



### **Opening**

Go around the circle and have each person share their name, and one thing they have struggled with this past week. (Some examples of a struggle might include a homework assignment, a friendship, or something that didn't work out their way.)

### **Wilderness Survival**

Explain to your group that they have been chosen to be on a new reality show called "Wilderness Survival." On this show each person will be dropped off in a remote place where they will have to survive for 40 days on their own. Each person gets to take 3 items with them;

1. one item should be something that begins with the first letter of their first name,
2. one item should be something that begins with the first letter of their middle name,
3. one item should be something that begins with the first letter of their last name.

For example: My name is Scott Alan Meier  
My three items: sleeping bag, almonds, matches

### **How You Prepare for Big Events or Projects**

Ask for volunteers in the group to share times when they have had a really big project or huge event.

1. Have the volunteers share what the project or event was.
2. Ask them to share what it is they did to prepare for that event or project.

Probing questions might include:

- How far in advance of the event or project did you start preparing?
- What were some of the preparation steps you took?
- Were there certain preparation steps that were more important than others?

## Bible Study

Have someone in the group read Mark 1: 9-15 After you read this passage, take a moment to de-brief by asking the group to re-tell this story in their own words.

What we are reading here is Jesus' preparation for his public ministry. Jesus' public ministry started when he was about 30 years old and lasted about 3 years. This passage of scripture tells us of the events that occurred right before and as he began his public ministry.

Questions:

1. What are the things that occur in this passage, and how do you think each contributes to preparing Jesus for his public ministry?
2. What is the purpose of Jesus going into the wilderness right after he was baptized?
3. Walk through, as a group, what you think those 40 days were like. Mark doesn't tell us much, but we can imagine what Jesus went through.
  - o What were the first few days like?
  - o How was day 30 different from day 5?
  - o What are some of the temptations Jesus may have faced? (Other Gospels give us a glimpse of these, but Mark doesn't elaborate. This gives us a chance to think more about what Jesus faced during those 40 days)
  - o What is the purpose of noting there were wild animals in the desert?
4. How do you think the angels helped Jesus during those 40 days?
  - o Why do you think Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days instead of, say, 30 days?
  - o What is the first thing that Jesus does after his time in the wilderness?
  - o What do you think occurred in Jesus' baptism and in his time in the wilderness that would allow Jesus to make such bold statements in Mark 1: 15?

## Applying the Passage to our Lives

Right after Jesus is baptized and God declares that Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus heads into the wilderness. There he spends 40 days where he is tempted by Satan. But Jesus is watched over by angels who take care of him, and give him strength and support. Here, we see Jesus needing to lean on God to survive, just as Jesus will need to lean on God for the rest of his earthly life as he preaches, teaches, heals, and reminds people about what the Kingdom of God is supposed to be like, as well as when he goes to the cross.

Have someone read Mark 1: 12 – 13.

In your own life, what are some of the temptations you face that draw you away from God? What are those temptations, and how do they take your focus off God? (Encourage members of the group to share openly and honestly).

In the Mark account, we read that "angels attended Jesus." This means they took care of Jesus. Jesus could survive the wilderness because he was able to lean on the angels. When you are struggling in your faith, what or who do you "lean on" and how does that help you stay strong in your faith. (For example, maybe you pray more).

## Get Hands-On!

Use the activity "The Temptations We Face" from the Youth Worker Collective to guide students through identifying temptations and the ways we can overcome those temptations. Everything you need is available here: <http://youthworkercollective.com/the-temptations-we-face>

## **Closing**

Lent is a time to refocus on Jesus. Some people give up certain things during Lent, but just fasting from something isn't enough to put our focus back on Jesus.

1. As a group, come up with several things that could be done to put our focus back on Jesus and to work towards understanding how God desires us to live day to day. (For example, giving up an hour on one's computer and spending that time reading the Bible and journaling).
2. Have each person share some of the wildernesses they are in right now; what struggle they are facing or what concerns they have. Commit to praying for each other. You may even want to write these down and re-visit them in the coming weeks.
3. Close in prayer.