Meet St. John Baptist de La Salle! • Saints for kids

LIVED: John Baptist de La Salle was born to a wealthy family in Rheims, France, on April 30, 1651, at the height of the power and splendor of the French monarchy. At 15, he inherited an important position at the cathedral in Rheims. He died on April 7, 1719.

MISSION: At about the age of 30, De La Salle took on the mission that would become his life's work: creating free schools for poor boys so they could break free of poverty.

ADVENTURES: "Père Jean, Père Jean!" Half a dozen young boys greeted Father John as he picked his way through the filthy street, past bony dogs and bent old women.

"Hubert! Denis! Why are you boys out of school, hmm?" Father John asked warmly.

"Maître Philippe is thrashing boys who don't know their Latin, Père," Hubert said. "And I don't know my Latin, so I *et egressit* right out of there!" Th e boys laughed.

"*Et egressi*, Hubert," Father John corrected. He sighed. "Now come with me, hmm? I brought bread for your lunch. Louis, will you distribute it fairly?"

Inside the small schoolroom, boys were everywhere—on the benches, standing, sitting in the open window. And at the front of the room was Maître Philippe, sternly lecturing a small, frightened boy.

Father John cleared his throat. "Good day, boys! Maître Philippe, a word?" The two men stepped outside the classroom.

"These boys have no time for Latin, Maître Philippe. They must learn to read and write French, so they can find good jobs!"

“But how will they say their prayers if they don’t know Latin?” Maître Philippe sputtered,

“I’m sure the Lord will understand French, my friend. And also—no thrashing the boys, hmm? Remember: You are an ambassador of Christ to these children of his! Did Christ teach with his fists?”

“Our Lord didn’t have to deal with such rascals, Père, or he might have!”

“Faith and patience, Maître Philippe, is the answer! Come now, perhaps a bit of bread will tame these rascals of yours!” **M:C**

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St. John Baptist de La Salle @ LaSalle.org

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