



Celebrating the 800th Anniversary
of St. Francis of Assisi's
Canticle of Creatures

Lesson Plan & Study Guide for Educators

Upper Primary Schools,
Secondary Schools,
Confirmation Groups

Partners

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LEVEL: Upper Primary Schools/Secondary Schools/Confirmation

SUBJECT: Religious Education

THEME: Creation, Stewardship, and Eco-Spiritual Reflection

1.0 OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the historical context and spiritual significance of St. Francis' Cantic of Creatures.
- Reflect on themes of gratitude, reverence for God's creation, and the interconnectedness of all life.
- Engage in prayer and creative expression inspired by the Cantic.

2.0 MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Copy of the Cantic of Creatures
- Bible (for related scripture readings)
- Art supplies (for creative projects)
- Audio/visual equipment (optional, for multimedia resources)

3.0 LESSON PLAN GUIDE:

3.1 INTRODUCTION (15 minutes):

- **Provide a brief overview of St. Francis of Assisi's life and his love for creation.**
 - His feast day is celebrated on October 04.
 - St. Francis was born into a wealthy Italian family. He became a friar and a preacher. He formed many religious orders.
 - St. Francis showed love to all people including the poor. He treated all people equally.
 - St. Francis also had a love for nature. He loved all of God's creation.
 - St. Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of animals, the environment and the country of Italy.
 - Many churches have ceremonies to bless animals on St. Francis feast day.
- **Discuss the historical context of the *Canticle*, written in 1224.**
 - St. Francis of Assisi composed a poem or hymn named *Canticle of the Creatures* (also known as *Canticle of the Sun*), when lying sick in 1224. He was being cared for by the Poor Clares at San Damiano in Assisi.
 - In this hymn Francis invites all his brother and sister creatures to praise God our Creator. These creatures include "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon," "Brother Fire" and "Sister Water," as well as "Sister Earth our Mother," who sustains us.
 - It is said that the final verse praising Sister Death was added by Francis in 1226, shortly before he died.

- **Guided Questions:**

- Why do you think St. Francis called the sun “Brother Sun” and the moon “Sister Moon”?
- What do these names “Brother and Sister” tell us about how he saw nature?
- How can we care for God’s creation (plants, animals, people, the poor and the earth) like St. Francis did?
- Can you think of any actions we can take to protect the earth, its creatures and the poor?

3.2 READING AND REFLECTION (20 minutes):

- Pray the [*Cantic of Creatures*](#) aloud (*See resource section below or click on the blue line*).
- **Group discussion:** What stands out? How does St. Francis view God’s creation?
- Is there a connection to the Season of Creation 2025 theme ‘*Peace with Creation*’ (*Isaiah 32:14-18*)?
 - Isaiah 32:14-18 envisions a peaceful Creation where God’s people live only when justice is achieved. Righteousness leads to peace and restores the land’s fertility.
 - Creation is God’s sacred gift, entrusted to our care. Christians are called to protect and nurture Creation in peace, working in partnership with others and passing this responsibility on to future generations. Its deep interconnectedness makes peace both essential and fragile.

- Pope Francis challenges us: “What is the goal of our work? What need does the Earth have of us? Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is up to us” (*Laudato Si’*, 160).
- *See resource section for link: Season of Creation 2025 Guide).*

3.3 SCRIPTURE CONNECTION (40 minutes):

- Read Genesis 1:1-31 (The Creation Story) and Psalm 148 (Praise for God’s Creation).
- Compare these scriptures with the themes found in the *Canticle*.

3.4 ACTIVITY (*Determine a timeframe with your group to complete the project*):

- **Creative Expression:** Students create an artistic piece that reflects your understanding of the *Canticle* or a specific verse. This can include paintings, photography, sculpture, video, song, poetry, dance, or prayer.
- **Group Project:** Collaborate to create a collective artistic piece representing the *Canticle*’s themes.

3.5 PRAYER AND REFLECTION (10 minutes):

- Close with a prayer inspired by the *Canticle*.
- Invite students to share how they can be better stewards of God’s creation.

4.0 ASSESSMENT:

- Participation in discussions and activities.
- Creative projects reflecting an understanding of the *Canticle*'s themes.
- **Select pieces for The Franciscan Institute's exhibition, to be held on September 27th, 2025**

5.0 STUDY GUIDE

- **St. Francis of Assisi:** Patron saint of animals and the environment.
- **Canticle of Creatures:** A hymn of praise for God's creation.
- **Stewardship:** Caring for God's creation as a moral responsibility.

Important Dates:

- **October 4:** Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi
- **2025:** 800th Anniversary of the *Canticle of Creatures*
- **May 24:** 10th Anniversary: publication of the encyclical *Laudato Si' On Care for Our Common Home*

Reflection Questions:

- Why did St. Francis refer to elements of nature as "Brother" and "Sister"?
- How can we live out the values expressed in the *Canticle* today?
- What does the *Canticle* teach us about our relationship with God and creation?

Activities for Further Study:

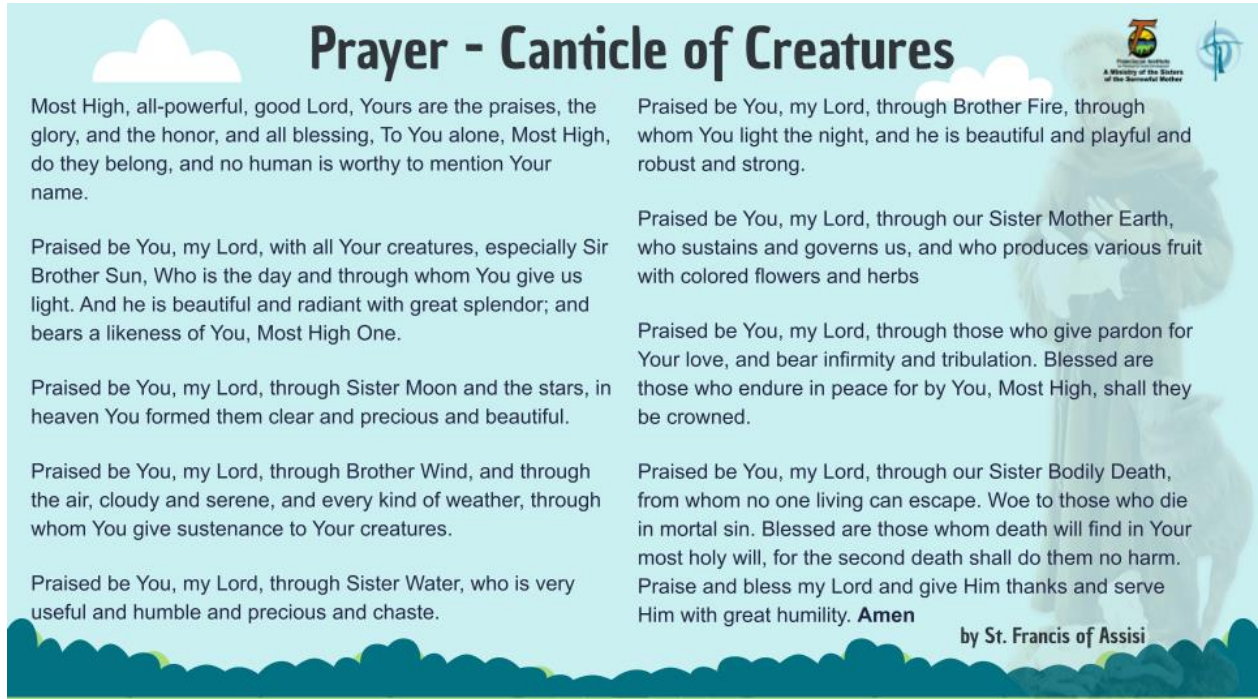
- Research the *Laudato Si'* encyclical and its connection to St. Francis' teachings.
- Celebrate the Season of Creation month.
- Organize a "Blessing of the Animals" ceremony.
- Participate in a local environmental and community service project.

Prayers and Meditations:

- Recite the *Canticle of Creatures* regularly during class or assemblies.
- Incorporate nature walks as meditative experiences reflecting on God's creation.

6.0 RESOURCES

Prayer of the Canticle of Creatures



Prayer - Canticle of Creatures

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing, To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no human is worthy to mention Your name.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs

Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility. **Amen**

by St. Francis of Assisi

Toolkit to Celebrate the 800th Anniversary

- [The Franciscan Institute Toolkit](#)

Colouring Book

- [Colouring Book](#)

Companion Journal

- [Companion Journal](#)

St. Francis of Assisi Resources:

- [About St. Francis of Assisi](#)
- [About the 800 Years of the *Canticle of Creatures*](#)

Laudato Si' Resources:

- [Laudato Si' Animation](#)
- [Laudato Si' Resource Guide for Catholic Youths](#)

About St. Francis of Assisi for Children:

- [Little St. Francis](#)
- [Laudato Si' Animation for Children](#)

Lenten Resources:

- [Environmental Stations of the Cross](#)
- [Stations of the Cross - Climate Change Reflections](#)

Season of Creation 2025 Guide

- [Season of Creation 2025 Guide](#)

Songs Inspired by St. Francis and Creation:

- ["Cantic of the Sun" – Marty Haugen](#)

7.0 CONTRIBUTORS

We are deeply grateful to the following people who contributed to the development of this document.

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