



Ten ways to Grow closer to Mary

Why should we want to grow closer to Mary, the mother Jesus? Because she draws us closer to Christ and deeper into the heart of the Church. Mary is a member of our faith family who holds a unique place in the story of salvation. Here are ten ways to grow in appreciation of her amazing Spirit-led vocation as Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

1. Learn from others

Do you know someone with a healthy, vibrant love for Mary? Spend time with this person and allow his/her love for Mary to influence your own faith perspective.

2. Read a good book

Rediscover Mary through the eyes of contemporary scholarship. Find out what the reputable theologians are saying about Mary and her relevance to the world today. Check out a good Catholic bookshop or contact your nearest Catholic adult education centre.

3. Gaze upon an icon

The history of Christian art includes striking icons of Mary that draw the viewer to contemplate the Christian mystery. Pray before a Marian icon and allow the Holy Spirit to 'speak' to you through the image. Adorn your home with an icon or statue of Mary.

4. Teach your children

Teach your children about Mary: who she was, what she did, why the Church honours her today. You may need to do some homework yourself, but that's OK. We learn best when we teach others.\

5. Pray with Mary

The Church's tradition contains many beautiful Marian prayers and images, not least the rosary to which has been added five new mysteries (the 'mysteries of light'). Incorporate some of these riches into your prayer life.

6. Be open to Marian charisms

The Church is home to numerous religious congregations and groups who profess a special love for Mary. Call upon such people to share with you their Marian charism and any resources and publications that might be available through their networks.

7. Be formed through song

Music and song are a wonderful medium for touching hearts. Obtain a CD of Marian hymns—traditional or contemporary—or find them in your parish hymn book or on the net. Introduce these musical prayers to your home and your prayer life.

8. Celebrate her feast days

Take note of the Marian solemnities and feast days which pepper the Church's calendar (e.g. Mary, Mother of God; the Immaculate Conception; the

Assumption). Take time to reflect on the meaning of these celebrations and the way they highlight the various dimensions of the mystery of faith.

9. Follow her story in the scriptures

Mary, the Jewish mother of Jesus, appears in the bible at significant points in the unfolding of Jesus' life, death and resurrection: at his conception and birth, in the temple, his journey to manhood, at Cana, at Calvary, at the birth of the Church at Pentecost... Allow Mary to enfold you in her relationship with Jesus by meditating on the relevant scripture passages.

10. Draw close to the saints

The great saints of the Church had a deep love for Mary. When praying with or reading about a particular saint be attentive to his/her love for Mary. Open yourself to their Marian perspective.

Helpful Hint

Today there is a renewed and growing interest in Mary, even amongst people who are not Catholics. In this post-Vatican II era, the Church today is in a position to rediscover the beauty of its Marian heritage and the powerful role Mary plays in the life of God's people. With confidence pursue your calling to follow Christ, with Mary as your companion.

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