

A NOTE FOR PARENTS

These are strange times—the experiences we are going through now are unique in our lifetimes, and it is likely that our world will not encounter anything similar for quite some time. We hope and pray that God will quicken its end and relieve the burdens that have been placed upon our families and society. It can be so easy to lament our current situation and wonder whether life will ever return to “normal.”

If we are not careful, we may echo the feelings of Elijah after his encounter with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, feeling entirely isolated and on the edge of despair in our human endeavor. Especially during this season in which we cannot freely travel around or visit friends and family, we must be careful to remember that we are not alone in our walk through life. It is so important to remain connected, even if only through creative means, to those who have our best interests at heart. We have to remain the church, even if we are spread out for a season.

Of even deeper importance than our human connection is our connection with God during this time. Without the anchor of many of our normal routines and responsibilities, we are vulnerable to drift away from those practices that keep us tethered to God’s purposes in our lives and families.

Even when we are aware of our need for God, it can be overwhelming to consider how God is present in our current situation. Sure, we may know that God has power and control over the events of history, including our current time, but does he know what it is like to endure real life situations like the one we now face? What do we do when it seems as though there is very little we can control?

When we read the stories of the gospels, recounting the amazing miracles and authoritative teaching of Jesus, it can be so easy to sit in awe of his activity on the earth and marvel at his divine being. What can become lost after 2,000 years of reflection on Jesus’ nature and church worship is a genuine understanding of Jesus’ humanity and ability to empathize with us in our weakness.

The story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness is helpful for us as we consider how he has experienced the full range of human emotion and trials. Each of the three temptations that the devil placed in front of him may seem completely within Jesus’ prerogative to perform. We know that Jesus could have easily made bread for himself out of rocks, he already possessed power and authority, and he could command legions of angels to his aide. However, the temptation in each of these actions was for Jesus to attempt to take control of his own situation and shortchange what God wanted to accomplish through him.

If Jesus had given in to any of these temptations, it would have revealed a lack of trust in God’s plan and timing, much like the original sin of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. In fact, the beginning of this story reveals that it was not the devil, but rather the Holy Spirit, that led Jesus into the wilderness for this testing. It was part of God’s plan for him to demonstrate his trust in the Father.

In the Old Testament, God’s people had failed to follow him through 40 years of wilderness wandering when God wanted to “humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands” (Deuteronomy 8:2). Jesus found strength in scripture from Deuteronomy to exemplify his success in overcoming temptation where Israel had failed in the past.

Jesus’ wilderness experience was an opportunity to lean into his deep trust in God’s purpose and provision. In so doing, he found strength and resisted temptation. Jesus is with each of us during our own period of loneliness and frustration. We ought to be careful about wishing away this time. Perhaps God also desires for us to experience his care in new ways that will strengthen us and prepare us for challenges ahead. Could this be his time to humble us and to test us to see what is in our hearts?

Note: Look for a video introduction to this worship experience at lhcco.org/worship-at-home/! Also, if you’re looking for a kids lesson for your children to watch together on Sunday mornings, we recommend the TruFire lessons from the Assemblies of God. These lessons follow the same curriculum path that we use with LHC Kids. Find all videos at lhcco.org/teaching/kids-church

READ

As a family, read Luke 4:1-15

As you read, think about why God, through the Holy Spirit, might have led Jesus into the wilderness for this time of testing. Talk about any of the questions below, and give opportunity for children and others present to pose their own questions:

About the Bible text:

- Who led Jesus into the wilderness after his baptism (see v1)? Who was in control during this time—God or the devil? What do you think God might have wanted to teach Jesus by experiencing temptation?
- Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days during this time—Can you think of any other important events in Israel's history that they spent 40 years in the wilderness?
- What were the three ways that the devil tried to tempt Jesus? What about each of these was tempting for Jesus?
- What about Jesus' situation—fasting for 40 days, living in the wilderness—would have made it easier or more difficult to resist temptation? Do you think Jesus felt closer to God or further from him during this time?
- Did Jesus give in to any of the temptations? How did he respond to the devil's challenges?

About how the Bible speaks to us today:

- Jesus clearly drew strength from God to resist temptation—how do you think that you can grow closer to God and trust him more?
- God did not shield Jesus from temptation, in fact he led him into the wilderness—What can we learn from Jesus in this story about how to not give into temptation?
- How do you think God might use tests in our lives to show us how well we trust and follow him?
- The devil tried to tempt Jesus to take control of his situation rather than trusting in God—What is one area of your life that you might be vulnerable to temptation? Where is it difficult to trust in God?

RESPOND

Jesus was tempted to sin, but the Holy Spirit gave Him power over the temptation. Jesus loves us, and He knows how hard it can be to face temptation.

The Bible says,

We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:15–16

Head outside for a walk in nature. Try to find a place that is as close to “wilderness” as you can so that you can spend some time talking with God. Find a place where you can stop and pray without distraction. As you spend time with Him, ask God to help you to identify one area where you are often tempted. More importantly, ask God to help you see a way out when you are tempted.¹

PRAY

End your Bible reading in prayer. Encourage each family member to share what they would like to pray for. Talk about how each of you might find strength from God to trust him and avoid giving into temptation. Use the questions below to help you identify areas where God can stand with you:

- In what ways are you struggling right now?
- What specific purposes does God have for you right now? Are you fulfilling them?
- In what areas do you need to give God control and trust him?

¹ Adapted from TruStory lesson Cycle A Spring Lesson 2: God Leads.

SING

Sing the song below together, and encourage everybody to reach out their hands to Jesus in worship. Explain that sometimes physically reaching out in worship can increase our willingness to praise God. Because we know Him for who He truly is--a God who loves us and cares for us--we can worship Him all the time, regardless of what happens.

Breakthrough² - Red Rocks Worship — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUvLKa_G_98

VERSE 1:

I am weary from the waves
Crashing over every day
God of Mercy, Please come Rescue me

I am longing for Your Voice
Your gentle whisper in the noise
Father, tell me everything's alright

CHORUS:

Your Power and Your Presence
Breaks Strongholds, King of Heaven
When You speak, mountains move
I believe there will be breakthrough

VERSE 2:

You alone can take my scars
And piece by piece restore my hear
Take what's broken,
Make it whole again

BRIDGE:

Shake the mountains,
Break the walls apart
Open the Heavens,
Almighty God, You are
Overcomer, Defender of my heart

By Your power, oceans open wide
Your fire falls down,
Heaven and earth collide
King Jesus, forever by my side

BLESS

Encourage everyone to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Then open a Bible and read 1 Corinthians 10:13:

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Stand in a circle with arms around each others shoulders and pronounce the following blessing over each member of the family

[Family member's name] , may you follow Jesus' example and have victory over temptation by the power of the Holy Spirit and your trust in the Father's will.

RESOURCES

The Bible Story Handbook: A Resource for Teaching 175 Stories from the Bible by John H. Walton and Kim E. Walton

When your Church Can't Meet, Gather your Family for Worship: How to Have a Family Worship Experience at Home — <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2020/march/when-your-church-cant-meet-gather-your-family-for-worship-h.html>

² Words and Music by Jake Espy, Kory Miller, Jason Stocker | CCLI# 7123001