



PRAYER CELEBRATION

Preparation: Cover a table with a decorative cloth. If possible, place an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the table, along with an empty vase. Set aside flowers, one for each child.

Gather the children around the table. If desired, begin with a favorite hymn that honors Mary.

LEADER: *We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

ALL: *Amen.*

LEADER: *Let us pray.
Mary, you are our greatest saint.
We gather to celebrate your faith and your love.
May we grow stronger as followers of your Son, Jesus.*

ALL: *Amen.*

Instruct the children to be seated. Review the appearance of Mary to Juan Diego as described on the Catechist's Page. Invite the children to reflect on the ways Mary showed her love for the poor peasant Juan and for all people. Explain that we ask Mary to pray for us and for all the people of the world.

Give each child a flower. Ask the children to think of someone for whom they would like Mary to pray. Invite them to say aloud the person's name as they come forward to place their flower in the vase on the prayer table. When all the flowers are in the vase, close with the following prayer.

LEADER: *God of power and mercy,
may the prayers of Our Lady of Guadalupe
help us to honor the dignity of each person.
Plant your justice in our hearts so that
peace may reign throughout the world.*

ALL: *Amen.*

Prayer adapted from *Gather In My Name* "Honoring Mary Around the World."
Religion.SadlierConnect.com
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OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE:

A MODEL OF COMPASSION AND RESPECT

On December 12, we honor Mary as Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas. This feast day offers an opportunity to reflect on living our faith with the love, compassion, and respect that Mary herself exhibited.

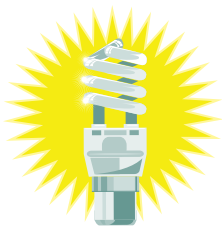
On the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we recall the appearance of Mary before Saint Juan Diego, a poor Aztec Indian peasant, on a hill in Mexico in 1531. Clothed like an Aztec princess, Mary spoke to Juan in his own language. Her request—that Juan go to the local bishop and instruct him to build a church on that very spot—took Juan by surprise. Why, he wondered, would a bishop listen to someone as lowly and humble as he? Yet Mary entrusted him with this important task. After first being refused by the bishop, Juan returned to the bishop with a sign given to him by Mary—roses that bloomed,

impossibly, in winter. When he opened his tilma, or cloak, the roses spilled out, and inside the tilma was imprinted the beautiful image of Mary as she appeared to Juan. The bishop built the church, and Mary's love and compassion were extended to the people of Mexico and beyond.

Mary's kindness and respect toward Juan and sensitivity to his culture are powerful reminders to respect the dignity of others, especially those who are poor or "different" from us. Mary also evangelizes. Over the centuries, she has brought the love of her Son to millions of people who otherwise might not have known him. Her example is one to emulate in our roles as catechists, teachers, parents, and believers.



The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Bright Ideas

For an intergenerational event that teaches about different ways Mary is honored around the world, visit Religion.SadlierConnect.com

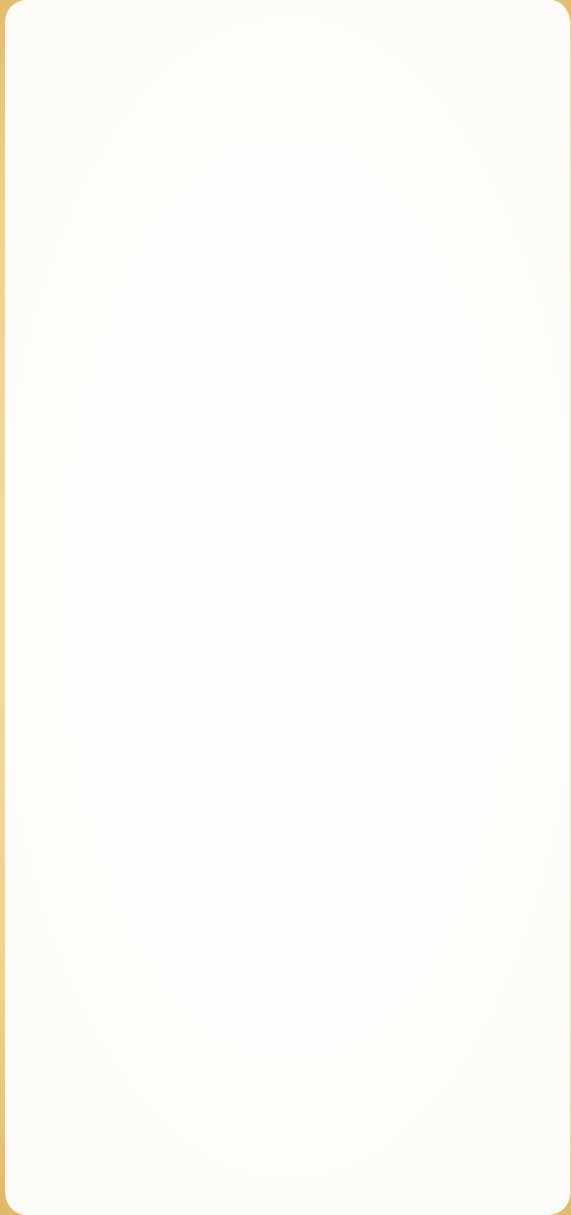
Suggested Activities

- ★ Invite the children to examine the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe and talk about its symbols—from the rays of the sun emanating from Mary to the stars on her robe. Invite the children to create their own pictures of Mary and use their own symbols to depict her love and compassion.
- ★ Celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with a meal incorporating food from Mexico. Dedicate a prayer space to Mary, using a statue, flowers, and other decorative elements. Start and end the celebration with a prayer such as the Hail Mary.

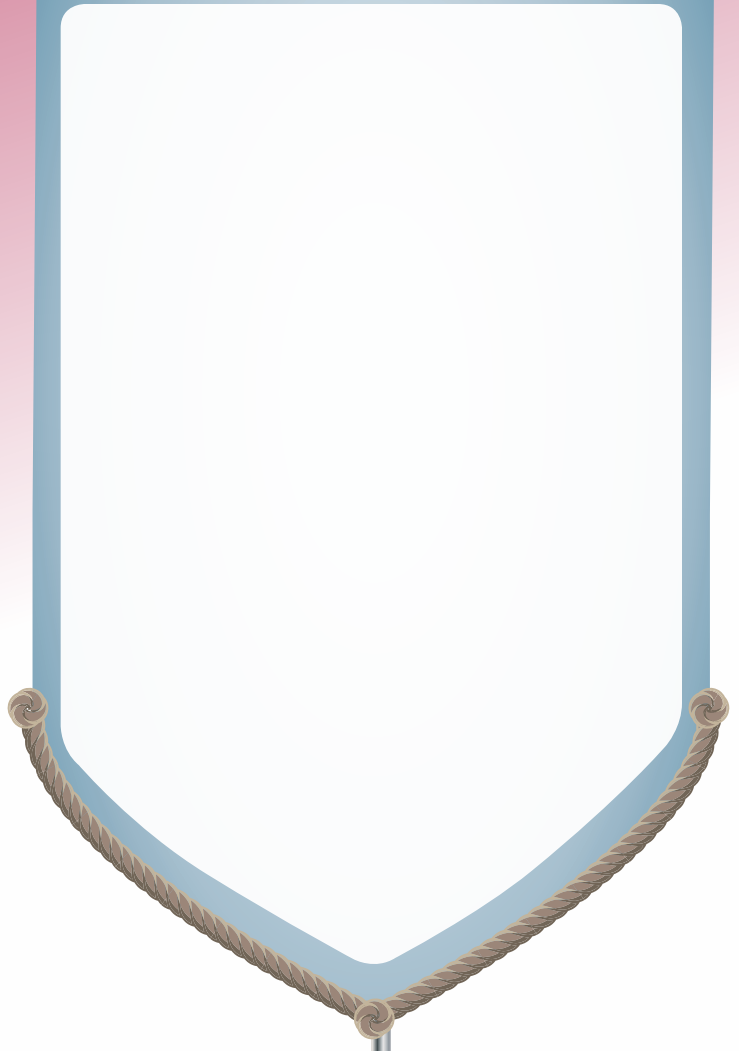
Complete the following activity.

Directions: Many parishes have processions to honor Mary. In a procession, people pray and sing while walking together. Decorate the banners for a procession to honor Mary as instructed below.

1. Juan Diego saw Mary appear as a beautiful woman dressed in the clothes of an Aztec princess. Draw a picture of Mary in the banner.



2. The beautiful woman told Juan Diego she was the mother of Jesus. She spoke to him in his own language. What does Mary teach you about Jesus? Draw or write something you know about Jesus in the banner.





3. Mary asked Juan Diego to tell the bishop to build a church. The bishop asked for a sign so that he would know it was Mary. Draw a sign of Mary's love in the banner.

4. On December 12, we celebrate the appearance of Mary to Juan Diego. Write a prayer to Mary in the banner.