

The use of beads and other aids to counting prayers predates Christian history. From about the third century, the Desert Fathers began to use knotted ropes to count their prayers. The use of beads is usually attributed to St. Anthony or his associate, St. Pachomius, in the fourth century. The meditative prayer they used was the prayer we know as the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." In the Eastern Church, the Jesus beads are known as a chatky. Under either name, it is simply a string of 100 beads, or knots, on which the Jesus Prayer is recited during meditation.

For a class project, beads can be purchased in bulk at the crafts store. For a single *chatky*, look for beads in the hair-care section of the grocery or dollar store. A single package usually contains enough for a string of Jesus beads.

Fold the piece of wire over the cord about 3" from the end of the cord. Press together tightly to use as a needle for stringing your beads. If you leave the cord attached to the bolt, the beads

won't slip off the other end of your cord; if you must pre-cut the cord, tie a temporary knot at the end to hold the beads. It is best to count 100 beads into a bowl so you won't lose count while stringing them.

Choose a crucifix with a hole going from front to back, preferably large enough for two pieces of your cord to pass through it. If the hole is big enough, cut or twist off the jump ring, as thread-

Jesus Beads

YOU WILL NEED:

- Scissors
- 100 beads — pony beads are a good choice
- Nylon cord
- 3" piece of thin wire
- Crucifix, preferably one with a large hole at the top
- Cigarette lighter or matches

ing the cord directly through the hole makes your project sturdier.

However, if you cannot locate a crucifix with a large enough hole, you can tie your knot through the jump ring.

When all your beads are strung, cut the cord from the bolt, leaving enough to tie your finishing knot. Finish your beads by stringing both cords through the hole in the crucifix from front to back, and tie a slip knot. If you must leave the jump ring attached, string one end of the cord through the ring in one direction and the other end in the opposite direction. Then finish with a square knot. Use the cigarette lighter to burn the ends and tamp them down into your knot to avoid fraying or slipping. As with any project using fire, an adult should help with this part.

