

Read

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalm 91:1-2, 10-11,
12-13, 14-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

First Sunday of Lent

March 6, 2022



REFLECTION

Jesus faced temptation for forty days—and it didn't start or stop with today's Gospel. Luke 4 recounts a particular time of temptation Jesus encountered after his baptism. The devil meets Jesus in the wilderness. They spend forty days together, and by the end, Jesus is famished and tired. The devil tests Jesus' commitment to God in a tense exchange atop a temple.

But this was far from the only time others tempted Jesus. Scribes and Pharisees tempted him with promises of wealth and prestige. Jesus' own disciples tempted him to stop his suffering. Daily, Jesus faced many of the same temptations we do today: to disobey our loved ones, to chase glory at the expense of relationships, to succeed above all else.

The Son of God knows how difficult it can be to resist temptation in favor of what's morally right. He also preaches an unrelenting message of forgiveness, for the times we succumb to temptation. Only Jesus is perfect. We are still on the journey. The beginning of Lent is a time to reflect on the temptations we find particularly challenging to face and ask Jesus our Messiah to intercede for us.



ACTION

Pick one temptation that affects your life on a regular basis. Perhaps it's a temptation to indulge in more food than needed, to disrespect your parents, to pick on a classmate who's an easy target, or not give your best effort in the classroom. Whatever your temptation is, face it head-on this Lent. Talk to friends about your struggles. Get the help you need. Work to not let the temptation win out.



"As It Is in Heaven"

— Matt Maher

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC2tMZ-jZ60>

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What is the greatest temptation you face daily?
- ❖ Why do you think this particular issue affects you in such a strong way?

Introduction to **LENT**



The Season

Lent is a season that captures the hearts and minds of Catholics each year, perhaps surprisingly so, since it is a season of penitence, of reordering, and of gaining new focus in our lives as Christians. Yet maybe this is exactly why the season is so popular. We all know that we fall short in our lives as Christ's disciples. Lent offers an annual time in which to get our act together. This forty-day period during which we turn our lives more fully toward Christ provides a designated time in which to turn away from sin, to participate in specific, traditional practices that will aid our spiritual growth, and to embrace ongoing conversion in Christ as the pattern of our lives.

The roots of the season as preparation for the initiation of the elect as they journey toward the Easter Vigil help to bring the season to life. As thousands of people throughout the world prepare for initiation, we grasp more fully the blessing and challenge of our own baptism and commit ourselves to Christ to a greater degree with our lives.

If your parish celebrates the scrutinies on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent with the elect, those preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil, you can use the Appendix (see page 238) to find sessions and handouts to accompany the Year A readings that are used on those days.

Celebrating Lent with Teens

The focus of Lent, with our admission that we sometimes fail to live as Christ's people, is particularly appealing to teens who are ready to take their lives of faith more seriously. It is helpful to remind them that the season is not wholly focused on giving up, but rather might be approached as taking up a practice or habit that will contribute to greater Christian living in the future. The traditional acts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving or works of charity provide the necessary structure by which young people may fully participate in the season. Inviting teens to intentionally embrace the season by participating in the liturgies, making and keeping Lenten resolutions, and reflecting weekly on the Gospel will enhance their spiritual growth as individuals and as members of the faith community.

Preparing the Liturgical Environment

The liturgical color for Lent is violet, and the Lenten environment is often bare of other adornment, as a means of furthering the reflective and penitential tone of the season. You might include a few bare branches and a crucifix to enhance the Lenten focus for your prayer. It is possible to add a small element each week to draw out the Gospel message, or simply include a Bible or lectionary, open to the Gospel passage for Sunday.



March 6, 2022

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LECTIONARY #24C

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalm 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Why are we so afraid of the desert? Perhaps we are afraid because the word desert conjures up images of empty, arid landscapes. While these descriptions are rooted in reality, we also know that desert lands are teeming with life. Although it can be intimidating to enter the desert, it is the only way we can truly experience the richness of plant and animal life found in this ecosystem. The same is true with our relationship with Christ as we begin this season of Lent. We enter the desert so we can more attentively listen to the voice of God and be strengthened to turn away from sin.

Q FOCUS: *We enter the desert to grow in our relationship with Christ.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

What visual changes do you see in your parish that tell you we are in a new liturgical season? What about in your gathering space? What other changes have you noticed at church that indicate we are now in the season of Lent? The liturgical color is purple, there may be fewer decorations, and the music might take on a more simple or solemn character. All of these changes help to remind us that we are in a penitential season. We recall the times we have turned away from God and use this season to draw closer to God, as we prepare to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection at Easter.

Church Teaching Connection

"In every age, the church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task. In language intelligible to every generation, it should be able to answer the ever recurring questions which people ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other" (*Gaudium et spes*, 4).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory.

Gospel

Luke 4:1-13

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, *One does not live on bread alone.*" Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." Jesus said to him in reply, "It is

written: / *You shall worship the Lord, your God, / and him alone shall you serve.* / Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: / *He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, / and: / With their hands they will support you, / lest you dash your foot against a stone.*" / Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, *You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.*" When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

It might seem strange to think that Jesus was tempted by the devil. Remember, though, that Jesus is both fully God and fully human, and temptation is definitely a part of being human. Take a moment to think about the reading we just heard.

► What do you notice about the humanity of Jesus?

Because Jesus is fully human, he knows and has experienced all that we go through. Jesus ate and played and learned, just like us. Today's Gospel even notes that Jesus was hungry from fasting!

► How does understanding Jesus' humanity help you to grow in your own relationship with Jesus?

The devil tempted Jesus with food, riches, and power. Even so, Jesus remained steadfast and did not give in to the temptations. What does temptation look like in your life? Sin sometimes seems so glamorous that we are easily drawn toward it. While we want take good care of ourselves, we don't want the self-care to turn into selfishness. While we appreciate the gifts and talents of other people, we don't want to live in jealousy and envy of our classmates.

► How do you deal with temptation?

Reread the last line of today's Gospel passage: "When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time" (Luke 4:13). Even when Jesus refuses to give into today's temptations, the Gospel writer notes that Jesus will be tempted again in the future. Jesus is not afraid, however, and continues his journey. We know that Jesus, unlike us, will not give into the temptations presented to him because he is divine. Today's Gospel passage of the temptation of Jesus reminds us that we must stay focused on growing in our relationship with God. Even when we encounter temptation and choose to sin, we can be mindful and try to do better next time. God loves us so much that nothing we do can ever separate us from God's love.

► What are some ways God reminds you of his love for you?

This season of Lent gives us the opportunity to examine how we use the freedom God gives to us. Do we make choices that draw us closer to God? Do we consciously move toward the life and love that God unconditionally offers? Do we work to build the kingdom of God here and now? Taking moments for reflection throughout this Lenten season can help us intentionally recall that all we do is directed to God.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 142.

Jesus is fully God and fully human, and faced temptation just like we do.

When we face temptation we have the choice to turn toward or away from God.

Even when we sin, God loves us more than we can possibly imagine.

Act on the Word

Temptations Today

For this activity, you will need sheets of paper, pens, and Bibles.

Divide the teens into small groups and give each group a Bible. Ask each group to imagine what the Gospel passage would look like if this story took place in today's world. Have the groups develop scenarios around the dialogue between Jesus and the devil. Encourage them to be creative. They can add dialogue to match the new setting, add new lines for Jesus as he refutes the devil's offers, or other creative additions. They can find the story in their Bibles (Luke 4:1-13). After the teens have had time to create their modern retelling of this passage, have the groups to act out their version. After each group "performs," invite the rest of the group to share constructive feedback about the content of the presentations. Guide the teens in discussing some of the common themes that surround temptation today.

Pray Differently

You will need to prepare some informational material on various Catholic prayer practices (some examples are mentioned in the activity below). Be prepared to share these with the teens.

Remind teens that prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are all components of Lenten spirituality. As Lent begins, encourage the young people to research different types of prayer within the Catholic tradition. You may wish to provide students with some examples, including lectio divina, praying with music,

praying the Rosary, imaginative or Ignatian prayer, adoration, etc. Invite students to choose and practice one of these methods of prayer during this season of Lent. Prayer is our way of communicating with God. The more we communicate with him, the stronger we become to fight temptations and follow Jesus.

Closing Prayer

*Ever faithful God,
the power of your Spirit fills our lives and
our world.
Help us to trust always in this power,
especially when doubts and fear threaten
our faith.
As we journey through these forty days to the joy
of Easter,
may our eyes remain focused on Christ,
our hope and our salvation.
We make our prayer through him, with him,
and in him,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.