








St Francis: Wolf Brother

Equipment: Music 'Bare Necessities' from Jungle Book; possibly a copy of 'Wolf Brother' by Michelle Paver.

Plan:

-  Play the 'Bare Necessities' song. Invite anyone who knows it to sing along.

Show a copy of 'Wolf Brother' by Michelle Paver; ask if any of the children have read it. (It's the first series of recent children's novels set in pre-historic Europe, about a young boy and a wolf whom he adopts as a brother and companion.
-  Both the 'Jungle Book' and 'Wolf Brother' are fictional stories about human beings who had special relationships with animals. But there was also once a Christian saint who saw birds and animals as his brothers and sisters.
-  St Francis didn't live in the jungle or travel with a wolf, but he did believe that all of God's creation belonged to one family. He preached that human beings and animals were made and loved by the same God; no person and no creature was worthless, unclean or unimportant.
-  One day on a road he met a man with leprosy (people with this disease were outcasts in the Middle Ages, because everyone else was terrified of catching it. It causes horrible damage to skin and bones). Instead of running away, Francis kissed him.
-  He also came across a town which was being terrorised by a wolf, attacking live-stock and people. According to the story, Francis found and spoke to the wolf, and explained to the people that he was hungry and desperate. If they provided him with food he would do them no harm. The townspeople listened to Francis, and gave the wolf regular meals. From then on he became tame and friendly, and lived out his days as a sort of town mascot.

Purpose/Teaching: Whether or not the story has been improved a bit in the telling, it shows us a lot about St Francis' attitudes. Animals were not enemies to be defeated or resources to be exploited, but brothers and sisters to be cherished. Human beings should find ways of having positive relationships with them.

Lets pray: Father God, we have many brothers and sisters in this world, help us to love and respect them all. Teach us to be kind to people and animals in need, and to be gentle and thoughtful towards everyone we meet. Where there is hatred, help us to bring love, and carry light wherever there is darkness. Amen.

