

February 26, 2023

INTO THE WILDERNESS

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

In times together and apart, we wander through possibility to find companions all around us in our search for hope and new life.



We begin the Season of Lent in the wilderness. While we might think of wilderness as barren and empty spaces, wilderness teems with life. Likewise, our personal wilderness times can surprise us with surprising wonders that bring us to new awareness.

• • • • •

This week, we find ourselves in a wilderness where curiosity invites us to seek new sight into God's goodness right here and right now.

This Wilderness Season

Read [Matthew 4:1–11](#) or **listen** to the audio story "[A Day in the Wilderness](#)" or **gather** around as someone tells the story "[In the Wilderness](#)" in this week's Exploring Our Faith.

Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness. The Spirit "leads" Jesus into the wilderness; he does not go alone. Often this text is seen as a time of testing for Jesus – perhaps it is also helpful to look at it through the lens of Jesus being with himself and with God. How is God going with you into this wilderness season?

Watch the short film [Wilderness](#) based on a poem by Dr. Ian McCallum inviting us to imagine this possibility as more than a place but a season. It is this wilderness season that we begin this week.

As you enter into this new season, wonder together:

- **What feels forgotten in the wilderness of this moment?**
- **When do you only notice the bright stars and the bright colours? Where else might you see God in this season?**
- **How do you feel connected to every creature?**

Care, Practice, Make

Care for creatures

Just as Jesus found companions in the wilderness and found strength in God's care, recognize how connected we are to every creature by making these [apple bird feeders](#) to care for our feathered friends.

- **What could you make or do to care for God's creatures?**

Welcoming the wilderness

Settling into a new place takes time. It takes time to learn your new surroundings and find comfort in being among so much that feels new. Practice simply being in this new place.

1. Begin by breathing deeply and welcoming the wilderness of this new season.
2. Allow all your thoughts and feelings about Lent and the wilderness to surface, and then let them go.
3. Invite your curiosity to wonder: What might I find here in this wilderness?
4. Listen without judgment.
5. Breathe deeply and give thanks.

Activity Sheet

Make a wilderness path on this week's [activity sheet](#).



During the Week

Caring in the wilderness

Jesus insisted that there are better things than worrying about only ourselves and our own interests. Think of someone who would like to receive a letter from your family. Choose paper and envelopes with care; perhaps you would like to use a special pen. Share news of your family and include a photo or other memento to show you are thinking of them.

Wilderness choices

It's during this wilderness season that Jesus chooses who he will be and who he will be with his responses to the tempter's suggestions. The decisions we face about how we live our lives today are no different. Our choices about what will feed us and sustain us physically and spiritually can reflect God's love in our lives. As a family, make choices about how you will live this season together. Maybe you will eat simple meals or spend more time outdoors. Maybe you will commit to more service or be more intentional about your stewardship.

Wilderness calendar

Work together to make a poster representing a 40-day journey of Lent. You might draw a road divided into 40 segments to represent each day (think of a board game with different spaces), a tree with forty branches or another image from the wilderness most familiar to you. Prepare how you will move through this season together by charting a path where certain days have specific Lenten practices related to fasting, prayer, penance, repentance, and giving.

Examples:

Pray for patience today when someone gets on your last nerve; ask someone you know you've hurt for her/his forgiveness; fast from one meal today and give the money you saved to a charity.

You might not fill every day but come up with at least four or five practices for each week. (Remember, Sundays are not included in the 40 days.) The practices can get more challenging as you go along, or you might repeat a practice once each week. Display this where everyone can see it as you move through this season together.

Prayer

Spirit, you lead us into the night.

Sometimes the darkness is scary;

sometimes, it brings peace.

In the stillness of the night,

help us come to you.

Let us find you in ways we have not before.

As we wrestle with the questions of our lives,

help us know what really matters. Amen.

Listen to the song "Lo, I Am with You" (MP3 available [here](#) for purchase and download).

Visit [Lectio Connection](#) for current events that connect with this week's scriptures.

*Note: Some have reported difficulty opening in-document links through Safari.
If you're experiencing this, please re-open links using Google Chrome.*

Photo credit: Unsplash/Abigail Ducote

