

**THE  
BUMPER  
BOOK OF  
RESOURCES**

**HARVEST  
ALL SAINTS  
ALL SOULS  
REMEMBRANCE**

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# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
<b>HARVEST</b>	
<b>PRAYERS</b>	
Praise	11
Based on Bible Texts	
Matthew 6:25-34	12
Deuteronomy 26:10-11a	13
Confession	14
Thanks	15
Fruits of the Earth	16
Intercessions	18
Year A	18
Year B	19
Year C	20
Prayer Activity – Feast and Famine	24
Harvest Eucharist	25
<b>SERVICES</b>	
Harvest	26
Harvest Thanksgiving	32
Celtic Services	34
Morning prayer	34
Midday prayer	37
Evening prayer	38
Night prayer	40
Autumn Equinox	41
<b>SERMON IDEAS</b>	
Making poverty history?	45
Responding to a world in need	45
<b>ALL-AGE SERVICES</b>	
Harvest Festival	47
Gifts to Every Nation	49
Harvest Sunday – a service for children	53
Sowing in Tears, Reaping in Joy	54
Harvest	56
The Beauty of God’s Creation	60
Plenty	62

Abundant Gifts	65
Giving Life to the World	68
God's World	72

## RESOURCES

Harvest Festival	77
A box full of sprouts – a harvest sketch	78
Quotes, anecdotes and proverbs	84

## ALL SAINTS

### PRAYERS

Approach	89
Praise and Confession	90
Thanksgiving	91
Thanksgiving and Petition	94
Intercessions	98
Year A	99
Year B	100
Year C	102

### SERVICES

All Saints	108
Remembrance – The Celtic Tradition	118
Hallowe'en – All Saints' Eve	118
The Cloud of Witnesses	120
Night Prayers	124
A Service of Light	125

### SERMON IDEAS

A rare breed	127
Running together	127
All Saints	128

### ALL-AGE SERVICES

All Saints' Day (Years A, B and C)	129
For pre-school age to 5 years	129
For 6 to 10 years	137
Sounds Good! (11-16 year olds)	145
What's This Then? (11-16 year olds)	147
Blessed	148
Letting the Light Shine Through	154
All Join In	157

## ALL-AGE TALK MATERIAL

Followers of Christ	163
Our heavenly home	164

## PRAYER ACTIVITY

Joined hands	165
Open hands	165

## RESOURCES

All Saints' Day	167
All Saints	168
Texts	170
Year A	170
Year B	171
Year C	173
The great company of God's people	175
The Beatitudes	176
In the kingdom of Mammon	177
Who's the lucky one?	178
Love your enemies	179
Blessed	180
Quotes, anecdotes and proverbs	182

## REMEMBRANCE

### PRAYERS

All Souls	187
Prayer window	187
All Souls' Day	187
Death	190
Remembrance Sunday	192
Remembrance	200
Confession	204
Act of repentance	205
War and Conflict	206
Peace and Reconciliation	208
Peacemakers	210
For Peace	212

### SERVICES

All Souls	214
For the Departed	214
A Service of Remembrance of Forebears and Loved Ones Who Have Died	216
An Annual Remembrance Service	218
Bereavement	221

Remembrance	224
Remembrance Day	224
Remembrance Sunday	230
National War Dead	234
Remembrance Day Evening Worship	237
Conflict and War	240
For an End to War and Hatred	244

## SERMON IDEAS

Death	248
Warfare	250
Peacemakers	251

## ALL-AGE SERVICES

Remembrance Sunday	252
Peace Be with You	252
Counting the Cost	256
We Will Remember	260
Remembrance Sunday	265
Rosemary	268
Don't Be Sad – A Celebration of Life	268
Following God (11-16 year olds)	273

## RESOURCES

All Souls' Day	276
All souls are loved	276
Quotes, anecdotes and proverbs – Coping with grief	278
Quotes anecdotes and proverbs – Death	279
Remembrance	283
It was March	283
Lest we forget	284
A debt owed	285
Remembrance Sunday	287
11 November	288
Remembering presents us with responsibility	288
Is war inevitable – because violence is in our genes?	290
The real costs of war	291
Mediation and peacekeeping	293
Eliminating the cause of wars – by establishing justice and human rights	294
Song for adult worship – Lest we forget	295
Symbols of Remembrance	296
Quotes, anecdotes and proverbs	297

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS	299
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# FOREWORD

This Bumper Book (together with its two companion volumes) draws together material from a wide range of sources and a number of top authors to create an invaluable resource for anyone seeking help with prayers, services, sermon ideas and illustrative material both for general and all-age worship.

The three volumes cover the major festivals of the Christian year:

Volume 1: Harvest, All Saints, All Souls and Remembrance

Volume 2: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

Volume 3: Holy Week, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost

Each volume is accompanied by a CD-ROM providing activity sheets and illustrations that can be reproduced to enliven learning and interactive worship.

**HARVEST**



# PRAYERS

## Praise

Loving God,  
we come this day to praise you,  
to celebrate your great goodness.  
We come with thanksgiving, joy and wonder,  
reminding ourselves of the richness of your creation,  
and acknowledging your faithfulness  
in providing for all our needs and far beyond!  
You have blessed us beyond our deserving:  
gladly we rejoice.  
For the beauty of the seasons,  
the constant cycle of day and night,  
and the vital gifts of rain and sunshine, we praise you.  
For the miracle of growth,  
the wonder of life,  
and the incredible variety of harvest, we bring you our thanksgiving.  
Receive then our worship,  
accept our offerings,  
bless our celebration,  
and fill us with thankfulness for all you have given.

*Nick Fawcett*

Lord of life,  
we gather this day to praise you,  
to acknowledge you as Creator of heaven and earth,  
to thank you for your faithful provision,  
and to celebrate the constant cycle of the seasons,  
of day and night,  
seed-time and harvest.  
Day by day,  
year by year,  
we see your hand at work,  
we marvel at the beauty of your design,  
and we rejoice in all you have given.  
We praise you for this vast and awesome universe  
in which you have placed us,  
this world in which we live,  
and this country in which we have been born –  
so many reasons to count our blessings,  
so much to thank you for.  
We thank you for the harvest which surrounds us today,  
for the many places from which it has come,

for the toil which has made it possible,  
and for your hand which ultimately lies behind it.

Lord of life,  
we recognise again your goodness,  
we remember once more how fortunate we are,  
and we celebrate the bountiful provision of your creation.  
Gladly we come, with thankful hearts and joyful worship.  
In the name of Christ.

*Nick Fawcett*

## Based on Bible Texts

### Matthew 6:25-34

Great Lord, our God, we praise you  
for your creative love,  
which made the world around us,  
which made the stars above.

We praise you for all fruitfulness,  
for all that lives and grows;  
for running deer, for flying bird,  
for oak tree and for rose;  
for all the rich variety  
of colour and of form;  
for summer's blazing heat wave  
and for winter's raging storm;  
for every season's beauty,  
for morning and for night,  
for sowing and for reaping,  
for darkness and for light.

We praise you for all sprouting grain,  
for warming sun, refreshing rain,  
for flower and garden, hedge and field,  
for farm's abundant harvest yield;  
for opening buds and hatching eggs,  
for newborn lambs on wobbly legs,  
for freshly wakened butterflies  
and bees that hum beneath blue skies.  
Such wealth is ours, O gracious Lord,  
wealth beyond ought we could afford.  
Your generous hand supplies our need,  
our bodies and our souls you feed;  
and when adversity's harsh blows  
batter our lives with griefs and woes,  
we learn our greatest need of all –  
for love to hold us lest we fall.

In weakness we would seek your power  
to triumph over each dark hour;  
and praise you still for all your grace  
bestowed upon the human race.

*Peter Dainty*

## **Deuteronomy 26:10-11a**

O God, our Father, we thank you for the harvest.

We thank you for all life that shoots green through the surface of the earth.  
We thank you for the abundant fruitfulness of this oasis planet –  
for the rich soil, for the quickening rain, for the ripening sun.  
And we thank you that we, too, are a part of this system of life –  
sharing its energy, enjoying its beauty and feeding on its wealth.  
We cannot fathom the mystery of our existence in this world,  
but at least we can give praise to you, our maker.

Forgive us when we handle too lightly the miracle of life;  
when we are careless with your works and thoughtless with the secrets of creation.  
Forgive us when we take for granted air, soil, water and minerals  
and treat them as if they were ours by right and there for ever.  
Forgive us when we treat other living creatures with contempt,  
without realising that in harming them we are harming ourselves  
by upsetting the balance of life.  
Forgive us when we carelessly destroy what, as your stewards,  
we should seek to nurture and protect.  
Forgive us when we manage the world so badly that it becomes  
a barren desert, poisoned by greed, selfishness and war.  
And forgive us most of all when we forget the needs of our neighbours.  
Forgive us when we snatch, instead of share  
and take more pride in possessing than in giving.

Help us to praise you and please you by careful management of the earth  
and the fair distribution of its wealth,  
so that all may benefit from the blessings of creation,  
both now and for generations to come.

As we thank you for the fruits of the harvest,  
we also ask you for the fruit of your Spirit,  
and the moral and spiritual power which it provides,  
so that your Kingdom may truly come on earth  
as it is in heaven,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

*Peter Dainty*

## Confession

What harvest do we show in our lives, Lord?  
In what ways do we bear fruit,  
reflecting the work of your Spirit within us?  
Too often we fail to practise what we preach,  
our discipleship proving barren.  
Reach out in mercy,  
and nurture the seeds you have sown within us,  
so that they may truly grow and flourish,  
to your glory.

*Nick Fawcett*

Gracious God,  
we have so much to thank you for,  
your creation so rich  
and the resources you have given us so many,  
and yet we all too rarely show our gratitude.  
We take your blessings for granted,  
complaining about what we haven't got  
instead of rejoicing in what we have.  
We are not only ungrateful but irresponsible,  
squandering what you have given,  
frittering away the earth's treasures  
with no thought of tomorrow.  
We are part of a world  
which wantonly pollutes and knowingly wastes,  
and we have done little if anything about it,  
preferring a life of comfort  
to the sacrifice a stand of principle would entail.  
We are not only irresponsible but selfish,  
our thoughts more often than not  
concerned simply with our own satisfaction  
and the pleasure of the moment.  
We forget the needs of those around us,  
we ignore the cry of the poor across the world,  
and we ride roughshod over the claims of future generations  
to their rightful stake in your creation.  
We are part of a world in which the few have plenty  
and the rest make do with crumbs from the table;  
a world in which the well-being of the future  
is sacrificed to the whims of the present;  
and once more we have remained silent,  
telling ourselves that there is nothing we can do  
and so ducking the issue.

Gracious God,  
we are reminded today  
that thanksgiving must be more than simply words,  
that it involves the stewardship of your gifts  
and the generosity of our giving,

# SERMON IDEAS

## A rare breed

*Dear friends, imitate my example and, in turn, learn from those who follow the pattern we have given . . . Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

(Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12b)

They lined the marshes, a great throng of birdwatchers, peering through binoculars and telescopes, or painstakingly adjusting their gigantic zoom lenses in the hope of catching that definitive close-up shot. Each looked out to sea eagerly, expectantly, the air of excitement almost palpable as ever more people arrived to swell their ranks. What was it all about? A rare species of gull had been spotted close by earlier in the week, presumably blown off course by winter storms. There was nothing particularly special about it, certainly nothing dramatic, yet these twitchers were in seventh heaven, delighted to have the opportunity to tick another bird off their list of unusual sightings.

We might not get worked up ourselves by a brief glimpse of an uncommon bird, but the Apostle Paul points us towards rarities of another sort that we should get excited about. He was referring, of course, to those special people who set an example to follow; specifically those like himself who provide others with a model of faith, exemplifying Christian commitment. In the early Church there were many to choose from, numerous believers who sacrificed their all for the cause of Christ. Others have joined them across the years, surrendering prospects, possessions, livelihoods, even life itself for the sake of the gospel. Others again have offered an example of a different sort, displaying a depth of wisdom, love and compassion that has brought inspiration to others and encouraged them in their own journey of discipleship.

Today is a day for remembering those special people, the recognised and unrecognised saints of God. It is a day for learning from them, and a day also for seeking to emulate their lives so that we likewise, in some small way, may set an example ourselves.

*Nick Fawcett*

## Running together

*So then, since we are surrounded by so great a crowd of witnesses, let us discard everything that encumbers us and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the beginning and end of our faith, who, focusing on the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1, 2)*

A memorable sight each year is that of the massed ranks of runners assembled for the London marathon, a scene echoed on a smaller but similarly impressive scale at numerous other long-distance events across the country. A select band in the field run seriously, striving to beat the other competitors after months of punishing training, but the majority will take part simply for fun, frequently to raise much-needed funds for charity. Far from competing

against each other, they run together, the race being a shared experience undertaken in a spirit of unity.

The same holds true in terms of faith. Our race is not one in which we strive to outdo each other. Rather, we participate alongside a great company of saints, past, present and future, from whom we can draw encouragement and inspiration, and pass these on in turn. Reflect, then, on those who have gone before you, consider those who will come after, and give thanks for those who run with you now, recognising what you can receive from them and also give. You'll struggle to run the race on your own, for it is a marathon, not a sprint. You need to hold on to the knowledge that you are part of something bigger than yourself, part of a great company engaged in the same undertaking, serving the same Lord and seeking the same goal.

*Nick Fawcett*

## All Saints

*Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.* (Hebrews 13:5)

In 1492, as we will all have learned at school, Christopher Columbus set off from Spain in the Santa María, sailing west on a journey that he hoped would take him around the world to India. His crew were terrified, convinced that, since the earth was flat, they would eventually fall off the edge to their deaths. Of course, nobody fell off anywhere, the ship eventually reaching what came to be known as the West Indies. The destination may have been other than intended, but the voyage proved conclusively that the world was not flat at all but round. Once done, many followed the same journey, and a thriving trade route was soon established. As so often in life, it took someone to show the way; someone to convince the doubters of what could be done.

That, for me, takes us to the heart of All Saints' Day, a day that celebrates those who have gone before us in faith, and whose Christian discipleship has inspired subsequent generations. It's not about holier-than-thou men and women adorned by a halo, such as we might see in a church stained-glass window, but about ordinary people like you and me whose lives serve as an extraordinary example. Remember such people, take note of their way of life, and learn from them, for they have shown what can be done and what God waits to do, here and now, in your life today.

*Nick Fawcett*

# ALL-AGE SERVICES

## All Saints' Day

### For pre-school age to 5 years – Year A

#### Thought for the day

Lives that have shone with God's love on earth are filled with joy as they see their Lord face to face.

#### Readings

Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm 34:1-10

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

#### Aim

To know that saints are Jesus' friends and followers.

#### Starter

Sing *Oh when the saints go marching in*, marching around the room together.

#### Teaching

Bring along a family or parish photo album and look through the pictures together, recognising some and hearing about others. (This is my grandad who shouted at me when I climbed the cherry tree, and who loved his old dog called Judy. Here's the Brownies at the May Fair, with Mrs Phillips who sells birthday cards after church sometimes. This is Timothy's dad when he'd broken his leg playing football with the youth club.)

All these people are part of the big family of God. We're all God's friends. Now look with them through another photo album, made up in advance from an enlarged worksheet (*see CD-ROM*). These saints are all part of the family, too, who have lived good lives as specially good friends of God. Talk about them as you did about the family and parish people, without any 'holy language' reserved for saints.

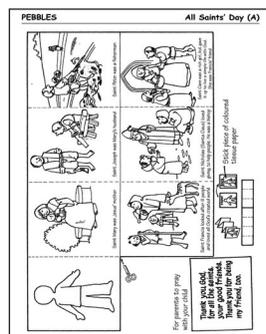
#### Praying

Thank you, God,  
for all the saints, your good friends.  
Thank you for being my friend, too.

## Activities

The pictures on the sheet can be made into a book of saints, and the cover made from a piece of coloured paper with tissue stuck into it as shown, so that they hold it up to the light and see the light shining through.

*Susan Sayers*



## For pre-school age to 5 years – Year B

### Thought for the day

Great is the rejoicing in heaven among the saints of God as they worship their Lord in glory.

### Readings

Wisdom 3:1-9 or Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 24:1-6

Revelation 21:1-6a

John 11:32-44

### Aim

To know that Jesus' friends get to party in heaven.

### Starter

*Party games.* Give everyone a party hat and play a couple of party games such as animal statues. (You tell them which animal to be and when the music stops they freeze in this species. Then they become a new animal.)

### Teaching

We're having quite a party today because we're joining in with all the saints in heaven.

When close friends of Jesus die, that isn't the end of their life. They are welcomed into heaven by Jesus and all the angels, who are very happy to see them. They may have come into heaven tired and worn out from doing lots of good and loving things on earth all through their life, but now all their tiredness goes away and they feel like dancing and singing! They might have known sadness on earth, but when they get to heaven, all their tears are wiped away, and they are filled with happiness and joy instead.

They are really happy to meet their friend Jesus face to face, and it's wonderful to be in all the light and beauty of heaven, where there is nothing nasty or evil, nothing selfish or unkind, but only all that is good and lovely.

All close friends of Jesus will get that welcome in heaven when they die. And the happiness is not just for an afternoon or a week. It lasts for ever and ever and ever!

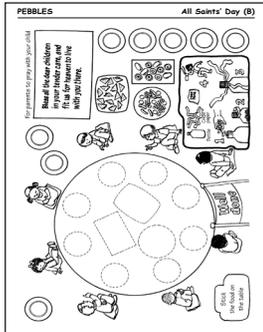
## Praying

Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven  
to live with you there.

## Activities

Continue the party with a few nibbles, and some singing and dancing, praising God. On the sheet there are instructions for making a musical instrument. Each child will need a plastic bottle, some dried peas and some lengths of crepe paper.

*Susan Sayers*



## For pre-school age to 5 years – Year C

### Thought for the day

In Christ we are chosen to be God's holy people.

### Readings

Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18

Psalm 149

Ephesians 1:11-23

Luke 6:20-31

### Aim

To find out what saints are and why we are celebrating today.

### Starter

Give out balloons to throw and catch.

### Teaching

Talk about the balloons and how much better they are with air inside them. Although we can't see the air we know it is there because the balloons get bigger when you blow air into them. We can't see God's love, either, but when it fills us we grow into loving people. We need God's love in us.

There is a name for people who have spent their lives being filled with God's love. We call them Saints. Saints are close friends of God who want to live God's way so much that they don't mind what happens to them so long as they can carry on being friends with him. Some

saints have bravely stood up for what is right. Some have spent their lives looking after the very poor, or those with dangerous illnesses. Some saints have helped lots of people to know and love God better.

Today is like a party to celebrate all the saints, and thank God for what he can do in our lives.

## Praying

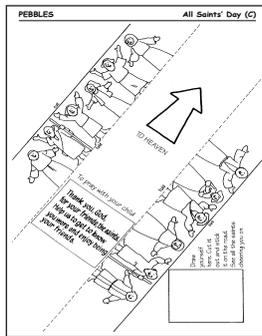
Sing *Oh, oh, oh, how good is the Lord*, dancing to it in a circle.

Thank you, God,  
for your friends, the saints.  
Help us to get to know you more  
and enjoy being your friends.

## Activities

They can make the worksheet into a pop-up picture of the saints cheering us on our way to heaven.

*Susan Sayers*



## For pre-school age to 5 years – Year A

### Aim

To tell the story of St Boniface.

### Readings

Revelation 7:9-17

Psalms 34:1-10

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

### Teaching

A long time ago there was a man who lived at Crediton in Devon. He decided he wanted to learn more about God and to give his whole life to God. He was very clever and joined a monastery in a city called Exeter. A monastery is a place where people pray to God and learn about God. He was good at reading and writing. He also wrote poetry and he said his prayers lots of times every day. This man was called Boniface. Let us say his name together: Boniface.

Boniface became a priest because he wanted to go and tell others about Jesus and his love. He could have stayed in England but he wanted to tell people who had never heard of Jesus all about him. Boniface would tell people how Jesus showed the love of God and how Jesus died on the cross and rose again. Sometimes he risked his life to tell other people about Jesus. Boniface got into a boat and went over the sea to a forest area where people did not know about Jesus.

In one place it was hard to tell anyone about Jesus because they said their prayers to a god who had a special tree. It was a great big oak tree. People told him if he harmed the oak tree, their god would harm him. They were afraid of the tree but Boniface was not afraid. He knew there is only one God and he is a God of love. Boniface told them that his God was stronger than the god they believed in and his God would protect him from any trouble.

Boniface got a sharp axe and chopped the great big tree down. (Act out the chopping.) Every time he hit the tree the people thought something awful would happen to him. But it did not. Soon the tree fell with a great big crack and a bang and it lay on the ground. Boniface was still safe; nothing had harmed him. In this way Boniface showed the people about the God he believed in and then told them how God is a loving God.

People saw that the God of Boniface made him brave and protected him. They saw that because of God's love Boniface was a good person and they asked him to tell them about God and Jesus.

Because Boniface loved God and spent his life telling people about God, he is called a 'saint'. If someone is called a saint, it means they love God and show his love to others.

## Activity

On the activity sheet there is a picture of Boniface to colour in. The children could act out the chopping down of the tree and say 'thank you' to God for caring for them.



## Prayer

God, thank you for St Boniface  
for he was brave and loved you.  
Help us to be brave  
and to tell others of your love.  
Let us remember  
to say our prayers to you every day.  
Thank you, God, for loving us.

## Song

Come on and shine

*David Adam*

## For pre-school age to 5 years – Year B

### Aim

To tell the story of St Francis and the Wolf.

### Readings

Wisdom 3:1-9 or Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 24:1-6

Revelation 21:1-6a

John 11:32-44

### Teaching

At the beginning of the session play ‘What time is it, Mr Wolf?’ Encourage the wolf to growl as it chases the children. Then settle the children down.

Once upon a time in Italy there was a big bad wolf. Most of the time it lived in the forest near a place called Gubbio. (Let us all say ‘Gubbio’.) The people who lived in Gubbio could not leave their hens or ducks or lambs out at night because of the wolf. If they did not shut their animals up, the wolf would come and steal them and eat them up. He was a big fierce wolf and he frightened the children and a lot of the grown-ups. If they saw him, they shouted at him and threw stones or sticks at him. They showed that they did not like him. They shouted loudly at him, and in turn he growled back at them. They were afraid to go into the wood at night in case they met the wolf. Some nights they could hear him howling but they were just as afraid when it was quiet because they did not know where he was. Before it got dark they used to shut their doors and put shutters on their windows so that the wolf could not get them. The people of Gubbio did not get on with the wolf at all.

Early one morning there came a man dressed in a brown robe. He looked very poor. For a belt he had a piece of rope. He was called Francis. (Let us say Francis.) Francis loved animals. He spoke to the birds and once preached a sermon to them (explain). Francis noticed a lot of the houses had their doors locked and their windows blocked out. He wondered what the people were afraid of. He had no money and he begged for some food. Often people gave him crusts or the food they were going to throw away. Whilst he was eating some bread, he asked what the people were frightened of. They told him about the wolf of Gubbio. They told him how it growled and how they threw sticks and stones at it. They often shouted at it to scare it away. Francis said he would go into the forest and try to find it and make friends with it. The people said it was very dangerous but Francis set off.

He had to look for a long time in the forest. He went right into where it was dark. Suddenly Francis heard a big growl. (Let us make a big growl. No, it was bigger and fiercer than that. Let us do it again.) The wolf thought it would frighten Francis but he spoke to it in a quiet voice and offered it a little of the food he was given. At first the wolf would not come. So Francis put some food down for it and moved away. The wolf could not understand because no one had ever been kind to it. Francis spoke to it gently with a friendly voice. He did not shout at it. He got it to eat some food from his hands. He stroked it and made friends with it.

As it was beginning to get dark, the people of Gubbio thought that perhaps the wolf had eaten Francis. Suddenly someone saw him coming out of the forest and following him like a dog was the big bad wolf. At first people were frightened but Francis persuaded them to care for the wolf, to feed it and not to shout at it. Because they did this the wolf of Gubbio became friendly and did not steal chickens, ducks or lambs. Everyone thought that Francis was brave and wise; that he was a man of God. They said Francis was a saint.