

- Choose an adult your child knows (a relative or a family friend) and talk about what gifts that person brings to others. (For example, a person in the medical field might be caring, good at science, a fast thinker, strong, and cheerful.)



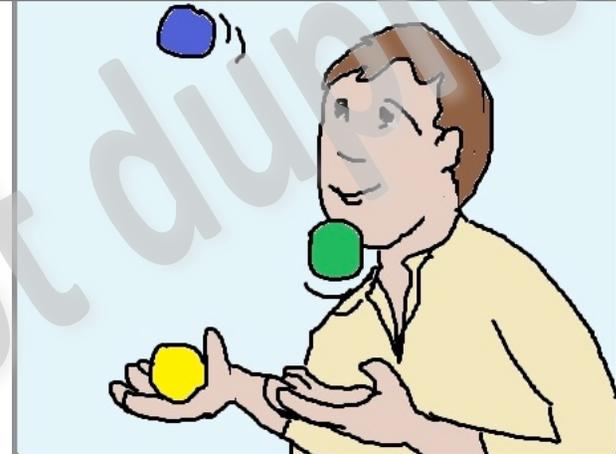
- Ask your child how God might be calling him/her as Saint John felt called. Name several ways you feel your child's talents could be used to help others.

Prayer:

Dear Saint John Bosco, please show us how we too can use our gifts to do God's work. Amen.

Help My Child Learn to

Know the Saints



Saint John Bosco
of Italy

Feast Day: January 31

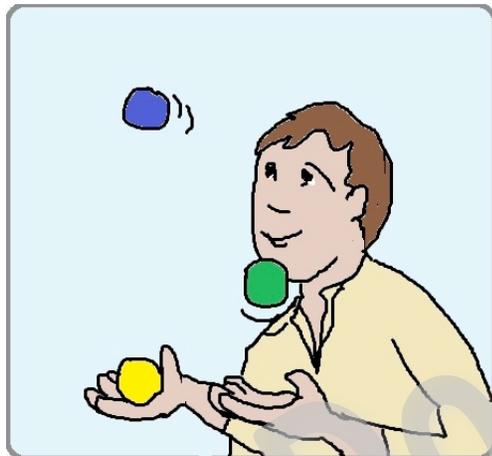
by Anne Neuberger

The Communion of Saints is our connection with those who have lived before us. We are never alone as we strive to live as Jesus did. We are "in communion" with hundreds of saints whose stories counsel, delight, challenge and comfort us.

Hand on this legacy by sharing with your child the story of Saint John Bosco (1815-1888 CE), whose good humor and great energy touched the lives of many in Italy during the Industrial Revolution.

My name is Margaret Bosco but many children called me Mama Margaret. Let me introduce you to my son John.

We were very poor. But John had many gifts and God had big plans for him. That little boy never stopped moving and learning! He taught himself to do magic tricks, juggling, gymnastics and tight rope walking! Oh the bumps and bruises that child had! He learned everything quickly. Once he heard an hour-long homily and repeated it to me! Of course sometimes, John's energy got him into trouble and he'd feel badly when he angered someone. Mostly, though, he was cheerful, loving and hard working. What an amazing kid!



When he grew up, he wanted to become a priest, so wearing a hand-me-down suit, he went off to study for the priesthood. To pay for school, he made candy, fixed shoes, managed a restaurant and put on a one-man circus.

In the city there were many children that had left their country homes in hopes of jobs in factories. Some got jobs doing dangerous, exhausting work. Others slept on the streets, cold, scared and hungry. John's heart ached for them. He came to understand that God was asking him to help them find safety, food, and education. And, to show them God's great love.

First, John needed to meet these kids. He did his one-man circus act, and they came running! He brought a picnic, then joked, sang and prayed with them. Soon he found good buildings to shelter them. More and more came and John asked for my help. While I cooked and gardened, John taught religion, reading, math, geography, and drawing. He played ball games, gave haircuts, encouraged children to think deeply and speak intelligently. He wrote books to support us. And he prayed with and for the children.



John used all his gifts of energy, intelligence and cheerfulness to help hundreds of children grow up healthy and safe, and knowing that our loving God is always with them.

Talking together:

- Our Church teaches that all people deserve to have their basic needs met. Explain that basic needs are food, water, shelter, education, and so forth. How did Saint John help the children get what they needed?
- Like Saint John Bosco, we all have gifts, or talents, from God. Talk with your child about what talents you see in him/her. Which does your child see in you?