

# Remembering St. Francis

Oct. 2, 2011



## Who was St. Francis and why do we remember him today?

Francis (also known as Francis of Assisi) grew up 900 years ago, in Italy, in a time where most people were poor, and struggling just to live. Francis was lucky in that his family was rich—his father sold expensive cloth which was made into clothes and drapes for kings and queens and other rich people. Francis grew up with everything he wanted.

One day, as a young man, he thought he heard God telling him "repair my house" (meaning the church). Because the church didn't have the money for repairs, Francis took a large roll of cloth and sold it and gave the money to the church.

Francis' father was very

angry with him and ordered Francis to leave the house, which Francis did. So Francis began to follow Jesus in a special way.

He gave away the expensive things he owned and for the rest of his life he helped poor people, acted as a peacemaker, and inspired others to also follow Jesus in the same way.

Francis also loved everything God had made. He loved the mountains and lakes trees and animals. He called the animals "brothers and sisters."

According to tradition, Francis and some

companions were traveling through a grove of trees when they came upon a flock of birds filling the trees on either side. Francis told his companions, "Wait for me while I go to preach to my sisters the birds."

*-Continued on Next Page-*



*St. Francis with the bird and the wolf*

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## Why do we bless animals?

God tells us to be good "stewards" of the whole world, that is, to love and care for the earth and all the animals and plants that live on it, treating them with the same kindness as we treat other people.

We bless animals as a reminder that they are part of God's creation, put here on earth to help us and be a part of our lives.

As part of our blessing service this morning we remember the animal

companions (pets) who live with us and who love being with us. Whether your pet is a dog, a cat, a hamster, a bird, whatever, know that God loves it!

### Volume 1, Issue 1

#### Special Sunday School event— Today you will:

- ✓ Learn the life of St. Francis!
- ✓ Learn why we bless animals (pets)
- ✓ Help St. Francis' Bird Friends!
- ✓ Learn the Prayer of St. Francis
- ✓ Have a Snack!
- ✓ Draw St. Francis and friends!

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## Who was St. Francis? (continued from First Page)

Another story about Francis says that he persuaded a wolf to stop

attacking the animals of the town of Gubbio if they agreed to feed the wolf. They agreed and Francis tamed the wolf so it no longer ate farm animals.

Francis loved the whole world, even the things we don't always like. He named the sun "Brother Sun" even when it was hot outside! He named the moon "Sister Moon" even on cold winter nights! Everything had a connection for St. Francis, because everything was connected to God through Jesus our Lord.



St. Francis (13th Century)

We come to Sunday School to know about God. Francis not only wanted to study about God, he wanted to show others that God's love was working through him on behalf of others. He knew that Jesus calls all Christians to serve others. He spent his life helping people in need.

He lived simply, owning very little so that he could care for others. He used to tell his followers, "Go and preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary." For Francis "preaching the Gospel" meant more than just a Pastor giving a sermon. It means that every Christian should show God's love in everything they do, whether they are a grown adult or a little child.

The church remembers St. Francis of Assisi on October 4th. In recognition of his love for all creation, we *Bless the Animals* today.

## Helping St. Francis' Bird Friends (to do at home)

How can you help the birds, especially as the weather gets colder? Here's a project you can do at home, with the help of your parents. This comes from the web site: <http://lets-explore.net/blog/2009/06/birdseed-cookies/>

Amy writes: *Let me start by saying that about two minutes into this project, I was pretty sure it was going to be a flop. But, we persevered and our birdseed cookies actually turned out, so there you go! I wish I remembered where I got this recipe from – it is scribbled on a sticky note and has been sitting in my to-do pile for months...*

### Birdseed Cookies

- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 Tablespoons corn syrup
- 4 cups birdseed

Mix it all together...

*At this point, the directions say to roll it out on wax paper and cut out shapes. Our mixture would not hold together well enough for that. We patted it out and used cookie cutters [and molds] to make shapes. I had to transfer the cookie*

*cutter and birdseed shape together with a spatula to our drying pan. They did hold together okay when we removed the cookie cutter.*

*We poked holes with a straw [so they could be hung on a string when dry] and left them to dry. The directions said 4-6 hours of drying, turning frequently.*

*We let ours dry overnight – I did turn them after the first two hours, and then again once more. The ones in the molds I just left until they seemed really*

*dry, then popped them out of the molds. Because our birdseed mix was so chunky, you couldn't really see any of the details from the mold. The butterfly and fly turned out great, but the ladybug and spider just looked like blobs. The molds were a much easier way to handle the gooey mixture, though.*

*When dry, they were ready to hang in the trees for our bird visitors...*

*[Again, for more details — including pictures, please see the web site: <http://lets-explore.net/blog/2009/06/birdseed-cookies/> ]*

**Let me start by saying that about two minutes into this project, I was pretty sure it was going to be a flop. But, we persevered and our birdseed cookies actually turned out, so there you go!**

# St. Francis' Prayer

(you may use this page as a placemat as you eat a healthy snack)

*Saint Francis is said to have written this prayer:*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love.*

*Where there is injury, pardon.*

*Where there is doubt, faith.*

*Where there is despair, hope.*

*Where there is darkness, light.*

*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.*

*For it is in giving that we receive.*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,*

*and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.*

*Amen.*

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*What prayer can you say that reminds you of St Francis?*

*(Hint... a prayer that thanks God for everything—the sun, moon, earth, animals, family, friends—everything!)*



St. Francis. Nicholas Roerich 1932.

### Let's have a snack!

*One kind of healthy Snack (in moderation) are animal crackers. How do Animal Crackers remind us of St. Francis? What kind of snacks are healthy? How does eating healthy remind you of St. Francis? (Hint—when you take care of yourself, you're taking care of creation!)*



## St. Luke's Lutheran Church

205 N. Prospect  
Park Ridge, IL 60068

Phone: 847-825-6659

### Draw St. Francis

Using the picture to the right as an example, draw St. Francis and the things he loved, in the space below. What are some of the things you can include in the picture? (hint: The sun, the moon, a wolf, birds, trees, mountains, rivers, poor people, everything!)



From

