

# Wilderness

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Look**

Sometimes we find ourselves in the wilderness – lost, confused, hungry – just trying to stay alive until we can find our way back.

1. Can you think of a time in your life when you felt like you were in the wilderness – lost and not sure how you would get back? What did it feel like to be in that place?
2. How did you get there? Was it through your own fault, or did it just happen to you?
3. How did you get back?

## **Book Matthew 4:1-11**

Jesus intentionally spends time in the wilderness after he is baptized. His time there is a preparation for his ministry – the way that he interacts with those who are hungry, those who use their power (Pharisees, for example) to try to test him, and those who might ask him for political loyalty, rather than loyalty to God.

1. Why does Jesus refuse to turn the stones into bread? Even though he doesn't feed himself in the desert, can you think of some stories about when Jesus fed others?
2. What is Jesus' response when the devil offers him political power? How does Jesus later describe power in the kingdom of God – who has power in God's kingdom?

## **Took**

The promise of the gospel is that Jesus will never leave us. Jesus has already gone ahead of us, even to the most forsaken places of the wilderness – and he meets us there when we are there. No place is so distant, or challenging that Jesus has not already been there; no test is so great that Jesus has not already overcome it.

1. Has Jesus met you in the wilderness? How did your faith in God help you to find your way out?
2. Like Jesus, did you find that being in the wilderness prepared you for ministry or other events in your life? What did you learn? How were you changed?

Adapted from the commentary at  
[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3174](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3174)