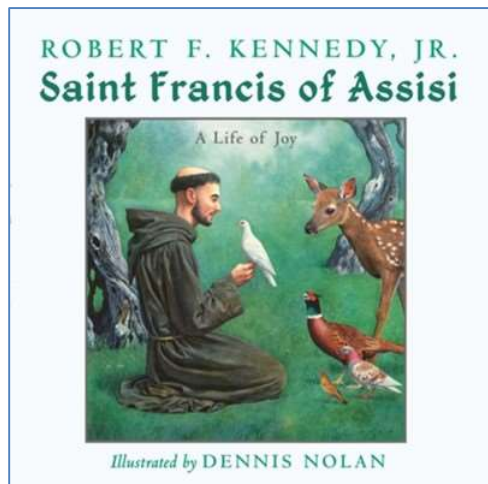


Sunday Storytellers

St. Francis of Assisi: A Life of Joy

By Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Illustrated by Dennis Nolan



Summary: This is a well-written biography which introduces Francis as a frivolous yet charming “King of Youth” and follows him through his conversion and founding of the Franciscan order, and finally, to welcoming “Sister Death” at the end of his remarkable life. It also describes incidents such as Francis' reconciliation with the wolf of Grubbio and his relationship with St. Clare, who started an order of nuns similar to the Franciscan brothers' order.

Sunday Morning:

Welcome & Introductions ‘Round the Room: Share your name and your favorite animal; why is it your favorite?

Background – Once a year we bring our animals to church to be blessed – have any of you brought your pet to church for a blessing? This happens on “St. Francis Sunday,” in October and it’s a tradition in our church where we honor a man named Francis who died in 1226 – nearly 800 years ago! St. Francis had a special relationship with animals as we will see in this book...

Read the Book – Read the book “librarian style” with pictures out toward the children as you read. Before turning the page make sure every child has seen the pictures.

Tip: I recommend skipping the “Author’s Note.”

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder what part of the story you like best?
- The book says Francis lived “a life of joy;” why do you think he was so full of joy?
- Why do we still celebrate and talk about Francis’ life?

Hands-On Bible

There are many animals mentioned in the Bible – can you think of some of the stories that have to do with animals? [Creation, Noah and the Ark, others?!] Let's find another passage about animals...

Let's look for Isaiah 11:6-9 [Write this on a whiteboard or flip-chart page. Hand out the Bibles. Children can use the Bibles individually or in small groups.]



- Where do we start? [Table of Contents]
- The Bible is divided into two big sections, do you know what those are? [Old Testament/New Testament] The Old Testament is the old stories - before Jesus' life. The New Testament is the story of Jesus' life and teachings.
- We're looking for a passage in the Old Testament, in the Book of Isaiah. Can you find that listed in the Table of Contents? What page does Isaiah start on?
- Go to that page and find Chapter 11 – look for the big numbers in blue at the top of the page.
- Now that we're all at Isaiah 11, look at the tiny numbers in the text to tell you the verse. We want verses 6 – 9.
- Will someone read those verses? [Or just read it aloud yourself.] Read it a second time and ask the children to raise their hands when they hear an animal mentioned – read slower this time!

Isaiah 11:6-9

⁶In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together;
the leopard will lie down with the baby goat.

The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion,
and a little child will lead them all.

⁷The cow will graze near the bear.
The cub and the calf will lie down together.
The lion will eat hay like a cow.

⁸The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra.
Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.

⁹Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,
for as the waters fill the sea,
so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD.

Craft

Animal mobile! Each person “adopts” an animal in the Bible verse and creates it in construction paper to hang on the mobile.

Materials: wreath, yarn/jute, construction paper with many color choices, hole punch, scissors, colored pens

Hang the mobile in your classroom if that's an option.



Snack

Animal crackers?!



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