

# St. Joseph's Family Activities



## 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

### 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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### “As the Father has loved me so I have loved you”

This Sunday's Gospel follows on from last week's Gospel on the true vine. This week, Jesus unpacks the consequences of being a part of His vine.

On Thursday we celebrate Jesus' Ascension into heaven, after asking His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the original novena and there is a practical activity to do with children and families related to this.

Finally, a couple of pages are dedicated to some of the many flowers which are associated with Mary and a suggestion to create a “Mary Garden”. There is a web link for a comprehensive list of plants, possibly you have many of these already!

Please do send in photos of anything that you have done.

As ever, if you wish to see past copies of these sheets, please go to <https://www.stjosephsmalvern.org/j/> and then click on the dropdown box for past editions.

***There are Four Dimensions of the Faith making sure that Jesus Christ is the centre of everything we do***

# Alleluia! Jesus is Risen

A **Mary garden** created beside an old tree trunk. Currently covered in forget-me-nots (our Lady's eyes) but with hostas (Assumption lilies), lilies of the valley, a white rose, ox-eye daisies, foxgloves (Mary's gloves) and hollyhocks (St. Joseph's staff) and self-seeded pot marigolds coming through. This garden has been created making use of the tree trunk and a statue of Mary, but you can create a garden anywhere – see below.



*The family is the “domestic Church” and if we are not able to gather in person with the parish, it's a good idea to set aside special times to pray with the family, even if it is just 10 minutes two or three times a week. These are graced moments. Light a candle and have a few moments' silence and remind everyone that they are in the presence of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These times are very precious and even if it is just a few minutes after a meal, it can be a fruitful time. Don't bite off more than you can chew! Start with just a few moments and build up the scope and variety of prayers slowly. Give everyone the opportunity to voice their own prayers as well as reciting traditional prayers.*

**Speaking/Learning the faith  
(which the Church calls  
“professing the faith”)**

**Living it (in Christ) – i.e. the  
choices we make in  
everyday life**

**Celebrating it in the liturgy  
and the sacraments**

**Christian prayer.**

## Gospel for 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

John 15:9-17

**Jesus said to his disciples:**

**‘As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love.**

**If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.**

I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete.

**This is my commandment:**

**love one another, as I have loved you.**

**A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.**

**You are my friends, if you do what I command you.**

I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master’s business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.

**You did not choose me: no, I chose you;** and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.

**What I command you is to love one another.’**

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: ***Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ***

## Family discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

*Again, some sections are in bold and if appropriate for younger children, just read these, as the reflection below is based on these.*

**Q: What does Jesus ask us to do?** (A: Remain in His love.)

**Q: What does this mean?** (A: Various possible answers but basically, stay close to Jesus, do what He says, obey/keep His commandments. *This is a recap from last week so you may like to remind them about the vine and that last week we talked about doing as He says by His grace, etc.)*

**Q: Whose commandments has Jesus kept?** (A: His Father’s. *If the children answer “God’s”, whilst they are not wrong, gently remind them that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that Jesus is God and in particular has kept God the Father’s commandments.)*

**Q: What is Jesus’ commandment/what does He want us to do?** (A: love one another as He has loved us).

**Q: What has Jesus done to show us His love for us?** (A: various; taught/healed/forgives our sins/especially He died on the cross and rose again .....

**Q: How can we be Jesus’ friends?** (A: By doing what He commands us to do.)

**Q: What does Jesus mean by that He chose us”?** (A: Various, but remind the children that He knew us before we were born and that a babies brought for Baptism don’t now Jesus but He knows them and that He has already chosen us.)

**Q: Jesus’ final sentence is a repeat – Jesus commands (tells) us to love one another. How can we do this?** (A: various, e.g., being kind/patient/helpful/ taking turns/noticing if someone is a bit unhappy or tired.....)

*End by praying:*

***Jesus, I know that you love me. You filled me with your Holy Spirit in Baptism so that I can come to know and love you and your Father. Help me to love you more and more each day. Amen.***

# 13<sup>th</sup> May, Christ's Ascension into Heaven

Jesus' Ascension into heaven is His final departure from His Apostles who at first stand in shock as He is taken from their sight. How He is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven and because He is not only in one place on earth, He can be everywhere that His people are. So He is in our churches as the blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle; He is with us wherever we are gathered to pray, whether that is in our families at home, or in school or anywhere else. He is also in the poor and the sick and the needy.

Before Jesus left, He told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit (at Pentecost). They did this for nine days and now the Church has a Tradition of praying before a particular feast day or for a cause for nine days. This is called a "novena" from the Latin "novem" meaning "nine". It's a good idea to pray a novena between Ascension and Pentecost for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the next page is an imagined picture of some of the Apostles gathered with Mary praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Below is a traditional prayer to the Holy Spirit. In the speech bubbles are some of the parts of the prayer in simpler language. Either cut these out and place above the Apostles or fill in your own speech bubbles. There is one for each day of the novena.

Come Holy Spirit!

Holy Spirit  
fill our hearts

Send your Spirit

Holy Spirit  
renew us and the  
whole earth

Holy Spirit  
teach us

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Holy Spirit set  
us on fire with  
your love

Holy Spirit  
make us wise

Holy Spirit, re-create  
us (make us new  
people)

Holy Spirit make us  
happy and content





A novena  
to the  
Holy  
Spirit

# May, the Month of Mary

This week we are thinking about creating a **Mary garden**. This might be something to do during half term coming up, or something to work on throughout the year, especially if you are sowing seeds now.

Whether you have acres or a windowsill indoors, there are a range of plants you can choose to honour Our Lady. Lots of the common names for plants have their origins in devotions to Mary. Think about marigolds, lilies (including lily-of-the-valley, roses) and any flower with “lady” in the name. Often these are “wild” flowers (or what are considered weeds”). Here are some ideas.\* Please note that although these explanations are generally the stuff of the medieval imagination, they show us a history of devotion to the Mother of God and her work of supporting her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. They also help us to contemplate the mysteries of Jesus’ birth, teaching, Passion, death, Resurrection and Ascension. Do look up the link below for more ideas of plants and flowers to use. These photos (except for the daisy chain) all come from my own garden.



Foxgloves used to be called “Our Lady’s gloves”

Roses have a special place in our devotion to Mary. Legend has it that Mary blushed a deep rose pink at the Annunciation. Red roses symbolise her sorrow and motherhood and white, her purity. Mary is also known as the mystic Rose.

Daisies (right) are a symbol of innocence and freedom from sin as Mary is, and ox-eye daisies (far right) are also called “Mary’s star”. Legend says that the wise men lost sight of the star but found a clump of ox-eye daisies right beside where the Holy Family was.



Poppies (right) remind us of Christ’s blood that was shed for us. This is a sculpted poppy and it shows that if you don’t have the space to grow many flowers then sculpture is a good alternative. Red poppies of course also bring to mind all those who have died for our country in war.



Daffodils have also been called “Mary’s Star” but meaning new life and hope. The way their heads look down reminds us of Mary looking down on us from heaven. (This yellow flower was photographed from below, looking up, against the blue sky).







Forget-me-nots (left) were known as "eyes of Mary". The stunning blue carpet of colour also reminds us of Mary's colour, blue.

There is a legend that Christ touched his mother's eyes and then passed his hand over the ground and forget-me-nots grew ..



Rosemary was known as "Mary's nosegay"



Chives were known as "Our Lady's Garlic. (Can you spot the bee?)



Bluebells have also been called "Lady's bells".



Tulips were known as "Our Lady's prayer"



Violets were known as "Our Lady's Modesty" as they symbolise humility and modesty as they flower for months and months quietly getting on bringing a bit of colour through the winter and into spring when there is not a lot of other plants in flower.

Finally, here are some marigold seedlings... they will have bright yellow flowers and are named after Mary herself: "mari-gold"

