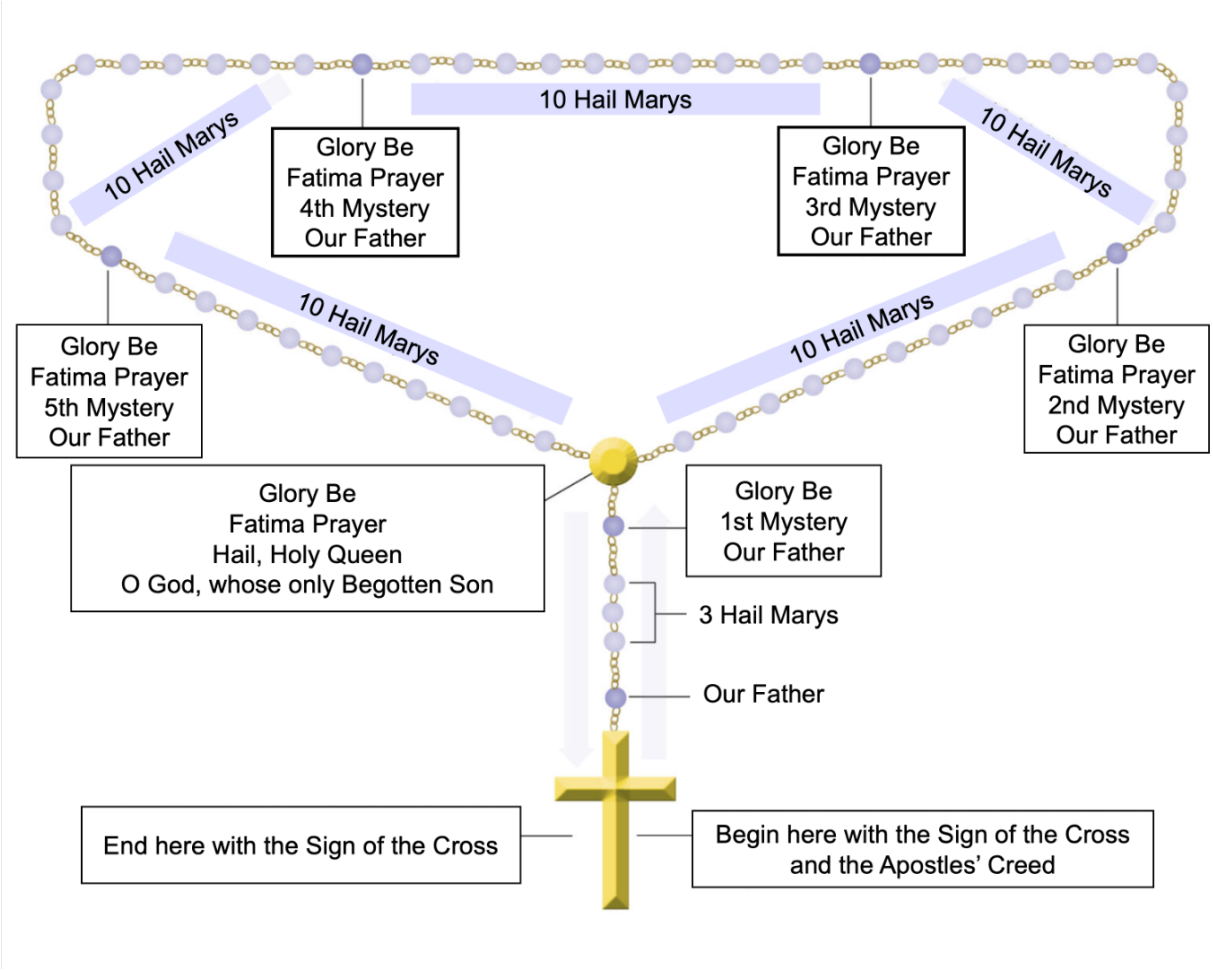
9. **Sorrowful Mysteries** of the Rosary (prayed on Tuesdays and Fridays)
   A) The Agony of Jesus in the Garden
      Jesus prays when confronted with the sins of the world. Read Luke 22:39-46.
   B) The Scourging at the Pillar
      Jesus is whipped before His execution. Read Luke 23:14-22.
   C) Jesus is Crowned with Thorns
      Jesus is mocked with a painful crown of thorns. Read Mark 15:16-20.
   D) Jesus Carried the Cross
      Jesus carries the weight of our sins to His crucifixion. Read Luke 23:26-31.
   E) The Crucifixion of our Lord
      Jesus Christ dies to save all mankind. Read Luke 23:33-46.

10. **Glorious Mysteries** of the Rosary (prayed on Wednesdays and Sundays)
    A) The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
       Jesus rises triumphant over death. Read Luke 24:1-49.
    B) The Ascension of Jesus to Heaven
       As Jesus ascends, He gives us a special task. Read Luke 24:49-53 and Acts 1:6-11.
    C) The Descent of the Holy Spirit
       At Pentecost the Church is born. Read Acts 2:1-41.

D) The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
The Virgin Mary is gloriously assumed into heaven. Read Revelation 12:1-11.
E) Mary is Crowned as Queen of Heaven and Earth
Mary is honoured above all creatures. Read Revelation 12:1-11 (same as above).

11. **Luminous Mysteries** of the Rosary (prayed on Thursdays)
A) The Baptism in the Jordan
God proclaims Jesus is His Son. Read Matthew 3:12-27.
B) The Wedding at Cana
Jesus performs a surprising miracle at a wedding. Read John 2:1-12.
C) The Proclamation of the Kingdom
Jesus calls us to do something important. Read Matthew 5:1-12.
D) The Transfiguration
Jesus is gloriously transformed. Read Matthew 17:1-9.
E) The Institution of the Eucharist
Jesus shares His Body and Blood for our salvation. Read Luke 22:14-20.

12. Pray the rosary with the students based on the mysteries of the day. A video may be used if deemed beneficial



13. Christ came to earth to be our model. The Word became Incarnate, not only to bring us the gospel of salvation and to accomplish our redemption, but also to serve as the perfect pattern for our spiritual lives.

    Each of Christ's mysteries is a revelation of His virtues. The humility of the crib, the retirement of His hidden life, the zeal of His public life, the self-annihilation of His Sacrifice, the glory of His triumph: all these disclose virtues which we must imitate; they are mysteries in which we should participate.

    This is the reason why the contemplation of the mysteries of Christ – for instance, while reciting the Rosary – is so fruitful for the soul. The life, the death, and the glory of Jesus serve as ideal models for our life and death and glory.

14. Never forget this truth: the Eternal Father is pleased with us only in so far as we imitate His Son and inasmuch as He sees in us the likeness of His Son, for it is in His image that He has predestined us from all eternity. For us there is no other form of sanctity than that which Christ has shown us. The degree of our perfection is measured by the degree of our imitation of Jesus and of our union with Him.

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