

# TRY PRAYER!

## *It Works!*

### Contest 2023

This year's theme, "**Open Wide the Doors of Your Home to Christ**" will help you and your family answer God's call to holiness by inviting Jesus and Mary into everything you do. Through family prayer, especially the Rosary, Mary will share her love for Jesus with your family and help you become a channel of His love and light in the world. Everyday life might seem ordinary, but God has an extraordinary mission for your family!



**Family Rosary**

HOLY CROSS  
FAMILY MINISTRIES

[FamilyRosary.org](http://FamilyRosary.org)

# FAMILY ACTIVITY

## *Open Wide the Doors of Your Home to Christ*

Inspired by our founder, Venerable Patrick Peyton, the *Try Prayer! It Works!* Contest focuses on Father Peyton's message: "The family that prays together stays together." To strengthen family prayer in your home, we're sharing a family-faith experience that takes you and your family through a reflective, enriching journey.

Our goal is to bring the Church's teachings to life around the dinner table with discussion prompts, reflection questions, prayer ideas, and creativity. Together, welcome God and the Blessed Virgin Mary into your family life and let them inspire you in writing, drawing, filming, or painting.

Dear family, we encourage you to take time during or after dinner to complete these steps, contemplate the prompts, and finish in prayer together.

### ■ STEP 1: LIGHT A CANDLE

Begin by choosing someone to light a candle for the center of the table. Turn off any devices that might be distracting, such as cell phones, televisions, and computers. Enjoy a moment of silence with your family. Choose to focus on the presence of God among you. Once the room is settled, continue to the next step.

### ■ STEP 2: OPEN WITH PRAYER

Ask someone to open with a prayer through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. Use the prayer we provide below or create your own.

*Dear Jesus, thank You for gathering us together. May Your Holy Spirit guide our conversation. We thank You especially for sharing Mary, Your Mother, with us so that she can be our Mother, too. Blessed Mother Mary, please pray that we may have the grace to open wide the doors of our home to Jesus, who wishes to make our family holy by His presence.*

*"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."*

### ■ STEP 3: FAMILY REFLECTION

Once you've finished the opening prayer, choose a member of your family to read the following reflection on family life:

*It's incredible that Jesus, the Son of God, chose to be born in a stable among the hills of Bethlehem. He could have been born in a king's palace, but He chose a poor family instead. What was important to Jesus was not wealth or comfort, but the warm, loving family that surrounded Him.*

*By choosing to be born into the family of Mary and Joseph, Jesus taught us that families have a very special place in the Heart of God. God created Adam and Eve as the first human family, and He has created every human being since then to be part of a family—even if no two families look the same.*

*Why does God care so much about families? Saint John Paul II, who was pope only a few years ago, told us that the family has a mission in God's plan.\* Superheroes and astronauts have missions, and families do, too! But the mission of the family, the pope said, can be described in a single word: "love."*

*This mission is amazing! Why? In the Bible, Saint John, one of Jesus' closest friends, wrote that God is love (1 John 4:8). If God is love, and the family's mission is also love, then the family is meant to be*

*like God and to reveal who God is to the world. God creates each family for this special purpose.*

*But how can families fulfill their mission? By welcoming Jesus into everything they do. As Saint John Paul II often said: "Open wide the doors to Christ!"*

*If Jesus becomes part of our family, He will teach us to love as He loves. Then, the rest of the world will surely notice! This was also part of the mission that God intended for the family. He wanted other people to see fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters who had met Him in prayer, the sacraments, and in everyday family life. God knew that when the whole world saw how much these families loved each other, everyone would discover deep in their hearts that Saint John's words were true: God is Love.*

**In the discussion questions below, we'll explore the many ways we can open the doors of our homes and our hearts to Jesus.**

## ■ STEP 4: FAMILY DISCUSSION

1. Consider how much God loves us and the many ways He shows us His love. Think about how God created us and how Jesus died for us on the cross. How can our family follow God's example in the way that we treat each other?
2. In family life, we discover that God desires to be a Father and close friend to each of us. As in other relationships, we have to talk to God if our friendship with Him is going to become stronger. Prayer is a conversation with God that makes this possible. Do we take time to pray together as a family? How can we help each other make prayer a more central part of our life together?
3. Fathers and mothers play very important roles in revealing God's love for each other and for their children. They do this especially by loving in difficult times as well as in good ones. What does this teach us about God's love? (Hint: Does God love us in good times? Does He love us in difficult times, even when we make mistakes or sin?)
4. The sacraments are incredible ways that God draws close to us to teach us who He is. Does our family receive the sacraments—especially

the Holy Eucharist and Confession—regularly? How can we allow the sacraments to transform our family more fully? (Hint: Do we remember that when we've received the Eucharist, we bring Jesus home with us? Do we reconcile with each other in addition to asking God's forgiveness in Confession?)

5. Consider the example of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. What are some of the ways they fulfilled God's mission for the family?

## ■ STEP 5: GET CREATIVE

**Decide as a family what your Try Prayer! It Works! Contest entry will look like. For example:**

- a. Choose an ordinary family activity—such as working, talking, playing, or praying together—and write about how you can invite Jesus and Mary to be part of that activity.
- b. Interview a grandparent or someone else in your family about how faith and friendship with God got your family through a difficult time.
- c. Draw or paint a picture showing how your family becomes holy by welcoming Jesus into the activities you do each day.
- d. Create a short video of your family talking about the importance of prayer and the sacraments in family life.

**Students in grades K-3 may select one of the pictures of Mary and color, paint, or decorate it. You may download the pages at [FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer](https://FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer). You are welcome to color/paint/decorate all of the pages, but only a single page will be accepted for the contest.**

**We encourage you and your family to brainstorm together as you design your project. Refer to the Contest Rules & Guidelines or visit [FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer](https://FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer) for more information.**



## ■ STEP 6: CLOSE WITH PRAYER

*O Jesus, You are the Son of God. In being born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, You became part of a human family. You showed us that family life is made holy by Your presence and You invited us into the family of God.*

*Today, our family commits to opening wide our doors to You. We ask for the courage to seek Your forgiveness and healing in the Sacrament of Confession. We ask for a love of Your presence in the Holy Eucharist. Finally, we ask that the grace we receive in these sacraments might strengthen our love for each other and for everyone we meet.*

*Mother Mary, we entrust our family to your care. In becoming Jesus' Mother, you became our Mother, too. We ask you, therefore, to guide our family along the path of holiness, so that we might enjoy eternal life with God in Heaven. Amen.*

### CONTINUE THE JOURNEY:

If you are looking for other activities to engage your family, visit **FamilyRosary.org** for family prayer resources.

\*For further reading on Saint John Paul II's vision of the family's mission, see *Familiaris Consortio* 17.

Thank you for taking the time to pray with your family! We encourage your family to have similar daily conversations to strengthen your faith. As Father Patrick Peyton said, "The family that prays together stays together." For more reflections and meditations, visit our blog at **Blog.FamilyRosary.org**.

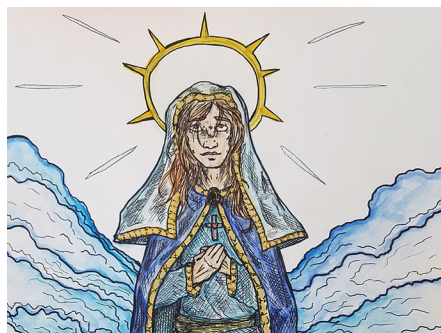
We look forward to receiving your contest submission! You're always in our prayers at the Father Peyton Center in North Easton, Massachusetts, USA.

Blessings to you and your family,

Father Fred Jenga, C.S.C.  
President, Holy Cross Family Ministries

### AWARDS:

Each first-place winning entry will be awarded \$100.00 USD, and each sponsoring institution of the first-place winners will receive \$100.00 USD.



# CONTEST RULES & GUIDELINES



## RULES

1. Children grades K-12 enrolled in a Catholic school, religious education program, parish, or other organization, including homeschool, are eligible to enter. Entries will be judged on content, ability to capture and interpret the theme, artistic and technical proficiency, and adherence to rules.\*
2. Every school, religious education program, parish, or other organization is asked to conduct its own contest and submit the top three winners from each grade and creative category.\*\*
3. All works must be original, prepared by the registrant\*\*\*, and not previously presented at any other competition.
4. A final judging panel will be selected by Family Rosary.
5. Entries may be in English, Spanish, or Portuguese.
6. Each entry must be accompanied by an official entry form. Copies of the entry form are permitted.

All prizes need not be awarded.

\*For more information on judging each creative work, visit [FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer](https://FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer).

\*\*See Frequently Asked Questions numbers five and seven for more information.

\*\*\*Students may receive help, guidance, and advice from teachers and parents on mechanical aspects of their entry.

## GUIDELINES

1. PROSE – Submit an essay of 50 to 250 words on 8.5-by-11-inch paper.
2. POETRY – On 8.5-by-11-inch paper, submit a poem of a minimum of 10 lines and a maximum of 30 lines. Poetry may rhyme or be written in free verse.
3. ARTWORK – (painting, drawing, scrapbooking, or collage) Any of these mediums can be submitted on no larger than 8.5-by-11-inch paper. Also, include a brief description of the work.
4. VIDEO – Videos may be no longer than two minutes. Ensure the file is saved and uploaded as an .MP4, .MOV, or .MPEG format and in Standard Definition.
5. Formal consent must be signed by a parent or guardian of every student involved.

*Do you have another creative category idea not listed here? We encourage you to think outside the box, but ask your parent, teacher, or leader permission before you pursue your creative idea!*

**ALL UNITED STATES ENTRIES  
DUE: FEBRUARY 24, 2023**



**1. Who is Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.?**

Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. (1909-1992), a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross and founder of Holy Cross Family Ministries, dedicated his life to serving God by encouraging families around the world to unite in prayer, especially the Rosary. To learn more about the life and ministry of Father Peyton, visit [FatherPeyton.org](http://FatherPeyton.org).

**2. What is Holy Cross Family Ministries?**

Holy Cross Family Ministries is a family of Catholic ministries dedicated to inspiring, promoting, and fostering the prayer life and spiritual well-being of families throughout the world. Through video, retreats, radio, daily family prayers via app or email, Rosary app, eBooks, and reflections through social media and blogs, we continue Father Peyton's mission of leading families to Christ through Mary.

For more information about each of our ministries, visit [HCFM.org](http://HCFM.org).

**3. What is the purpose of the Try Prayer! It Works! Contest?**

In the spirit of our founder, Venerable Patrick Peyton, and his message, "The family that prays together stays together," the *Try Prayer! It Works!* Contest is intended to help families unite in prayer together. Discussion prompts, reflection questions, and opportunities for creativity will shed light on the Scriptures and the Church's teachings as you gather around the dinner table. Let Mary inspire you in writing, drawing, filming, or painting to express how the Holy Family can be a model and guide for your family.

**4. Who are the participants of the Try Prayer! It Works! Contest?**

Students in grades K-12 enrolled in a Catholic school, religious education program, parish, or other organization, including homeschool, are eligible to enter.

**5. How does the contest work?**

Participating institutions provide information about the *Try Prayer! It Works!* Contest to students. Students take home the Family Activity and begin working on their entries. Each institution conducts a preliminary contest to select the three best entries for each grade in every creative category. After institutions submit their selections to Family Rosary, a judging panel will determine the winners.

**6. Can children participate in every category (artwork, poetry, prose, video)?**

Yes! You can submit an entry for any, some, or all four categories.

**7. What is the role of the Catholic school, religious education program, parish or other organization?**

Your role is to explain the contest to the students in your classroom or parish, assign the Family Activity, and encourage family discussion about each child's entry. We then ask that you conduct your contest and submit the top three winners from each grade and creative category.

In other words, for each grade (K-12), you'll provide the three best entries of artwork, the three best entries of poetry, the three best entries of prose, and the three best entries of video.

\*Please Note: It is very important that you conduct this preliminary contest so that your school or parish only submits three entries from each grade and creative category. Please do not submit to us more than three entries per grade and category.

**8. What is the judging criteria?**

Entries will be judged on content, ability to capture and interpret the theme, artistic and technical proficiency, and adherence to contest rules. See detailed judging rubrics on the next page.



ARTWORK - Relevance to theme (30%); Originality (25%); Creativity (20%); Color harmony (15%); Visual impact (10%)

POETRY - Relevance to theme (30%); Creativity, style, and originality (30%); Language, imagery, and form (20%); Clarity of expression (20%)

PROSE - Relevance to theme (30%); Organization and format (40%); Language and style (30%)

VIDEO - Relevance to theme (30%); Originality and creativity (40%); Presentation (costumes, transitions, light, sound, edits, etc.) (30%)

#### **9. What is the deadline of the contest?**

All entries are due **February 24, 2023**.

#### **10. How do institutions submit international entries?**

International Ministry Centers will individually manage a *Try Prayer! It Works!* Contest to align with their local academic schedules. Within their region, international Ministry Centers will choose one best entry from each grade and share it on **FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer**.

#### **11. What are the roles of family members?**

We encourage families to complete the Family Activity together. Complete each of the steps, contemplate the prompts, and finish together in prayer. If necessary, assist your child with his or her *Try Prayer! It Works!* Contest entry. Guide children in brainstorming ideas and in the safe execution of their creative works.

#### **12. What are the contest awards?**

Each first-place winning entry will be awarded \$100.00, and each sponsoring institution of the first-place winners will receive \$100.00.

#### **13. Additional questions?**

For any additional questions and/or more information, please email [mission@HCFM.org](mailto:mission@HCFM.org) or visit: **FamilyRosary.org/TryPrayer**.

**TRY PRAYER!**  
*It Works!*

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