


## Child Apostles.

*St. Francis de Sales—St. Jane Frances de Chantal.*



As soon as St. Francis de Sales could speak, his pious mother taught him the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, and then the words of the Sign of the Cross. Afterward, co-operating with the Abbé Deage, the first preceptor of St. Francis, she taught him the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, and the Apostles' *Creed*. The child loved to repeat these beautiful prayers and, eager for instruction in the things of God, he begged to be taught something else.

He began the Catechism, and great was his joy at receiving these new lessons. He listened with rapt attention to those that instructed him, at times asking questions about the mysteries which filled them with admiration. As soon as his own lesson was over, he used to go, bell in hand, to gather the children of the neighborhood. Then, ranging them around him, he repeated the answers of the catechism, a few phrases at a time, and made his little audience say them after him, until every one knew them perfectly.

Sometimes, Francis' zeal rose higher, and he was seen to attack the Calvinists without a shadow of human respect. He quoted the words of the Catechism with wonderful appropriateness in his endeavors to convince them of their errors. To prevent these, sometimes indiscret attacks, it was found necessary at times to shut him up in his room when some of these secretaries visited the château.

The amusements of children of his age had small attraction for him. His whole diversion was in erecting little chapels in the house, and there reciting on his knees several times in the day all the prayers that he had been taught. If, in obedience to his parents, he lent himself to the games of the children whom they had selected as companions for him, as soon as they were over, he would conduct them to his little chapels to recite some prayers, or he would take them to the parish church, and range them around the baptismal font. Then he would address them :

—“ My friends,” he would say. “ behold the one spot in all the world that ought to be the dearest to us, because here it was that we were made the children of God. Let us chant all together the *Gloria Patri*.”