

**WEEK:**

1st Sunday of Lent (February 21, 2021)

THEME:

Repent and Believe

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Genesis 9:8-15

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

SECOND READING:

1 Peter 3:18-22

GOSPEL:

Mark 1:12-15

KEY WORDS:

Covenant, Promise, Sign, Penitence, Sacrifice, Hunger

KEY THEMES:

1. When we understand what a covenant is, we more fully understand why and how the Mass is a sacrifice and not just a celebration or memorial.
2. Lent reveals our spiritual dehydration.
3. God never broke a covenant. He is a Father who keeps His Word (promise).
4. The Church is the ark of salvation, welcoming in the tame and the wild, the clean and the unclean.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Stack and Search (10 min)

Instruct the teens to find a partner, and give each pair a Bible, a list of Lenten Bible verses, and a pile of Cheerios. When instructed to do so, one teen begins stacking the Cheerios, trying to make a tower out of the cereal. The other teen searches for the first verse from the list in the Bible. When they find it, they read it aloud and their partner stops stacking. For the next verse, the teens switch roles. This continues until all of the verses have been found and read aloud. The first pair to do so wins.

The following is a list of Lenten Bible verses:

Joel 2:12-13

Matthew 6:17-18

Isaiah 58:6-7

Joel 2:1-2

Genesis 2:7

Ezekiel 36:25-26

Matthew 4:4

Psalm 51:12

Psalm 42:2

John 3:16

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Father, we praise you for the chance to enter the desert with your Son. You desire for us to rely on you alone, and we ask for the grace to do so. Help us turn away from sin and turn toward you, so our hearts may be changed by your love for us. We thank you for your covenant with us and for the way Jesus fulfills your covenant. Please give us faith, hope, and love. In your name we pray. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- What is your perception of Lent? What has Lent been like for you in the past?
- Why is there so much desert imagery during Lent? What is the physical and spiritual significance of the desert?

Reflection: Repent and Believe (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Repent and Believe,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Mark 1:12-15 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO _____

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- What strikes you about Jesus’ entry into the desert? Does it inspire you? Does it challenge you?
- What do you need to repent? What do you need to believe in?

ORATIO _____

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting

point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Why do you think Jesus went into the desert before preaching about the Kingdom?
- How do you plan on imitating Jesus this Lent? What will be your “desert”?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said, “This is the time of fulfillment”? What was He fulfilling? How does this fulfillment apply to your life, today?
- Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is at hand.” What does this mean? Why is His proclamation so urgent?
- Why did Jesus not just say “repent” or “believe”? Why do we need to do both?
- What enables us to repent and believe?

CONTEMPLATIO _____

Turn to Me and Be Saved (10 min)

Take the teens into the chapel or another sanctuary space with a tabernacle. If this is not possible, display an image of a tabernacle or crucifix, and have the teens complete the reflection without turning. When they enter the chapel, have them turn away from the tabernacle and close their eyes. Recite the prayer found on the *Turn to Me and Be Saved* handout which can be found on the *September 2020 Life Teen USB* and online at lifeteen.com under Life Support: *September 2020*. Allow the teens to make two quarter-turns so that, when the prayer is over, they are facing the tabernacle.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to stick to their Lenten promises or, if they have felt prompted by the Lord, to commit to something new. Remind them why they have made these commitments: to draw closer to Jesus and depend on Him alone.