

Activity ideas – St Francis of Assisi Window

Background info	Activity	What you will need	Curriculum
<p>In the legends about St Francis, he is able to communicate with wild animals – they will even listen to him and do what he asks of them. This means he has an awareness of them and a connection with them that is far more powerful than most people's.</p>	<p>Increase your awareness of the natural world by observing an animal or a plant closely. If it is an animal, notice its appearance, how it moves, what noise it makes. Follow its progress with your eyes and see where it goes and what it does. If it is a plant, notice how it is formed – is it tall or short, does it have leaves, needles, flowers? Does it have spines or prickles? How is it different from another plant near it?</p> <p>Make sure you do not interfere with the wildlife you are observing – look but don't touch. With animals it is better to look from a distance.</p>	<p>If you are able, do this by going for a walk in nature – this could be the countryside, or your local park. If you have a garden, go into it. If none of these are available to you, go to the window and look for signs of nature outside – birds, insects, trees, plants in window pots. Nature exists even in highly populated cities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observing the natural world • Environmental awareness
<p>Stained glass windows are not designed to let light into a room to see by, in the way that the windows of a house do. They are designed to control the light and make an interesting visual effect.</p> <p>The St Francis window is very colourful with few or no clear glass sections. This means that the light coming through is not bright, but it is strongly coloured.</p>	<p>Experiment by holding transparent or semi-transparent coloured paper or objects up to a window. Make observations: What is the effect on the light that shines through? Does the room inside look different?</p> <p>Why not make a 'stained glass' window or sculpture using coloured tissue paper or gels, or by grouping together transparent or semi-transparent objects such as bottles or jars. (Transparent means you can see through it.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coloured tissue paper or gels – you can even use some kinds of sweetie wrappers. • Coloured bottles or jars, made of glass or plastic. (If they are made of glass be very careful as this can break and shatter and can be very dangerous. Ask an adult to help you). • Use black card or black felt pens to imitate the lead frame of a stained glass window. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science, • Observation of natural phenomena • Light and colour

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<p>When people write the story of someone's life it is called a biography. However, when the story is about a saint's life, it is called a hagiography.</p> <p>(If you are interested in words, this is why: these English words come from the Ancient Greek language. 'Bio' is the Ancient Greek word for <i>life</i>, and 'hagio' is the Ancient Greek word for <i>holy</i> – saints are considered to be holy people. 'Graph' is the Ancient Greek word meaning <i>to write</i>.)</p> <p>In medieval times, people enjoyed reading hagiographies and they were very popular.</p>	<p>Write your own hagiography of St Francis of Assisi. You could research his life and write a non-fiction summary of it, or you could write a story about one episode – for example the incident with the wolf, or the birds. Choose whichever part of his life you find most interesting. You could then illustrate your hagiography with a drawing.</p>	<p>Computer access and search engine for research; computer or pencil and paper; colouring pencils or paints</p> <p>We'd love to read your hagiography! Why not share it with us by sending it to learning@rosslynchapel.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Presenting your findings in writing • Creative writing • Illustrating your own writing