

HOW TO MAKE A LIFE BALLOON ROSARY

Supplies Needed

- 53 LIFE balloons for the Hail Mary beads. You can have your own printed, or order 17 in. yellow LIFE balloons at cost from youth@cantius.org
- 6 balloons of a different color (preferably larger) for Our Father beads
- Spool of balloon ribbon (or a biodegradable cotton string)
- A helium tank, which can be rented from a party supply store. Just tell them the amount and size of balloons to be filled up and they will tell you what size tank.
- Clear packaging tape (packaging tape dispensers are very convenient)
- Use your imagination as to how you would build the cross and whatever available materials you have. It should not be heavy. I prefer to use cardboard.

Practical Considerations

- Once constructed, the rosary will be quite large. It will not be possible to transport it in a vehicle (unless you have access to a private bus). Therefore it is important to construct the rosary at a location reasonably close to your objective location.
- Helium balloons always want to escape, it is advisable to construct the rosary inside in order to reduce the risk of losing your balloons. Parish halls or gymnasiums are ideal due to their size.
- Allow for plenty of time to make it. If you are creating the rosary for a scheduled event, you'll want to give yourself 3 to 4 hours, at least, before the event. Conversely, helium balloons are at their best when they are fresh, so it is **not** advantageous to make the rosary the day before an event.
- At least 2 people will be needed to do this, but that will take much longer. A crew of 6 or more people is ideal to get a good assembly system going. Also, you'll need 6 or more people to transport the rosary when it is done. *It can be a challenge to keep from getting tangled or caught on objects while in transit.*
- If you plan to release the rosary, you should check on your local mass balloon release laws, as you could be fined. There are some cities and states that have outlawed mass balloon releases. *Needless to say, we should respect the environment. Thus it is worth considering how one can keep the rosary as biodegradable as possible.*
- A release should be done in a wide-open space. Fields or city squares are good, but you'll need to consider the wind, any nearby trees etc., as the rosary doesn't necessarily go straight up right away, but rather over and up. **DO NOT RELEASE NEAR POWER LINES.** *What should be a wonderful experience, could quickly turn into something you might regret.*

Steps For Assembling Rosary

1. Fill and tie balloons. Though you want the balloons to be big, make sure not to fill them too much, as you want them to be tough and able to endure a beating. As you fill, it is good to either immediately tie the balloons on or have some one hold them. *It is inconvenient to constantly be climbing a ladder to pull balloons down from the ceiling.*
2. Make one decade at a time. Leaving extra string at the end to connect the Our Father balloons. Take the spool and tie on the first balloon. Do not cut the string. Run it up along the side of the balloon and tape it with the packaging tape. Make sure the balloon is taped so that it continues from the very top of the balloon (like a rosary bead). Use any object that is the appropriate length to measure to the point where the next balloon will be tied on (We used a coat hanger for 17 inch balloons). Continue this process until you have the first decade. As you finish each decade, tape both ends down to the floor or chairs.
3. Once you have made all five decades, fill up the Our Father balloons. It is desirable to use larger balloons for this. They will eat up more helium, but the trick is to fill about 3 of the bigger balloons up with half air and the rest helium. That way the rosary will not float away too fast. It will give time for it to slowly and dramatically ascend. Using a longer measurement between balloons, connect the decades by tying on the Our Father balloons. Depending on how much string you left on the ends of the decades, you may have to add in extra string to bring things together.
4. Use the same method of construction to make the part of the rosary nearest the cross for the Faith, Hope, and Charity beads. You would do well to double reinforce the string in this part to help strengthen the string that will be holding the weight of the cross to the rosary and any other areas that look weak. The two bigger Our Father beads in this section should definitely be filled with pure helium to make sure that the weight of the cross is lifted.
5. There are many ways one could make the cross. It is important to make sure that it is not too heavy. Also, it depends on how “green” you are trying to be in regards to the materials that you use. For one rosary, we made the cross from smaller balloons, and more recently we used long strips of foam board notched and put together. Then we wrapped the entire cross in masking tape since it can hold paint with out letting it penetrate the tape, as paint eats foam board. Then we spray painted the entire thing with gold spray paint, VERY effective. To make sure the cross didn’t break off the rosary, we drilled a hole through the top and cut a small tube and fit it into the hole to fortify the spot where the string was to secure the cross to the rosary. Also, I am sure one could use card-board, biodegradable foam board etc. Good luck and have fun with this part.