



SAINT MATTHEW

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

LESSONS 8 and 9 CONTENT GOALS FOR FEBRUARY:

- ☐ Recite this month's Scripture Memorization
 - "And Mary said, 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior.'" (Luke 1:46-47)
- ☐ Define the following:
 - Immaculate Conception
 - *Fiat*
 - Hail Mary
 - Assumption of Mary
 - Magnificat
 - Vocal Prayer
 - Meditative Prayer
 - Contemplative Prayer
- ☐ Describe Mary's honored role in the Church.
- ☐ Explain why Mary is our Mother.
- ☐ Understand and participate in three expressions of prayer.
- ☐ Tell the Story of Our Lady of Lourdes
- ☐ Tell the Story of St. Josephine Bakhita
- ☐ **ALL: Complete your Monthly Prayer Board Activity!**

I. PRAYING TO THE VIRGIN MARY- Lesson 8

MAIN IDEAS: “Mary serves a unique and honored role in Salvation History and the Church. She is a model of prayer for us and is someone to whom we can bring our prayer petitions” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.158*).

“God sent His son into the world to save us from our sins. In order for Jesus to be born a human being like us in all things except for sin, He needed to be born of a human woman...He needed to find a woman who would willingly cooperate with His Divine Plan...God found Mary who would say yes to His plan for the Savior to be born. Through her yes, Mary becomes for us the perfect example of cooperation with God’s will through the life of prayer” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.306*).

THE MOTHER OF GOD and THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: Mary was always a part of the God’s plan. He knew that she would say yes! While all humans (except Jesus who is both God and human) need saving and redemption, “God gave Mary a special and unique grace that preserved her from the stain of Original Sin...God applied to her the Redemption that would be won by her Son’s death and resurrection before the moment of her conception. In this way, Mary was conceived in her mother’s womb free from Original Sin” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.306*). This dogma of our Faith is called The Immaculate Conception.

Vocabulary Word	Definition	In other words...
Immaculate Conception	The grace God gave the Virgin Mary of being conceived in her mother’s womb free of the stain of Original Sin.	Grace from God that preserved or protected Mary from Original Sin at the time of her conception in her mother’s womb.

Mary received this special grace because she was to be the Mother of God. Through this special grace Mary remained free of personal sin throughout her life, and this special grace prepared her to say yes to God’s plan.

“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” (Luke 1:28 RSV) – Mary was free from sin in order for the Angel Gabriel to declare her “full of grace.” It is fitting that the woman who would bear the Son of God would be free from sin and full of God’s grace.

THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD – Mary’s unconditional trust and YES to the Lord:

The Archangel Gabriel announced that Mary was to be the Mother of God is called the **Annunciation**. While Mary was initially confused, “since I have no relations with a man?” (Luke 1:34), Gabriel explained that she would conceive the child by the power of the Holy Spirit and that her cousin, Elizabeth, who was barren, was pregnant. Despite Mary’s confusion, she “replied with the complete submission of her will saying, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done according to your word’ (Luke 1:38)” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.307*).

“Mary’s yes to the Father’s plan is called her **fiat**. This is the first Christian prayer and is the prayer of all Christians. Mary shows us that to belong to Christ is to trust ourselves totally to Him. (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.307*). “In this first Christian Prayer, Mary calls herself the ‘handmaid’ of the Lord. Mary is telling God that she is completely at his disposal, ready to do whatever he asks of her...Mary models the grace of total submission to the will of the Father. We are called to respond this same way. Engaging in regular prayer helps us to discern what God is calling us to do.

Vocabulary	Definition	In other words...
Fiat	Latin word meaning, “Let it be done.”	Mary’s consent to cooperate with God’s plan for Salvation.

OUR MEDIATRIX AND MOTHER: Mary plays a special role in bringing our prayers before her Son, therefore, the Church calls her our **mediatrix** (or intercessor).

- Example: Mary’s intercession at the Wedding Feast of Cana – Mary went to Jesus when the wine ran out at the wedding. While it wasn’t Jesus’ time yet, he still responded to Mary’s request.

Jesus, while on the cross, gives his mother, to all of humanity, making her the Mother of the Church

- In the Gospel of John we read “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (John 19:26–27).

“Since its earliest traditions, the Church has held that in this encounter John represents all of redeemed mankind. Thus, it can truly be said that Mary is the Mother of the Church and we can say Mary is our Mother” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.307*).

Jesus invites us to bring our needs to his Mother. “It is His will that we should ask Mary to pray for us” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.307*) as in the Hail Mary when we pray “Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.”

DEVOTION TO MARY

Magnificat: When Mary was pregnant, she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, who was also with child despite being past her child bearing years, (because as scripture says nothing is impossible for God). This is called the Visitation.

From Luke 1:39–56, we read that “when Mary greets her cousin, Elizabeth exclaims, ‘Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.’ Elizabeth explains that when Mary’s voice reached her ears, the child in her womb leapt for joy. Mary responds with the beautiful prayer called the **Magnificat**. She proclaims that her soul magnifies the Lord, and that ‘from now on, will ages call me blessed,’” (*FF Parent Guide, Vol IV, p.308*).

Vocabulary	Definition	In other words...
Magnificat	Mary’s prayer of praise given to us in Luke’s Gospel	A Prayer that comes from Luke’s Gospel about the Visitation. It is a song of praise to the Lord.

Since the times of the ancient Church, “Mary has been honored with a unique devotion that is above that of all the angels and saints. We do not adore Mary as we do God, but we do honor her, as her Son honored her, for her special and unique role in His plan of Salvation... The church encourages us to ask Mary to intercede for us, and to fly to her protection when we are in need or in danger.

Vocabulary	Definition	In other words...
Assumption of Mary	The lifting up of Mary’s body and soul into Heaven at the end of her earthly life.	Mary was assumed into Heaven meaning she went straight to Heaven (body and soul) at the end of her earthly life.

Some Devotions to Mary: *The Hail Mary, The Rosary, The Magnificat*

HOOK QUESTION FOR YOUR CHILDREN: Is it difficult to trust in God? Why or why not?

HOOK QUESTION FOR OLDER KIDS: What are ways that we can learn to grow in our trust in God so we can learn His plan for us?

II. EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER– Lesson 8

MAIN IDEAS: There are “three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative, which correspond to our God-given voices, minds, and hearts. In all three types of prayer, we seek to know God more intimately and grow in our relationship with Him.” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p.159).

St. Gregory of Nazianzus, an early Doctor of the Church, said, ‘We must remember God more often than we draw breath’...It means that our actions and thoughts should come from a heart overflowing with the love of God. Actions flowing from a loving heart not only bring us close to God, they are a constant prayer. In this way everything that we do then becomes an offering of prayer to God” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p.309).

Conversion of heart requires that we set time aside and purposefully pray with God to develop a relationship with him. “As the Catechism explains, ‘we cannot pray at “all times” if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are special times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration,’ (CCC 2697)” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p309).

THREE MAJOR EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER: Vocal, Meditative, Contemplative

VOCAL PRAYER

Vocabulary	Definition	In other words...
Vocal Prayer	Praying with our voices	Praying with our voices, usually aloud.

Vocal prayer expresses what we must express from our hearts while using our voices. This is an expression of our human nature, as we are made up of both body and soul. Jesus taught his disciples vocal prayer in the Our Father; the disciples were watching him pray one day and they asked Him to teach them how to pray. He then taught them the vocal prayer, The Our Father.

Jesus prayed vocally numerous times in the bible: When He raised Lazarus from the dead, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and from His Cross. Jesus provided for us the example and need for vocal prayer.

We can engage in vocal prayer when we pray *The Our Father, The Hail Mary, The Glory Be* for example, or “we can express our own spontaneous prayers that arise from within our hearts and minds... The Catechism recommends that group prayer be often vocal when it says, ‘Because it is external and so thoroughly human, vocal prayer is the form of prayer most readily accessible to groups’ (CCC 2704)” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p309-310). We participate in many vocal prayers at Mass, saying grace before a meal, or praying someone’s intentions aloud.

With Vocal Prayer, we must always be aware that it is not about how many words are said, but that they come from the heart. “Jesus had strong criticism for those who were constantly praying with many words, but their hearts were far away from God” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p310).

MEDITATIVE PRAYER:

Word	Definition	In Other Words...
Meditative Prayer	Praying with our thoughts and feelings to understand God’s will for us.	A type of prayer where we use our thoughts and feelings to figure out what God is calling us to do.

“In meditative prayer, we use our thoughts and imagination to seek to know God’s will for our lives...The Catechism says, ‘Meditation is above a quest. It seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking’ (CCC 2705). More than anything, **meditation seeks to answer the question ‘Lord, what do you want me to do?’** (CCC 2706)” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p310).

Meditative Prayer:

- Engages our thoughts, imaginations, desires, and emotions
- Helps to give us an increased understanding of our faith, “and a conversion of heart to desire the things of God” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p310).
- Gives us strength to follow God’s will
- Focuses on the mysteries of Christ
- Examples:
 - Reading Scripture and the writings of the Saints – we can reflect on how those writings apply to and shape our own lives.
 - The Rosary or Lectio Divina – we reflect more closely on the mysteries of Christ

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER:

Word	Definition	In Other Words...
Contemplative Prayer	Praying with our hearts fixed on Jesus, giving ourselves over to Him	Praying without words, but fully with our hearts; it is <i>GIFT</i> in which we enter into communion with <i>God</i> .

“In contemplative prayer we fix our hearts on Jesus. St. Theresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church, says: ‘Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.’ (CCC 2709)” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p310).

Contemplative Prayer:

- Takes place in our hearts, is done in silence, and is led by the Holy Spirit
- Requires that we surrender ourselves to the Lord and that we fix ourselves completely on Jesus; it requires that we renounce ourselves (and our attachment to sin) so we can be “purified to love and serve God and others” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p310).
- Is a free and undeserved gift from God in which we enter into communion with Him through the Holy Spirit” (*FF Vol IV Prayer, Parent Guide* p310).
- Is a means of being strengthened by God so we can say yes to his will
- Requires humility, an understanding of our dependence on God, who blesses us with all we have
- Example: Adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament, putting yourself in the presence of God

PRAYER IS A DECISION:

Prayer requires intention and time – this is how we nourish our spiritual lives and model prayer for our children. Parents teach their children prayer, just as Joseph and Mary taught Jesus.

*Attending the Holy Sacrifice of the MASS each and every Sunday is one of the greatest habits parents can create for their children. It is central to the faith, where we are nourished body and soul.

HOOK QUESTION FOR YOUR CHILDREN: How do you feel after you pray?

HOOK QUESTION FOR OLDER KIDS: What interferes with praying more? How could you pray more?

IN SUMMARY:

- We honor Mary because Jesus honors her.
- Mary is our Mother.
- We can take our petitions to Mary.
- In vocal prayer we use our voices to speak to God.
- We focus our thoughts and feelings to discern what God is calling us to do in meditative prayer.
- In contemplative prayer we fix our hearts on Jesus.