

# Into the Wilderness

## Matthew 4:1-11

### A Lenten Calendar

Click [here](#)

### Folded Journals

Click [here](#)

### A Letter to Families

Click [here](#)

### Today's Bible Reading

Click [here](#)

### Additional Bible Readings

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew places this story between Jesus' baptism by John and Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Forty days in the wilderness parallels Israel's forty years in the desert. Before land is entered or ministry proceeds, preparation in the presence of God opens the way. Three other figures play roles in this passage. 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. God, not the tempter, directs the course of action. Matthew variously identifies the second figure as tempter, devil, and Satan. Within this story, the tempter puts a face on the presence of evil in the world by tempting "ends" that overlook the "means" used to achieve them. The tempter's offers to Jesus are for more power, possessions, and so on. This connects with the "more" Adam and Eve wanted in the garden. The third figure(s) are the angels at the story's end. Their "wait- ing on" Jesus translates a Greek verb (*diakoneo*) that also means "minister" or "serve at table."

**We venture forward with tentative steps into your wilderness. As we step forward, make our steps curious and bold. Grant us eyes to see new things, and hearts to feel new feelings. May this venturing forward reward us with adventure as we follow Christ. Amen.**