

Blessing of Pets

Leader: Dear Creator God, in your out-flowing, abundant love you have made us, our pets, and all living things. Our pets are special gifts from you. Like your servant, St. Francis, who loved all of your creatures, we truly love our pets. They love us back, bringing us delight and comfort as companions on our journey. Through this special relationship with our pets, you teach us caring and compassion. We ask that you give our pets health and protection for we know you love them even more than we do. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1: 24-31

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

Leader: We praise and thank you, Lord, for the gift of our pet(s) and for how he/she/they have added to the love in our home.

(Each family member can add a line of gratitude for each pet, using the line: "Thank you, Lord, for _____." An example is given.)

Mom: Thank you, Lord, for Pickles. I am grateful for the way he greets me with happy barks and licks when I come home from work.

Son: Thank you, Lord, for Pickles. I am grateful for how he warms my bed up in the winter.

Blessing: *(All family members place a hand upon the pet.)*

May the blessing of God, our loving creator, rest upon our precious pet(s) _____ . May he/she/they enjoy good health and a happy life with our family. May we all become more loving and caring to each other and to our pets. May God bless us all, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Family Session – St. Francis of Assisi – October 4

Opening Prayer: Dear Saint Francis, we remember you for your love of all creation, for your praise of Brothers Sun, Wind, Air, and Fire and Sisters Moon, Stars, Water, and Earth. We have heard the stories of your gentle way with animals. You dedicated your life and your whole person to repairing God's church. Your prayer was so fervent it was said of you, "He seemed not so much a man praying as prayer itself made man." Teach us to fling ourselves passionately into a life of praise and thanksgiving and oneness with God. Amen.

Discussion: Francis found God in all creation and used every opportunity of his daily life to praise God. He chose a life of poverty to be less distracted in his work for God and in his prayer. His goal was imitation of Christ and he tackled it with body, mind, and soul. The man and the message became one in Francis. What can he teach us about praying our daily experiences and living intentionally?

Activity: Francis' praise of God overflowed his person in poetry and song. Give each family member one of the following quotes from St. Francis. Play some quiet, meditative music for a few minutes to allow everyone time to think about his/her quote. Younger members might need help in reading and understanding the words. When everyone is ready, take turns sharing how these words of Francis might apply to the everyday life of your family. The questions in parentheses are to help stimulate your reflection and discussion.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
(Why does our earth need the sun? Why do we feel more cheerful on sunny days?)

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.
(How does your family use water every day? What do you like doing best with water? Washing? Swimming? Drinking?)

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
(What fruits, vegetables, and flowers are your favorites? Does your family have plants, indoors or out? What do you learn about life by growing plants?)

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.
(Is someone in your family ill or going through a difficult time of some sort? How is God especially near to them during this time of pain and suffering?)

Saint Francis of Assisi Continued

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

(Do you sometimes fight, argue, and hurt one another in your family? What sows discord in your family? What sows love? How do you forgive one another and recreate peace?)

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

(What do you receive when you give to someone else? Is it hard to forgive another family member when they have offended you? Who pardons us when we pardon another?)

Prayer: Pray together in the words of Saint Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Snack: Francis spent much time in the woods, eating the fruits of creation. For your snack prepare a tasty assortment of simple fruits and nuts.

Beyond this family time: Your family might enjoy a family movie night. Watch the video *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. Paramount Pictures, 1972, 120 minutes. Many parishes have a copy of the video in their resource center. Francis' care of the poor might inspire your family to give of its bounty to others in need. Does your parish have a food pantry or help to serve a meal for the poor? Does your parish contribute to an overseas mission? How can your family help?