THE STORY OF DON BOSCO (REMEMBERED ON 31 JANUARY, DIED IN 1888)

ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE STORY

The story of Don Bosco was developed on the initiative of the Don Bosco team of Flanders (North Belgium), based on the Godly Play methodology and Jerome Berryman's stories about the saints (The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 7).

The story was developed by a workgroup of five Godly Play storytellers of the Don Bosco movement (Salesian Eric Haelvoet, sister Hilde Huysentruyt, Maaike Van Grootel, Maarten Van Eeckhout and Gee Van den Berghe).

It was tested and adjusted by two test groups of adults. For the test, we deliberately chose a diverse group of people: people familiar and unfamiliar with Godly Play, Don Bosco supporters and critics, men and women, young and old, people from the educational system, the sectors of youth work and social care. We also received feedback from the Salesian Provincial Council, the Formation & Animation Team of Don Bosco and the group of monitors of the Don Bosco playground in Genk.

Additionally, it was tested with groups of children between 6 and 12 years old in a variety of places: on the Don Bosco playground in Genk, in the Don Bosco primary school in Wijnegem, the Don Bosco boarding school in Kortrijk and day centre De Stuw in Heist op den Berg.

The woodwork students of Don Bosco Helchteren made the wooden figures and the little house (oratory) and Jos Hannes made the bars. Kürt Maes drew the figures and Annabel De Croo did the graphic design of the little book.

We would like to thank Marc Rummens, Hilde Pex and Katie Velghe for reading and editing our story. Thanks also to Hannelore De Groot (Belgium) and Sue Mc Donald (England) for the translation and Paddy Hennesy (Ireland) for the last correction of the translation.

THE MATERIAL

PLACE:	The Pentecost cabinet, on the shelves where the other saints are.
PIECES:	The little book of Don Bosco, a wooden figure of Don Bosco, a small basket with a piece of red rope, a wooden figure of the wolf/lamb, a wooden figure of Mary, a small study book, bars, four wooden blocks and a roof that form a house together (the oratory), an old photo of Don Bosco, the Salesian shield and a globe.
UNDERLAY:	Green felt underlay
EXTRA	We noticed during the tests that children spontaneously wanted to write something in the little book of Don Bosco. It is a good idea to provide a nice notebook in which the children can write something to Don Bosco during their processing time. You can also provide the comic book about Don Bosco and the children's books 'Loop naar de pomp!' and 'Don Bosco mijn vriend'. Some children were curious to know if something was written in the study book. That's why we looked for a piece of text in Don Bosco's handwriting. It comes from one of his Rome letters, written on 10 May 1884. The text *'Vostro aff° (affezionatissimo)amico in J.C. (Gezù Cristo), Sac. (sacerdote) Gio (Giovanni) Bosco'* means *'Your very dear friend in Jesus Christ, priest Giovanni Bosco'*.

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
Take the figure of Don Bosco from the communion of saints as well as the small basket with the story.	Watch carefully from where I'm going to get today's story.
Take the green underlay and lay it open in front of you. Take the figure of Don Bosco in your hands and look at it.	This is the story of Don Bosco.
Point at the green pedestal saying, "during the green time of the year".	The Church remembers him during the green/Ordinary time of the year.
Put Don Bosco right in front of you on the underlay, this way, it seems as if you and Don Bosco tell the story together.	I wonder why we remember Don Bosco. Let's have a look.
Take the little book of Don Bosco and put it down in the middle of the underlay in front of the figure of Don Bosco.	Giovanni Bosco was born in a poor farming family, on a small hill in the North of Italy. He was the youngest of 3 children. His father died before he was 2 years old. That was a big loss for the young family. His mother was left alone. She made sure there was food. That was not easy. They were poor, yet their door was always open for people who were hungry. His mother also made sure Giovanni and his brothers still had an enjoyable childhood.
Curiously take the red rope and move it playfully over the underlay. Play with it as if you are a magician or acrobat.	Giovanni was a playful and studious boy. He liked watching the tricks of the magicians and acrobats at the market place.
Then hold the rope tightly between both hands and show with your body how to look straight ahead as a tightrope walker to find your balance.	He paid close attention and one day he himself was walking on a rope for his friends. Which wasn't easy because you have to look straight ahead and find your balance.
Then put the rope loosely on the green underlay as you say:	Later on, Giovanni would have to do that a lot: looking straight ahead and finding balance.
Show your fists and hold out your fists at "harsh words".	When he was nine years old, Giovanni had a special dream. He dreamt his friends were fighting and cursing. He tried to silence them with his fists and harsh words. Suddenly the fighting children turned into wolves and

Place the wolf on your right next to the little book on the underlay. Then put Mary next to the wolf. *Point to Mary for a little while and then take the wolf and turn him gently around saying "she showed him how to turn the wolves into lambs".* *Show your fists again and then gently stroke the lamb's back.* *Bring your hands together like a bowl to cherish the dream. Then gently bring your hands towards your heart.*	Mary appeared in his dream. She showed young Giovanni how to turn the wolves into lambs. Not with fists but with gentleness. Giovanni didn't quite understand the dream, but he didn't forget it. He kept the dream as a precious gift in his heart.
Leave enough silence and calmly place the study book on the underlay and then continue the story.	Giovanni wanted to become a priest. His mother was happy and helped him, but his eldest brother was angry. What about all the work in the fields? Giovanni had to go far away to study to become a priest. He also had to work to pay for his studies and accommodation. Yet he didn't forget his family and friends. He helped them wherever he could.
Stress "Don". *Place the prison bars firmly on the underlay.*	Giovanni's dream came true. He became a priest. From that day on, they called him Don Bosco. As a priest he left for the big city of Turin. There he saw a lot of boys on the street, boys who were left to their own devices. A number of them even were in prison. They had no one who loved them and believed in them. That made Don Bosco sad. He decided he wanted to give his life to help these boys.
Place a first block of the house in the middle of the underlay saying "a place where they could really be at home", a second one at "room to play...", a third one at "where they could learn a profession" and a fourth one at "where they could pray...". Put the four blocks together so that they form a solid base for the house.	The boys missed a lot: a place where they could really be at home, a place to play, a place where they could learn a profession and a place where they could pray and meet God, their Father who did believe in them.

Lean back for a moment, *calmly look at the base, leave some silence and then say:* *Put the roof on the four blocks ~~when~~ as you say "he started an oratory".* *Point at each pillar every time you redefine it.*	Don Bosco missed having a father himself as he grew up. Now he wanted to be like a father to these boys. To make sure they would no longer roam the streets, he started an oratory. Don Bosco's oratory was a place where the boys could really be at home, where they could play to their heart's content, where they could learn a profession and where they could pray and meet God, the Father who did believe in them.
Point at the oratory saying "the eldest boys of the oratorio". *Point at Mary of the dream.* *You can hold one of your hands close to the figure of Don Bosco when you tell about God who is coming closer. You can also make a movement with both hands, one representing the movement from God to Don Bosco and the other from Don Bosco to God. Take the photo of Don Bosco while saying "God wanted him to be close to the boys" and then put it down.* *Leave a moment of silence.* *Show the crest of the Salesians and put it on the underlay.*	It started with a few boys and many would follow. Don Bosco and soon realised he needed helpers. He was helped by his mother, the eldest boys of the oratory and many others. Mary also continued to show him the way. God came so close to Don Bosco and Don Bosco came so close to God, that he knew what God wanted. God wanted him to be close to the boys. He told his helpers: "Make sure they love you". Don Bosco knew that one day he wouldn't be around anymore. He therefore created a group that could continue his work. He called them the Salesians of Don Bosco and this is their crest. The work of the Salesians began with boys, but he wanted to do the same for girls. That's why he founded 'the Salesian Sisters' together with Maria Mazzarello.
Take the globe and show it while saying that "Don Bosco became known outside of Italy and even outside of Europe..." and then put it on the underlay.	The work of Don Bosco continued to grow, just like the number of Salesians, sisters and helpers. Don Bosco soon became known outside of Turin, but also outside of Italy, and even outside of Europe, all over the world.

Wait a moment, leave silence and then respectfully and serenely say:	He died at the age of 72, tired and worn out from the hard work. But his dream continued to live and even today it is still alive.
Before you start asking the deeper questions, you share why we want to remember Don Bosco.	We remember Don Bosco because he loved the street boys as God wished.
Lead the amazement about Don Bosco's life by using the following questions:	I wonder … …what part of the story you liked the best. …what part of the story is the most important. …what part of the story is about you. Or where you could be in this story. …if there is a part of the story we could leave out and still have all of the story?
Show the children the little book. Show where Don Bosco lived on the map. Show the flag of the country… *Show the story so that the children get to know Don Bosco better.*	Now let me show you what is written in this little book and how you can use it to find out more about Don Bosco.
Show the children how the material fits back in the small basket and put the small basket back in its place together with the figure of Don Bosco.	Now let me show you how you can put this story away again. This is the globe that reminds us of the work of Don Bosco in the whole world. This is the crest. It reminds us of the Salesians, the Salesian Sisters and many others who continue his work. This is an old photo of Don Bosco among his boys. It reminds us of Don Bosco who really wanted to help them. This is the house that reminds us of the oratory that Don Bosco started. These are the prison bars that remind us of the many poor street boys he met. This is the little book that reminds us of how hard Don Bosco studied and worked, far from home, to become a priest.

Here you can also ask the question to the children (what does this underlay remind you of?) and let them formulate the answer themselves.	This is the wolf and here is Mary. They remind us of the special dream he had as a child. This is the rope that reminds us of the playful and tightrope-walking Don Bosco. This is the little book that helps us learn more about Don Bosco. Here is the green underlay because we remember Don Bosco during the green Sundays of the year. The green looks a little like grass, don't you think? Playing and fooling around was very important to Don Bosco.
Return to your spot in the circle and let the children go to work.	Now how would you like to respond and work on our story today? what would you like to make your work today?