Introduction

Most of us enjoy stories. We enjoy hearing stories about friends and relatives. Stories teach us lessons we don’t even know we are learning. We also enjoy telling stories about our friends or about ourselves.

The stories of the saints contained in this book call us to reflect on the blessings we receive from the lives of these holy men and women. All of the saints laughed, cried, worked, played, believed, doubted, hoped, and despaired—but through it all they “acted with justice, loved tenderly, and walked humbly with their God” (Micah 6:8) in the ordinary everyday events of their lives.

Some of the saint stories deepen our courage and help us find a voice to speak out against injustices. Other stories propel us toward volunteering to help those in need. Still other saint stories encourage us to take risks or create new paths as we too try to act with justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God in the ordinary, everyday events of our lives.

This book can be used in several different ways. First of all, at times catechists need to work with small groups of children—what can the other children do while the teacher is working with a small group? The catechist can set up two or three learning stations, and the children who aren’t working directly with the catechist can learn about the saints through these independent activities.

Another way to use this book is to set aside a couple of class times. Divide the class into small groups and have the students rotate through the different centers. The catechist can facilitate learning through asking questions and assisting students as they create the different projects.

A third way to use this book is to create an intergenerational evening focused on the saints. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and parishioners can be invited for a two-hour session focusing on the saints. All of the centers can be set up in advance, and people can rotate through the different centers.

Another possibility is to create a “Saint Museum.” Each student prepares a short talk about one of the saints and dresses like that saint. Saints are placed around the room, and when visitors stop in front of the saint, the saint begins talking about him/herself.

Finally, for the students in grades three through six, the catechist can take the saint stories and put them together one after the other to create a readers’ theatre for the students. These can be performed for the younger students, parents, or other guests. Readers’ theatres are great because the catechist doesn’t need props, costumes, etc; only scripts are needed. The story is told using vocal expression.

This book can comfortably be used in a variety of ways, which allows it to meet the diverse needs of both teachers and students. Be creative! Use this book as a springboard to deepen your students’ knowledge and love for the saints. May these holy men and women pray for us as our hearts find a home within their stories.
A Grateful Heart

As I wrote this book, there were many moments where I paused to give thanks for the many people who supported this project.

Rosanne Coffey, the editor of *RTJ’s Creative Catechist*, who innocently asked, “Catherine, did you ever consider writing a book?” Rosanne planted the seed and then, much to my delight, as the editor, she watered the seed and helped it grow.

Father Mark Osterhaus, a good friend of mine who often told stories about the saints in his daily homilies and helped us apply their characteristics to our own lives, which deepened my love and appreciation for these holy men and women.

The monks at Saint Bede Abbey in Peru, Illinois, who provided a sacred space that was so essential in the writing and rewriting of this manuscript.

Lindsey Leach and Sarah Sudkamp, two students at Blackburn College, whose computer skills amazed me as they took my brief sketches and created, resized, and flipped numerous templates for the learning centers. Their energy and enthusiasm was catching. One day I walked into the office area and each of them was wearing a bishop miter! Their assistance was invaluable.

Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois, who never know when or where the next creative bubble is going to emerge, but provide the necessary encouragement and resources to help my dreams become realities.

My family has always supported and encouraged me in any endeavor I’ve undertaken. Without realizing it, they give me great material to include in books and articles.

My colleagues at Blackburn College, who provide me with a variety of opportunities to share my creative passion.

Everyone at Twenty-Third Publications, who made this a very positive experience.
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Sample—do not duplicate
**Bishop Symbols**

When Saint John was ordained a bishop, he received five special symbols; today, newly ordained bishops receive the same symbols. The first symbol is the pectoral cross. The cross is worn on a chain close to the bishop’s heart. Next, there is the ring. Each bishop chooses what design he wants on his ring. Wearing this reminds the bishop to care for all of the people in his diocese. When the bishop says Mass, he wears a miter. This is a special headdress, which is a sign of victory. The bishop needs to lead others to their victory in heaven. The bishop also carries a crozier to remind everyone that he is like Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Finally, the bishop wears a pallium that is a huge white collar made from lamb’s wool embroidered with six black crosses.

**DIRECTIONS**

- Cut out one of each bishop symbol.
- Decorate the symbols.
- Glue the symbols on a strip of red ribbon or construction paper. Make a rectangle paper “name plate” and write the name of your bishop. Glue the “name plate” at the top and add the symbols underneath.
- Hang it in your bedroom where you will remember to pray to St. John Neumann, for your bishop, and all bishops.

Then teach the children this song.

**SAINT JOHN NEUMANN**

(Tune: ARE YOU SLEEPING?)

Saint John Neumann
Saint John Neumann
Worked with farmers
Worked with farmers
He became a bishop
He became a bishop
Holy Man
Holy Man
BISHOP SYMBOLS FOR WALL HANGING

Saint John Neumann 11
Saint John Neumann Cabin

Saint John Neumann lived in a log cabin. Students will remember facts about Saint John Neumann by creating a log cabin.

DIRECTIONS

- Get a square tissue box.
- Cut off top.
- Fold paper to make a roof.
- Glue to tissue box.
- Cut out door and windows.
- Use pretzel sticks for the logs and marshmallow cream for the mortar to make a log cabin.
- Write two facts about Saint John Neumann on the cabin.
CATECHIST'S PAGE FOR GRADES 4-6

OBJECTIVES

- To help children learn about Saint John Neumann through “Saint John’s Story”
- At center one, to learn the characteristics of a good bishop by making a miter
- At center two, to teach someone else about Saint John Neumann using capes

MATERIALS

- Colored paper strips for miter
- Ribbon
- Glue
- Plastic tablecloth
- Markers and pens for writing

Saint John Neumann’s Story

READER ONE: John Neumann was born in Bohemia, a part of the Czech Republic. He studied theology, but he was also interested in botany and astronomy. When he finished studying, he asked to be ordained. The bishop said "No. There are too many priests."

READER TWO: John didn’t give up his dream, but he boarded a ship and sailed for America. There he was met by Bishop John Dubois who was very excited to ordain him. America had very few priests and needed as many as they could find. He worked with Father Pax in Buffalo, New York. Father Pax asked him if he wanted to work in the city or in the country. Father John chose to work in the country.

READER THREE: Father John liked being a priest but he wanted to join the Redemptorist Fathers. Bishop Dubois gave him permission to do this. He traveled from New York to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to become a novice in this order. A few years later, he made his vows.

READER FOUR: In 1852, Father John Neumann was appointed as Bishop of Philadelphia. He had many dreams for his diocese. First of all, he established an organized Catholic school system; he built over 200 Catholic schools! That was simply amazing!

READER FIVE: Another dream Bishop Neumann had was to have a lot of religious sisters and brothers in his diocese to care for the people.

READER SIX: Bishop Neumann was doing errands one day when he collapsed and died. Later, the doctor discovered that he had a stroke. People were very surprised to hear of their bishop’s death. He was only 48 years old.

Saint John Neumann 13
Bishop Miters

Saint John Neumann received a miter when he was ordained a bishop. Today, bishops also receive miters when they are ordained. The miter symbolizes tongues to represent the fire of the Holy Spirit. Students will focus on the characteristics a man needs in order to be a good bishop, and they will keep these in mind while creating a miter.

DIRECTIONS

- Make a bishop’s miter.
- Write five characteristics on the miter that a bishop needs. For example: generosity, person of prayer, ability to listen, kindness
- Wear your miter.

(DIRECTIONS FOR MITER TO GO WITH ILLUSTRATIONS)

- Take two sheets of paper, and divide them into thirds. Cut on the dotted lines.
- Take another sheet of paper, and draw a heart big enough to cover most of the sheet.
- Cut out the heart. Apply glue to the two humps at the top of the heart. Secure the heart to the strips you have fit to your head.
- With one of your leftover strips, draw a circle and cut it out.
- Glue the circle to the point of your heart.
- Attach two thick pieces of ribbon to the back of the miter base.
- Draw a cross on your miter and write five bishop characteristics somewhere on it.
Saint John Neumann Capes or Copes

Saint John Neumann wore a cape as a bishop. The cape symbolizes the protection a shepherd gives his sheep. Making a cape will help students remember important facts about Saint John Neumann.

DIRECTIONS

- Get a plastic tablecloth. Cut it to desired length.
- Attach 2, 12-inch strips of ribbon to each end to make ties.
- Draw pictures and print words about Saint John Neumann.
- Wear cape.