

Mindful Colouring

Temptation in the desert

As we light this candle
And ring the bell
We pray that God is with us this day.

Close your eyes
Place your hand on your belly. Notice your breathe as your belly moves.
Breathe in through your nose and out
Through your mouth.
Breathe in and breathe and out
Repeat for 1 minutes.

Invite participants to begin colouring



Song - Big Daddy Weave Redeemed
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf-JsNVeNLc>

Song - I Am New - Jason Gray
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9bjPwwLgi0>

Song - Natalie Grant - Clean
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BfZ3KKKg9c>

Song - Broken Vessels
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61Hlx9Y_MQ

Scripture - Mark 1:12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Scripture Reflection

The passage from Mark 1:12-15 holds significant meaning within the Christian tradition, encapsulating themes of temptation, divine service, the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry, and the call to repentance and faith. Here's a breakdown of its key components and their meanings:

The Spirit Drove Jesus into the Desert: This reflects the active guidance of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life, leading Him into a period of preparation and testing before the start of His public ministry. The desert, a place of isolation and hardship, symbolizes a setting apart for spiritual focus and confrontation with fundamental challenges.

Forty Days, Tempted by Satan: The forty-day period is symbolic, echoing significant periods of testing, preparation, and transition in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as the Israelites' forty years in the wilderness. This time frame signifies a period of purification and readiness. The temptation by Satan serves to highlight Jesus' sinlessness and His fulfillment of what Israel and humanity failed to do: to remain faithful to God under trial.

Among Wild Beasts, and Angels Ministered to Him: This contrast highlights the dangers Jesus faced and His divine protection and support. The wild beasts may represent the threats and challenges present in the world, including the forces of chaos and evil. Meanwhile, the ministering angels signify God's care and sustenance, emphasizing that even in the harshest conditions, God provides and protects His own.

After John Had Been Arrested: This marks a pivotal moment in the narrative, indicating a transition from John the Baptist's preparatory ministry to Jesus' active proclamation of the Kingdom of God. It signifies the end of one era and the beginning of a new phase in God's redemptive plan.

Proclaiming the Gospel of God: Jesus begins His ministry with a message of good news—the gospel. This message is centered on the coming of the Kingdom of God, signaling the inbreaking of God's rule and reign in the world through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

The Time of Fulfillment: This phrase indicates that the long-awaited moment in God's plan of salvation has arrived. The promises of the Old Testament about the coming of the Kingdom and the Messiah are being fulfilled in Jesus' ministry.

The Kingdom of God is at Hand: The nearness of God's Kingdom suggests its immediate relevance and availability to Jesus' listeners. It calls for a response, indicating that the rule of God is manifesting in Jesus' works and words.

Repent, and Believe in the Gospel: This summarizes Jesus' call to His hearers. "Repent" or "the Greek word 'metanoia' meaning 'change of mind' " involves a turning away from sin and a reorientation of one's life towards God. "Believe in the gospel" invites trust and faith in the good news of God's Kingdom brought by Jesus. Together, they encapsulate the appropriate response to the inbreaking of God's Kingdom: a transformative change of heart and mind leading to a life of faith and obedience.

In summary, Mark 1:12-15 encapsulates key themes of Jesus' mission and message: divine guidance, the victory over temptation, the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, and the call to repentance and faith in the good news of the Kingdom. It sets the stage for Jesus' ministry of teaching, healing, and ultimately, sacrifice and resurrection, which are central to Christian faith.

Silent Reflection

Silently reflect on the today's scripture passage and its meaning for us today. Reflect on the questions for reflection.

Discussion

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in Jesus' journey into the desert? How does the Holy Spirit act in our life?
2. How does the period of forty days Jesus spent in the desert relate to Old Testament narratives?
3. What significance do the wild beasts and the ministering angels have in the narrative of Jesus' temptation?
4. What challenges or suffering will we face?
5. What does Jesus mean by "The time of fulfillment" and "The kingdom of God is at hand"?
6. How are we called to "change our minds"?
7. How can we prepare during this time of Lent?

Prayers of the faithful

1. Heavenly Father, just as Your Spirit led Jesus into the desert for a time of preparation and testing, we seek Your guidance in our own lives. Lead us through our spiritual wilderness, and help us to discern Your will in the face of challenges and decisions. May we be open to Your direction at every turn, trusting in Your wisdom to guide our paths. Lord hear us.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

2. Lord God, in moments of temptation and trial, remind us of Jesus' steadfastness in the desert. Grant us the strength to resist the enticements of the evil one and to cling to Your word for comfort and defense. May Your presence be a shield around us, keeping us faithful in all circumstances. Lord hear us.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

3. Almighty God, just as You provided for Jesus among the wild beasts and ministered to Him through angels, we pray for Your protection and provision in our lives. In the face of danger and need, be our refuge and sustenance. Send Your angels to guard us in all our ways, and deliver us from harm. Lord hear us.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

4. Gracious God, as the arrest of John the Baptist marked a new chapter in Jesus' ministry, help us to be faithful during times of change and transition. When one door closes and another opens, give us the courage to step forward in faith, trusting in Your plan for our lives. Guide us to be bearers of Your good news in every season. **ALL** - Lord hear our prayer.

5. Merciful Father, we hear Jesus' call to repent and believe in the gospel. Stir our hearts to turn away from sin and toward Your loving embrace. Help us to believe in the good news of Your kingdom with all our hearts, and to live out this faith in action and truth. May our lives reflect the transformative power of Your grace. Lord hear us. **ALL** - Lord hear our prayer.

5. Are there any other prayer?

Closing prayer

Loving Father,

As we reflect upon the passage from Mark 1:12-15, we come before You in humility and awe, recognizing the profound journey of Your Son, Jesus Christ, through the desert. Guided by the Holy Spirit into a place of solitude and trial, He embraced a period of preparation, facing temptation with unwavering faithfulness. In these moments of contemplation, we see the embodiment of purity and the fulfillment of Your promises.

Lord, the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness echo the trials and transitions of Your people through the ages, reminding us of Your constant presence and provision in times of testing. As Jesus stood firm against Satan's temptations, He became for us the perfect example of righteousness, showing us the path to remain faithful to Your commands.

In the presence of wild beasts and ministered by angels, we see the juxtaposition of danger and divine protection. It teaches us that, no matter the threats or challenges we face in this world, Your protection and sustenance are ever-present. Your care envelops us, even in the harshest conditions, affirming that You are our refuge and strength.

With the arrest of John the Baptist, a new chapter in salvation history unfolded, marking the commencement of Jesus' proclamation of the Gospel. This transition signals the beginning of a time when Your Kingdom is revealed through the words and works of Christ. The Gospel of God, a message of hope and redemption, was brought near to us.

The call to repentance and faith in the Gospel is as relevant today as it was then. Lord, we ask for the grace to experience metanoia, a transformation of our hearts and minds, that we may turn away from sin and reorient our lives towards You. Help us to embrace the good news of Your Kingdom, trusting in the salvation offered through Jesus Christ.

May the story of Jesus' time in the desert inspire us to seek Your guidance, to stand firm in the face of temptation, and to live in the light of Your Kingdom. Let us hold fast to the promise of fulfillment and the nearness of Your rule, responding with a commitment to repentance and a steadfast faith in the Gospel.

In Jesus' name, we pray,

Amen.