

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE

SAINT OF THE MONTH



JANUARY

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Age Level: All ages

Recommended time: 10-15 minutes

What you need: St. Paul the Apostle coloring page, markers and/or crayons



Activity

- A. Tell your students that this month, we are learning about St. Paul the Apostle, who is known for his dramatic conversion and his zeal in spreading the Gospel to the gentiles.
- B. Read aloud the biography of this month's saint and have your students complete the coloring page while they listen.
- C. When you are finished, discuss as a group how the life of St. Paul can inspire us to share the Gospel with others. What are some things that we can do to follow his saintly example?

Biography of St. Paul

Around the time Jesus was born, a Jewish boy named Saul was born in Tarsus. Tarsus was a Roman city, and so Saul was a Roman citizen. While he was still very young, his parents sent him to Jerusalem to be taught by the greatest rabbi of his time. Saul was an excellent student. He was respected for his great intellect and zeal for the Jewish faith and traditions.

His zeal, however, caused him to feel upset that some Jews were following the New Way, as Christianity was first called. Thinking that he was serving God, Saul

became the worst enemy of Christians. He hunted them down and dragged them out of their homes. He imprisoned them and even had them killed. In fact, Saul witnessed the death of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. (A martyr is a person who is killed for his Faith.) He watched as those throwing stones at Stephen laid their cloaks at his feet. Because Saul was a leader, it's very likely that Saul had ordered Stephen to be stoned.

One day Saul set out for the city of Damascus. Saul knew there were many

new Christians there, and he planned to arrest them and take them back to Jerusalem. The journey to Damascus took about two days by horseback. When Saul and his men were very near the city, they were suddenly surrounded by a light so bright that it knocked Saul to the ground.

We can read the account of what happened next in the book of Acts, 9:4-8:

“He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” He said, “Who are You, sir?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.” The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, for they heard the voice but could see no one. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus.”

Saul could not see for three days, and he didn't eat or have anything to drink. A disciple named Ananias was told by God in a vision to go to Saul, and Ananias obeyed: “[Saul] regained his sight. He got up and was baptized, and when he had eaten, he recovered his strength.”

From that time on, Saul went on to preach about Christ. He decided to use his Roman name, Paul, because it would be more familiar to the non-Jews he would be talking to. He met with Peter, our first pope, and some of the other Apostles, to receive Peter's blessing before he started his ministry. Paul spent the rest of his life traveling and spreading the Gospel of Jesus. He established churches and taught other men to lead in his absence. Paul's letters (called epistles) to the churches that he established make up more than one-fourth of the New Testament. He truly is the greatest missionary in Church history!



Connection to the Catechism

...The Lord's missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity: The Church on earth is by her nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love. (CCC 850)



ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE

The Conversion of St. Paul

BY BL. FRA ANGELICO (1430)



Missal 558, Folio 21. Museo di San Marco, Florence.

The Conversion of St. Paul

Directions: Look at the painting, then read the Bible verses listed. Explain the connections you see to each verse, then answer the questions that follow.

1. Acts 9:3-7:

2. Acts 22:9:

3. Revelation 1:8:

4. What is the significance of the Greek letters on Jesus' book?

5. Why do you think Bl. Fra Angelico painted St. Paul with a sword?
