

EDUCATION MINISTRIES

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Happy Feast of St. Francis!



“If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men”. St. Francis of Assisi

Happy Feast of St. Francis! Although we are not able to celebrate this feast day as we have in the past, it is important to note that this year we can celebrate it as a solemnity in our parish since it occurs on a Sunday. In addition, Bless Fest will take place later this afternoon! Be sure to come out and participate in the car parade in which you can have an animal, live or stuffed, be blessed. Be on the look-out for the colorful artwork in the tents; our preschool students are the artists behind the beautiful masterpieces!

As you might imagine, we are also not able to celebrate the feast of St. Francis at preschool as we normally would. We, however, have not let this dampen all of our plans to teach to our students the importance of this day. One piece that we have been able to preserve is our annual service project for the SPCA. With some careful modifications and adjustments to maintain the highest level of safety during this time of COVID, our 3, 4, & 5-year olds made dog biscuits this past week.

They were able to shape them into dog friendly items such as bones and dog houses. The biscuits were then baked until crispy! There are sure to be many happy recipients of these tasty treats which were made with much love and enthusiasm!

It will come as no surprise that we purposefully plan this activity with our preschoolers to coincide with the celebration of St. Francis’ feast day. In doing so, we are able to emphasize with them that God wants us to be caretakers of all of His creation. We are able to further explain to our children how St. Francis followed God in many ways, including taking special care of animals such as in the story of the wolf, Gubbio. Although our preschool students can’t actually see the dogs at the SPCA enjoying their treats, many have a previous experience with caring for an animal in some way. It might be in the form of giving their dog a bath, filling a bird feeder, or even just stepping around a caterpillar on the side-

walk. The idea of taking care of animals (and each other) as God wants us to do, is one that often occurs as part of everyday life. We know as educators that for an experience to be really meaningful to children it should be very relatable. Not only does this project help us reiterate the importance of taking care of the earth as with the example of Francis, but it is a simple act of service that children are able to grasp and understand with little difficulty.

If you are a parent, grandparent, or have a child in your life whom you hold dear, see what daily opportunities you can share with them that will reiterate the importance of taking care of animals and all of God’s creation as St. Francis encouraged people to do. I am confident that you will not have to look far!

To learn more about the wonderful opportunities that we provide, please visit our website at www.preschoolatstfrancis.com or contact Shelley Freeman at: shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org