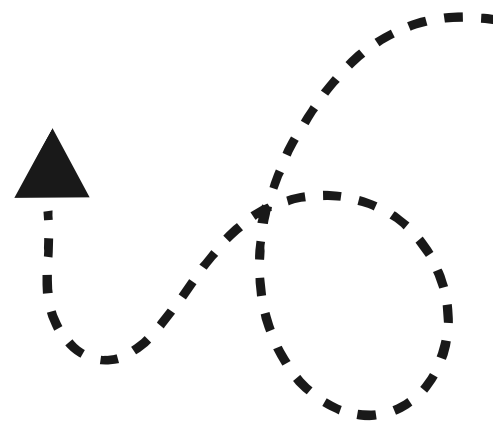


# GUIDELINES FOR FRANCISCAN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS





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## PRESENTATION

1

IDENTITY OF THE CHILD - ADOLESCENT

2

MODELS: FRANCIS AND CLARE

3

HUMAN, CHRISTIAN AND FRANCISCAN GROWTH

4

FORMATIVE JOURNEY

5

TRAVEL COMPANIONS

6

FEASTS OF THE PROMISE OR COMMITMENT - OF  
THE HERE I AM OR FAMILY - OF THANKSGIVING

## PRESENTATION

Hello, I am an animator of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) and/or Franciscan Youth (YouFra) and I would like to share with you a beautiful journey, to learn together to know Jesus even more with the help of St Francis and St Clare.

I invite you to join the group of Franciscan children and adolescents.

In the various countries of the world these groups have many nice names: Little Heralds, NiFra, AdoFra, FraChi.

I'll have another child/adolescent like you explain what it's all about.

Come on, we are waiting for you!



## I. IDENTITY OF THE CHILD-ADOLESCENT

I am a child or adolescent from 5 to 17 years of age .  
I like to be together with others of the same age who, like me, find St Francis of Assisi likeable.  
The group I belong to is sometimes called a fraternity.  
We meet often and the animators of the Secular Franciscan Order / Franciscan Youth, together with the assistants, involve us in many interesting activities where we also learn many things about ourselves, about St Francis and about Jesus. I always go to catechism, but by attending group meetings I can better understand what the catechist has told me: there is always an animator or an assistant to answer my questions!  
Every year I make a commitment to be with the Franciscan children and adolescents group to know more about Jesus, St Francis and St Clare, respect for those around me, for Creation and for all creatures: for me it is a day of feast!



## II. MODELS: FRANCIS AND CLARE

St Francis and St Clare help me to better understand how I can follow Jesus and make him my most important friend. Their life was really great!

St Francis at my age was very lively and loved to have fun, just like me! Then he met Jesus and his life was very adventurous, but in a different way.

St Clare was also very courageous and chose a very different life from the one her parents wanted for her. They both teach me many things, even though they were born many centuries ago.



### III. HUMAN, CHRISTIAN AND FRANCISCAN GROWTH

The group of Franciscan children and adolescents makes me discover many things, even about myself. It helps me to know and manage my emotions; to know how to relate to others, children and adults; to understand the things I am good at (my animators call them "talents"); to be part of a special group that the adults call "fraternity" and much more. I can deepen what I am taught in catechism.

The animators and the assistant make me understand, with the examples of St Francis and St Clare, that it is good to have Jesus for a friend; that Mass and prayers help me to make this friendship stronger and stronger; that even I who am a child/adolescent can be 'the Herald of the great King': to proclaim the Word of God and be a witness to His love. Of course, I have to work hard and it is not always easy, but I have been told that making mistakes or failing is normal: the most important thing is to try again and ask Jesus for help.



#### IV. FORMATIVE JOURNEY

Since we are children and adolescents, when we meet we are divided into groups by age groups: this way we are all happy, no one is in difficulty, and the OFS/YouFra animators can explain things to us in an age-appropriate way. I learn by listening to the animators and the assistant and following their example, but also by playing many different games; singing; doing "recitations" on St Francis and St Clare or other topics and characters we have studied during the fraternal year. Our animators are sometimes a bit crazy, but I also like the Franciscan group for this.

Sometimes, during the year, we children and adolescents are all together and it is a great joy.

They are moments of celebration but also of prayer.

We also have meetings together with all the young people of YouFra and the adults of the OFS, with the assistants: I really like these moments because even though we are the smallest of the big Franciscan Family, they make us feel important.





## V. TRAVEL COMPANIONS

- Family: my parents are happy that I am in the Franciscan group because I am happy and the animators always try to keep them informed. Often mum and dad are involved in our activities, to play a musical instrument or to prepare costumes or sets or set up lights for the plays we do; when we have some special prayer time: the most important being the Feast of Here I Am or the Feast of the Family.
- Animator: it is an adult of the OFS or a young person of YouFra. He/she is the person who follows us, explains things to us, makes us do lots of activities. He/she's always joking but when I have a problem he/she's close to me, helps me and gives me good advice.
- Assistant: it is a friar, a nun or a priest. Together with the animator, he/she explains many things, teaches us how to pray and is always ready to play with us.
- OFS and YouFra Fraternities: these are the groups of adults people and young people who follow Jesus following the example of St Francis of Assisi, to which our animators belong. Don't be afraid: they are all very nice and ready to play, sing and dance.



## VI. FEASTS OF THE PROMISE OR COMMITMENT - OF THE HERE I AM OR FAMILY - OF THANKSGIVING

During the fraternal year we have three special dates.

Shortly after the start, there is the Feast of the Promise or the Feast of Commitment and it is the time when I and the other children and adolescents in the group commit to the Franciscan Way.

In the middle of the year, there is the Feast of the Here I Am or of the Family: I like it a lot because my family and I are the protagonists.

At the end of the year we have the Feast of Thanksgiving, because we are happy to have been together.

