

Chapter 2  
*Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*  
Leonardo da Vinci  
We Are a Work in Progress

*In this assignment, students will reflect on how we are all “works in progress” in our journey to heaven. Themes of “growth mindset” and “fixed mindset” will be tied into this lesson. Students will then apply this knowledge to their faith lives by first identifying statements that are either a “growth mindset” or a “fixed mindset.” Three statements are presented that reflect a fixed mindset. Students will take these statements and reword them to reflect a growth mindset. The goal is to identify patterns in their own thinking where they have one of these mindsets and how they can change their thoughts.*

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*Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* by Leonardo da Vinci is a beautiful, though unfinished, work of art. There are a couple of ways we can understand an unfinished project. We can see it as a disappointment that we did not get to see da Vinci's completed vision or we can see it as an example to us that we are all "works in progress".

As human beings, we are God's works of art that are still in progress. Some parts of our lives are filled out and beautiful, while others remain unknown and messy. Sometimes the messy parts of our life can lead us to discouragement. They can make us think that things will always be unfinished and messy. This kind of thinking reflects a "fixed mindset."

A fixed mindset is when we think things will always be a certain way and there is no room for change or improvement. We can counter these thoughts with a "growth mindset." This kind of mindset sees that we can grow and change, we are never stuck in our negative circumstances. These mindsets can affect our spiritual lives. A fixed mindset can lead us to believe that we will never be close to God or that if we mess up then we can never start fresh. But God teaches us to have a growth mindset in which we can always find forgiveness, hope, and a new life!

For each of the following statements, identify either a growth mindset or a fixed mindset and circle which you think it is.

1. If I mess up spiritually, God won't want anything to do with me.

Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

2. I don't always act with virtue, but I can keep trying every day.

Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

3. If I don't have all the answers about why I believe what I believe, I can always ask questions and figure it out.

Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

4. I've tried praying before and nothing happened - I don't think it's for me.

Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

5. Holiness means doing really big things for God and it's something only for monks and saints.

Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

6. I struggle to focus in Mass or when praying the Rosary, but if I am trying God will still help me.

Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

There are three statements that reflect a fixed mindset. Rewrite the statements so that they reflect a growth mindset instead.

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