

St. Paul

Name: Paul of Tarsus

Born: 10 AD in Tarsus.

Died: 67 AD in Rome.

Notable Accomplishment: Largely responsible for the initial spread of Christianity.

The Basics: A tentmaker by trade, the son of a merchant, Paul (born Saul) initially persecuted the growing Christian minority in the name of the emperor. Legend has it that he was converted to Christianity on the road to Damascus. Once converted, he changed his name and began a new ministry in spreading the message of Christianity to the world. 13 epistles (letters) in the Christian Scriptures are attributed to Paul. He was put to death in Rome for his faith. Did you know that 29th June 2008 to 29th June 2009 has been designated the 'Year of St. Paul?' So, there is no better time to think about him in your programmes.

Programme ideas

1] One of the symbols associated with St. Paul is a Sword, there are two, and possibly more reasons why this is so (anyone know why? – answers on an email to the National Chaplain please). Design and make a sword shaped book mark; you could use it in your Bible, Missal or Prayer book. You might like to decorate the sword and put on it a short quote from St. Paul e.g. "I have kept the faith" 2Tim4:7; "And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." —1 Corinthians 13:13; "Let the word of Christ dwell in you" Col 3:16; "Pray continually." 1 Thess 5:17; "You are all the children of God" Gal 3:26.

2] Before his death St. Paul spent his time as a prisoner in chains. Make a paper prayer chain, everyone writes a prayer on a link in the chain and attaches it to the last chain, perhaps you could make a display in your HQ or Church next to a picture of St. Paul and his quote "pray continually", this could be added to each week.

3] Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus led to him being blind for a time, and Paul tells us that he was a tent maker by trade. Bringing these two together take part in a disability awareness exercise e.g blindfold tent pitching or some blindfolded and being led around an obstacle course made up of tents and poles etc.

4] St. Paul wrote letters to the different churches he had been involved with. Imagine you are St. Paul and you are writing a letter from you to your local Church. What would you like to say to them to encourage them and challenge them? When you have written your letters you might like to share them in small groups and discuss them.