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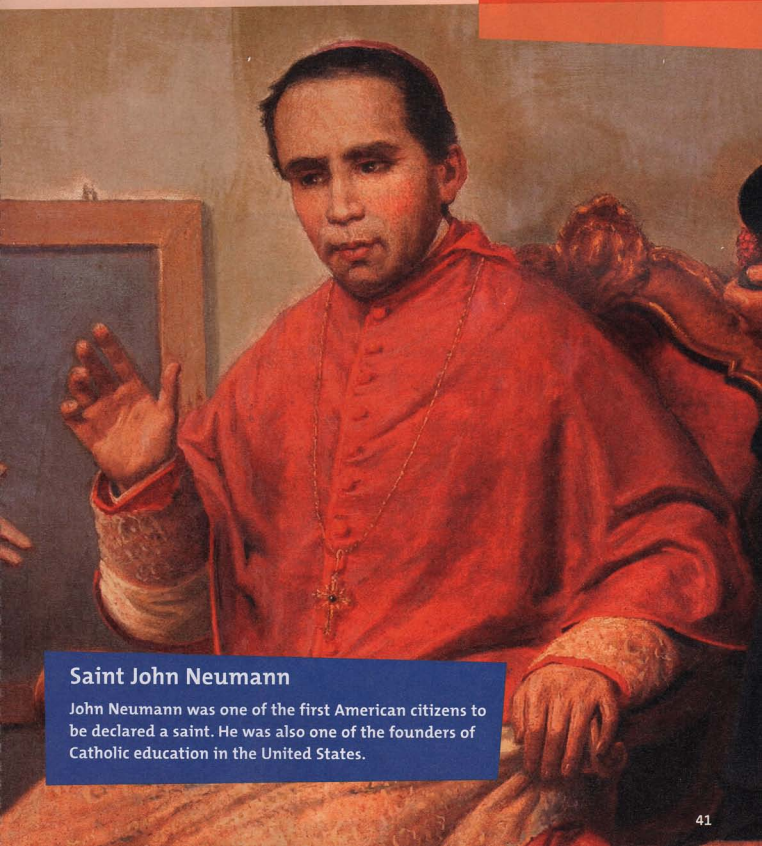
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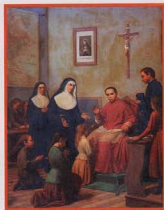
Son of God, Son of Mary

Unit 2



Saint John Neumann

John Neumann was one of the first American citizens to be declared a saint. He was also one of the founders of Catholic education in the United States.



Saint John Neumann, Gagliardi

Saint John Neumann

John Neumann was one of the most influential bishops in the United States. He was one of the first American citizens to be declared a saint by the Catholic Church.

John was born in 1811 in Bohemia, which is now part of the Czech Republic. Although he studied for the priesthood in Bohemia, he was ordained in New York City. Soon after his ordination, John was sent to the northern part of New York State, near the city of Buffalo.

The people in that part of the state were immigrants from Germany, Ireland, France, and Scotland. Father John knew eight languages, so he was able to communicate with his new parishioners. Over the years, he served the

people of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. In 1852, in recognition of the wonderful work he had done, Father John was appointed bishop of Philadelphia. While bishop, he established schools, wrote books of religious instruction and

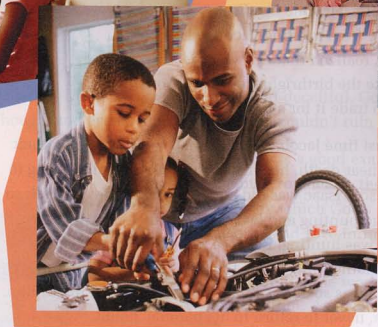
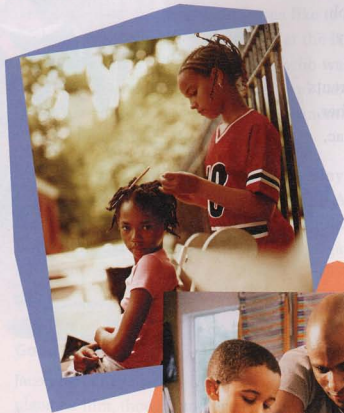
newspaper articles, and strongly encouraged devotion to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

After being bishop of Philadelphia for only eight years, John Neumann died suddenly while leisurely walking along a city street. The Catholics of Philadelphia mourned the loss of their spiritual leader. The Church honors him on January 5.



God Is Faithful

Session 6



God works through people to bring about good in the world. Think of a way that God works through someone you know to bring good into the world. Share your thoughts with the group.



PRAYER

Loving God, help me to see your presence in all of the ordinary events in my life.

Jacob Deceives His Brother

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, and they competed with each other from the day they were born. Esau was born first, and Jacob was born holding onto Esau's foot! They were completely different in looks and personality, and unfortunately their parents each favored a different son. Their mother, Rebecca, favored Jacob; their father, Isaac, favored Esau. This probably heightened the brothers' competitiveness.

Esau was to receive the birthright—a special right passed from the father to his firstborn son—but Jacob wanted the birthright for himself. One day Esau came home hungry from hunting. Jacob, who had been cooking, realized that this was his opportunity to take the birthright from Esau, so he convinced Esau to trade it for a bowl of stew!

That wasn't the last time Jacob took advantage of Esau. When their father, Isaac, was near death, he wished to give his final blessing to Esau, his favorite son. Isaac was old and could not see very well, so he asked Esau to go hunting and bring back some food for his favorite meal. While Esau was hunting, Rebecca helped Jacob pretend to be Esau and trick his father into giving the blessing to him instead. When Esau found out, he was so angry at Jacob that he wanted to kill him. Jacob had to leave, never to return to his parents' home.

based on *Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45*



Link to Liturgy

During Mass, before we receive Holy Communion, we pray, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." With these words, we are asking for God's help and forgiveness.

Jacob Is Tricked

Shortly after leaving home, Jacob met Rachel, and he agreed to work for her father, Laban, for seven years to win permission to marry her. This time Jacob learned what it was like to be on the receiving end of trickery. Laban switched daughters at the last minute, and Jacob married Rachel's older sister, Leah, who was heavily veiled, instead. Jacob still wanted to marry Rachel, and Laban let him, but Jacob had to work an additional seven years as payment. (In that time and culture, a man often had more than one wife.)

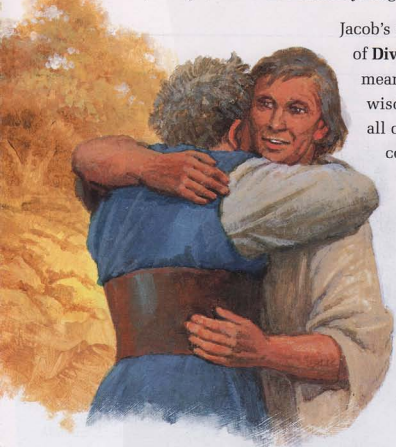
God made sure that Jacob found his destiny. He spoke to Jacob and reestablished the promise he had made to Abraham and Isaac. Then he gave Jacob a new name: Israel. After that, Jacob was able to face the brother he had tricked years ago. Esau forgave Jacob, and finally their competition ended.

based on Genesis 29:15-30

Good Results From a Loving God

Jacob certainly had his flaws: he was ambitious and deceitful. God had plans for him, though, and even a misled young man couldn't ruin them.

Jacob's story is a good example of **Divine Providence**, the means by which God's wisdom and love influence all creatures to help in continuing the work of creation. As Jacob's story shows, God was able to bring about good results from bad choices. Both Jacob and his grandfather Abraham fulfilled their destinies, and their faith and character grew in the process.



Remember That God Remembers You

Although God can take our sins and mistakes and bring about good results, some people think that they can count on God to get them out of trouble when they deliberately do something wrong. Such an attitude doesn't come from real faith—it comes from disrespect for God's love and patience. It is never acceptable to do a bad thing in the hope of bringing about something good.

Accepting Consequences

Think back through Jacob's story and list the ways in which he had to suffer the consequences of his actions.

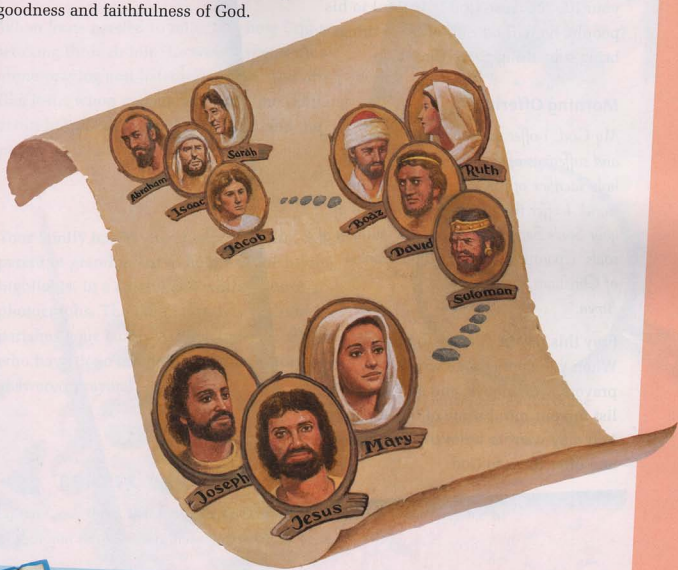
Sometimes, when we have acted in ways that have hurt friends or family members, being sorry and saying so don't seem to be enough. We need to show that we are sorry. Think of a few things you could do other than say, "I'm sorry," and write them below.



Jesus, Descendant of Jacob

Jesus descended from a long line of men and women, including Jacob and King David. Jesus' ancestors were people who made mistakes and learned from them, just as we do.

Through the example of Jesus and his ancestors we can see that our choices and actions are part of God's plan. We all face difficult choices in life, and sometimes the choices we make hurt other people. Although we may not always understand God's plan, Jesus teaches us to trust the goodness and faithfulness of God.



Reading God's Word

And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

Matthew 22:31-32



PRAYER

God can bring about good results from our sins and mistakes, as he did with Jacob. With this prayer you can offer God every part of your life. Because God is faithful to his people, he will take all of these things and bring something good from them.

Morning Offering

*My God, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Son's Sacred Heart, for the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of Christians.
Amen.*

Pray this prayer silently to yourself. When you come to the words “my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings,” list in your mind some of those things. You may want to write them on paper and offer them to God.

Faith Summary

Jacob trusted in God. Divine Providence can bring about good results from bad choices and situations.

Word I Learned

Divine Providence

Ways of Being Like Jesus

When Jesus needed to reflect on how God was working through him, he would spend time alone praying and listening to God. You are like Jesus when you spend quiet time thinking about how God works through you and the people you know.

With My Family

Your family has its own history of faith. Ask a parent or grandparent to help you record the highlights, in a small book, with pictures and photographs. The highlights may include parishes your family has belonged to, relatives who have done religious work, and stories of answered prayer.

Living My Faith



Anthony is the latest of the Cucco family to wear this baptismal garment.



PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for being faithful to me even when I sin. Help me to trust in you through everything that happens to me.

My Response

You may not always be able to know what the consequences of a choice will be. Think about what steps you can take when you must make a difficult decision; then write them on a piece of paper.



Focus on Faith

Every Child Is Special

Sibling rivalry is common in all families. In the Old Testament, Isaac and Rebecca had the problem with their twin sons, Jacob and Esau. The boys competed for their father's affection and the right for his blessing. Through trickery and with the help of Rebecca, Jacob gained Isaac's blessing but lost his family. He fled for his life when Esau sought revenge. It is easy for parents to make comparisons between their children. The subtle hints convey that one child's behavior and gifts meet with approval while those of the others somehow fall short. Making any comparisons between children in a way that sets them against one another damages family solidarity. Each child is unique and blessed by God. Celebrate that uniqueness in special and noncompetitive ways.



Dinnertime Conversation Starter

One evening, set your child's place at the table with a unique or decorative plate. Tell him or her that your family recognizes how special he or she is to the family. Invite each family member to mention one gift that the child brings to the family. Honor a different family member each night.



Hints for at Home

Help your child to create a faith family tree. On a large sheet of paper, write the names of people who have had a significant impact on the faith life of your family. Include family members, teachers, priests—even writers or artists who are in some way connected to your family's practice of the Catholic faith. Include any ethnic or regional influences as well. Share with one another stories about how these persons affected your family faith life.



Our Catholic Heritage

Saint John Neumann is entombed at St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia, where his body rests within a glass encasement under the main altar of the lower church. To this day, St. Peter's Church is staffed by the same brotherhood of Redemptorists that founded the church. Catholics from around the world still journey to St. Peter's Church to see the National Shrine of Saint John Neumann. In 1979, when Pope John Paul II visited Philadelphia, he too visited the shrine.

Focus on Prayer

Your child is reviewing the Morning Offering. Say this prayer together before he or she leaves for school to help with memorization. You can find the words for the Morning Offering at www.FindingGod.org.



Review

Session 10



Jesus' ancestors were ordinary people who grew in their **faith**. Each person had a destiny, and over the course of their lives each learned to be faithful.



PRAYER

God of Abraham and Jesus, help me to remember the many people who have walked with you and learned, day by day, how to be faithful.

Faith Summary

Even though Jacob was a flawed human being who made bad choices, he trusted God.

God delivered the Hebrew people from slavery, and this event is remembered through a celebration called Passover. Centuries later, Jesus added new meaning to Passover during the Last Supper with his disciples, when he began a new covenant with God's people, one that we celebrate in the Eucharistic liturgy.

God chose Moses to lead the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt. This journey, known as the Exodus, along with God's giving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, renewed the Israelite people's trust in God's covenant, which began with their ancestor Abraham.

King David made both good and bad choices, but he continued to turn to God. God forgave David, and David with Divine Providence continued to do God's work for his people. Jesus was born from David's family line many generations later.



Passover



Parting of the Red Sea



Mount Sinai



King David



Last Supper

Our Ancestors in Faith

Write as many short phrases or statements as you can about these ancestors of our faith. An example is provided for each.



Jacob

was a twin.



Moses

killed an Egyptian.



David

was an ancestor of Jesus.



Ruth

was a widow.

Learning From Our Ancestors in Faith

After you have finished writing statements about Jacob, Moses, Ruth, and David, you will be assigned to one of four groups. Each group will be assigned a different person—Jacob, Moses, Ruth, or David—and given poster board and markers or colored pencils.

On the poster write your character's name in big letters and then divide the poster board into three sections with two vertical lines. In the section on the left, rewrite the story of your character, using the statements each person wrote in the previous activity. In the middle section draw scenes, based on the story, with the markers or colored pencils. Then, in the section on the right, make a list of the important lessons learned from that story.





PRAYER SERVICE

Leader: *Let us praise God, who guides us through life.*

All: *Amen.*

Leader: *We are all on a journey together. It is a journey of faith, and while we travel God watches over us and helps us to grow into the people we were meant to be.*

Reader: *A reading from the Book of Psalms.*

[Psalm 107:1–9]

The Word of the Lord.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

Leader: *We let go of all things that hinder our faith journey.*

All: *We want to be free of the sins that hurt us and other people.*

Leader: *We journey to the new country that God has waiting for us.*

All: *We know that God has good plans for our lives.*

Leader: *God's Providence will make a way for us.*

All: *We will trust God's love and guidance, no matter what.
Amen.*

Living My Faith

Ways of Being Like Jesus

Throughout his life Jesus learned the stories of Jacob, Moses, Ruth, and David. When you read these stories, think about their meanings and let the stories help you to make important decisions as you grow in faith.

With My Family

During the week remember your faith ancestors. Use photographs, drawings, letters, poems, gifts, or other reminders of them. Include Bible characters as well as people in your family's history. Each night during the week, light a candle among all of these remembrances and thank God for the journey your family has taken.



PRAYER

Thank you, God of Jacob, Joseph, David, Ruth, and Moses. We're all part of the same family. Best of all, we have you, our loving God, watching over us.

My Response

Write a prayer for the people who will come after you—your other relatives who will be born, perhaps even your future husband or wife, children, or grandchildren. Ask God's blessing on the lives of people who have not even been born yet. They, too, will be part of this great family of faith.