| **Name:**  **Grade:**  **Date:** | **Life Teen**  **Sunday, January 22, 2023**  **Unforeseen:** The Foremost: Blind |
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**Directions**

* **Make-up work must be completed before the next Life Night.** It should not take you more than 90 minutes to complete.
* **Go to File → Make a copy. Name the file 1-22-2022, Your First and Last Name.**
* Make-up work will require you to research answers, please only use credible Catholic sources, **Wikipedia will not be accepted.**
* You must cite your sources. To do this, just copy and paste the URL after your answer.
* You may not copy and paste directly from any website, it must be in your own words, (unless stated otherwise).
* **All questions or activities are in bold and highlighted.**
* **All your answers should not be in bold**
* **When you are finished, email your assignment to Rachael Kriger:** [**rkriger@romeroparish.org**](mailto:rkriger@romeroparish.org)**. Please submit with your FIRST NAME-LAST NAME-LifeTeen-1-22-22 . Please do not send it as an attachment on Flocknote, I do not receive it that way!**

**Homework Breakdown**

1. Activity
2. Reading
3. Written Questions
4. Video
5. Challenge of the Week

**1. Activity**

**Answer this question with some real thought: How/what can do you do to be closer to Jesus?**

**2. Reading  
Making Sense: In the Flesh**

Who would be the ideal partner for a school project: our best friend or our worst enemy?

The answer is obvious: we would choose our best friend. We would have a great time, and we would have someone that we trust to do their share of the work. Why would someone even think of choosing their enemy? Well, that is what God often does.

Unusual Suspects

God tends to choose unusual suspects and works through them to do incredible things, instead of choosing those who are viewed as holy, perfect, powerful, wealthy, or popular.

God chose Abraham and Sarah, who could not have children, and told them their descendants would outnumber the stars. God chose a murderer with a speech impediment named Moses to save the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, instead of his brother Aaron who was older and well-spoken. God chose David, the youngest of his family, instead of his older brothers who were soldiers, to become king of Israel. (Genesis 11:30; Exodus 2:11-12, 4:10-16; 1 Samuel 16:1-13, 17:13-14).

Even when God became man, He chose to live the life of a humble, poor carpenter over that of a powerful ruler like Caesar. When He began His ministry, Jesus chose twelve mostly uneducated men from humble or unsavory backgrounds to be His first and most important disciples. He did not go to the temple and synagogues to find scribes, elders, and Pharisees. He chose from tax collectors, fishermen, and zealots. God seems to root for the underdog. (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 6:3; Luke 5:27- 32, 6:15; 1 Corinthians 1:27).

This is particularly true of St. Paul. Despite the fact that he started out as an enemy and persecutor of Christians, God chose him. As a result, St. Paul became one of the most influential figures and one of the greatest missionaries in Church history.

**Every Saint Has a Past**

Before St. Paul started going by his Greek name, he was known as Saul and was a Jewish Pharisee. He was well-educated and was a strict observer of the Jewish law. When the “new way” of Jesus began to spread, Saul actively sought out opportunities to find anyone who belonged to the new Christian community to bring them back to Jerusalem in chains. There was not a more unlikely candidate to become a follower of Jesus then Saul. His story reminds us that no matter how far we run away from God, He can still change our lives and do incredible things through us if we let Him. (Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2, 23:6).

As read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, And asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues: that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And he: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him, stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days, without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink.

Saul, a powerful and influential Pharisee, was humbly reduced to blindness and fasting for three days after his life-changing encounter with the risen Jesus. In the same way that Jesus died and rose after three days, Saul and his old way of life symbolically died and, after three days, he began his new life as a disciple of Christ.

After Saul’s blinding encounter, God sent a disciple named Ananias to help him recover. After Saul was baptized, he immediately began preaching about the risen Christ, and people were amazed. No one could explain how someone who was an enemy of Christians suddenly did a complete 180 ̊ turn in the opposite direction. It was so sudden that some Jews did not believe him and were still afraid of him. That radical change in Saul’s life is what we call a conversion, and it showed people that Jesus Christ must be the Messiah if He could make something that unexpected happen. Saul was a living example that nothing would be impossible for God. (Luke 1:37; Acts 9:17-18, 22, 26; Galatians 1:11-24).

**Be Like Paul**

When Saul began ministering, he started going by his Greek name, Paul. This was likely something he did to be more relatable to those he ministered to and to mark a shift between his old life and his new life. He went on a series of missionary journeys to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, a word for anyone who was not Jewish. As Paul traveled, he often returned to the story of his conversion in his preaching to show others how the truth of the Gospel impacted him and reveal to them the power God has to change their lives. The radical change he experienced because of his encounter with Jesus was something anyone Paul encountered could relate to, regardless of the cultural or religious barriers that otherwise could have been obstacles. (Acts 13:9, 22:1-21, 26:1-23; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Paul’s life was a powerful example of what can happen when we respond to God’s will for our lives. This reminds us that we are all in need of conversion. Some of us may have had a powerful encounter with God in prayer, and some of us may not even be sure if He is real. No matter where we find ourselves on that spectrum of faith, we are still called to ongoing conversion. No one has an encounter with God and then never sins again; it is a lifelong process.

We must have a constant resolve to turn away from the things that are not good for us and that prevent us from being the people God created us to be. When we sin or falter in our prayer life, we repent, go to confession if we need to, and recommit to the Lord. Even St. Paul struggled after his conversion with something he called “a thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:6-9), and he begged the Lord to relieve him from it numerous times.

Despite having a life-changing encounter with God, St. Paul still needed to recommit himself to stay faithful to the Lord. Saint Paul also is an inspiration for how we can use our own story to share the Good News with those around us. When St. Paul lived among the people he preached to, many of whom had very different cultural and religious backgrounds than him, he shared something no one could refute: his own story. We have a story, too.

We do not need to have all the answers. In fact, the only answer we need is the answer to one question: “How has following Jesus changed our life?” Maybe some of us do not have any experience like that yet, or even an answer to that question, but it is OK if you do not have that yet.

We have to remember that we do not need to have a dramatic story of being blinded like St. Paul did in order to have a conversion. Instead, it can be the story of how we were impacted by an encounter with God in prayer, a moment we decided to take ownership or our faith, or a decision to turn away from sin and walk toward the freedom Jesus offers. If we have not experienced that yet, then maybe this is a challenge for us to begin to open our hearts to what God is calling us to: a new and more fulfilling way of life with Him.

The life and legacy of St. Paul are reminders that God can use us no matter how far away from Him we think we are. If God took a murderer of Christians and turned Him into one of the greatest Christian missionaries in Church history, He can also do incredible things in our lives.

**3. Written Questions**

**Q1: What actions do others take to make you feel heard or not heard?**

**Q2: What actions did others take to make you feel respected or disrespected?**

**Q3: How can we respectfully present Jesus to others?**

**Q4: What actions or words should we avoid when talking to others about our faith?**

**4. Video**

**Please watch the following video. If you cannot click the link either search for the title:**

**“5 surprising facts about Paul apostle of Christ - Sometimes You have to be Patient to Begin.”**

**Link:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le3TfLyb2Fk**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le3TfLyb2Fk)

**5. Challenge of the Week**

**Say prayers throughout the week with the intercession of your Confirmation saint.**