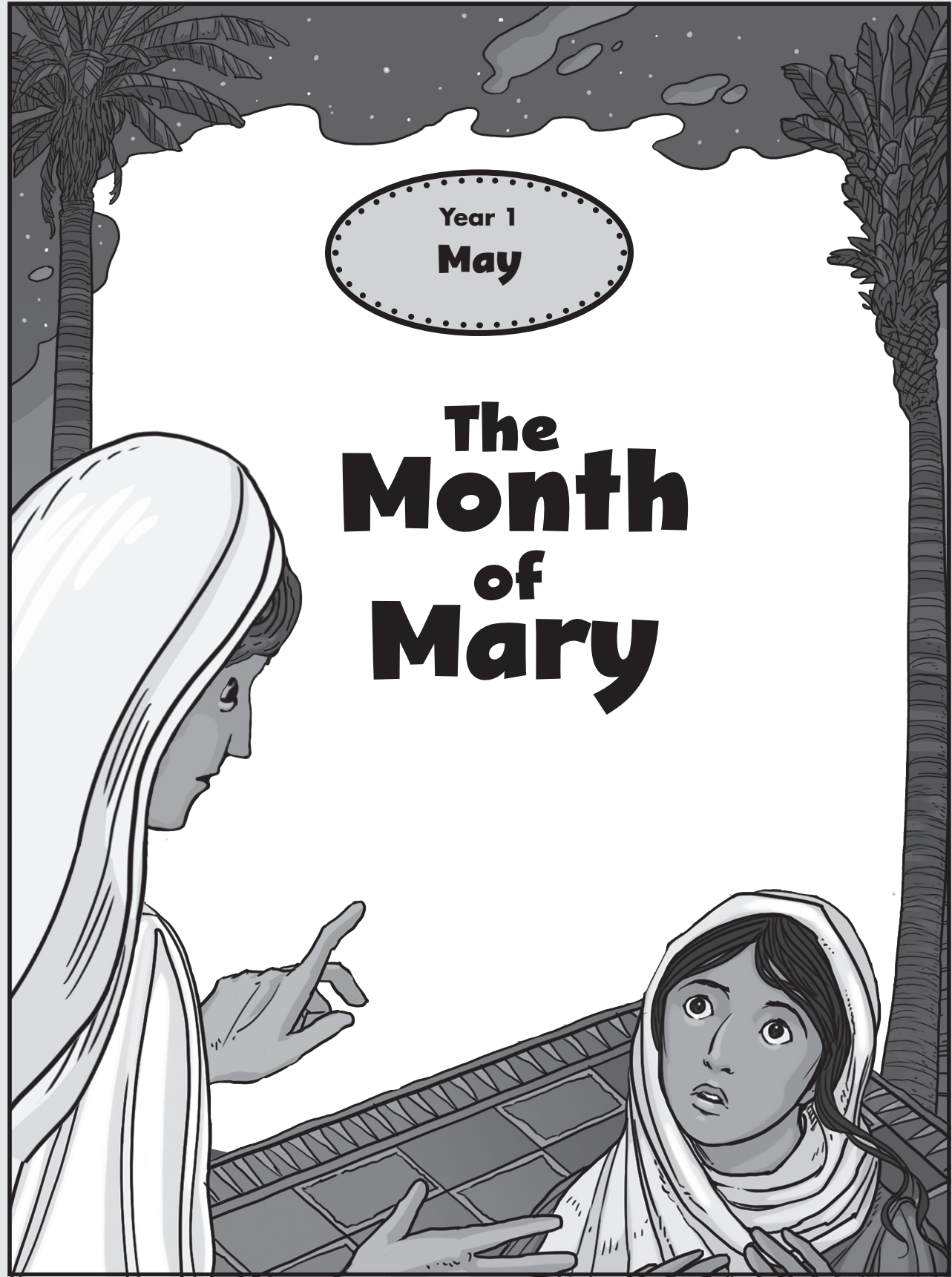


Year 1
May

The Month of Mary



Preparing the Session

Scripture Focus

Luke 1:30–33, 38 (“Mary Trusts God Completely,” p. 1574)

Session Goals

- to celebrate the month of May as the month of Mary
- to see Mary as a role model for our own trust in God
- to encourage families to celebrate Mary as their mother and guide to Jesus

Materials Needed

General

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* open to Luke 1:30–33, 38 (“Mary Trusts God Completely,” p. 1574) and set on the prayer table (if not doing the Bible procession)
- a prayer table decorated with Marian decor (a statue of Mary, flowers, blue tablecloth, other blue accents, etc.)
- a copy of *The Catholic Children’s Bible* for each family, distributed ahead of time
- two battery-operated candles for the Bible procession (*optional*)
- music for the Bible procession (*optional*)
- appropriate equipment for playing the Bible procession music (*optional*)
- copies of the year 1 May session handout, “The Month of Mary,” on page 9, one for each family

Icebreaker

- baggies, one for each table, with the Hail Mary prayer sections inside
- the Hail Mary prayer printed in readable size, one for each table, cut into sections

- Separate the prayer into these five sections:
 - 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.

Family Activity

- a recording of instrumental music
- appropriate equipment for playing the music

Family Craft

- a sample of the craft for the families to view
- copies of the handout “A May Altar Triptych,” on page 8, one for each participant
- sheets of white or blue construction paper, one for each participant
- scissors, bottles of glue, and boxes of crayons, one of each for each family



Get Ready! (15 minutes)

Welcome and Icebreaker

- Greet families as they arrive, and invite them to find seats together at one of the tables.
- Welcome everyone to the family session for May, which is the month of Mary!
- Distribute the baggies with the Hail Mary prayer, one to each table. Explain to the group that each baggie contains the Hail Mary prayer cut into sections. Share that the goal is for the table to put the prayer together in the right order.
- Tell the participants that when their table has put the prayer together, they should pray the prayer as a table group and then raise their hands so that you know they are finished.
- Watch for the groups to finish. Call time. If any groups are struggling, tell them that you will help. Invite the whole group to pray the prayer together so that everyone can check how they did.
- Ask everyone to stand for the opening prayer.

Bible Procession (optional)

- Choose a family to carry the Bible with Luke 1:30–33, 38 (“Mary Trusts God Completely,” p. 1574) marked with a bookmark or ribbon, and two battery-operated candles, in procession from the back of the room to the prayer table.
- Ask one member of the family to carry the closed Bible with two hands at waist level with the front cover facing forward.
- Play accompanying music if desired.
- Ask the Bible-bearer to place the Bible on the prayer table, opening it to the marked Scripture passage.
- Continue with the opening prayer and Scripture reading as outlined below and on the next page.

Opening Prayer

Begin the prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross. Then continue with the following:

- Dear God, thank you for bringing us together as we celebrate the meaning of May as the month of Mary, our mother.
- Help us to support and encourage one another as we learn more about Mary’s trust in God.
- And help us to remember that when we read and pray with the Scriptures, Jesus, the Word of God, is with us.



Dive In! (30 minutes)

May

Scripture Reading

- Pick up the Bible from the prayer space and begin by saying, “A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.” Invite everyone to respond, “Glory to you, O Lord.” (*The Roman Missal*)
- Read aloud Luke 1:30–33, 38 (“Mary Trusts God Completely,” p. 1574).
- End by saying, “The Gospel of the Lord.” Invite everyone to respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” (*The Roman Missal*)

Scripture Reflection

- Invite everyone to sit down and find the Scripture passage, Luke 1:30–33, 38 (“Mary Trusts God Completely,” p. 1574), in their Bibles.
- Explain that they have just heard the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, when Mary trusted God enough to say yes to his plan. Continue with the following:
 - Try to put yourself into this story. Imagine that you are Mary and that God is asking you to do something—something big or small, maybe something hard but necessary. Perhaps you are asked to move, change schools, change jobs, or help a family member or neighbor in need.
 - What will you say to God? Yes or no? God will love you no matter what you say, but how is God asking you to trust him in some way?
- Encourage the families to read the Scripture passage together. Ask them to pause and think about the passage for a minute or two. Have each family member share with one another a word or phrase they remember about the passage and why.
- Call the large group together, and ask volunteers to share a few things they or their family members noted from the Scripture passage. Unfold the meaning of the story, using the contributions from the group if possible. Emphasize the following points:
 - When God asks us to trust him, he always helps us. He never leaves us to figure things out on our own. We meet the right people to help us as we trust God and say yes to him.
 - A special feast called the Feast of the Annunciation celebrates Mary’s trust in God and her yes to him. We celebrate this feast on March 25. Nine months later, on December 25, we celebrate another feast: Christmas, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! Because Mary trusted God, we have been given the great gift of Jesus!



Discover! (30 minutes)

May

Family Activity: An Exercise in Trust

- Ask each family to choose a leader for this activity. Explain that the leader should be a trustworthy member of the family but need not necessarily be an adult.
- Share that you will play some music, and while the music is playing, the leader will lead the family to one end of the room and back, taking care not to bump into any of the other families or any of the furniture around the room.
- Explain that everyone else in the family will close their eyes and rely on trusting their leader. (Young children do not have to close their eyes if that is too uncomfortable for them.)
- Start the music and ask each family to join hands. Ask the leaders to lead their families around the room, to a point at the far end of the room and then back. Remind them to guide their family around obstacles or other families. Share that this is not a race, so walking at a slow pace is fine.
- Stop the music after a few minutes, and ask the families to open their eyes and return to their seats.
- Process the experience by discussing the following questions:
 - When you had your eyes closed, how did it feel to be led around without being able to see or to control where you were going? Did you trust your leader?
 - If you were the leader, how did you feel about leading your family and keeping them safe?
 - How can you compare these feelings to your relationship with God? Are you comfortable following his path in your life? Are you anxious and fearful? What is your level of trust in God and God's leadership?

Family Craft: A May Altar Triptych

- Distribute the handout "A May Altar Triptych" and a sheet of white or blue construction paper to each participant. Distribute a pair of scissors, a bottle of glue, and a box of crayons to each family.
- Explain that each participant will make a personal May altar, or triptych, for a special place in their home. Share that a May altar is a temporary altar set up to honor Mary in the month of May, either in a home or in a church. Explain that a triptych has three sections. Point out the three sections of the handout, noting that the main section is a picture of Mary, and the other two sections show vases of flowers, as on an altar.
- Share that we honor Mary because she is the mother of God and our mother too. Tell the group that we worship God above all but that we honor Mary because she was chosen by God to be the mother of God, the mother of Jesus.

- Direct the participants to cut out the triptych, following the dashed line that goes around the picture of Mary and the two vases.
- Invite the participants to color the statue of Mary and the vases of flowers. Have them glue the triptych onto the white or blue construction paper, and then fold the triptych along the solid lines to enable it to stand up.
- Close the activity by asking the group to stand their May altars, or triptychs, at their tables during the remainder of the session.

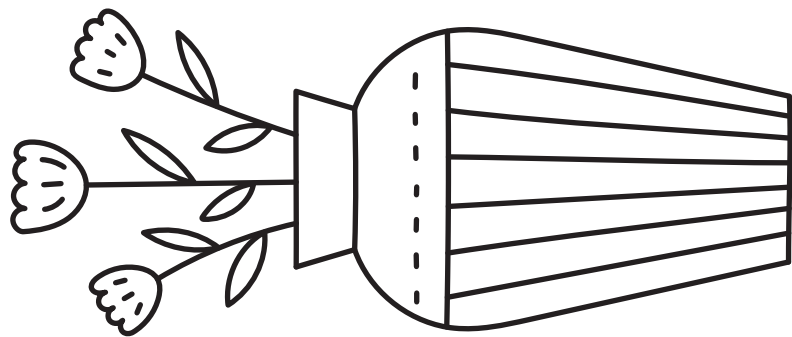
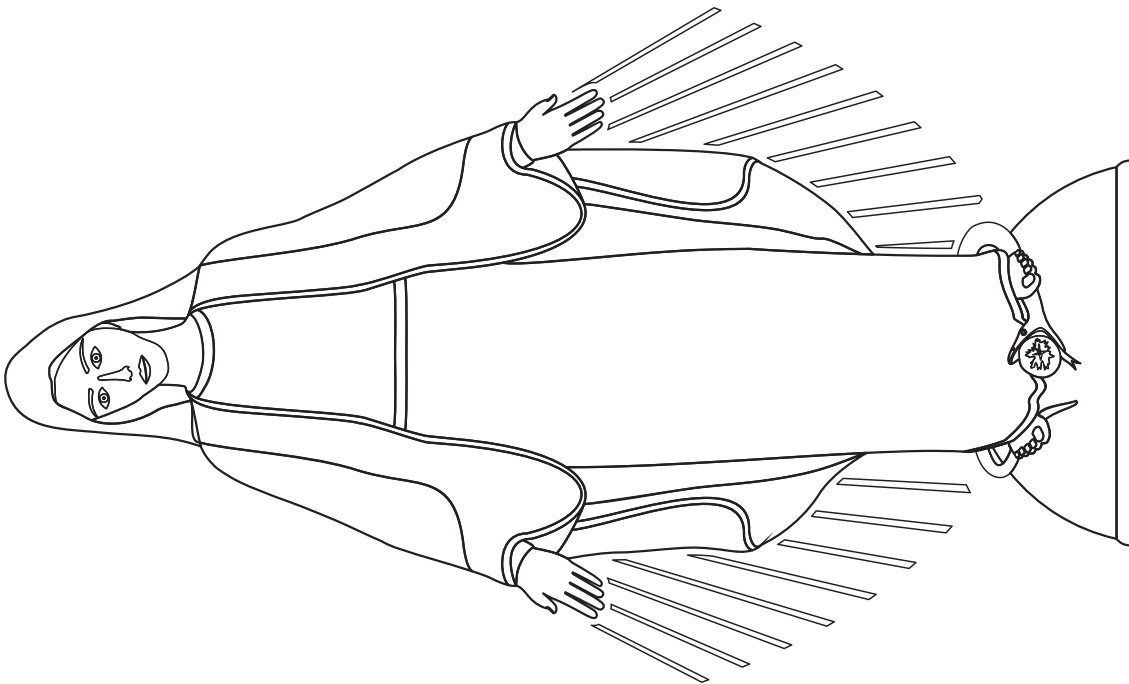
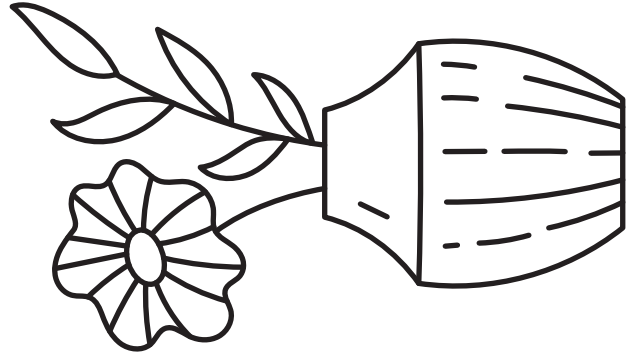


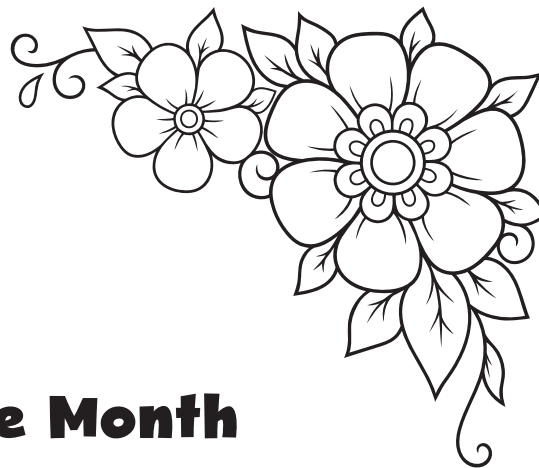
Go! (15 minutes)

Blessing and Closing Prayer

- Invite the parents and caregivers to bless their children. Ask the adults to stand and place their hands on the heads of their children. Pray this prayer aloud, asking the adults to repeat each line after you:
 - Lord Jesus, bless my child(ren) as we celebrate our mother Mary and the month of May.
 - Help them to remember to trust in God as Mary did.
 - Help them to remember that Mary will always help them.
 - We ask this in your name. Amen.
- Invite the children to bless their parents and caregivers. Explain that the adults may sit so that the children can easily place their hands on the adults' heads. Ask the children to pray each line after you as you pray this prayer aloud:
 - Lord Jesus, bless the ones who love and care for me.
 - Help them to learn patience and understanding from Mary, our mother.
 - Help them to remember to trust in God.
 - Help them to remember that Mary will always help them.
 - And help me do my part to love and help my family.
 - We ask this in your name. Amen.

- Invite each family or table group to stand and hold hands in a circle. Pray the following prayer:
 - Thank you, Lord, for gathering us together in celebration, support, and encouragement as we celebrate Mary, our mother, during this month of May. Thank you for the fun of finding partners and having a procession to honor Mary at the beginning of our session. Thank you for helping us to learn from your Word in the Scriptures. Thank you for family fun during our exercise in trust. Thank you for reminding us of our mother Mary and that the month of May is Mary's month while we made our triptychs.
 - Be with us, Lord, as we show support and love to our families this month. Help us to trust in God as Mary did, and to honor her in the month of May. *(Invite everyone to respond, "Amen.")*
- Distribute the handout "May: The Month of Mary." Explain that the families should take it home and place it where they can see it throughout the month.
- Explain that the Question of the Month is something the families should reflect on together at various times throughout the next few weeks.
- Point out the Catholic Practice Challenge, and invite the families to consider ways to complete it over the next month.
- Remind the participants to take their May altar triptychs home.





Question of the Month

How will your family honor Mary, the Mother of God and our mother, during the month of May?

Catholic Practice Challenge

Setting up a May altar at home is a traditional way of honoring Mary during the month of May. Use your prayer space or another spot in your home. Include a statue of Mary or one of the triptychs your family made at this session. Add a Hail Mary to your grace before meals, or pray a decade of the rosary each night with the family before getting everyone ready for bed.

