Blessed Fra Angelico

Painting for God

Ages about 7-11 | Video 5:35 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Fra Angelico offered his life and artistic gifts to God. His paintings helped people remember Jesus and pray. We can use our own gifts with love.

Learning goals Children will identify the purpose of Fra Angelico's sacred art, distinguish talent from holiness, and choose a way to use a gift for another person's good.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask: Can a picture help you remember someone? Explain that Fra Angelico was a Dominican friar and painter. Watch for what he hoped his pictures would help people do.

Watch and notice

Watch the whole story. If a pause is useful, stop at the paintings in the friars' rooms. Ask why an image might be helpful in a quiet place of prayer. Resume through the invitation to use different gifts.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What new name did Guido receive as a friar?
Fra Giovanni, or Brother John. He is widely known as Fra Angelico. Joining the friars did not mean abandoning his gift for painting.

2. What did he hope his paintings would help people do?
Remember Jesus, think about the Gospel, and pray. They were more than decoration or a way to win praise.

3. Did being a wonderful painter automatically make him holy?
No. Holiness is friendship with God and a life of love, not winning an art contest. His prayer and service shaped how he used his talent.

4. What could someone offer God if drawing is difficult?
Listening, helping, singing, solving a problem, or another good gift. A small act offered with love matters; everyone need not have the same talent.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Blessed Fra Angelico

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Children draw a Gospel moment named in the video and a gift they can share. A child may describe the scene instead. Ask how the first picture could help someone pray.

Read & Write Children recall the purpose of the paintings, explain why talent is not the same as holiness, and plan a use for one gift. Oral or dictated answers are welcome.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: offer Gospel choices from the video: Mary and Gabriel, Jesus carrying the Cross, or the risen Jesus. Accept a simple symbol.

Ages 9-11: ask how the purpose of an activity changes the way we do it. Discuss how patience and practice can serve love rather than praise.

Look, remember, pray | Optional 4 minutes

Invite children to choose one Gospel scene from the film. Let them sketch or describe it, then spend a quiet moment thanking Jesus or asking his help. Sharing is optional. Discuss how a picture can prompt prayer without judging whose picture is best.

Look for understanding Ask what the paintings were for. Look for remembering Jesus and prayer, and a service idea that uses a gift without measuring a person's worth by ability.

Closing prayer God, thank you for the good gifts you give us. Help us use them patiently and generously, and keep our hearts close to you. Blessed Fra Angelico, pray for us. Amen.

At home Choose a small task or creative activity and offer it to God. Let it benefit someone else, then thank God for that person's gifts too.

Handout answer notes Paintings invited remembrance of Jesus and prayer. Talent alone is not holiness; love and life with God matter. Accept a specific, generous use of any good gift.

Teach with care

Have crayons or pencils available. Tell children that artistic skill and neatness are not being graded. Speaking, pointing, or describing a picture are equally welcome responses. Use Blessed Fra Angelico as his Church title. He was a Dominican friar and priest; Angelico is a name of honor, not a claim that he was an angel. Sacred images direct our love toward the persons represented; the paint itself is not God.

Words to explain Friar: a member of a religious community such as the Dominicans. Sacred art: art made to help express faith and turn our attention toward God.

Sources for the leader

Art and vocation: John Paul II, Jubilee of Artists homily, 18 February 1984
Gifts in service: 1 Peter 4:10-11