

Francis and Friends Skits



Introduction

God loves everything God has made

The introductory unit introduces children to all of the characters in the program, especially Francis and Clare. The themes of a loving God, this wonderful world God created, and our relationship with everything else in creation are emphasized.

Live

Rich: Hi! My name is Rich and I'm so glad you are joining us for the Francis and Friends journey. I think it's going to be a lot of fun.

I'm here in one of my favorite places, outdoors. I love to be outside. I have three friends who I like to spend time with outside. Here's my good friend Danny the Donkey.

Danny: Howdy everybody!

Rich: Danny and I have been through a lot together, out there riding the range. He's a special friend of mine. And here is Olivia the Owl.

Olivia: Well, hello there!

Rich: Olivia is wise and reminds me of important lessons I have learned. And here's my other friend, Sally the Squirrel.

Sally: Hello friends!

Rich: Sally is a hard and busy worker. She helps me get things done.

It's good to have friends. You will get to know Danny, Olivia and Sally and maybe they can become your friends too.

There's someone else I want you to meet. They were two very good friends who lived a long time ago. Their names were Francis and Clare and they lived in a town called Assisi, right in the middle of a country called Italy. Just like all of us, they loved being outside in God's world too. Let's learn more about Francis and Clare!

Play the Introduction cartoon

Live

Sally: Francis really did have a special way of seeing the world, didn't he?

Olivia: I love how in that Canticle poem he calls everything either brother or sister. We really are all related because we are all a part of God's family.

Danny: Being out in the beautiful, amazing world feeling Brother Sun or Sister Water on my skin helps me know that God is near me too.

Rich [to the kids]: Francis, Clare and their friends went on some amazing adventures. We are going to go on some amazing journeys together too as we go Following the Way with Francis and Friends. To get started, today we will create our very own Francis and Friends Passport. We will use this throughout our whole journey together to keep track of what activities you have completed.

We will also make sure everyone has a copy of the Francis and Friends Guidebook. In it you will find more about the Great Commandment. You will also find that poem that Francis wrote, the Canticle of the Creatures where he gives God thanks for the things he loves. There is a place in your Guidebook for you to write or draw a picture of thanks about the things that you love too.

Right now my friends Olivia, Sally, Danny and I are going to go have some fun playing outside here. I hope you'll do that together today too! We'll see you next time!



Heart

We are called to help others

Early in his life, Francis had a profound experience that showed him that he was called to love and care for others, especially people that society had rejected. In the Heart unit we see that we too are called to care for others, sharing what we have with them and learning to truly love our neighbors as ourselves.

Live

Rich: Hello everyone! Welcome back to the Francis and Friends Clubhouse. We're so glad you are here. I was just talking with my good friend Danny the Donkey here. He says that he had a pretty rough night last night. Do you want to share what happened with our friends?

Danny: Well, after the campfire went out, it got really dark and I started to get scared. During the day we have the sun to give us light. And a lot of nights we have the moon and stars to give us light. But last night it was cloudy and you couldn't see a thing. I couldn't tell what was making noises I heard. I couldn't see where I was walking. I felt like I was all alone in the whole world!

Rich: Wow, Danny! It does sound like you were scared. What did you do?

Danny: Well at first I didn't know what to do. And just then I heard a swooshing noise. It went this way and then that way. I thought maybe I was a goner! But do you know what? It was just my friend Olivia the Owl coming in for a landing. And look, here she comes now!

[Olivia enters]

Rich: Well, hello Olivia! We were just talking about you. It sounds like Danny was pretty scared last night.

Olivia: I could tell he was scared when I saw him. I wanted to let him know he was safe and that it would be ok.

Danny: Yeah. My eyes don't work very good at night but Olivia's work just fine. She's an owl so she can see all kinds of things the rest of us can't see.

Olivia: Like when a friend feels alone and needs me to be there for him.

Rich: Thanks, Olivia. You ARE a good friend.

[to the kids]

Does the dark ever scare you? It scares me sometimes. I think one of the reasons the dark can be scary is that you can't see if there is anything out there that might hurt you. And so our imaginations can run wild and think any little noise we hear might be something to be afraid about. I think that's what spooked Danny last night. He could hear lots of noises. Even though he hears those same noises when it's not dark, in the dark they scared him.

It's true that some people are mean. But a lot of people that we are scared of aren't mean. But we are scared of them just because we don't know them very well. Or maybe there is something different about them that we don't understand.

In Francis' day, a lot of people were scared of people who were sick. They didn't want to catch what the sick people had. So they made them live outside of town, out in the country where it was a scarier place. One group of people had a disease on their skin. Do you think it would hurt to have a disease on your skin? Maybe it itched all the time? They called these people lepers and no one wanted to go near them, even Francis. But one day Francis decided he *would* go near one of those people. And a pretty amazing thing happened. Let's see...

Play the Heart cartoon

Live

Danny: Francis and Clare really helped a lot of people, didn't they?

Olivia: You can say they brought light to dark places, like the Sun and Moon and Stars. They just seemed to brighten the day of everyone they met, especially the people who felt dark or gloomy inside.

Rich: [to Olivia] Just like you helped Danny.

[to the kids] Owls really are amazing creatures. They are nocturnal, meaning they are awake at night and can see better in the dark. An owl has three eyelids: one for blinking, one for sleeping and one for keeping the eye clean and healthy. Owls can even turn their heads 270 degrees, almost all the way around, to be able to see everything that's around them.

So Olivia could tell Danny what all those sounds were and where they were coming from. After that, Danny didn't feel so scared anymore.

Do you know any one who is scared that you could help? Maybe someone who doesn't have many friends? Or maybe even someone who is sick or has a disease like the lepers did?

Loving God with all our Heart means that we care about other people and we help them when they are sick or alone. Sometimes we may even be a little scared to go to a hospital to see a sick person. That's ok. Francis was scared of sick people at first too, wasn't he? But when he remembered that God wanted him to love everyone, it helped him not be so scared.

Now it is our turn! Today we will do some Heart activities together. Some are about God's amazing gift of light. Some are about caring for others. Some are about getting outside like Danny and Olivia and enjoying God's beautiful world. Let's go have fun Following the Way with Francis and Friends.



Soul

We are all brothers and sisters in God's family

Francis and Clare created communities of brothers and sisters which extended out to all people and even all other creatures. In the Soul unit we hear the story of how Francis made friends with Brother Wolf, whom everyone else feared and hated.

Live

Rich: Hello and welcome back to the Francis and Friends Clubhouse! Just outside the clubhouse is this great big tree. I love to come outside in the morning and stand next to this big, powerful, amazing tree.

[loud commotion]

Rich: Hey! Olivia the Owl and Sally the Squirrel! What's all the fighting about?

[Both animals speak loudly at one another.]

Rich: Wait! Wait! One at a time, please! Sally, why don't you go first.

Sally: This is my tree! I've lived in this tree for years. I collect it's nuts, feed my babies, and sleep here every night. It is my home! Well, this morning I woke up and look who's here in the tree too but Olivia. I didn't invite her to share this tree and I don't want her here.

Olivia: And I didn't expect such a rude awakening. I've been flying around all night looking for food and was exhausted. I landed here on this branch and fell fast asleep. I wasn't bothering anyone when all of a sudden, Sally woke me up and started yelling at me to get out of her tree. It's not hers. It belongs to everyone!

Rich: I see. This is a hard question to answer, just whose tree this is. It reminds me actually of a story about Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio. Have you ever heard that story?

Olivia: No.

Sally: No.

Rich: Well, it's a lot like the problem you have. Why don't we all listen to that story and see how Francis handled this.

Play the Soul Cartoon

Live

Rich [to the kids]: Francis really showed a lot of courage, didn't he? He saw the wolf as his brother, when everyone else saw the wolf as their enemy. Why was the wolf mean to everyone? It turns out he was hungry, wasn't he? Sometimes it takes difficult things to bring people together. I'm glad the people of Gubbio and the wolf made peace with each other.

Rich: How are you doing up there Olivia and Sally?

Olivia: That was such a beautiful story about the wolf. It almost made me cry.

Sally: Yeah, it turns out they didn't need to be enemies after all. All they needed to do was learn to have compassion and to share.

[Olivia and Sally look at each other.]

Olivia: I'm sorry I fell asleep in your tree without asking you if it was ok.

Sally: I'm sorry I got mad. You're right. It's not really my tree. God made it and it belongs to everyone. I'm glad to share it with you. Why don't you come over here by my nest. It is more comfortable over here.

Rich [to the kids]: Loving God with all our Soul means that we see each other as sisters and brothers instead of enemies. Francis made friends

with the wolf. And Sally and Olivia forgave one another so they could stay friends. I wonder if there is anyone you could become friends with? Or maybe a friend you've been fighting with you could say sorry to and forgive?

Now it is our turn. Let's do some Soul activities together. Some are about God's amazing gift of water. Some are about making friends. Some are about getting outside and reconnecting with God through time in nature. Let's have fun today Following the Way with Francis and Friends.



Mind

We all live in God's kingdom

The world came alive for Francis when he realized that we are all a part of one big family. He would even release rabbits from traps, fish from nets and birds on their way to the market so they could enjoy life longer. In our Mind unit, we come to see the interconnectedness of creation and the joy of understanding everyone's place in it.

Live

Rich: Hello and welcome back to the Francis and Friends Clubhouse! Something happened to me the other day and I wonder if the same thing has ever happened to you. Have you ever had a friend try to boss you around and tell you what to do all the time? How did that make you feel? I've had that happen to me and it made me feel sad and a little bit angry.

Rich: Hey, Danny! What a beautiful day, huh?

Danny: Yes, very nice.

Rich: It is. But we better get to work. We have a lot of cleaning up to do around here. But if we work together, I think we can get it done in an hour or two. What would you like to start working on first?

Danny: Hmm. Well, I will pick up this mess if you will rake up the leaves over there.

Rich: Ok. That sounds good.

[Rich goes off to rake up leaves and then returns. Danny gets distracted and doesn't pick anything up.]

Rich: Well, I'm done with the leaves. How is picking up going?

Danny: What? Oh, yeah. Picking up. Well, it's going.

Rich: [looking around] Wow. Yeah there is still a lot to pick up isn't there? Ok, well, you keep working on this then and I will go pick up those limbs over there.

Danny: Sounds good. [Sits down] And after that maybe you can come help me pick up all this stuff.

[Rich goes off to pick up limbs. Danny drifts off to sleep.]

Rich: Well, I got that done. How's it going with picking...[looks around in disbelief]?

Danny: I'll tell you what, it's pretty tiring. In fact, I just fell asleep there for a minute. How about you just finish this up for me and I will finish up my nap?

Rich: That's doesn't seem fair, Danny. I've already done two things and you haven't done any.

Danny: Yeah, I've been giving that some thought. I think it would be better if I was just the boss and told you what to do and then watched to make sure you do it right.

Rich: That doesn't feel right to me. It feels unfair and it reminds me of a story about some greedy men. Let's watch that cartoon and maybe you will see what I mean.

Play the Mind cartoon

Live

Danny: Hmm, I think I see what you mean. I kind of was making you do all of the work and not treating you the way I should.

Rich: Yeah, it kind of felt that way.

Danny: I guess sometime it's easy to forget that we are all in this together. I didn't really want to help clean up. But if I don't help, then that leaves it all to you to do which isn't fair either.

Rich: How about we try this again? You choose something that you would like to do and I will choose something else.

Danny: I think I will start by raking up some of those leaves you missed!

Rich: [shakes his head, then to the kids:]

Donkeys can sometimes be stubborn animals, but they actually are pretty amazing when you stop to think about it. Did you know that a donkey is stronger than a horse of the same size? And donkeys have an incredible memory - they can recognize areas and other donkeys they were with up to 25 years ago. In the desert a donkey is able to hear the call of another donkey 60 miles away with their amazing large ears. Donkeys won't do anything they think might harm them and usually when they refuse to do something it is because they are afraid they might get hurt.

Loving God with all our Mind means seeing that each of us is special and unique. And when we all remember to work together, we can do some pretty amazing things. We are all a part of God's Big Family. And that is more important than anything else.

Now it is our turn. Let's do some Mind activities together. Some are about God's amazing gift of land. Some are about the power of teamwork. And some are about the holiness of all of creation. So let's go have fun Following the Way with Francis and Friends.



Strength

We are called to live simply and joyfully

Our children are bombarded with advertisements and consumerism, even though we know that the best things in life cannot be bought. In our Strength unit, we hear the story of Francis preaching to the birds to live fully into their “bird-nature” and consider how we too already have the gifts from God we truly need.

Live

Rich: Hello and welcome back to the Francis and Friends Clubhouse! It’s a beautiful day here today.

You know our world has different seasons, hot and cold, dry and rainy. The fall is the time of year when all the leaves and nuts are falling out of the trees. It’s a busy time of year for many animals as they are trying to gather together enough food to get them through the coming winter.

Sally: [*frantically*] Yeah, and winter is coming a little too fast for me. I’ve got a lot of babies to feed and I just can’t seem to collect enough nuts to feed them all!

Rich: Sally, Sally! Slow down a little. I can hardly understand what you are saying.

Sally: I’m running out of time before winter. There aren’t enough nuts to feed my family. And I’m tired and out of breath.

Rich: You sure are. Here, take a break and I will pick up nuts for you for a few minutes.

Sally: Wow, thanks. That would be great.

Rich: You know, Sally, sometimes when I get to worrying about the future I have to stop and remind myself to just be thankful for today. Jesus once said, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its

own. Today's trouble is enough for today." I like to repeat that scripture passage to myself sometimes when I worry too much about tomorrow.

Sally: That reminds me of a story about Francis and Clare, and how they learned to be happy with what they had and reminded other people and animals to be thankful for just being who they are.

Rich: Oh yeah, that's a great story.

Play the Strength cartoon

Live

Sally: Oh yeah, I forgot that part about the birds. I bet Francis would say the same thing about squirrels too.

Rich: And probably about people too. We all need to be reminded to be more thankful for what we do have instead of be sad about what we don't have. Wow, that wind is really picking up!

Sally: Yeah! And look at what it is doing! It's knocking all the nuts out of the trees. Wow. There really are a lot aren't there?

Rich: Yes. And to think they were there all along. We just couldn't see them before.

Sally: And now they will be easier to collect here on the ground. I think I'm ready to get back to work!

Rich [to the kids]: Squirrels are an amazing part of God's creation. Did you know that they can leap 10 times their body length? Squirrels can also turn their ankles 180 degrees to face any direction when climbing. They can learn from copying other animals—even humans. Squirrels have 2-5 babies at a time. That's a lot to take care of.

Loving God with all our Strength means appreciating the gift of caring for our bodies. And the best way to do that is to focus on the here and now. Taking a deep breath of fresh air is a good way to slow ourselves down. In

fact, why don't we do that now? [coach the kids to take a few deep breaths]

Now it is our turn. Let's do some Strength activities together. Some are about God's amazing gift of air. Some are about living with joy. And some are about the holiness of all of creation. So let's have fun Following the Way with Francis and Friends.