

# •+ Saint Francis of Assisi •+



Saint Francis was born in Assisi, Italy, in the year 1181. He was the son of a wealthy cloth merchant and his early life was filled with many luxuries. He joined the military as a young man but soon became a prisoner of war. He spent almost a year in prison, where he began receiving messages from God. When he finally returned home, Francis felt drawn to serve the poor.



While praying before a crucifix, Francis heard Jesus tell him, "Repair my house," the Church. He began by rebuilding churches in need of repairs, but soon realized that he was being called upon to do much more. Jesus was calling him to rebuild the faith of God's people. He sold all of his worldly possessions and donated his money to the church. He depended on nothing but God to guide him.



Francis was also known for his great love of nature and animals. His devotion to God was expressed through his love for all of God's creation. It is said that animals would flock to him to find safety in the wild. He would even preach sermons to the birds! Francis' radical poverty and simplicity attracted many followers. Today, the Franciscan Order remains one of the most beloved religious institutions worldwide.

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## Activities

**Family Discussion:** Saint Francis of Assisi lived a life of luxury before giving away his possessions to others who needed them more than he did. What is something your family has that you are grateful for? What is something that you could give away to someone less fortunate than yourselves? What is something that makes your life richer that ISN'T a material possession?



**Family Activity:** Saint Francis was called upon by Jesus to repair the church. Find an activity to do together that helps the people in your home. This could be cleaning out a closet, fixing a broken toy, or helping each other with homework. Do your best not to worry about how much others are contributing to this project, but only how much YOU are able to help! When you are done, share with your family this activity made you feel.



**Individual Activity:** Saint Francis loved nature and animals. Create a piece of art of your favorite wild animal. You can draw with crayons, paint, or even create a sculpture! Then, write about what you would do if you had that animal as a pet. What would you feed it? Where would the animal live? Would you cuddle with your animal on the couch or ride it around your city?

