



DIOCESE OF CAMDEN  
**Life & Justice  
Ministries**

*30-minute Catholic Social Teaching home session for families*  
**Theme: St. Francis of Assisi and Protecting God's Creation**

**Spend Time Outside (10 minutes)**

- + Go outside your home, or head to a local park, lake, wooded area, etc.
- + Invite all present to spend ten minutes walking and looking around. Ask them to pretend that they had spent their entire lives indoors. What would surprise them or stand out to them?
- + Ask them to select an object of nature that caught their eye the most.

**Discuss the Experience (5 minutes)**

- + Reflect on these questions, indoors or out: What object stood out to you the most? Why did it strike you? What is your favorite part of nature?
- + What is your favorite outdoor place? Why? What about that place do you love?
- + Say: God created the whole world, and nature is one of God's most beautiful gifts to us. When we see something incredible in nature, we are seeing the work of God.

**St. Francis Pledge (10 minutes)**

- + Introduce it. Say something like: St. Francis of Assisi is one of our greatest saints as Catholics. Our new Pope, Pope Francis, took the name of this saint, who spent his life devoted to serving the poor.
- + St. Francis also loved God's creation. He believed that we could learn about God by spending time in nature.
- + Today, our Catholic Church teaches that it is essential to protect nature, since it is a gift God gave to us. It is up to us to make sure the world is protected from damage so our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren have enough natural resources to live well.
- + (1) Instruct your student to log on to <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org>. (2) Click "The St. Francis Pledge" at the top of the screen. (3) Read the pledge out loud, and explain any hard-to-understand parts.
- + Discuss: What are some ways our family can do our part to protect God's creation?
- + Invite the student to fill out the information, and click submit.

**Closing Prayer: Canticle of the Sun (5 minutes)**

- + Introduce it. Say: St. Francis of Assisi wrote some beautiful prayers. One of his most famous ones is the Canticle of the Sun. Pray it together, or take turns reading stanzas. If possible, gather outside to pray it.
- + Prayer on following page; feel free to print. If you have younger students, they might want to draw images of nature on the sheet, and then you can hang it on the fridge or on a bulletin board as a reminder to respect and protect God's creation.

## **The Canticle of the Sun** *St. Francis of Assisi*

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.