

- We tend to think of being rich as mainly monetary. Help your child think of different kinds of riches that are possible (such as friends, family, love, music, home, safety, school, trees, pets, laughter).
- Talk about which of these riches your family enjoys. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for all of your riches.

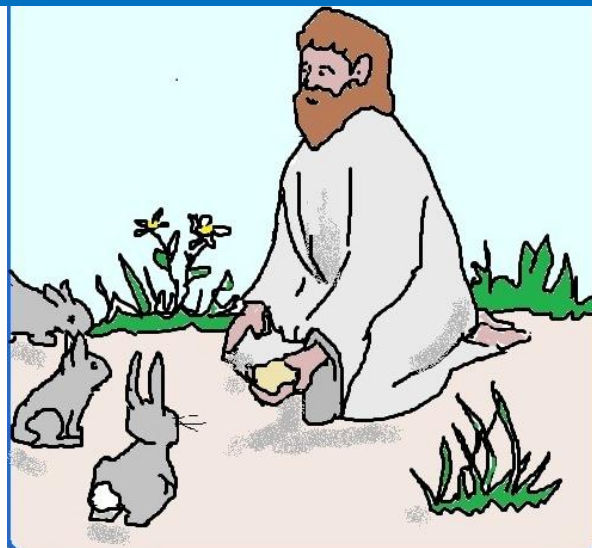
**Prayer:**

Saint Francis, help us praise God for the sun and the moon, the water and the air, and everything else, including ourselves. Please show us how to be joyful in all of God's Creation! Amen.

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*Help My Child Learn to*

# Know the Saints



*SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI, ITALY*

Feast Day: October 4

by Anne Neuberger

The Communion of Saints is our connection with those who have lived before us. We are never alone as we strive to live as Jesus did. We are “in communion” with hundreds of saints whose stories counsel, delight, challenge and comfort us.

Hand on this legacy by sharing with your child the story of Saint Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) who is one of the most well-known holy people of all time. He is the patron saint of ecology.

I am Francis and I live in the Italian town of Assisi. Walk with me, and we will enjoy God's creation together! You don't need your shoes—I often walk barefoot too.

The wind is gentle today. I like to call it "Brother Wind."  
Through the wind, the air and storms, we can praise God!



Here come the doves! I rescued them and now they never let me pass their nests without landing on me. Okay, I know that you want a blessing, Little Sister Doves. May God our Creator bless you today with abundant food and the joy of flying! Now off

you go!

Do you understand now why you always see statues of me in gardens, with a bird on my shoulder?

Some call me "the poor man of Assisi." In my rough, raggedy clothes, and my bare or sandaled feet, I look poor. But I am rich beyond measure!

Some time ago, I decided to take very, very seriously the words of Jesus, "Sell all that you have, give the money to the poor, and follow me." (Matthew 19:33)



And so I did. I own nothing, and ask people for what I need, mainly food. If they give me more than I can use, I give it to someone else. I take care of sick people. I pray. I teach others about God's great love. And I sing. A lot.

So how am I rich? Every morning, I see Brother Sun warming the soil and plants. I hear the songs of the birds. I drink clean water. I laugh with people. When I am cold, I am warmed by a crackling fire. I find great joy in all of God's Creation. And I know I am loved by God. How much richer can you be?

Do you mind if I sing?

**With children, the terms "poor" and "rich" may seem very concrete, but adults understand the complexities in these terms. To help children develop a greater understanding, discuss these concepts.**

### *Talking together:*

- Saying people are poor or rich does not have anything to do with being good or bad.
- Our church teaches that every person on earth should have food, water, work, a home, school and medical care. These are 'rights': things every single person on earth must have to live. But many people do not have them. Jesus wants those who enjoy these rights to help their sisters and brothers obtain their rights. It is not enough to feel badly for others. Jesus says it is our responsibility to see that they receive their rights.