

Flower Garden for Mary

Everyone knows that mothers love to receive flowers from their children. Our Blessed Mother Mary is no exception. Maybe that is why the Church chose the month of May for us to especially honor Mary - for it is the height of spring, when countless blossoms are in bloom and can be gathered for Her shrines and altars. It is a wonderful time of year and opportunity in which to show our Blessed Mother how much we care about Her and to thank Her for all that She does for us. But as we gather natural blossoms for Her, we must not forget that Her favorite flowers are spiritual ones.

So in this craft, the purpose is to assemble a spiritual bouquet of beautiful flowers for our Blessed Mother. How can we do this? Well, for a long time different flowers have been symbolic for specific virtues. So when we practice these virtues then, if we have the desire and intention, we are in a very real way giving flowers to Mary. And these blossoms are especially dear to Her. They never fade. And whenever She looks at them, She feels again the joy of receiving them - remembering, as a good mother does, the love behind the gift.

Let's take a look at the seven virtues/flowers included in this craft. (There is also a list further on of suggested ideas for how to practice and gather them for Mary.)

For this craft, we have provided pictures of these seven different flowers for each week of the month (four sets in all). On each flower, there is a line where you fill in the total for that virtue for each week. Try to do as many as you can!

FLOWER	VIRTUE
Sunflower	Faith
Ivy	Hope
Rose	Charity
Carnation	Obedience
Forget-me-not	Piety
Violet	Humility
Daffodil	Diligence

Make your Own!

1. Get your parents' permission and say a prayer to Guardian Angel for help.
2. Gather all your supplies:
 - Your printed off background pages (two pages in all)
 - Your printed off flower sets (two pages, a total of 28 flower circles) (*And whenever printing, please remember to always print on 'Draft'!*)
 - Coloring Materials - Crayons, Markers, or Colored Pencils
 - Tape (to attach background pages together and to attach flower images to the background)
 - Scissors

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3. Color the garden picture and then tape it and the bottom background page together. Be sure and find a safe place to keep this through the month.
4. At the start of each week, color, cut out and attach to your background the seven virtues for that week.
5. Keep track of your acts of virtue throughout the week. (*You may need a separate piece of paper or notebook to do this.*)
6. At the end of the week, write down in the slot provided in each flower circle the number of acts you did of that virtue **that week**.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 until you reach the end of the month.
8. Now your Flower Garden is complete and ready to present to our Blessed Mother with your full and colorful arrangement of well earned flowers!

SUGGESTIONS and TIPS

- When you perform your acts of virtue, don't forget to have the *intention* of gathering them as flowers to give to Mary. This desire is very important and will also help give you the necessary focus for these good deeds, prayers and sacrifices.
- Remember to ask your Guardian Angel, your Patron Saint and/or Jesus for help. Ask them to do the things with you. They know Mary very well and what will please Her the most. They will help you in your good deeds, thereby picking Her favorite kinds of flowers in the very best way possible!
- Also, unite all of your 'flowers' to the merits and love of Jesus - this will give an infinite value to your every deed.
- When counting your acts of virtue, make sure that you are not too stingy or careless with what you consider one flower. For example, when obeying your parents by setting the table - not every plate or cup should count as an act of virtue: it is the whole chore that counts as one good deed. On the other hand, if they give you a list of chores, each task can be its own act of obedience. (For instance, setting the table, sweeping the floor, and taking out the trash are three good deeds - not one act of obedience.)

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Different ways to gather flowers for your Garden for Mary

VIRTUE	ACTION
<p>Faith (Sunflower)</p>	<p>Make an Act of Faith or say the Apostle's Creed - with a special effort <i>think</i> about what you are saying, trying as best as you can to sincerely <i>mean</i> it</p> <p>Say a prayer, or even just a simple 'hello' to someone in Heaven: God, Jesus, Mary, a Saint, your Guardian Angel, anybody! Try to do this often throughout the day. Really try to remember that They, especially your Angel, are at your side and talk to Them as if you could see Them: asking for help, sharing your troubles, giving your love, etc.</p> <p>Spend some time reading about the Catholic Faith: this can be from either a catechism, or from stories or meditations that illustrate elements of our Faith. (For example, the books of mediations and stories of Mary in the Catholic Kingdom's Monastery School's Library.)</p> <p>Offer a sincere prayer in your own words, for an increase of the virtue of Faith for yourself and for everyone else.</p>
<p>Hope (Ivy)</p>	<p>Make an Act of Hope with extra fervor and confidence, <i>thinking</i> of and <i>meaning</i> every word you say.</p> <p>Say a special prayer to God, Jesus or the Blessed Mother for those who need the grace of conversion - with the firm hope that these poor sinners will receive it from Heaven.</p> <p>Make a sincere act of contrition, confidently hoping in God's love and mercy.</p> <p>Pray for the salvation of everyone who will day today throughout the world.</p> <p>Offer a sincere prayer in your own words for an increase of the virtue of Hope for yourself and for everyone else.</p>
<p>Obedience (Carnation)</p>	<p>Do what you're told right away and cheerfully - without questioning your parent's decision or giving them a hard time.</p> <p>Try to do your chores without even being told.</p> <p>Think of something your parents generally request, and try to do it without their reminder (For example, turning the lights off when you leave a room, not slamming the front door, etc.)</p>

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<p>Charity (Rose)</p>	<p>Make an Act of Charity with sincere focus and love.</p> <p>As an act of love to God, take special notice of the little things throughout the day that you take for granted and thank Him in your heart. Thank Him also for whomever He is using as His tool to give it to you. So, for example, be grateful to your father that you have a home, with a bed to sleep on and food in the refrigerator. Be thankful to your mother that she washed your dirty clothes and for the dinner she cooked for you. If you are blessed with siblings, thank God for their companionship and love for you.</p> <p>In general, treat others the way you would like to be treated. This includes being patient, forgiving, helpful, encouraging, etc.</p> <p>When someone annoys or hurts you, try to either give them the benefit of the doubt (presume they did not mean to hurt you) or forgive them quietly without letting them see how hard you are trying. Patiently forgive them as you would want to be forgiven.</p> <p>If you have to wait because someone else is late (like coming to a meal), then patiently make the sacrifice of waiting. Take the opportunity to say an extra prayer.</p> <p>Share your time with others in productive or playful activities that may not interest you. (Like playing the game your sibling wants instead of the one you had in mind.)</p> <p>Give/share something special to you with another.</p> <p>Make the effort to give a sincere kind word, look or smile (even and especially if you do not feel like it or want to)</p> <p>Offer a prayer for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Bringing them relief and release is a great Act of Charity.</p>
<p>Piety (Forget-me-not)</p>	<p>Make a special effort to say your morning and evening prayers.</p> <p>Take the time to make at least one Spiritual Communion a day.</p> <p>Try very hard to pay attention to your prayers.</p> <p>Go to confession, and ask for the grace to prepare well.</p> <p>Offer some prayer, sacrifice or simple act of love in reparation for sins - especially those committed against Jesus and Mary and Their Sacred and Immaculate Hearts.</p>



<p>Humility (Violet)</p>	<p>Be respectful to others, with a special effort towards your parents (since you should always show them respect.)</p> <p>Try to not let anyone know about something good you did. Do not look for the praise of others.</p> <p>If you are tempted to jealousy of someone else's talent, skill or possessions - simply thank God for the gifts that you have received, and for the fact that that other person has been blessed with such a gift.</p> <p>Don't make excuses for yourself, when justly accused/reprimanded. And if someone accuses you of something you didn't do or gets mad at you for no good reason, do not argue - simply forgive and forget.</p> <p>When it comes to a matter of preference (not a matter of right or wrong) - Do not force/voice your opinion, but do it someone else's way. For example: which game to play; who goes first; etc.</p> <p>When you have done something wrong, don't be forced or cornered into making an apology. You be the one to admit and apologize for it, <u>right away</u>.</p>
<p>Diligence (Daffodil)</p>	<p>Help your parents around the house in ways that you don't have to.</p> <p>Go out of your way to help someone with <i>their</i> chore.</p> <p>Make a special effort to do every task well and not sloppily or hastily.</p> <p>Sacrifice the opportunity to play a video game or watch TV.</p> <p>Finish your schoolwork before you play - again, don't do it all in a rush so you can play. Do it <i>well</i>.</p> <p>Do not complain.</p>



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