

PANAGIA'S TEARS

COIX LACRYMA-JOBI



PREPARATION
Soak seeds for 30 minutes before planting



GROWING SEASON
Wait to plant until at least 80 degrees & needs lots of water



HARVEST & MAKE
Using needle & thread, you can make your own prayer rope

THE STORY BEHIND THESE SEEDS:

As the Theotokos was crying at the foot of the Cross, her tears fell to the ground and there grew a grass-like plant that produces bead-like seeds called "Panagia's Tears". Much later, a monk on Mt. Athos was upset because he was having difficulty tying the traditional knots of a prayer rope. The Theotokos appeared to him and said, "My child, take my tears, cultivate them, and make prayer ropes with which men may say the prayer of the heart."

1

BIBLE

Read and discuss Christ's crucifixion in the Gospels

2

JESUS PRAYER

Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me a sinner

3

MT. ATHOS

Where is it? Who lives there? What is monasticism?

LESSONS & CONNECTIONS

There are many titles given to the Mother of God. Some of them include: Theotokos (God-bearer), Panagia (All-Holy), and ever Virgin Mary.

As we till the earth to plant our Panagia's Tears, we can talk to our children about the name of these seeds. Do you know what Panagia means? This is an opportunity to talk about the many titles given to the Virgin Mary. You can expand upon this by asking your kids to actively look for all the ways we refer to the Virgin Mary in our prayers and services. You could even have a little notebook set aside to record these titles as they come across them and include where they found them. This notebook or scrapbook could be dedicated to learning more about the Theotokos, incorporating writing and research skills with learning more about the Mother of God.

In addition to making a prayer rope from the seeds you will harvest later in your garden, you can also learn how to make a knotted prayer rope by watching tutorials on YouTube. (This is an activity for older children because the knots are quite complicated and will require some



concentration. Search: youtube orthodox prayer rope)

We can also talk to our children about the majesty of creation. Let's use a tree as an example. "We have come full circle: human misuse of a tree resulted in a curse upon the earth, and now the life-giving tree revokes that curse." (Theokritoff) The tree is "a graphic expression of the way God calls his creation to serve his saving work." (Theokritoff) In what ways can we serve God in our daily lives as well? How has this plant, Panagia's Tears, taught us about God and provided us the opportunity to grow closer to Him?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Jesus Prayer and Me by Vasiliki Tsigas-Fotinis

The Holy Monks of Mount Athos by St. Nectarios Press

Celebration of Faith (Volume 3): The Virgin Mary
by Alexander Schmemmann

The Power of the Name: The Jesus Prayer in Orthodox Spirituality
by Bishop Kallistos of Diokelia

Living in God's Creation: Orthodox Perspectives on Ecology
by Elizabeth Theokritoff

