

TEACHER'S GUIDE

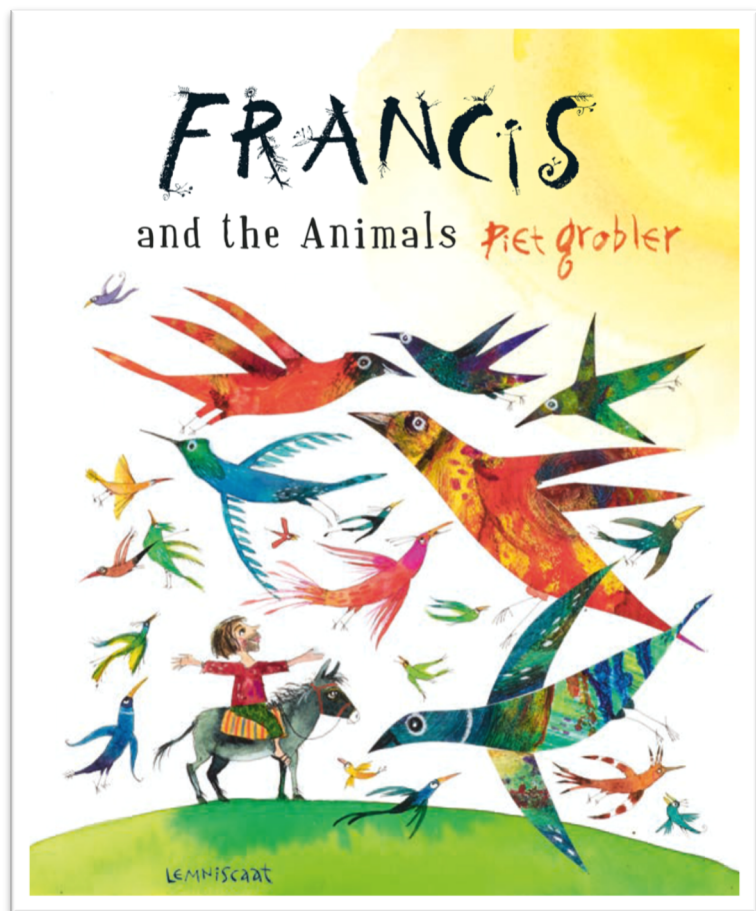
Piet Grobler

Francis and the Animals

(Lemniscaat)

Everyone has heard of Francis, the saint who could talk to animals. Francis is always outside, together with his best friend Donkey. They think the world is beautiful and love all animals. They believe in the Good. Francis wants to make the world more beautiful and together with Donkey he travels all around to let everyone experience Goodness.

Together with the children, set out to find good and nice things. Below are some suggestions for social and emotional activities around Francis and the Animals.



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My best friend

Francis and his best friend Donkey like to be outside all the time.

Have a brief discussion with the children about friendship.

Who are their friends? What do they do with their friends? Do their friends live nearby or far away?

How do you stay in contact with distant friends?

Draw a number of large hearts on a sheet of white paper. Cut each heart in two in different ways.

Give each child one half of a heart. The children set out to find the other half. When two children have found each other, they sit down together and fit the two halves together. After that, each pair decorates their heart. They discuss and decide together what the heart should look like and which colours to use. Hang all the hearts in a row to create a friendship garland.

Goodness within yourself

Everyone has good qualities or is very good at something. Do you know what you're good at? And what do others think is good about you?

Sit in a circle. Let others shine by saying something good about them. Pass a diamond (or shiny stone) around the circle. The child holding the diamond says something good about the child to their right and then passes the diamond to him/her. This child, in turn, says something about the child sitting on his/her right, etc. The group says something good about each child.

Were there any surprising compliments?

Make merry

“Fly, sing and spread joy.”

Francis tells the birds that they are children of the Good. He tells them to fly and sing and spread joy.

Make merry with the children. The children are birds. Play cheerful music and place a number of hoops in the room. The birds hop and fly around. When the music stops, the birds find a nest (hoop) to sit in. More than one bird may sit in each nest. When the music starts again, the birds leave the nest. Once in a while, remove a nest. The birds have to cooperate so that all find a spot in a nest. What is the smallest number of nests needed for all birds to have a spot?

A cheerful world

The rabbit hops away and fills the world with good cheer.

Look in the book *Francis and the Animals* to see which colours are used. The book mostly uses bright, cheerful colours.

Give the children a sheet of paper and have them draw a flower on it that they colour in using bright colours. Cut out all the flowers and lay them in a row in the middle of the circle. Place a stuffed bunny or a figure of a rabbit in front of the first flower. The children take turns to roll a die. They count the number of pips they have rolled and make the rabbit hop the same number of steps along the cheerful flowers.

Untangled

Francis sees countless fish trapped in a net. He wades into the water and frees them.

Take a ring-shaped rope or tie the ends of a long rope together. Ask the children to take hold of this rope.

Tell the children that they are fish. They swarm through the sea. Let them criss-cross between each other, step over the rope, crawl under it, and so forth. They may not let go of the rope. Choose one child to be Francis. This child lets go of the rope and tries to free the fish by untangling them. The other children are still not allowed to let go of the rope. Francis tells them what to do.

Afraid

In the forest, a dangerous, bloodthirsty wolf jumps out at Francis. Francis holds up his hand and makes the wolf stop. “Calm down,” says Francis. “If you don’t kill anyone, you don’t have to be afraid of anyone.”

Take the book *Francis and the Animals* and read out the part about the wolf. Ask the children who is afraid of whom? Is Francis afraid of the wolf, or is the wolf afraid of Francis? Have a brief discussion about fear.

Without the children seeing, place a bath puff or sponge in a shoebox. Make a few breathing holes in the lid and a hole big enough for the children to stick their hand through the side. Hold the box carefully in your hand, at a safe distance. Once in a while make the box move. Tell the children that you found a scary creature with sharp teeth yesterday. It’s inside the box and wants to come out. You’re afraid that if you let it out, you won’t be able to catch it again. Ask who is brave enough to grab the creature and show it to the group. Which child dares to put their hand in the box? How do the children react?

Suddenly, you let the lid fall from the box and run away. Do the children realise that there is no creature in the box? Did any children take fright?

Kindness

Together with the wolf, Francis returns to the village.

He asks the villagers to feed the wolf every day. The villagers promise and together with the wolf, they fill the world with kindness.

Make a kind gesture by baking something for someone else. Find a recipe for cookies, cake or pie and make it together with the children. Bring the treat to a group of people whom you want to surprise.

Love

For many years, Francis and Donkey travelled together. Donkey has been with Francis for all his life. He has filled Francis's life with love.

Ask the children who gives them love. Who is always there to comfort them, help them, listen to them and so on?

Give each child a bright pink heart. On it, they draw themselves with someone who gives them love. They cut the heart out. Hang up all the hearts in the shape of one big heart – the heart that fills the world with love.

Cheerful music

The birds spread their wings and fill the world with colour and music.

Play cheerful music and let the children flap through the room like birds. When the music stops, they carry out a task.

Suggestions:

- The birds find another bird, link wings (arms) and spin in a circle.
- The birds whistle a happy tune.
- The birds sit down and preen.
- The birds stand on one leg.
- Place hoops on the floor. When the music stops, the birds find a nest.

I spy with my little eye

Look at the colourful birds in *Francis and the Animals*.

Choose a bird on a particular page and describe it by saying, for example: "I spy with my little eye... a blue bird with a green head." The children look at the birds closely and guess which one it is. Variation: you pick a bird (without saying which one) and the children have to find out which one it is by asking questions that you can only answer with "yes" or "no".

Towards the sun

In the book, the sun is shining. Give each child a sheet of sturdy white paper. Let them make a dot in the middle of the paper using yellow paint. Then, they make the yellow paint lighter by adding some white paint. They paint a circle around the yellow dot. Then they add some more white paint, paint another circle, and so on. The sun grows bigger and bigger, and the colours lighter and lighter. When the suns are done, the children look for birds and glue them around the sun.

Suggestions:

- Cut birds out of magazines, scrap paper or wallpaper.
- Make birds by tearing bodies and wings out of glossy paper and gluing them together.
- Draw birds.
- Find colouring pictures of birds and scale them down if necessary. Colour in the birds and cut them out.

On the branch, below the branch

In the picture of the birds, look at the birds near the branch. Where are the birds? Use the terms “on” and “below”, “beneath” or “under”. Prepare some (children’s) tables. These represent branches. The children are birds and stand near the branches in groups. Give them instructions using the terms “on” and “below”/“beneath”/“under”.

Suggestions:

- “Two birds are sitting on the branch.” The children sit on the table.
- “Three birds fly underneath the branch”. The children sit under the table.
- “Four birds sit on the branch and one bird flies under the branch.” Four children sit on the table and one sits underneath it.

Skipping along a branch

Francis merrily runs after the birds along a branch.

Can the children do that too? Use chalk to draw a line on the pavement. Practise on that. Then prepare a bench and balancing beam and walk from one side to the other without falling off. Can the children also do tricks on the bench, like standing on one leg?

Chirping birds

The birds are cheerful. Listen to them chirp! Say a few sounds or words in a row. The children listen carefully and repeat.

Suggestions:

- Cheep cheep
- Tweet tweet tweet
- Coo, coo, tweet, tweet
- Chirp, cheep, coo
- Chirp, chirp, hoot, coo

Colourful birds

The birds in the picture have bright colours.

Close your eyes and blindly put your finger on a bird.

What colour is it? Look for objects with the same colour and put them next to the picture. Then choose another bird and repeat the activity.

Lesson suggestions written by Anke van Boxmeer and Els van Dijk