



Christian Education

Bulletin Insert

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St Francis of Assisi, October 4

St Francis was born into a wealthy family in 1181, but, after a long illness, he decided to devote himself to serving the poor and to prayer. It is St Francis who is thought to have been the first to set up a creche at Christmas. He may be best known today for his love of animals. It is said that the birds would come down from the trees when he spoke and fierce wolves would lie at his feet.

Give your pet extra attention today - maybe take the dog for an extra long walk, or play with your cat and a ball of yarn. Make a bird feeder. Use the net bags that some fruit and onions come in. If you put one inside the other, you will end up with smaller holes. Fill separate bags with corn, sunflower seeds and unsalted peanuts. Tie the bags together so that they will hang one above the other, and tie a strong piece of twine to the top. Thread this twine through the centre of an upside down plastic plant saucer and tie the twine to a tree branch. (The saucer stops the seed from getting too wet if it rains)

Thanksgiving, Sunday October 10

Many parishes combine Thanksgiving and Harvest services. The Jewish people celebrated the in-gathering of the harvest at the Feast of Tabernacles. It lasted for 7 days with great joy and festivity and then there was a solemn 8th day. During the feast time the people lived in 'booths' (tabernacles), temporary structures erected outside, sometimes on the flat roofs of their homes, to commemorate the time when their ancestors had lived for 40 years in the wilderness en route to the Promised Land. Why not make a 'booth' for your family? If you have family members who have camped with the scout movement you will have a head start. One side of the booth may be left open. Once you have constructed a simple framework (an indoor drying rack for washing may be a help in doing this), you can use old blinds or fabric for the sides. The roof should be of branches arranged so that the stars are

visible from inside. Decorating the inside of the booth is the fun part. It should be hung with a variety of fruits and vegetables, garlands made with cranberries, seeds and crab apples strung together on fishing line or other strong thread, and, if possible, with lightweight carpets or mats. The Jews also invited symbolic guests to share the festival with them, such as their ancestors Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Miriam, David and Ruth. An artistic member of the family might draw pictures of one or two of them to decorate the walls of the booth.

On Thanksgiving weekend have an outdoor picnic in and around the booth. Caramel apples are popular at this time of year. A family member might tell or read about one of the people whose pictures are on the walls and you might play games such as the following:

Cornucopia

Players sit on the ground or on camp chairs in a circle. There should be one more player than there are chairs. The player without a chair is the leader. The leader points to each of the other players to give them a name, such as "Cranberry, Corn, Apple, Turkey," anything related to Thanksgiving. After names are chosen, the leader calls out two names, "Turkey and potato." Those two players must quickly switch places. The leader keeps calling as fast as possible, until suddenly he says "The cornucopia has tipped over!" Everyone, including the leader, then scrambles for a new place. The player without a seat is the new leader. The leader may give the same name to more than one person. It can get confusing but it is also great fun!

Popcorn Relay Race

Divide the group into two or more teams of at least three people. Set out bowls full of popcorn - one for each team - and empty bowls about 4 metres away. Teams must transport the popcorn from full bowl to empty, using a measuring cup.
N.B. popcorn is a choking hazard for children under three.

To finish the Thanksgiving party, sing a verse of a well known hymn such as "We plough the fields and scatter," or "For the beauty of the earth," and say a prayer of thanksgiving. This one comes from The Lion Book of Children's Prayers:

Bread is a lovely thing to eat - God bless the barley and the wheat; A lovely thing to breathe is air - God bless the sunshine every-where; The earth's a lovely place to know - God bless the folks that come and go! Alive's a lovely thing to be - Giver of life - we say - bless thee!