

## Year of St. Francis Suggested Possible Monthly Themes

### Suggested Possible Monthly Themes

#### January : Called to Conversion

**Focus:** Ongoing conversion of life

- Franciscan meaning of *penance*
- Beginning the year with renewed commitment
- Rule of the SFO, Article 7

*Key question:* What is God asking me to change this year?

#### Love in Action:

#### Simplicity of Life

- Choose one area to declutter (closet, pantry, digital life).
- Give away at least one item each week to someone who needs it more.
- Practice a daily moment of gratitude for what you already have.

Reflect: **The Poverty of Christ**

- Sit in silence for a few minutes each day, imagining yourself before the manger.
- Ask God to show you one attachment to release, not out of guilt but out of freedom.
- Offer a simple prayer: *“Lord, make my heart small enough for You to fill.”*

#### February : Gospel Life in the World

**Focus:** Living the Gospel in daily life

Focus: Living the Gospel in daily life — embracing the incarnational spirituality of St. Francis and allowing Gospel values to inform concrete choices.

Incarnational spirituality of St. Francis — finding God in creation, in humble service, and in simple presence with others.

Faith in family, work, and society — integrating prayer and Gospel ethics into relationships, job responsibilities, and civic life.

Rule, Articles 4–5 — grounding our habits and communal commitments in the discipline and mercy that the Rule outlines.

Key question: ***How does the Gospel shape my daily choices — in what specific***

***ways do mercy, humility, gratitude, and justice guide the decisions I make each day?***

**Love in Action:**

**Peace & Reconciliation**

- Reach out to someone you've lost touch with or had tension with.
- Offer one intentional act of peacemaking each week (listening without interrupting, diffusing conflict gently).
- Pray daily for peace in one specific place or relationship.

Reflect: **The Peace of Christ**

- Before speaking each day, pause and breathe a prayer for gentleness.
- Bring one strained relationship into prayer, asking for healing even if reconciliation isn't possible yet.
- Whisper Francis's prayer for peace slowly, letting one line stay with you through the day.

**March: Embracing the Cross with Christ**

**Focus:** Lent and redemptive suffering

Focus: Lent and redemptive suffering — embracing small daily sacrifices that unite our lives to Christ's passion and bring healing to the world

Poverty, humility, and trust — living simply, depending on God, and accepting our limitations as pathways to spiritual freedom

Prayer, fasting, and simplicity — committing to disciplined practices that deepen our relationship with God and free us from distractions

Franciscan understanding of joy amid hardship — finding gentle, Gospel-rooted gladness even in trial, grounded in love for God and neighbor

**Key question: Where is Christ inviting me to deeper trust in this season of conversion and mercy?**

**Love In Action:**

**Care for the Poor**

- Keep a small “Franciscan bag” in your car or backpack (snacks, socks, water) to give to someone in need.
- Volunteer once this month at a shelter, pantry, or charity.
- Skip one meal out and donate the cost.

**Reflect: The Christ Hidden in the Poor**

- Once a week, intentionally look into the eyes of someone who is overlooked—at a store, on the street, in your own home.
- Reflect on the small act of mercy you offered this week; take a moment to remember what you did, and notice how it felt in your heart and in your body.
- Pray: *“Lord, let me recognize You where I least expect You.”*

**April: Resurrection, Joy, and Gratitude**

Focus: Easter spirituality — reflecting on the mystery of resurrection and its call to transform our lives  
Franciscan joy as a sign of resurrection — simple, humble gladness rooted in Christ’s victory over death  
Praise, gratitude, and hope — daily practices that shape our hearts toward God and neighbor  
Canticle of the Creatures — praising God in all creation as an expression of Easter faith

Key question: **How can I witness joy as a risen people in word, action, and presence?**

**Love in Action:**

**Love of Creation**

- Spend 10 minutes outside each day simply observing.
- Pick up litter during one walk each week.
- Plant something—flowers, herbs, a tree—or care for a neglected plant.

**Reflect: Brother Sun, Sister Moon**

- Offer a blessing for the earth when you wake and when you go to sleep.
- Practice gratitude for the elements—sun, water, wind, soil—that sustain your life.

## **May: Franciscan Prayer and Devotion**

**Focus:** Relationship with God

Focus: Relationship with God — Personal and communal prayer; Marian devotion (Our Lady of the Angels); prayer in the Franciscan tradition.

Key question: **How does regular prayer shape and deepen my relationship with God, both personally and within my community, my fraternity?**

**Love in Action:**

### **Humility & Hidden Service**

- Do one act of kindness anonymously each week.
- Choose one household chore you normally avoid and do it cheerfully.
- Practice a “Franciscan silence”: listen more than you speak for one conversation each day.

Reflect: **Hiddenness & Humility**

- Reflect on the act of service you performed each week — how did it make you feel afterward? Consider also the people you served: how do you think those individuals felt about the help they received?
- Pray: *“Lord, make me content to be small.”*

## **June: Fraternity: A Gospel Way of Life**

Focus: Building community — cultivating mutual care, practicing forgiveness, and committing to service; fostering unity amid diversity. Rule, Articles 13–15.

Key question: **How do I actively contribute to the life and health of our fraternity?**

**Love in Action:**

### **Joy & Praise**

- Start each morning with a short prayer or reflection of praise.
- Share encouragement with someone

Reflect: **Joy That Cannot Be Taken**

- Begin each morning by naming one gift God has given you.
- Let yourself smile at something simple every day.

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- Offer a prayer of praise in your own words, even if it feels awkward or childlike.

### **July: Simplicity, Poverty, and Detachment**

Focus: Living simply — embracing both interior and exterior poverty with humility and gratitude.

Stewardship and detachment: responsibly caring for what we have while letting go of excess and attachment.

Franciscan use of material goods: using possessions modestly and purposefully for service and community.

Key question: **What do I truly need, versus what is merely convenient or desired?**

### **Love in Action:**

#### **Hospitality**

- Invite someone for coffee, a walk, or a simple meal.
- Carry small kindness cards or notes to give spontaneously.
- Make a point to greet strangers warmly.

#### **Reflect: Holy Hospitality**

- Meditate on the people whom you meet each week: how hospitable were you toward them, and how might you show greater welcome and kindness in the days ahead?
- Pray: *“Lord, open my heart as You open my door.”*

### **August — Peace, Reconciliation, and Mercy**

Focus: Franciscan peacemaking — being instruments of peace, practicing conflict resolution and offering forgiveness.

Rule, Article 19.

Key question: **How do I intentionally bring peace into my daily relationships and interactions?**

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### **Love in Action:**

#### **Detachment & Trust**

- Fast from one comfort (sweets, social media, unnecessary spending) for a week.
- Practice a daily surrender prayer.
- Give a small donation without calculating or overthinking.

#### Reflect: **Surrender & Trust**

- Choose one fear or worry and place it before God daily.
- Practice a small fast—not to prove anything, but to remember Who sustains you.
- Pray: *“Lord, I give You what I cling to.”*

### **September — Care for Creation**

Focus: Franciscan ecology — Creation as a precious gift and a shared responsibility rooted in care and respect. *Laudato Si’* and the Franciscan tradition guide our understanding, showing how St. Francis’ love for all creatures and the natural world informs contemporary ecological teaching. As we prepare for the Feast of St. Francis (Oct. 4), we reflect on practices and attitudes that encourage reverence, simplicity, and solidarity with creation.

Key question: **How do I live an ongoing ecological conversion in daily choices, prayer, and community action?**

### **Love in Action:**

#### **Compassion for the Suffering**

- Visit someone who is sick, elderly, or lonely.
- Write letters to people in hospitals, nursing homes, or prisons.

#### Reflect: **Compassion for the Wounded Christ**

- Hold in prayer those who suffer silently—by name if you can.
- Offer a gentle word or gesture to someone who seems burdened.

## **October — Walking in the Footsteps of St. Francis**

Focus: Franciscan identity — exploring who we are in light of Franciscan heritage and witness

Life and charism of St. Francis — the spirit, humility, and joyful service that shaped his life and continues to inspire us

Living the Rule faithfully — observing our commitments with sincerity, prayer, and communal support

Profession and vocation — the ongoing call to commit ourselves publicly and to discern how we serve God and others

Key question: **How am I living as a Franciscan today, in attitude, action, and relationship?**

**Love in Action:**

### **Evangelical Simplicity**

- Share your faith gently through action: kindness, patience, generosity.
- Read a short passage from the life of St. Francis each week.
- Choose one habit to simplify further (food, schedule, possessions).

Reflect: **Gospel Simplicity**

- Reflect on how you spend your time, energy, and attention.
- Pray: *“Lord, let my life speak Your Gospel without noise.”*

## **November — Hope, Saints, and Eternal Life**

Focus: Communion of saints, especially Franciscan saints and blessed; Christian hope and remembrance; Death as sister.

Key question: **How does the promise of eternal life shape and guide my daily choices and present way of living?**

**Love in Action:**

### **Gratitude & Generosity**

- Keep a daily gratitude list.
- Donate food or time to a Thanksgiving outreach.

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- Give thanks intentionally to people who serve you (cashiers, janitors, delivery workers).

### Reflect: **Gratitude as a Way of Seeing**

- End each day by recalling three moments of grace, no matter how small.
- Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the people who have shaped your faith.

### **December : Incarnation and Humility**

Focus: Advent and Christmas spirituality — the call to quiet waiting and joyful preparation.

Poverty of the Incarnation — God’s self-emptying in humble simplicity.

God made small and near — Emmanuel who draws close to the lowly and the little.

Greccio and Franciscan Christmas — a lived reminder of crib-side wonder and radical proximity.

Key question: **Where, in my life and community, do I encounter God’s humility and closeness?**

### **Love in Action:**

#### **Incarnational Love**

- Perform one “hidden gift” each week—helping someone without them knowing.
- Support a family or child in need during Christmas.
- Spend time in quiet prayer reflecting on Christ’s *humility* in the manger.

### Reflect:**The Humility of the Incarnation**

- Spend time in silence before a nativity scene or image of the Christ Child.
- Pray: *“Lord, be born in the quiet places of my heart.”*