Welcome back, families! We will focus the next two weeks on our God-given talents and the role they play in our “going forth.” Add the following passage from Psalm 34 to your family prayers this week:

*I will bless the LORD at all times;*
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
*My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;*
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.
*Oh, magnify the LORD with me,*
And let us exalt His name together.
*I sought the LORD, and He heard me,*
And delivered me from all my fears.
*They looked to Him and were radiant,*
And their faces were not ashamed.
*This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him,*
And saved him out of all his troubles.
*The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,*
And delivers them.
*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;*
*Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*

-Psalm 34:1-8

As a family, go over the following scriptural passage and discuss the questions that follow (if you have younger children, please paraphrase for their understanding):

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the
Cosmas and Damian were brothers born in Rome. They were raised in a pious family and led lives centered on Christ. They were physicians by their training and, because of their faith, God granted them the gift of healing the sick. The brothers converted many to Christ through their kindness and generosity. The brothers told the sick, “It is not by our own power that we treat you, but by the power of Christ, the true God. Believe in Him and be healed.” Since they accepted no payment for their treatment, the holy brothers were called “unmercenary physicians.”

The Roman authorities did not like the spiritual influence the brothers were having on the people they treated so they were arrested. At their trial, they actively professed their faith in Christ by saying, “We have done evil to no one, we are not involved with the magic or sorcery of which you accuse us. We treat the infirm by the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and we take no payment for rendering aid to the sick, because our Lord commanded His disciples, ‘Freely have you received, freely give’” (Matthew 10: 8).

The emperor, Carinus, however, continued with his demands. Through the prayer of the holy brothers, imbued with the power of grace, God suddenly struck Carinus blind, so that he too might experience the almighty power of the Lord. The people, beholding the miracle, cried out, “Great is the Christian God! There is no other God but Him!” Many of those who believed besought the holy brothers to heal the emperor, and he himself implored the saints, promising to convert to the true God, Christ the Savior, and so the saints healed him. After this, Saints Cosmas and Damian were honorably set free, and once again they set about treating the sick.
This summer we are encouraging you and your family to create an Apostles Log journal as you Soak Up the SON. Each family and person will do this differently. You can choose one or any number of ways: write, use pictures (your own or from elsewhere), or make videos, for example. Your family can choose to have one journal everyone contributes to or have personal ones. Some families might put up poster boards on a wall and make this their journal. The sky is the limit—be resourceful and do whatever works for your family!

Journaling is a great way to inspire our creative processes, and the Apostles Log will be dedicated to how we’re “going forth” as witnesses of Christ in the world. If you choose to do individual journals—sharing can be encouraged but not mandatory. Respect family members that wish to keep some or all of their entries private. Participation is the most important thing. And whether you decide to log daily, semi-weekly, or weekly, just try to stay consistent.

Week One Journal Entry: As apostles sent out to the world, what things would need to be packed to aid? These can be physical items as well as virtues and other unseen qualities. Take pictures, and don’t forget to share with us!

#soakuptheSON

For this is the safest way to protect the good things you enjoy: Realize how much your Creator has honored you above all other creatures. He did not make the heavens in His image, nor the moon, the sun, the beauty of the stars or anything else which surpasses understanding. You alone are a reflection of eternal beauty, a receptacle of happiness, an image of the true light. And, if you look to Him, you will become what He is, imitating Him who shines within you, whose glory is reflected in your purity. Nothing in the entire creation can equal your grandeur. All the heavens can fit into the palm of God’s hand; the earth and the sea are measured in the hollow of His hand (Is.40:12). Although He is so great that He can hold all creation in His palm, you can wholly embrace Him. He dwells in you.

VITAMIN D: St. Theophan the Recluse

No one who has received life from the Lord can say that he does not have a single talent—everyone has something, and not just one thing; everyone, therefore, has something with which to trade and make a profit. Do not look around and calculate what others have received, but take a good look at yourself and determine more precisely what lies in you and what you can gain for that which you have, and then act according to this plan without laziness.