

# Prayer Bead Comparison Guide – How to Find the Right One for You

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Bead Type (Also Called)	Tradition	Users	Beads	Bead Pattern	Purpose / Theology
<b>Catholic Rosary</b>	Roman Catholic Christianity	Catholics worldwide (laity, clergy, religious orders)	59 beads	5 decades (10 beads each) separated by larger beads; includes crucifix	Meditation on the life of Christ through Marian devotion; structured vocal and contemplative prayer
<b>Protestant / Anglican Prayer Beads</b>	Protestant / Anglican Christianity	Protestants, Anglicans/Episcopalians, and other Christians	33 beads (optional 34th Resurrection bead)	4 groups of 7 beads (“weeks”) separated by 4 cruciform beads; invitational bead; cross or symbolic pendant	Flexible, contemplative prayer; <b>no required formulas</b> ; may use Scripture, silence, or personal prayer; <b>emphasizes personal connection with God</b>
<b>Tasbeih (Misbaha, Subha)</b>	Islam	Muslims worldwide	33, 34, or 99 beads	Divided into sections (often 33 + 33 + 33); includes marker bead (imām) and tassel	Dhikr (remembrance of God); repetition of phrases such as Subhan Allah, Alhamdulillah, and Allahu akbar
<b>Mala (Japa Mala, Buddhist Mala)</b>	Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism	Hindus, Buddhists, some Sikhs, yogis, meditation practitioners	Typically 108 beads (+ guru bead; 27/54 variations common)	Circular strand; guru bead marks start/end; may include counters (especially in Buddhist malas)	Repetition of sacred words or names: mantra (Hinduism), mindfulness and meditation (Buddhism), and Naam Simran (Sikhism); supports focus, discipline, and spiritual awareness
<b>Orthodox Prayer Rope (Komboskini, Chotki)</b>	Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Greek & Slavic traditions)	Orthodox monks and laity	Typically 33, 50, or 100 knots	Knotted cord rather than beads; often includes cross and tassel	Repetition of the Jesus Prayer; inner stillness, repentance, and continual prayer (hesychasm tradition)
<b>Bahá’í Prayer Beads</b>	Bahá’í Faith	Bahá’ís	95 beads	Simple strand	Recitation of “Alláh-u-Abhá” 95 times daily as a structured devotional practice
<b>Komboloi (Worry Beads)</b>	Cultural (Greek; non-religious)	Greek individuals	Usually 16–23 beads	Loose strand with spacer and tassel	Used for relaxation and stress relief; not used for formal prayer

Most prayer beads follow fixed prayers. **Protestant prayer beads allow you to pray in your own way.**

**Sources:** Encyclopaedia Britannica; Oxford Dictionary of World Religions; Anglican Communion; Catholic Church; Islamic dhikr teachings; Hindu & Buddhist texts; Orthodox writings; Bahá’í writings; Scholarly works on comparative religion and devotional practices