



Welcome to RE



A bit about us

The story of St Francis of Assisi

Introduction: Finish these sentences in your own way.

- A saint is ...
- A saint should

Big Question: Why is St Francis such an important saint?

Small questions: What happened to St Francis in his early life?

How and why did his life change?

Knowledge: Use your highlighters to highlight the important points.

Early Life

Francesco Bernardone was born about the year 1181. He was given the name John but his family and friends always called him Francesco. His father, Pietro, was a cloth-merchant and his business was doing well. His mother's name was Pica; it is thought that she came from the South of France.

Francis grew up in a Christian home. He was brought up to a life in which prayer played a part. He also learnt to read and to speak French; he was taught how to help in his father's business. Francis was very popular among the young people of the town.

At that time Italy was not a single, united country. There were many small states which frequently made war on one another. Francis was involved in one of these wars against the city of Perugia and was imprisoned for about two years. He returned to Assisi and was taken ill. During his illness he changed - he felt an emptiness in his life. Even the beauty of the countryside around Assisi did not help him, when he was again able to look at it.



Nil satis optimum
Only the best is Good enough.

A Time of Change

Francis next lived through a period of uncertainty. He was sure that he should not go back to the wars - but he did not know what do with his life. He found that he needed time to be alone, time to pray. It was during this period, it seems, that he met a leper one day; he gave the man money and kissed him.

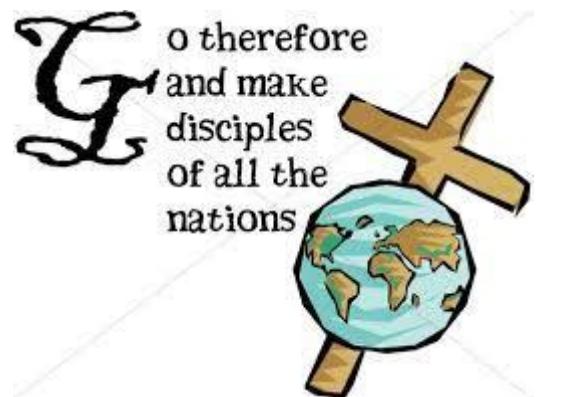
Outside Assisi was a small chapel called San Damiano. It was a tumble-down place with a room or two built onto one side for the priest. Francis went there to pray and one day heard a voice speaking to him. It seemed to come from the figure of Christ on the wooden crucifix before which he was praying. The voice said, "**Go, Francis, repair my church, which, as you see, falls in ruin**". Francis sold some cloth and gave the money to the priest for the repair of the church.

The priest would not use it but he did welcome Francis into his house. He stayed there for some time - to his father's fury. It was a time of solitude and prayer, a time of preparation for his future life: San Damiano played a most important part in Francis' development.

Eventually Francis left San Damiano and, in order to support himself, began to beg for his food in the streets of Assisi. His father beat him and locked him up in a cellar. His mother released him while Pietro was away on a business journey and Francis returned to San Damiano. His father returned and disowned him. So began a period of about two years when Francis spent his time in prayer, in repairing churches and in the service of lepers. In one of the churches - St. Mary of the Angels - Francis (now aged about 27) heard the Gospel reading and at last understood what his life's work was to be.

This was the Passage - The Commissioning of the Twelve.

"Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The labourer deserves his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave. As you enter a house, wish it peace. (Matthew 10)





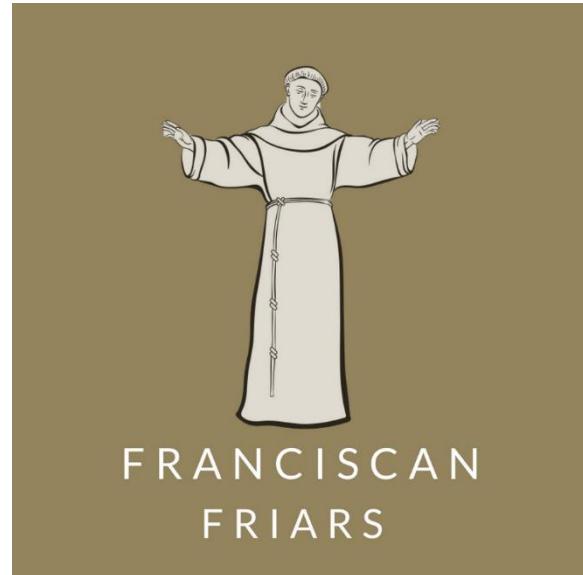
Nil satis optimum
Only the best is Good enough.

Francis and his followers travelled widely, preaching everywhere. He insisted that his followers were not monks. There was a new way of life - so he called them friars (from the Latin word frater, a brother). His followers were to be a brotherhood. The friars travelled all over Europe. The first of them to come to England arrived in 1224, two years before Francis died.

The last years of Francis' life were partly occupied by the re-writing of their rule of life. This was necessary because certain difficulties and disagreements had arisen. Some believed in a more solitary life; some wanted to preach in the towns; some believed that the friars should study; others disagreed.

The way of life was a hard one. The friars dressed in simple, poor clothes; at first they, refused to own any property; they travelled from place to place preaching, depending for their food on the goodness of those who heard them. Their ideal was to live in the way which Jesus taught his followers.

St Francis loved all of God's creatures and has become the Patron Saint of the environment because of this.



Consolidation

In the space below, write down 5 points that you have learnt about St. Francis from the parts you have highlighted.

Check your learning – circle the correct answer

1. What year was Francis born?



1115 1183 1181 1118

2. Why was he in prison?

He stole his father's money / he was captured in war / he was in debt

3. What were his followers called?

Priests / monks / friars / brothers

4. Where did he go to find peace and solitude?

St. Mary of the Angels / Rome / his father's house / San Damiano

5. What was the Gospel reading that changed his life?

The commissioning of the twelve /The great Commandment / The Sheep and the Goats

WAGOLL

Explain one way that the life of St. Francis changed.

Give one developed point and refer to Catholic teaching in your answer.

I DO

Point	Francis changed from being a rich spoiled person to being someone who worked for God.
Evidence	We Know this because he answered Gods call to "Go, <i>Francis</i> , repair my church, which, as you see, falls in ruin".
Explain	Following this call Francis began to give up his riches to help pay for repairs on St Mary of the Angels church.

WE DO – Think about the war

Point	
Evidence	
Explain	

YOU DO: Hint - Look at the way Francis life changed after he heard the Gospel reading.



Nil satis optimum
- Only the best is Good enough -

St Francis spent much of his adult life in prayer and he wrote many prayers the most famous of which is our school prayer.

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's in dying that we are born to eternal life
Amen



Nil satis optimum
- Only the best is Good enough -