

Lent: First Sunday of Lent

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Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- Today's reading from the Book of Deuteronomy reflects the central beliefs of the Israelites.
- The people offered a portion of the first harvest of the year to acknowledge that the land belonged to God.
- The recited creed was an expression of gratitude to God.

Second Reading

- The passage from the Letter to the Romans stresses Paul's belief that Jesus is Lord.
- Jesus trusted in God, his Father, and was raised from the dead.
- What we must do to share in that salvation is simply to believe in the Risen Lord.

Gospel

- In today's Gospel passage, the Spirit drove Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
- Just as God led Israel out of Egypt, nourished them for forty years in the desert, and gave them the Promised Land, so God would care for Jesus during and after his forty days in the desert.
- Jesus passed the test because his trust in God never wavered.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for First Sunday of Lent

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:4-10—Story of the Hebrews' faith.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15—God is with us when we are in trouble.

Second Reading: Romans 10:8-13—Confess faith.

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13—Temptation of Jesus.

Invitation to prayer (30 sec.)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Begin the session with the Sign of the Cross. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us.

Listening for a word or phrase to speak to your heart (3-4 min.)

Read the Gospel passage or the special phrase slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they select their "word" from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

For Ages 5-6: Help children sound out the words "**Jesus in the desert.**" Read Luke 4:1-13 from a children's Bible or tell it in your own words.

For Ages 7-8: Read aloud the adapted Scripture text on the handout and then finish the story of Luke 4:3-13 in your own words or from a children's Bible.

For Ages 9-11 and Ages 12-14: Read the passage from the Gospel according to Luke. Ask young people to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their word or phrase. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Loving God through his word (3-5 min.)

For Ages 5-6: Start a conversation with children about Jesus in the desert by using the questions on the handout. Explain that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert and stayed with him. The Holy Spirit gave him strength to do the right thing. Emphasize that the Holy Spirit helps us and gives us strength to do the right thing. Close with the prayer.

For Ages 7-8: Call children's attention to the questions on the handout and read them aloud. Give children a quiet moment to think about their responses and then have them share their responses. Explain that everybody is tempted at some time to do the wrong thing but the Holy Spirit helps us to have the courage to do the right thing. Close with the prayer.

For ages 9-11: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Using the questions on the handout, engage young people in a conversation about the Gospel. Explain that everybody is tempted at some time to do the wrong thing but the Holy Spirit helps us to resist the temptation. Close with the prayer.

For ages 12-14: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Organize young people into three groups and have each group share and discuss their responses to the questions. Have one person note the most common responses (the ones that were offered by more than one or two people) of each group and then report to the large group. Close with the prayer.

Living the Gospel words through the week (3-5 min.)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal

choices to act on this week.