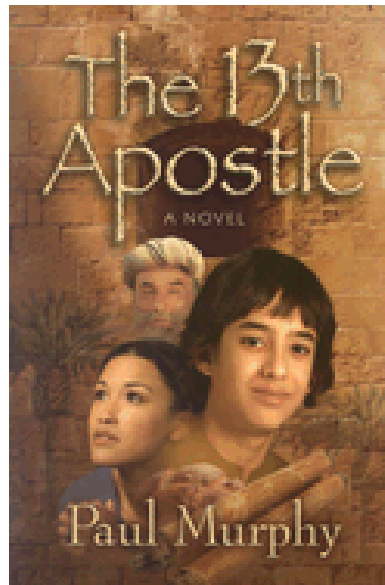


Catholic School  
**Curriculum  
Guide**



**The 13th  
Apostle**

By  
**Paul Murphy**

Curriculum Guide prepared by  
Joyce S. Donahue

# For the Teacher

Dear Catholic School Teacher,

Thanks for choosing *The Thirteenth Apostle*, by Paul Murphy, for your students. You will find it a great, engaging book and a wonderful tool for integrating Faith Formation (Religion) with Language Arts and Social Studies, for students from Grades 5-8. Because of the focus on Jesus' Passion and its aftermath, the book can be an especially effective resource for Lent and the Easter Season. Here are just some of the pedagogical themes:

## **Faith Formation (Religion):**

- Discipleship
- The person of Jesus
- The ministry and Passion of Jesus
- The nature of Scriptural truth
- Virtue
- Empathy and just treatment for the poor and disabled
- Christian community
- Early foundations of the Church
- Ignatian Guided Meditation (experiencing a scripture story through prayer)

## **Language Arts:**

- Vocabulary
- Imagination
- Narrative technique
- Characterization
- Point of view

## **Social Studies / Geography:**

- Culture in the Holy Land in Bible Times
- Roman Empire
- Jerusalem
- Social and economic systems in the ancient world

## **Character and behavior:**

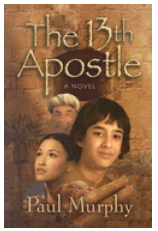
- Bullying

This Curriculum Guide will help you draw out meaningful discussion, faith sharing, prayer, vocabulary, internet-based research projects, art projects and more for your students. It is somewhat detailed because of the richness and formational potential of Biblical historical fiction. Feel free to choose what works in your classroom.

We sincerely hope you and your students enjoy your time with Gamaliel and his friends as they help you encounter Jesus in a unique way. May God bless you in all you do for children.

Joyce Donahue and Paul Murphy

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# Teaching Ideas

## Introducing Students to the Book

- **Engage** students by asking if they have ever imagined themselves as a character in a story they have read. What story would they like to be part of?
- **Explain** that *The 13<sup>th</sup> Apostle* is “historical fiction” – an author’s use of a historically true situation as a setting for characters mostly of his own creation, who interact with real people who actually experienced the events.
- **Ask** students to name some other books that do something similar.
- **Ask** students what difference they think it makes if the real historical situation is taken from the Bible. Why might it be important to refer back to the Bible?
- **Explain** that in this book they will meet some people who experience part of the life of Jesus, and by reading their story, they can learn more about Jesus and the time he lived in.
- **Invite** them to read chapters 1 and 2 continuously, because this sets up the characters and background for the rest of the narrative.

## Chapters 1-2

### Vocabulary Words:

seizure      optimism      street urchin      intolerance      contingent  
centurion      afflicted      Passover

### Language Arts/Religion Integration

- **The REAL Gamaliel:** Have students research the name Gamaliel. Try *The Catholic Encyclopedia* at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06374b.htm> - for information on the historical Gamaliel, who, in one legend, became a secret Christian living among the Jews. He was made a saint in the early Church for his work for Christ. <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintg1d.htm>
- **Characterization:** Talk about how much freedom an author has when creating a story about a person whose life is not well known. Does it make any difference if the main character really is the historical Gamaliel?

### Faith Formation/Religion

- **Special Needs** – discuss Gamaliel’s (epileptic) seizures. Have students watch throughout the book how Gamaliel is treated because of his disability. You may want to have older students read the “Pastoral Statement of the US Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities”, found at [http://www.ncpd.org/pastoral\\_statement\\_1978.htm](http://www.ncpd.org/pastoral_statement_1978.htm). Discuss the attitude the Church asks us to have toward the disabled.
- **Prayer idea** - pray for just treatment for those with disabilities. Add this intention to regular intercessory prayer.

## Ongoing Project Ideas

### Social Studies/Geography

- **Invite** students to locate a map of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. These can be found in some editions of the Bible, or on the Internet. One such site is currently located at <http://scriptures.lds.org/biblemaps/12>
- **Challenge** students to locate the Joppa Gate, at the point the road to Joppa and Emmaus exits the city. Have them also situate Jerusalem in relation to Nazareth, home of Jesus.
- **Assign** students to do research on Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. They could prepare a short report to discuss in class. Here are some internet sites:  
<http://www.time.com/time/2001/jerusalem/cover.html>  
<http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/SFS/an0300.asp>  
<http://www.datanumeric.com/vlm/02-98/24.htm>
- **Teach** students about the Roman Empire, the structure of the Roman army, and the world of Jerusalem under the Romans. Here are some websites:  
<http://www.frommers.com/destinations/jerusalem/0088032911.html>  
<http://www.geocities.com/delerius2001/Rome.htm>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_army)
- **Engage** students in creating a diorama of part of Jerusalem, or invite them to work together to make a model of the entire city, using craft materials of their choice. Students might make cardboard representations of the characters and move them around in the city as the reading of the book progresses.

### Faith Formation/Religion

**Discuss** pilgrimage (visiting a holy place for spiritual reasons.) Have students make a “virtual pilgrimage” to Jerusalem. The best site for this is the interactive one at <http://www.cyberfaith.com/weblinks/landjesuswalked.html>, which has a leader and a student version. Or, have students accompany Pope John Paul II to the Holy Land at <http://198.62.75.5/www1/ofm/pope/>

## Chapter 3

### Language Arts

- **Engage visual learners:** How does the author use imagery to “paint a picture” of what is happening on the galley? Have students draw what they “see” in this scene, or imagine they are making a movie. What details in the text supports this?
- **Reinforce:** You might want to show a clip from the galley scene in the movie *Ben Hur* after the student visualizations – for those who need help visualizing.

### Vocabulary:

galley	maul	gangplank	infernal	opportunist
antiquated	exiled	legion	swaggering	tyranny

## Chapter 4

### Faith Formation/Religion

- **Discuss:** On page 33, Aaron suggests that Gamaliel should become a disciple of Jesus. What about Gamaliel makes him disciple material?

- **Define:** What is a disciple? How can students be disciples today?
- **Connect** the virtue of humility, using Gamaliel’s reply as an example.
- **Explore** Sarah’s dream on p. 37. How does her dream reflect what we know about a conspiracy to arrest Jesus in the Bible? (see Matthew 26:1-5)

### Social Studies Option – the role of women

- **Challenge:** On page 36, it says “the girls rarely spoke at meetings”. Talk about the cultural role of Jewish women in Biblical times. Help students understand that girls and women usually worshiped separately from men and boys, and never talked to men outside their family. Talk about how cultural roles of women have changed since then.
- **Religion integration:** Discuss how Jesus treated women. See if students can name women who interacted with Jesus: *Mary, Martha, Mary Magdalene, the woman caught in adultery, the woman at the well, the women of Jerusalem on his way to the cross,* and the women disciples (see Luke 8:2-3) Why did Jesus treat them as persons?

## Chapter 5

### Language Arts

- **Analyze** how having Jesus meet and talk with Gamaliel gives an opportunity to clarify key teachings of Jesus and develop the character of Gamaliel.
- **Get specific:** How is Jesus made real through physical description and dialog?
- **Explore:** Why does the author stop the narrative for a substantial teaching moment?
- **Handout 1 (Characterization)** – can be used any time after this chapter

### Faith Formation/Religion

- **Special Needs:** note how Joshua the farmer treats Gamaliel – refer back to page 6 of this guide for resources on treatment of those with disabilities
- **The Lamb:** What is the purpose of the incident with the lamb? Have students recall scriptures about lambs/sheep and shepherd. Examples: Passover lamb Exodus12, 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm, the parable of the lost sheep - Matthew 18 and Luke 15, “I am the Good Shepherd” passages - John 10, John the Baptist’s “behold the Lamb of God...” - John 1:29 and the Lamb in Revelation 17:14.
- **Bible Search/Comparison:** Have students locate and read in the Bible about the temptation in the desert (p. 51). (See Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.)
- **Catechism, Scripture Connection:** On page 46-47, Jesus talks about his difficult journey and his Father’s will. Ask students how they understand the reasons for Jesus’ suffering and death. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 599-600. Talk about Romans 5:12: Christ as second Adam.
- **Prayer experience:** Let students experience meeting Jesus through a guided meditation Ignatian style. Set up the story from scripture, then let students enter the story in their imaginations to interact with Jesus. A good resource is *Guided Meditations for Children* by Jane Reehorst, Harcourt Religion Publishers.

## Chapter 6

### Language Arts – narrative technique

**Analyze:** What is the narrative effect of having rumors about Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem and later, his arrest, in the background of this chapter? Why do students think the author had his characters not be present for these events?

## Faith Formation/Religion

- **The Passion:** have students read any of the accounts in the four Gospels of the Passion to understand the events of this and the following chapters.
- **Faith and the Will of God:** talk about Isaac's healing. Read aloud Gamaliel's prayer (top of page 66). Why did he pray in this way? Discuss our desires and God's will. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2822-2827 and 2734-2741.

## Chapter 7

### Language Arts- creating dramatic narrative

- **Discuss:** how does the author bring the trial of Jesus alive in this chapter?
- **Analyze:** Have students tell which parts of this chapter seem most dramatic.
- **Detail:** Have them list the details the author includes that add to the sense of realism.
- **Get specific:** How does Sarah's presence at the trial add dramatic tension?
- **Analyze:** How does having Sarah wounded while trying to help Jesus add to the reader's sense of involvement? Does it divert us from focusing on Jesus' suffering?

### Vocabulary

subverting                      contingent                      farce                      anarchist                      battalion  
insurrection                      preliminary                      pompous                      vanguard

### Character development/behavior

- **Discuss** the character of Marius and have students compare his behavior to their concept of bullying, especially if your school has worked on this.
- **Connect:** Note the loyalty of Gratius, who risks everything to save Sarah. Use that as a springboard to talk about the virtues of friendship and loyalty.

## Chapter 8

### Language Arts – the writer's craft

- **Discuss:** what are the dramatic hints throughout the chapter that even as our characters focus on their problems, something big is happening to Jesus?
- **Analyze:** What is the effect of having the main characters in the foreground, while we hear of the crucifixion in the background? Why can't our characters be at the foot of the cross, and why can't Gamaliel help Jesus?

### Vocabulary

chastened                      recuperating                      interjected                      vulnerable

## Faith Formation/Religion

- **Analyze:** Have students re-read Gamaliel's prayer over the dying Sarah on page 93. How is it similar to his prayer over Isaac on page 66? What does it say about Gamaliel's faith that he can detach himself from his own desires, in favor of God's will?
- **Reflect:** Could students trust God that much? (Journaling opportunity)

## Chapter 9

### Language Arts – Vocabulary

placard                      reverberated                      blasphemy                      supplicant  
prodigal                      exasperation                      traversed

## Faith Formation/Religion

**Discuss:** How was Gamaliel able to use Jesus' own words to comfort Peter?

**Scripture Connection:** Review the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) Ask students to discuss why Peter is like the Prodigal Son.

## Chapter 10

### Language Arts – Vocabulary

demeanor	contemplate	bounty
humiliated	sepulcher	Sabbath

## Faith Formation/Religion

**Discuss:** why didn't Gamaliel notice until later (page 118) that Jesus had healed him back in chapter 5? What does that tell us about Gamaliel?

**Journaling opportunity-** Have students read Ruth's reflection (page 68) about God's action in the lives of the characters. Have students reflect and journal about seeing the action of God in their own life or the life of a friend or family member.

**Research project option** – have students look up a description of traditional customs for the Jewish celebration of Sabbath and report on it. Then, look up information on the early Christians and why they may have connected their own meetings to the Sabbath customs.

## Chapter 11

### Language Arts – the writer's craft

**Discuss:** how does Peter's testimony at the meeting work as a dramatic device to help us learn more about Peter, the disciples and about Jesus' story? Notice that this is not based strictly on scripture, but fictionalized. How did the author know what Peter's story would be?

## Faith Formation/Religion

- **Discuss** Peter's power to evangelize (to bring people into direct and meaningful contact with the person and message of Jesus Christ)?
- **Challenge students:** discuss how our baptism calls us all to be evangelizers for Christ. Get students to tell you some ways they can do this in their lives.

## Chapter 12

### Language Arts – the writer's craft

**Discuss:** how does the dramatic device of having Gratus and Marius fight to the death add to the story at this point? Is this more than just an opportunity for excitement? Why?

## Faith Formation/Religion

**Research Project opportunity** – have students find out who the Zealots were and report on that. Then, connect that to the use of the Zealots in the "cover-up" story to protect Gratus and Flavius. Discuss why that would be convincing, based on what students know about the Zealots.

## Chapter 13

### Language Arts – function of a character

**Discuss** why Gamaliel is the voice of hope for the disciples. Why is he not depressed by Jesus' death? What purpose does his telling about meeting Jesus (p.146) serve?

## Vocabulary

sanctify

maneuver

### Faith Formation/Religion

Discuss: Why did Sarah's parents keep their belief in Jesus' teachings secret from Sarah? Why did they consider it dangerous to involve her? Talk about the persecution of early Christians by the Romans, especially after Jesus' death.

## Chapter 14

### Language Arts – the power of dialog

Have students read John, chapter 20. Discuss how the author of our book brought this to life through the tense dialog between Mary Magdalene, Peter, James and the others.

## Vocabulary

disheartened

furtive

defected

### Faith Formation/Religion

- **Discuss:** Why were the apostles gathered in the upper room?
- **Ask:** Why didn't they believe Mary Magdalene?

## Chapter 15

### Faith Formation/Religion integration with Language Arts

Again, it is most useful to compare this chapter with Chapter 20 of the Gospel of John.

- Discuss: What does it add to the story that Gamaliel is present, and witnesses to the disciples about his faith that he and Jesus will meet again?
- Why is Gamaliel's retelling to his family of his encounter with the resurrected Jesus powerful? Discuss Gamaliel as an example of evangelization – the courage to testify to the power and presence of the living Christ.

## Chapter 16

### Language Arts – dramatic narrative

- Have students name a moment in this chapter that particularly stands out for them. This might be Peter jumping out of the boat in his excitement to reach Jesus, or Jesus' ascension into heaven, or... Have the students write a paragraph telling why they remember that part and why did it stand out for them. What would it have meant to be there? Have students close their eyes and imagine themselves present.

### Faith Formation/Religion

- **Connect the liturgical year** to the narrative. Ask students to name and locate the feast commemorating Jesus' going up to heaven. (Ascension).
- **Analyze:** On pp. 188-190, Isaac expresses disappointment that Jesus did not do what he expected the Messiah to do. Look at Gamaliel's response. What does Gamaliel mean when he calls Jesus the New Covenant?
- **Discuss "Covenant":** beginning with God's promise to Abraham, continuing prophecies of a savior– the entire thread of Salvation History in scripture is based on God's promise: "I will be your God and you will be my people." Look at <http://www.salvationhistory.com/library/scripture/wordofgod/covtbrins.cfm> or <http://www.thefloridacatholic.org/bishops/2005/050722-pb-barbarito.htm>



## Chapter 17

### Faith Formation/Religion

- Discuss the passage on pp. 197-199, where Gamaliel, having returned to Jerusalem, testifies to the followers in his meeting group that Jesus has risen and he has seen, touched and spoken with him.
- Talk about the power and importance of personal witness in sharing faith.
- Ask students if they have ever heard anyone talk about the power of God in their life in a way that excited them or made them want to change.

### Language Arts – narrative device

What is the effect of placing Gamaliel and Sarah's engagement at the end of this chapter?

### Social Studies

Have students look closely at the description of the Jewish betrothal ceremony.

- How does this ceremony connect the couple to their families?
- What are the physical signs of their engagement? (*a bracelet and a necklace*)

### Family Life connection

- Why didn't they get married before Gamaliel left? Talk about the importance of faithfulness and patience before and during marriage.

## Chapter 18

### Language Arts – dramatic narrative

Have students compare and contrast the dramatic scene on page 205, as the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples to the scripture narrative in Chapter 2 of the Book of Acts.

- What details has the author included that particularly bring this moment to life?
- What has he added to the sermon of Peter to make it even more real?

### Faith Formation/Religion

- Connect to the liturgical year. Discuss how and why the Church celebrates the feast of Pentecost. What symbols are used, and why is it called "the birthday of the Church"?

## Chapter 19

### Language Arts – dramatic narrative

Discuss what stands out for students in this final chapter. How does the author tie up the story, but leave room for a future?

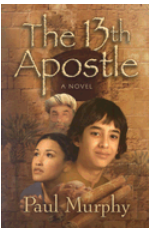
### Faith Formation/Religion

On the final page, Gamaliel remembers Jesus' words: "Go now and teach all nations..."

- Discuss the mission of the church to evangelize.

### Help students process and remember their reading experience

**For reflection, discussion or journaling:** How did reading *The 13<sup>th</sup> Apostle* help you see and understand the events surrounding the last days of Jesus differently? What, in particular, stands out for you from this book? If you could be a character in the book, who would you be?



# Student Handout 1: The 13<sup>th</sup> Apostle

(Characterization: After Chapter 5)

## Matching

Connect the character to the associated image, object or description:

Jesus	motherly
Isaac	beggar
Joshua	hammer & chisel
Gamaliel's father	plays with pebbles
Marius	bread
Ruth	farmer
Gamaliel	chaperone
Lydia	braggart
Aaron	epileptic

## Reality Check

Which character in the book feels the most real to you? What kinds of things does the author do to make that happen?

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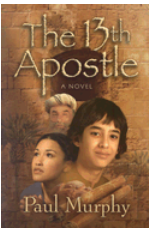
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## Student Handout 2: The 13<sup>th</sup> Apostle

### Vocabulary

What is the meaning of each of these words?

seizure \_\_\_\_\_

intolerance \_\_\_\_\_

centurion \_\_\_\_\_

galley \_\_\_\_\_

antiquated \_\_\_\_\_

legion \_\_\_\_\_

tyranny \_\_\_\_\_

pompous \_\_\_\_\_

battalion \_\_\_\_\_

insurrection \_\_\_\_\_

vulnerable \_\_\_\_\_

blasphemy \_\_\_\_\_

prodigal \_\_\_\_\_

reverberate \_\_\_\_\_

exasperation \_\_\_\_\_

contemplate \_\_\_\_\_

demeanor \_\_\_\_\_

sanctify \_\_\_\_\_

maneuver \_\_\_\_\_

furtive \_\_\_\_\_