

Saint John Neumann

The Saint Who Made Room for Everyone

Ages about 7-11 | Video 5:59 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth John's plans changed, but he kept seeking a way to serve. He learned people's languages and worked with others so families could grow in faith.

Learning goals Children will retell three steps in John's journey, explain why learning languages was an act of care, and plan a thoughtful welcome.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online [Open this video on Servus Dei](#)

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask: What can help when a good plan does not work out as expected? Introduce John and watch for both the choices he makes and the people he wants to serve.

Watch and notice

Watch the journey from his blocked ordination plans to ministry in America and parish schools. Notice the muddy roads and his efforts to speak with different families.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. Why could John not be ordained in his home diocese?

The story explains that there were already many priests there. This disappointment did not mean he was worthless or that his wish to serve was wrong.

2. What did he do when priests were needed in America?

He crossed the ocean, was ordained in New York, and traveled to serve scattered communities. His path changed, but his desire to serve continued.

3. Why did he learn the languages of the people he served?

He wanted to understand them and help them hear the faith. He made an effort himself rather than expecting everyone else to do all the work.

4. Could one bishop build a school community alone?

No. Priests, sisters, brothers, families, and other helpers shared the work. Good schools needed people as well as buildings.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

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Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Use three journey panels to show a changed plan, care for families, and a school community. Children may point and retell while an adult draws or labels.

Read & Write Children put three journey events in order, explain the purpose of learning languages, and choose a welcoming action that starts with listening.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: retell the journey together using first, next, and later. Offer simple symbols such as a boat, road, and school.

Ages 9-11: ask how listening differs from assuming what someone needs. Discuss why perseverance can include changing a plan.

A welcome that listens | Optional 4 minutes

Imagine a new child is unsure how a classroom activity works. Pairs choose a kind question, a demonstration, and a way to check understanding. Invite pointing or pictures; do not pretend to imitate an unfamiliar language.

Look for understanding Look for the correct journey order and the link between language learning and care. Welcome should include listening to the other person's wishes.

Closing prayer God, guide us when plans change. Help us listen, keep learning, and make room for others. Saint John Neumann, pray for us. Amen.

At home Ask a family member about a time they learned something to help another person. Share one way you can make a new person feel welcome.

Handout answer notes Journey order as printed: 3, 1, 2. Learning languages helped John understand families and share faith. Accept a respectful question, demonstration, or offer of help.

Teach with care

Have three places ready to name: Bohemia, New York, and Philadelphia. Bohemia is a historical region in today's Czech Republic; no map knowledge is assumed. Changing plans does not guarantee an easy or successful next step. Encourage prayer, advice, and patient effort. Children need not share migration experiences. This is John Neumann, Bishop of Philadelphia, not John Henry Newman.

Words to explain Immigrant: someone who moves to live in another country. Parish: a local Catholic community. Redemptorists: a religious congregation serving especially people who are poor or neglected.

Sources for the leader

Life and mission: [National Shrine of Saint John Neumann](#)

Welcoming one another: [Romans 15:7](#)

Three steps in a life of service

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Tell John's journey with pictures or spoken words.

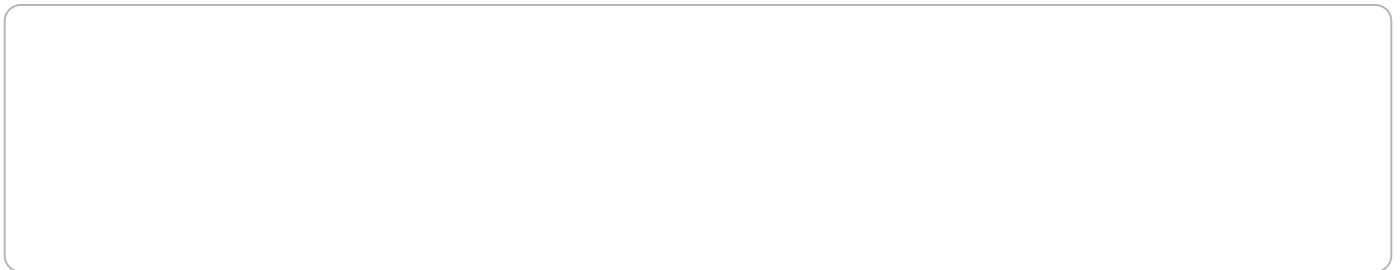
Name _____

Adult helper Read aloud. Invite drawing, pointing, or spoken answers. Writing is optional.

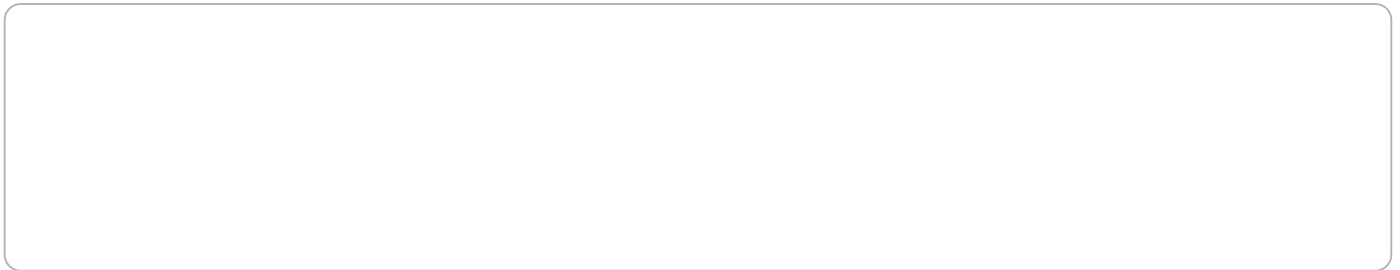
1 FIRST: His plan at home changes.



2 NEXT: He serves families in America.



3 LATER: He helps school communities grow.



Tell Where do you see John learning so he can help someone?

Pray God, guide my steps and help me listen. Amen.

At home Share your picture and one thing you learned about God or following Jesus.

A new path to serving

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Think about John's journey and the people he welcomed.

Name _____

1 Put the journey in order

Write 1, 2, and 3 beside the events.

☐

John helps parish schools grow in Philadelphia.

☐

John cannot be ordained in his home diocese.

☐

John becomes a priest in New York and serves families.

2 Explain a choice

Why was learning people's languages a way of caring?

John made an effort to ...

3 Welcome thoughtfully

A newcomer is unsure what to do. How could you help without deciding everything for them?

I could ask ...

Pray God, guide my steps and help me listen. Amen.

Go deeper When can changing a plan be a way of continuing toward a good purpose?