

Today, your children learned about St. Francis and the 4 points of his Spirituality.

1. **The Spirit of Simplicity~**

The spirit of poverty embraced by Francis was two-fold. It expressed solidarity with all God's children and a special compassion for those who suffered from illness, poverty or were not valued by society.

Secondly, voluntary poverty was the approach Francis used and was not based on self denial but in the spirit that anything which distracts us from our relationship with God is burdensome.

- How important are material possessions to you?
- How do you show concern for "the poor ones" in your community, those who are in of need special care?
- What would simplify your life? What would be a benefit of simplifying your life?
- In our society some people express the feeling that they are "overscheduled." Would you find a value in simplifying your schedule? How would you do that?

Prayer ~

St. Francis' life is an example of the power of prayer. His way of praying involved both the mind and heart; a time devoted to a relationship with a loved one, God. This kind of prayer changes us from the inside out. As we learn to listen to the stillness we begin to hear the whispers of God and realize the footsteps of the divine in the daily events of our life.

- How would your life change if you balanced the activity in your life with times of prayer?
- What would it take to integrate consistent prayer in your life? Turning off the radio when driving? Waking up fifteen minutes early to pray about the day's activities? Ending the day in review of your efforts to love that day?

Reverence for Creation ~

St. Francis saw himself as the steward of creation, not the master over it. Francis urged us to view creatures and nature with the care and regard of "brothers" and "sisters". He saw himself as servant and caretaker of creation and he invited us to that same perspective.

- How deep is the footprint of your household on the gifts of the earth?
- How do you reverence creation? Does your concern for the environment lead you to stay informed about life practices that harm the earth?
- God has given us the wonder of the sky, earth, and creatures. Do you spend any energy in your life protecting and in wonder of these priceless gifts?

Christ Centered ~

The foundation of Franciscan spirituality is the love of Christ. Francis saw Jesus' willingness to enter creation as the basis of humility. He believed the willingness of God to experience the whole human journey, even suffering and death, was a sign of amazing and unselfish love.

- What are some signs of Christ's love you have experienced or observed in your life?
- What is something you know about the life of Christ that seems in contrast to what the world today values?
- What is the quality or action of Christ's life that you most want to develop in your own life?