

# Saint Francis

**Memory Verse:** 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'  
Mark 8:34 (NRSV)

**Study Plan:** Saint Francis is remembered as a man who completely changed his life in order to have a better friendship with God. Just like you, Saint Francis was like a jewel, with many sides to his life. As you work through each step of this badge, you will learn more about the different things he loved and did.



To earn the St. Francis badge, you will need to do the following steps:

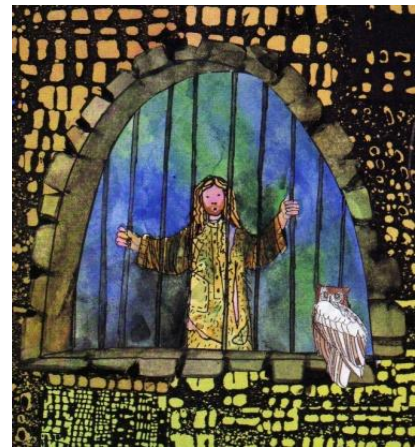


**Step 1: The Early Life of Saint Francis** Leader's initials\_\_\_\_

(Beautifully illustrated books are available at the public library about Saint Francis. See the Leader's List for more information.)



Saint Francis was born in Assisi, Italy and lived about eight hundred years ago, from 1182-1226. His full name was Francis Bernadone. He was spoiled by his parents. His father sold cloth and was very rich. Francis always had spending money. He went to parties with his friends and had lots of fun. Francis wanted to do something exciting, so he became a soldier. Unfortunately he was captured and put in jail. It was cold and wet in the jail. Francis sang songs and told jokes to keep the other men in the prison happy. Finally he got very sick. His father came and paid a ransom to have him released from jail.



Even after Francis got well, he was not really happy. He did not enjoy going to parties anymore. He started to walk in the countryside around his town, trying to forget his sadness. One day, he saw the ruined church of San Damiano. He knelt to pray. He heard a voice say, "Francis, my church is falling into ruin. Go and repair it for me." Suddenly Francis felt happier and knew what he should do with his life.

Francis wanted to repair the church of San Damiano. But he stole money for the repairs from his father to give to the priest of the church. He also gave away his father's horse and some bolts of cloth. His father was angry and dragged Francis before the Bishop of Assisi. The Bishop told Francis that God did not want him to steal things from his father to give to the poor. He told Francis to give back the money he stole. Francis gave back the money and also all of his clothes! He said, "I am giving back all of the things you have given me. You are no longer my father. I am now the son of our Father who is in heaven!"



The Bishop gave Francis an old brown robe that had belonged to a gardener. Francis put it on and tied a rope around his waist. He went out to beg for stones to repair the church. He never felt happier.



What country did Francis live in? \_\_\_\_\_

What was Francis like when he was young? \_\_\_\_\_

What job did Francis decide to try? \_\_\_\_\_

How did Francis feel after he got out of jail? \_\_\_\_\_

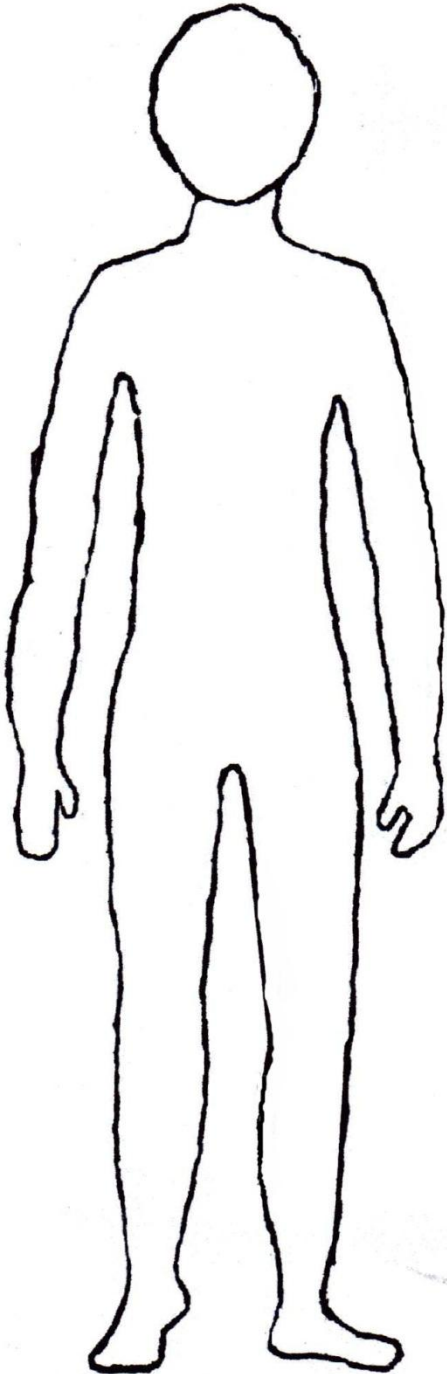
What did Francis hear God say? \_\_\_\_\_

Who did Francis say was his new Father? \_\_\_\_\_

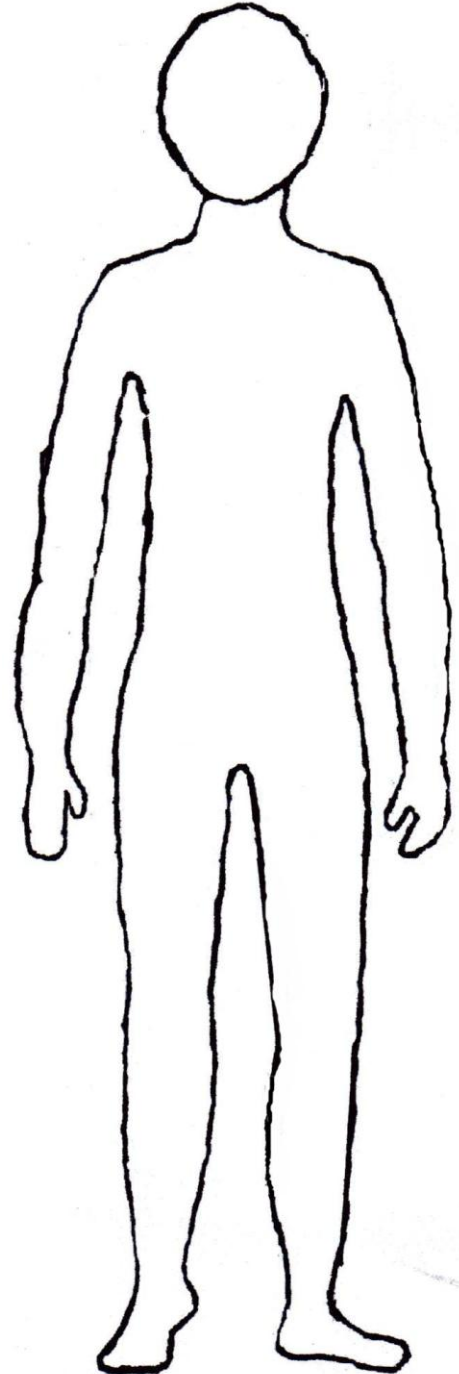
What did Francis wear after he gave back his fancy clothes? \_\_\_\_\_



Using the two outlines below, make two pictures of Francis.  
Make one figure to show him before he changed his life.  
Make the other figure to show him in his plain robe and bare feet.  
You can color with crayons or use fabric and trim to create his robes,  
hair and belt. What do you think he looked like?



Francis as a young man.



Francis after he changed his life.

Step 2: Francis loved the animals

Leader's initials\_\_\_\_



One of the most popular stories about Francis is about how he tamed a wolf!



Long ago, in a small village in the mountains, a hungry wolf was frightening the villagers. The wolf was old and tired and could not hunt with his pack anymore. When the wolf found the town, he knew it would be easy to get his dinner.

First, the wolf stole a lamb from the shepherd. When the shepherd could not find his lamb and saw paw prints on the

ground, he knew there must be wolves near his town. Then the wolf stole some chickens and even a goat. One day he wandered into town on market day. The villagers threw stones at the old wolf. The wolf roared in pain and the people ran and hid. From that day on, it was war between the wolf and the people of the town. The wolf began to wander into town whenever he was hungry. Pretty soon the people were afraid to leave their homes.



Finally the villagers decided to ask Francis to help them. They had heard of Francis and knew that he called the animals his brothers and sisters. Francis came to the town. He listened to the villagers. Then he said, "The wolf is just doing what wolves do. He is hungry and he needs something to eat." Then Francis went out to talk to the wolf. "Brother Wolf," he called gently, "come out and greet me. I will not hurt you. I am your brother." The wolf heard the tender voice of Francis and crawled out of his lair.



"You have frightened the people and hunted the animals they need. Listen. If the people promise to feed and care for you for the rest of your life, will you promise to live peacefully with them?" The wolf put his paw in Francis' hand and pledged to live in peace with the villagers.

After that, the wolf lived for two more years as part of the village. He was never hungry and he guarded the people all day long.



Do you have a pet? \_\_\_\_\_

What is its name? \_\_\_\_\_



If you don't have a pet, what kind of pet would you like to have?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why did the wolf steal food? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does your pet do to show it is hungry? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who feeds your pet? \_\_\_\_\_

How did Frances talk to the wolf? \_\_\_\_\_

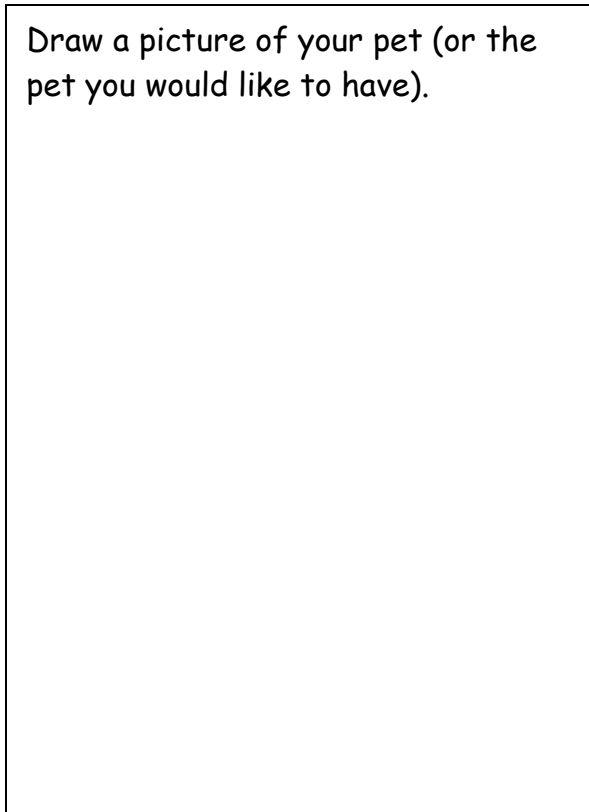
\_\_\_\_\_



**Do 2 of the following:**

- ❖ The Feast Day of Saint Francis is October 4<sup>th</sup>. If your church holds a special church service to bless pets on this day, help out at the service by being an usher or an acolyte or a reader. You could also collect pet food for a local animal shelter. This reminds us that our pets are special friends.
- ❖ Make a collage of animals using magazine pictures.
- ❖ Visit a zoo or nature center.
- ❖ Make a bird feeder: For example, tie a piece of yarn around a pine cone so it can be hung on a branch. Spread peanut butter on the pine cone and then roll it in bird seed. Hang the pine cone in a tree so the birds can eat the bird seed.

Draw a picture of your pet (or the pet you would like to have).



## Challenge material!

### Other men and women join Francis

It was not long before many people had heard about Francis. Other men came to live as he did. They lived and prayed with Francis. He read to them from the Bible. This is what he read:

“If you wish to go the whole way, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and then you will have riches in heaven.” Matthew 19:21

Francis and his friends made three vows. A vow is a promise. They vowed to live their lives in

1) poverty (they do not own anything individually, 2) chastity (will not marry), and 3) obedience (denial of self).

To remind themselves of their three vows, they tied three knots in the rope around their waists. Often they called themselves “little brothers” because they saw themselves as the least or lowest of all of the monks.

One woman who wanted to follow Francis’ ways was Clare. She had also been very rich. She gave up her fine clothes and jewels and cut off her beautiful hair. She and other women vowed to live in holy poverty. They called themselves Poor Sisters or Poor Clares.

Even today, men and women still search for the answers to life’s big questions. Sometimes they join a religious order so that they can pray more and live a quiet life, doing the work of God. Visit these web sites for more information. <http://www.s-s-f.org/> or <http://www.communitystfrancis.org/>

What are the big questions? These are some of the questions that thoughtful people consider:

- ✕ What am I really supposed to be doing here on earth?
- ✕ How can I find true joy that keeps me content?
- ✕ How can I simplify my life so that I can have time for God?

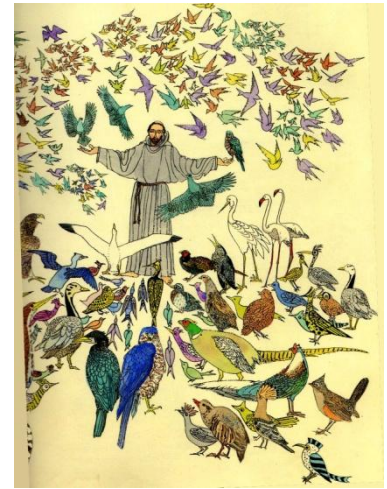
Some religious orders follow the footsteps of Saint Francis. The Society of Saint Francis is a community within the Anglican Communion. Members live their lives with a total commitment to peace, love of mother earth, concern for all humankind, and most importantly, walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.



**Step 3: Francis loved creation**      Leader's initials \_\_\_\_\_



One day, Francis was walking with some of his brothers. He saw some trees filled with birds. He began to preach to the birds. He told them to be grateful for everything God had given them. He reminded them that God feeds them and gives them water to drink from the streams and rivers. He told them to praise God with their songs.



Francis called the sun his brother and the moon his sister. He called the wind, the water, fire, trees... everything... his brothers and sisters. Francis felt like everything on earth was part of the same family. He could not stand to see an animal killed for food. Once he even gave his cloak in exchange for two lambs that a peasant was taking to the butcher.



Francis understood that we must have a good relationship with creation. We can have a good relationship with the earth by being careful about how we use water, electricity and paper.

Answer the following questions:

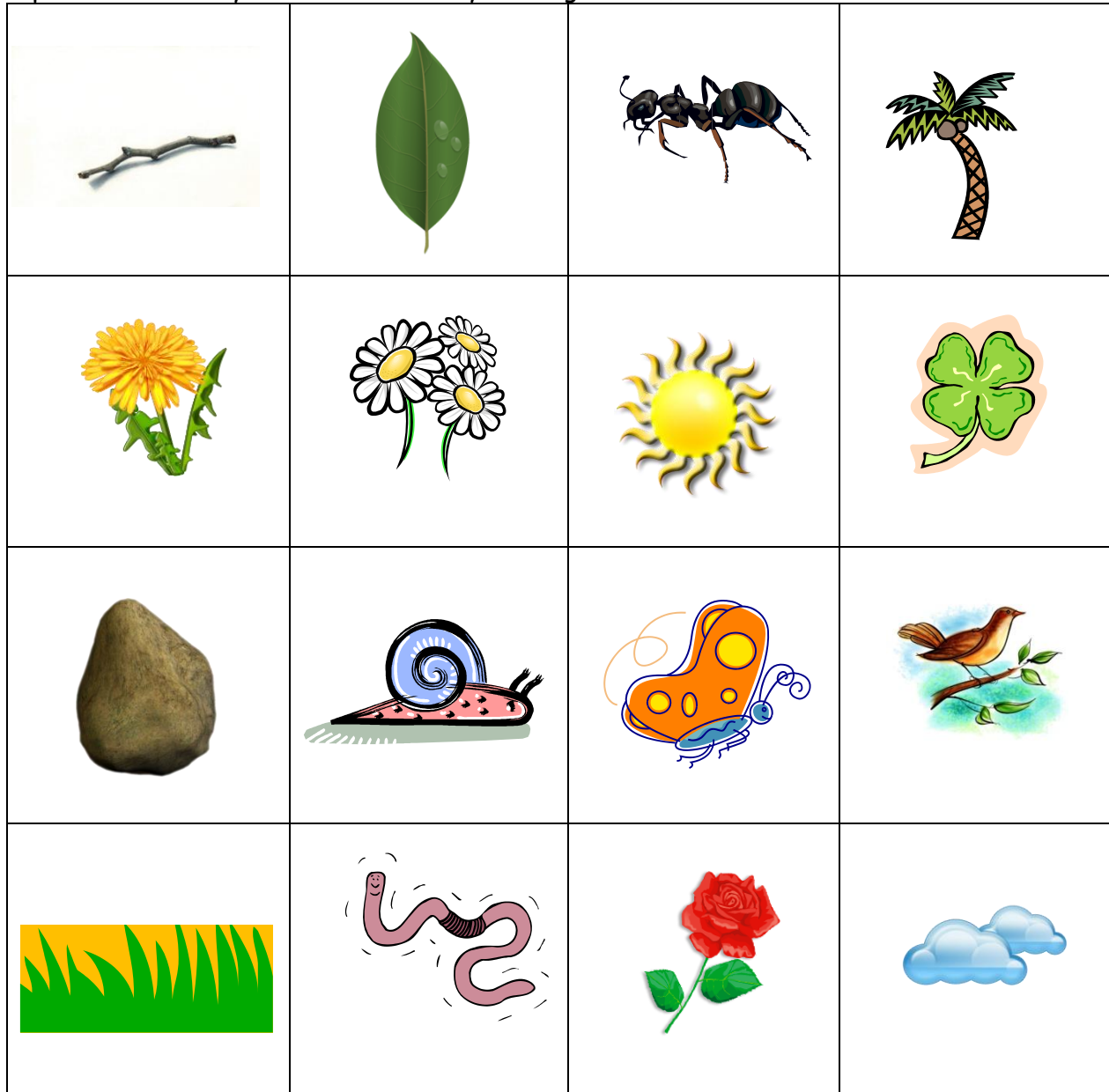
|   | Yes | No | Sometimes |
|---|-----|----|-----------|
| I recycle the newspaper and computer paper.                 |     |    |           |
| I recycle glass, aluminum and plastic.                      |     |    |           |
| I don't leave the water running while I brush my teeth.     |     |    |           |
| I use a re-usable water bottle instead of a disposable one. |     |    |           |
| I turn off the lights when I leave a room.                  |     |    |           |



**Do 2 of the following activities**

❖ **Show and tell** -Bring something or look outside that God has made to share with your group, for example, a stone, shell, flower, feather, pine cone, a bird's nest. Explain what it is, where you found it and what you know about it.

❖ **Play Nature Bingo** Walk around your church property, looking for these nature specimens. When you find an item on your bingo sheet, cross it off. 4 in a row is BINGO!!!



❖ **Capture a piece of nature: Pressing flowers**

You will need:

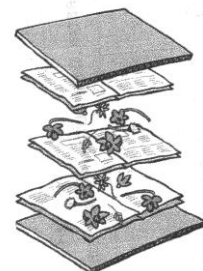
Two sheets of cardboard

Sheets of newspaper

String or rubber bands

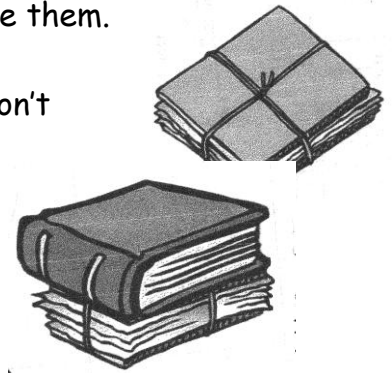
A heavy book

Flowers - select flowers that will flatten easily, such as pansies.



What to do

- 1) Lay out the flowers. You can keep the stems and leaves or remove them.
- 2) Put down a sheet of cardboard and two sheets of newspaper.
- 3) Place some of your flowers on the newspaper. Make sure they don't touch each other.
- 4) Place two more sheets of newspaper on top.
- 5) Continue layering flowers and sheets of newspaper.
- 6) Top with the other piece of cardboard.
- 7) Carefully tie string or put rubber bands around your stack of flowers and papers.
- 8) Place your stack in a cool, dry place where it can remain undisturbed for two weeks.
- 9) Place a weight on top of the stack.



In two weeks, very carefully check your top layer of flowers to see if they have dried. If they have not, leave them alone for another week. After the flowers are dry, you can use them to decorate greeting cards.

#### ❖ Create a "Snow Globe" (a recycling project)

You will need:

Baby food or other small jars

Paint for jar lids

Non-water soluble glue or putty

Miniature plastic animals and trees  
from craft or party store

Silver glitter

- 1) Apply putty to bottom of inside of jar.
- 2) Put animals and trees in place.
- 3) Allow to dry thoroughly.
- 4) Add a teaspoon of glitter.
- 5) Fill jar with water.
- 6) Put glue around inside of lid. Screw lid into place. After top is screwed on, seal around lid with more glue. Let dry thoroughly.



## ❖ Soda Bottle Aquarium (a recycling project)

You will need:

A 2 liter plastic soda bottle

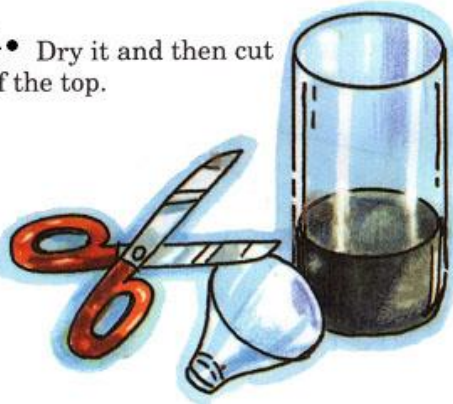
Thread

Poster board

Colorful pipe cleaners

Paper, markers, tape, glue, scissors, cardboard

- 1.** Dry it and then cut off the top.



- 2.** Cut fish from poster board, and color them brightly with markers.



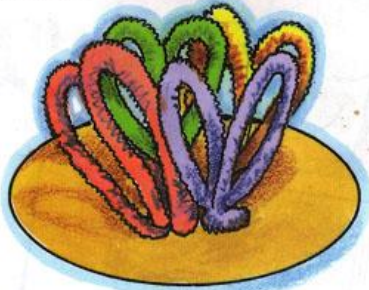
- 3.** Poke a hole in each fish. Tie a piece of thread through the hole. Tape the threads to the inside of the bottom of the bottle so that the fish hang down when the bottle is turned upside down.



- 4.** Place the bottle upside down on a piece of cardboard, and trace around it. Cut out the circle, and glue a piece of felt on top of it.



- 5.** Twist different-colored pipe cleaners into the shapes of seaweed and coral. Glue them to the "ocean floor."

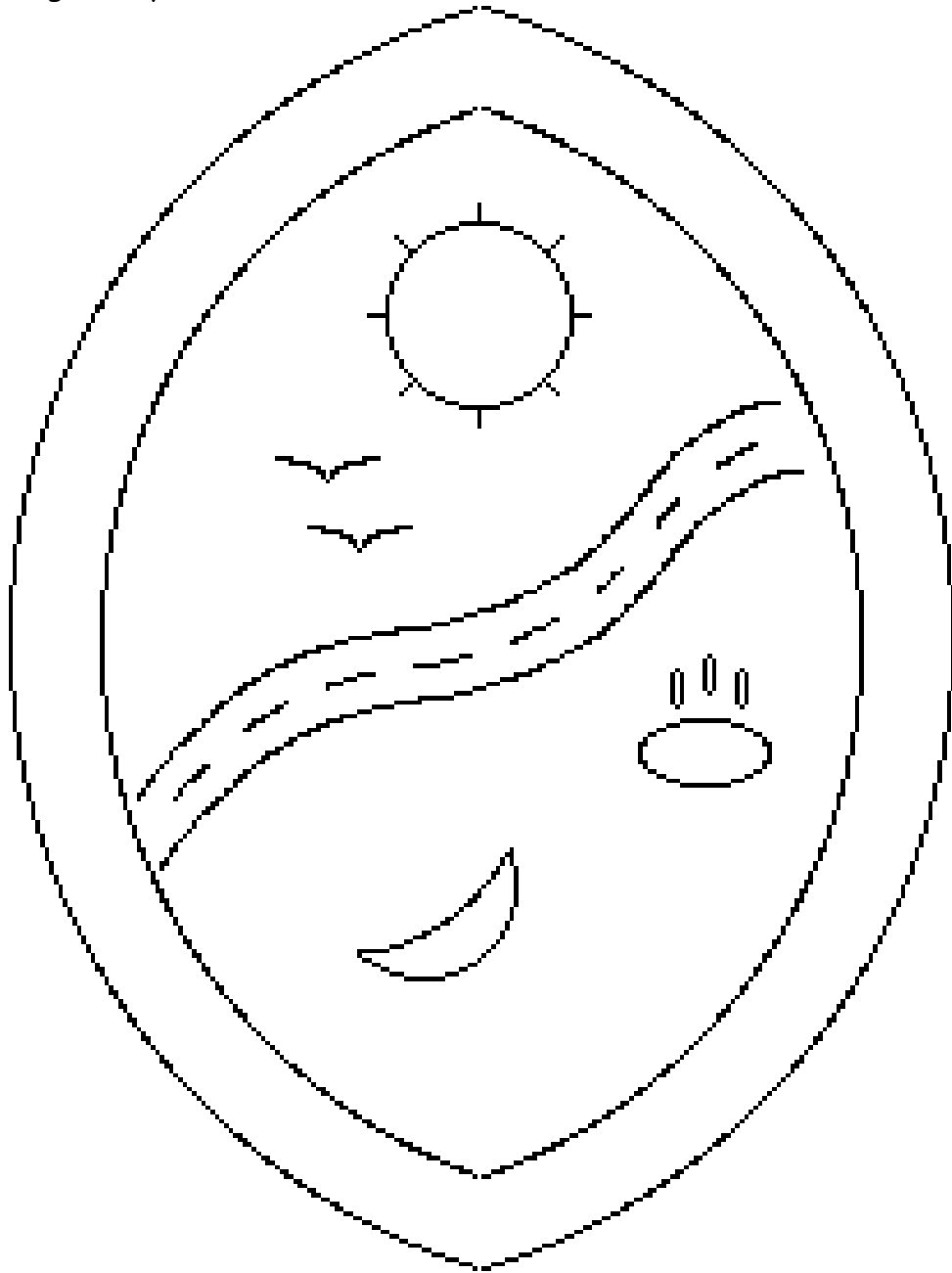


- 6.** Glue the bottle to the "ocean floor."





Color this badge for your notebook.



## **Leader's List**

### References

*Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi* by Tomie de Paola

*Brother Wolf of Gubbio: A Legend of Saint Francis* by Colony Elliott Santangelo

*Saint Francis* by Brian Wildsmith