

Caring for Animals

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 26, ages 3-4

Lesson 26 Goal

- Your child will learn that animals have babies as part of God's plan and that animal parents take care of their babies.

Key Points

- Animals have babies, too.
- Animal parents take care of their babies, just like my parents take care of me.



Parent Reflection

Saint Francis is known in part for his love for all of God's creation. Legends about Francis say that he had a remarkable ability to communicate with animals and even talked a wolf out of continuing his attacks on the village of Gubbio. It's difficult to know how many of these legends are based on actual events, but we know that Francis greatly valued animals. A prayer attributed to Francis also expresses his sentiment that God is praised through all of his creatures.

Jesus uses animals to help us recognize our own relationship before God. For example, Jesus describes himself as a good shepherd and we are his sheep. Jesus also uses the analogy of a mother hen gathering her chicks to describe his feelings toward Jerusalem: "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings" (Matthew 23:37).

Reflection Question

What have God's creatures taught me about him? How do I care for all of God's creatures?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- Activity Master #21 (included with this lesson)
- safety scissors
- copy paper
- glue or paste

- craft sticks
- Lesson 26 Activity Master – Saint Page (included with this lesson)

(Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Cut out the baby and parent animals shapes from Activity Master #21.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Pray together: *“Thank you, God, for the gift of animals. We will love and care for them and for all of your creation. Amen.”*

Discovering

All God’s Animals. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about creation.

Ask your child, “What can you do to help animals?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s

understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. God Made Animals. Turn to the drawing in the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child a crayons or colored pencil. Explain the activity and have your child complete it.

2. Parent and Baby Animal Puppets. Have your child color the baby and parent animal shapes made from Activity Master #21. Have your child glue or paste the colored pictures onto craft sticks for puppets and dramatic play. Talk about how animal parents care for their babies.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Francis of Assisi. Show your child the picture of Saint Francis on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Francis to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child, “How do you feel when someone you love says a prayer for you? Do you think you could do the same for someone else?”

Have your child write and draw about Saint Francis using the Lesson 26 Activity Master.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by

tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“God, thank you for animals. Help us to take good care of all the animals you have given us. Amen.”

Saint Francis

Even the Animals Deserve Respect

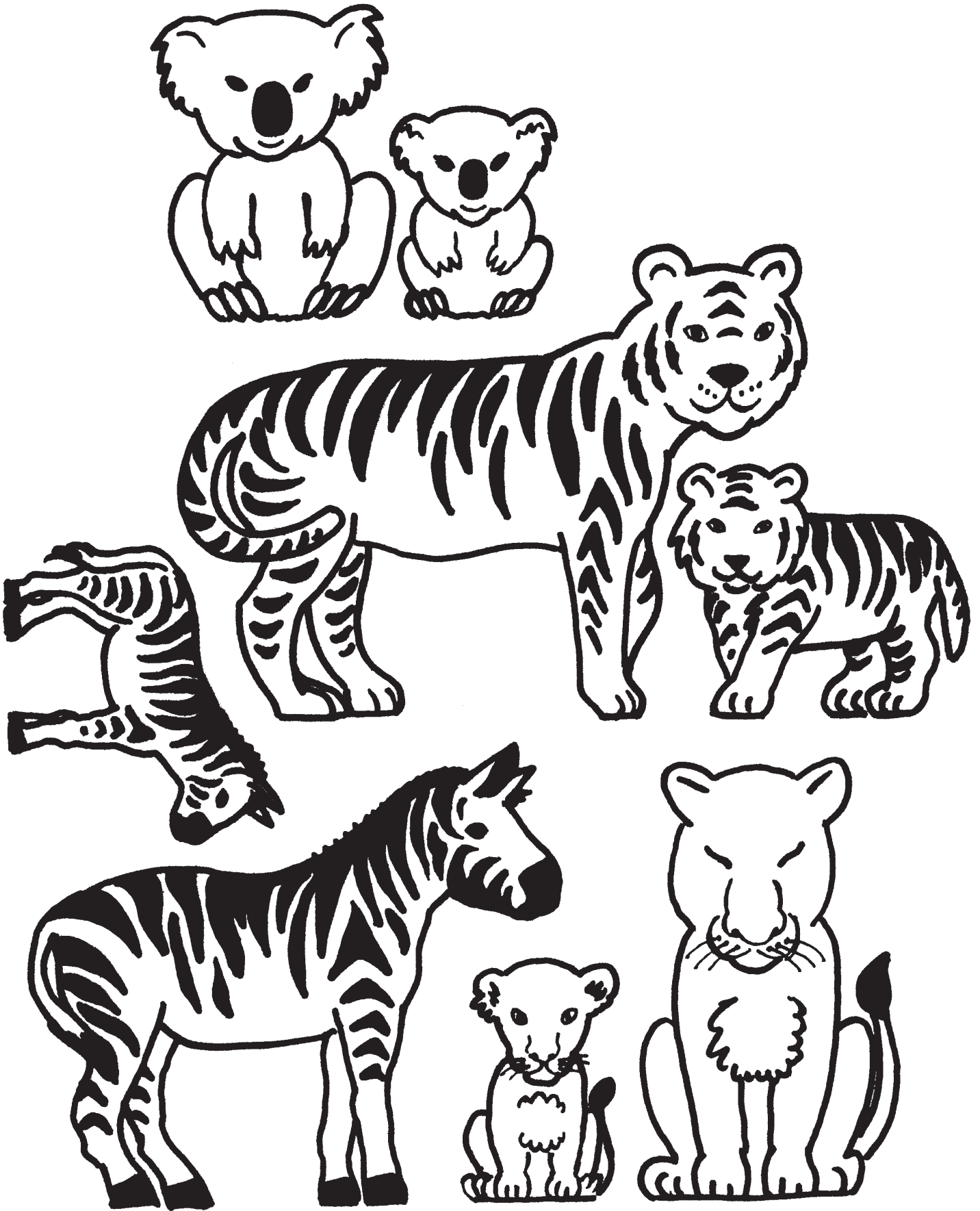
Saint Francis believed that we should treat all the living things on earth kindly, and that God loves them, too.

When Francis was a boy, his father was a merchant. A merchant is a person who sells things that people want. So his family had a lot of money. That meant that Francis did not have to work hard as a boy. He often goofed around and sometimes got into trouble, big trouble. One day, when he was almost a grown up, he dreamed that God wanted him to change. In the dream, Jesus asked Francis to work hard to fix a church that was broken.

Francis decided to obey. He gave away his

fancy clothes and dressed in old clothes instead. He spent much of his time with people who were poor and sick. This made his father angry. Even though Francis was trying to do the right thing, his father felt embarrassed that Francis did not have an important job and wear fancy clothes. He told Francis that he wouldn't be able to have any more family money. Francis said that was okay. He thought it was more important to help the poor and sick than to have a lot of money.

Francis also wanted to help the animals. He wanted them to receive God's blessing. This was an idea that was new to many people, but it is an idea that we still honor today.



DRAW



**Saint
Francis of
Assisi,
pray for us!**