



**“Take Care Of His Animals”
Saint Francis of Assisi and his
love for God's creatures.**

Prayer time

A Blessing for a Beloved Animal (Bob Hostetler)

Blessed are you, Lord God,
who made every living thing with which the water teems,
and every winged bird,
the livestock,
the creatures that move along the ground,
and the wild animals,
and called it all “good.”

Thank you for this animal,
for its life that comes from you,
and for the love and joy it brings.

Please bless this creature
and let our loving care for him/her be a reflection of your loving nature.

We praise you for all your beauty in creation, and especially for this expression of your love.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures! Amen.

Activity time

1. Crafts Birdhouse/Saint Frances' Church



- Using the kits in your MESSY CHURCH In A Bag or out of junk cardboard
Collect some cardboard recycling (clean), which is all eco-friendly. Make an Italian Church. I used glue and some masking tape to hold things in place. Why not take a marker, a ruler and draw some windows on the Church and /or a rose window above your door. Add a cross to your house with the coffee stir stick provided or out of cardboard.

Why? After returning to the town of Assisi, Francis had a vision when he was in a church. The church he was in was derelict and falling down. Francis was praying to God to be shown a new way in his life. God spoke to him and told him to rebuild his church. Francis immediately thought he was referring to the church he stood in and, being from a rich family, he took some of his father's silk cloth and sold it giving the money to the priest in the church. The priest would not touch this money as he had stolen it. Later in

Francis' life he started to build the church, but this time he did it by hand and built it brick by brick himself.

2. Drawing

Make a beautiful bird.

Look at the colour photo of the Pine Siskin (or another Ontario bird) and the line drawing of a bird. Can you manage to draw a bird? Or colour in the sketch. Make sure the bird is brightly coloured as it seems to be a songbird singing its heart out.

Why? St Francis was seen having long conversations with birds. That is why you often see him pictured with birds on his shoulders. In Job 12 verses 7-10 we are asked to listen to the birds, the animals and the earth. When we do this with empathy and put ourselves in the position of an animal or a bird we soon find out that they are in distress and that we need to help them. This could be by planting a tree or putting out bird seed in the winter or much, much more.



• BACKYARD BIRDS of ONTARIO •



3. Freeze Dance: Name That Bird

Before You Start:

Designate an open area free of obstacles while you dance.

In this activity, everyone dances as the music plays.

When the music stops, each player must freeze immediately and hold that position until the music begins again.

Listen carefully, the birds are going to sing along.

Can you guess which bird is singing?

Red-headed Woodpecker

Blue Jay

Mourning Dove

Gold Finch

Barred Owl

Northern Cardinal

Whooping Crane

Seagull

St Francis loved to dance, and I suggest that when you stop your music you form a statue. While you stand still, think of St Francis who gave up everything for God. He and his followers were so poor that if you had seen them in the street they would have been very dirty and bedraggled.

4. Spaghetti and Meatball Nests

I hope you will have time to have a meal together after this Messy Church at Home session. Recipe in your MESSY CHURCH In A Bag or ideas on Pinterest.



Messy Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out your hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen. (Hands up in the air)

Celebration

Proverbs 12 verse 10 ICB

“A good man takes care of his animals. But even the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.”

Job 12 verses 7 – 10 NIVUK

7 But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;

8 or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. 9 Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

10 In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

I looked at these two bible passages and thought of Saint Francis of Assisi in Italy, a good man who lived around 1200 AD - over 800 years ago. He lived in very troubled times with wars, earthquakes and destruction. He turned his back on being a soldier and the son of his billionaire (the equivalent in today's terms) silk merchant father. He turned to God and was known for talking to birds and animals! He took a vow of poverty and many people followed his way of life. He had one basic rule which was "To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps". It has been recognized that he was a champion for environmental issues. He was our original conservationist who promoted looking after animals and God's whole creation. St Francis led the way hundreds of years ago. Did you know that October 4th is observed as Saint Francis' feast day?

The Peace Prayer (written by Saint Francis of Assisi)

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, the truth;
Where there is doubt, the faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved as to love.



Please listen to this reflective song based on this prayer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7itP2pVL05M>