



Prayer Beads

Making and using prayer beads allows us to share a tangible reminder of our time together and the prayerful issues we have as individuals and as a community. Follow these simple instructions.

1. Use pre-cut paper (long triangular strips) or cut strips from the paper supplied. Vary the size of the triangle. The wider the strip the longer the bead will be. Try creating triangles from rectangles cut in these sizes: 1" by 4", 1 1/2" by 6" or 2 1/2" by 8".
You may wish to make your own design if using plain paper. A detailed pattern will appear more intricate on the finished product, but simple beads are beautiful, too.
2. On one side of the triangular strip, write a prayer, reflection, poem or a few words. As you consider what to write, bear in mind the earlier discussions.
3. Meditating on what you have written, prepare to roll the strip into a bead. You will need the strip, glue and a toothpick or wooden skewer (or even a plastic coffee stirrer) for this process. Starting at the wide edge, apply a thin line of glue to the side of the triangular strip that you do not want to be visible.



4. Starting at the wide end, begin rolling the paper around the toothpick or skewer. The paper will wrap around itself, making an elongated bead. Continue to roll until the entire strip is wrapped into the bead. Slide it off the toothpick or skewer and set aside to dry. Repeat steps 1 – 4 as many times as you wish. The more you make, the easier it becomes.
OPTIONAL step: The beads do not need to be sealed, but can be coated in decoupage glue or another type of varnish. If you want to seal them it is easy to also experiment with different inks and glitter. Drying time will differ depending on the type of varnish used, but is usually around 10 minutes.
5. If you wish, share beads with one another before stringing them together.
6. To string the beads into a necklace, bracelet or a prayer rope, first cut a piece of string or yarn to the desired length. Hemp or leather cord could also be used. The size of the bead will determine the thickness of the string, yarn, hemp or leather cord. Make a knot about an inch away from one end. (The knot will need to be larger than the center of your first bead.) Slide on the first bead. Depending how long your string is and how many beads you have, you can knot the string along the way in between the beads. Tying a good end knot, leave about an inch at this end of the string as well. If you desire, you can later add a cross or other item at the end of your prayer rope.
7. When you pray, you may wish to hold the prayer beads and remember the notes you and the others tucked inside each one. This purposeful action can help you remember to pray for those who may be out of sight or about things that may be out of mind.

However you use your beads, thank God for the time to be thoughtful about your prayer life and for the wonderful gift of prayer.

Excerpted from "A Thoughtful Prayer Life," a resource from Women of the ELCA.