



Grades 6-8 Resource Guide

WHO IS POPE FRANCIS?

Who is Pope Francis?

Basic chronology of his life:

Dec. 17, 1936	Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina
1950's	Studied at University of Buenos Aires to be a chemist
1957	Became very ill with pneumonia and had part of his lung removed
1958	Entered the novitiate for the Jesuits and began to study for the priesthood
1960's	Studied humanities, philosophy, and theology while also teaching high school students
Dec. 13, 1969	Ordained as a priest
1970's	Served in a number of leadership roles for the Jesuits in Argentina
1980's	Continued to serve in leadership roles while also completing his doctoral thesis
1992	Consecrated as an auxiliary bishop in Buenos Aires
1998	Named Archbishop Buenos Aires
2001	Elevated to the level of cardinal
March 13, 2013	Elected as the 266th pope and chooses the name Pope Francis, first Pope from the Americas

Suggested Activities:

- Make a visual, illustrative timeline of the key dates in Francis's life
- Make a list to show papal succession from Peter to Pope Francis
- Use the Busted Halo video on Pope Francis at: <http://bustedhalo.com/video/you-dont-know-jack-about-pope-francis> for a class activity. Prior to watching the video with your class ask the questions that Fr. Jack asks on the street. Then watch and discuss the video with your class. Make a chart to show the different offices and functions of the papacy and the Roman Curia
- Role play some of the events of the Pope's life;

- a. Research a given era to enhance dialogue and characterization
- b. Work in groups to script given event in Francis's early life
- c. Share scripts to ensure continuity
- d. Combine scripts to make a cohesive story line
- e. Role play the completed script, sequentially

Why did Cardinal Bergoglio choose the name Francis of Assisi? What is the significance?

Pope Francis himself said the following to reporters about why he chose the name Francis:

"I will tell you the story. During the election, I was seated next to the Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo and Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal Cláudio Hummes—a good friend, a good friend! When things were looking dangerous, he encouraged me. And when the votes reached two-thirds, there was the usual applause, because the Pope had been elected. And he gave me a hug and a kiss, and said, "Don't forget the poor!" And those words came to me: the poor, the poor. Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of Francis of Assisi."

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/inaugurating-pope-francis#ixzz2OChikZz0>

The change in name indicates a change in identity. He is no longer Jorge Bergoglio, but Pope Francis, the successor of St. Peter. He continues the same mission the Lord entrusted to Peter. Cardinal Bergoglio chose the name Francis to honor St. Francis of Assisi's great concern and care for the poor.

Suggested Activities:

- Research St. Francis and identify the reasons why Cardinal Bergoglio would want to honor him.
- Students preparing for Confirmation may relate the selection of new name for Pope with the selection of a new name for Confirmation.
- "What's in a Name?": Create a decorative plaque of one's given name(s) (first and/or middle name). Interview parents to discover why the name was chosen. Suggested interview questions:
 - a. Was I named for a specific person?
 - b. Does my name have a meaning in a certain culture?
 - c. Is my name a combination of two or more names?
 - d. Was I named for a place or thing?

Edit the narrative to fit an index card (sized to fit a plaque) and place it beneath the decorated name.

- Imagine a meeting between St. Peter and Pope Francis. Write a short story or a scene of a play about what they might discuss.

Where does Pope Francis live?

As the Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis lives in Vatican City. Breaking the tradition of the past 100 years, Pope Francis has chosen to live in the papal guest house rather than the Apostolic Palace.

Vatican City is actually a country with diplomatic ties to other countries. Even though it is an independent country, it is surrounded by the city of Rome.

Related Enrichment Resources:

- Pope Francis's life:
<http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/francis/index.cfm>
<http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/biography/documents/papa-francesco-biografia-bergoglio.html>
- News on the Pope:
<http://www.news.va/en>
- Vatican City
<http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en.html>