

Saint Rita • Saint stories

Do you know what you want to be when you grow up? Many kids have lots of ideas of what they want to be when they are young. As you get older your plans may change. That's what happened to St. Rita!

Saint Rita, who lived in Italy, wanted to be a nun from the time she was a young child. But her parents had other plans. Rita was their only child and they wanted to have grandchildren! The idea of her being a nun wasn't an option. This made Rita sad and she prayed about it and asked guidance from a priest. After much prayer, Rita chose to obey her parents, believing that God wanted her to sacrifice her desire to be a nun and to marry as her parents wanted.

Unfortunately, the man Rita's parents chose for her husband was not a kind man. This was the late 1300s and marriages were arranged by parents. At the age of twelve, Rita married Paolo Mancini, a man with a violent temper. When he got angry, he often would say mean things to Rita. With God's help, Rita stayed kind and loving towards her husband; over time, her husband became a loving, caring, God-fearing man. They had two children together, both sons.

Then the unthinkable happened. Paolo was murdered! It was common during those times for the family of the murdered to take revenge and murder someone from the family of the murderer. In this case, Rita's sons, along with their uncle and his family, wanted revenge for their father's death. So, they began plotting to kill someone from the murderer's family.

Rita begged them not to, but they wouldn't listen. So then she prayed to God. She knew that committing murder was a mortal sin. A mortal sin is a deadly sin, one that separates us from God. If her sons committed this horrible sin and died without

turning back to God, then they could go to hell—and Rita definitely didn't want that to happen!

But her sons died before they could carry out their plot. Without her family responsibilities, Rita was free to enter a convent like she always wanted. Even though she was known as a very holy woman, she was denied entrance to the Augustinian convent. It was believed that since her husband's family and another were still upset with each other it would not be safe for the other nuns if she entered the convent. Rita had already made it clear to everyone that she had forgiven the murderer of her husband. This wasn't enough, the convent said. She needed to bring peace between the two families first.

It took a lot of courage and patience to work with both families and get them to become friends. But, through God's help, she succeeded and was allowed to enter the Augustinian convent.

Rita loved her life as a nun and lived a very holy life there. She spent much time in prayer and always did God's will. Jesus appeared before Rita many times. Because of how much she loved Jesus, she begged Him to be able to suffer some of the pain of his crucifixion. This request was granted by him. He sent her one of the thorns from his crown and it pierced her forehead. She had this wound the rest of her life. It never healed and caused her great pain which she gladly suffered.

Medicine nowadays is much different than when St. Rita lived. The wound from the thorn got very infected and it began to stink. The smell from the wound was so bad that to spare the other nuns suffering through having to smell it, Rita would often stay in her room to pray. Later, even worms began to live in her wound which added to her torment. But never did she complain and she was always joyful. (Makes me extra glad for "modern medicine" being around. Could you imagine worms crawling in your wound?)

Saint Rita died in 1447 at the age of seventy-six. She is known as the Saint of impossible causes.

Feast day: May 22

St. Rita, pray for us!

Activity: CARD WAR!

~Need 2 people~

Take 20 pieces of M&Ms, Skittles, peanuts, raisins, whatever little treat your kids like.

Start playing the card game WAR:

*deal the cards evenly between the 2 players

*each player turns over the top card

*the person with the highest card then gets to keep both cards

*If both turn over the same card, then there is a battle.

-each side puts 3 cards upside down next to their previously played card saying, "I declare war."

-each side then flips over the next card in the pile. The person with the highest card then wins all the played cards.

Usually, when you play this game, you keep playing until one person has ALL the cards.

AFTER A FEW MINUTES OF PLAY, stop the game and talk about it.

Is someone winning?

How does the winner feel?

How does the loser feel?

Does the loser want to battle for his cards back?

Is there an easy winner in this game, or could this game last for hours?

Discuss how this is like the argument between Saint Rita's husband's family and the other family. Saint Rita needed to make the families STOP fighting and be friends.

Take the treats and have the players divide them evenly and ENJOY eating them together.