

*Show Us Light
in the Shadows*

Prayer Guide 1

For the week starting
March 1, 2020

Show Us Strength

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11
Genesis 2: 15-17; 3:1-7



Invitation

We begin our Lenten reflections with a vivid picture of Jesus in the wilderness, where he fasts for 40 days. Hungry, weak, and vulnerable, he faces the tempter. ‘Turn these wilderness stones into bread’, ‘jump from the Jerusalem temple’, ‘worship me,’ and you will have all the power and glory this world has to offer. To the first temptation Jesus responds, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4) He was able to stay true to who he was because he knew whose he was.

Opening Prayer: Become quiet. Light a candle. Notice your breathing. Say the first phrase of the breath prayer as you inhale and the second phrase as you exhale. Repeat as the Spirit leads you.

You have made us for yourself, /our hearts are restless till they rest in you. (St. Augustine)

Meditative Reading

Spend time with Matthew 4: 1-11. Write out the entire passage or an excerpt. Underline words that seem particularly important. Note the questions you have of the text and aspects of the story you’ve never noticed before. Feel the wilderness, the heat of day, the cold of night. Feel the hunger. Notice the strength of the temptations. Jesus quotes scripture but so does the tempter! How do you respond?

For Reflection

How are you tempted in your thoughts, in your family or in work relationships? What desires or seductions distress you? Bring these struggles to the surface. You might want to write them down. Bring your feelings and distress to God in prayer. Clench your fists as if holding the feelings and then slowly open up your hands, releasing all that you are holding into God’s mercy and care. God is present with us in our wilderness trials.

Closing Prayer

Merciful God, save me from the time of trial
and deliver me from evil.

Forgive my sins and fill me with the joy and peace
of your presence and strength.

Extinguish the candle and carry God’s light within you.

God will command the angels concerning you and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. Matthew 4:6 (Old Testament words used by the tempter! Yet they are words of courage and forgiveness.)

Additional Prayer Options

Select a prayer suggestion from the list below that grabs you, challenges you or causes you to question. You may stay with the one way of praying throughout the week or try several options.

Praying with the Scriptures

Read Genesis 2: 15-17; 3:1-7. Focus on how it portrays what it is like to be human. Even in this paradise Adam and Eve feel incomplete. They grasp for more, both of them thinking the emptiness they feel inside is exactly the shape of the fruit they eat. And of course it's not. How are you tempted to fill the emptiness inside? Sit in quietness asking God to fill the holes in your heart.

Praying through your life

As a righteous Jew, Jesus fasted in preparation for the beginning of his ministry. Many Christians today fast during Lent. Consider what distractions or attractions God may be calling you to release for this time.

Praying with Music

Listen to, sing or play the music that has been stirring in your heart, or choose songs from the list below. Dance to the music, move to it, take it along when you walk or as you drive.

STS #31 Jesus be the Center (or find on YouTube)

Refiner's Fire (find on YouTube)

STJ # 23 Slowly turning, ever turning

Praying for our World

World issues like climate change, hunger, disparity between rich and poor may make us feel hopeless. Ask God to open your eyes and heart to the places where God is active. Consider how you might become an agent of change. For example, are there ways to reduce your Carbon footprint? Talk with a friend about what you are doing and why. Jesus the one who was tempted continues to invite us to find both hope and courage in the God who named Jesus and all of us as beloved children. Pray you might discover who you are by recalling whose you are.