

LENT: TESTING IN THE WILDERNESS



Testing in the Wilderness

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

As we continue to journey through the wilderness of Lent, in order to fully celebrate the joy of Easter, let this weeks' text reveal the wilderness within our own lives. The invitation for adults and kids alike is to ask what areas of life feel like a desert or drought, and more importantly, how is Jesus present and providing in those places?

Big Idea: God is present and provides for us in the wilderness of life.

Starter

- **Evidences of Grace**

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

- **Ask:** Have you ever been extremely thirsty? What were you doing and why couldn't you get a drink? How did it feel to finally have something to drink when you did?

Sing Together

Story - from Exodus 17:1-7

After God had rescued Israel out of slavery from Egypt and miraculously brought them safely through the Red Sea, they then had to travel through the wilderness in order to get to the land God had promised them. This could have been a very dangerous journey and there were many opportunities to worry and wonder how they would survive. What would they eat? Where would they get water? What if they encountered more enemies?

But the same God who defeated the Egyptians to free the Israelites, the same God who parted the sea, was still with them in the wilderness. God showed them where exactly to go by traveling in front of them in the form of a pillar of cloud during the day and fire during the night. He transformed water that wasn't safe to drink into good water. He provided food where the land gave no food.

Yet time and time again, the Israelites failed to remember God's presence with them and His care for them. They would grumble and complain, even at times wishing He had just left them as slaves in Egypt!

One time, soon after the Red Sea miracle,

the whole Israelite community set out from a place called the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they rose against Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah, which means quarreling and testing, because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

God provided for His people, even though they complained and doubted. He continued to care for them and show them His goodness and power over and over again.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ Do you ever feel like you're in a wilderness? Maybe where you feel worried about what's going to happen, or wonder if there is anything good, or just even feel angry or sad?
- ▶ Do you think God is there with you in those times and places?
- ▶ What does it look like for God to be present in those hard places?
- ▶ How does God provide refreshing life to you?
- ▶ In 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul wrote that Jesus is the Rock that was struck and the Israelites drank from. In John 7:37-38 Jesus said, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." He was talking about the Spirit being within us. How does Jesus bring the refreshing, living water we need in the wilderness of life?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, thank you for being with us, even in the hard times of life. Thank you for providing all we need. Thank you that one day we will enter fully into your kingdom and never lack anything again, because of what your Son, Jesus, has given to us. Help us to be filled with your Spirit. Amen.

Craft:

- Use the coloring sheet attached

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Sabbath** rhythm. Talk to your parents or guardians about how you can rest in the goodness of what God provides this week.

