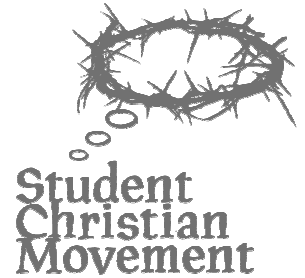


Small groups: Facilitator's notes



Sunday morning Bible study: Luke 4: 1-13 “Led by the Spirit into the wilderness”

(Facilitator's notes are in italics — these points might be helpful to clarify or deepen the discussion but feel free to let the discussion take its own course)

Welcome

Welcome the group and explain that this morning's small group session is a bible study—reflecting on Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. **Ask someone to read Luke 4: 1-13 out loud.** Follow the reading with a **few moments of silence** for people to reflect, gather their thoughts and pray. **Hand out copies of the questions.**

Questions to guide discussion of the text

Beginnings

The passage begins with Jesus being 'led by the Spirit in the wilderness'. Look at where this passage comes within the narrative of Jesus' life.

1. Why might Jesus be led by the Spirit in the wilderness at this particular moment in his life?
 - *The wilderness narrative comes between Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:21-22 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased') and the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:14-21 'He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor'). Perhaps a time of discernment? Working out his vocation? Exploring his mission?*

Unmasking the temptations

One way of thinking about the temptations is that they are different expressions of power. The first is the **power to exploit the land** for our own profit (turning the stone to bread), the second is the **power of domination and Empire** (authority over all the kingdoms of the world) and the third is the **power of entitlement** (God will protect us whatever we do). Jesus unmasks these as 'false' powers.

2. What do these temptations look like today? What are we, as individuals and as the Church, tempted by?

- *Power to exploit—think about 'security' - what do we do to try and make ourselves (or our societies) secure? How can this be detrimental to the land and to others?*
- *Power of domination and Empire—what powers do we need to reject? In what ways are we—in the West—part of the Empire?*
- *Power of entitlement—questioning ourselves and others when we say 'God is on our side'? Jesus' way is one of vulnerability—refusing to put God to the test.*

Wisdom of the old

Three times Jesus replies “It is written...”. He is rooted in ‘the old Story’ of his people and draws on scripture to reject the temptations of the Devil.

3. Where do we draw our strength from in the wilderness? What are we rooted in?

- *It might be helpful to get people to explain what they understand by 'the wilderness'.*

Lenten journeys: looking ahead

We are at the beginning of the period of Lent. Your group might want to spend a bit of time sharing how they would like to take things forward after conference throughout Lent.

4. Do you have any particular ways of 'journeying' through Lent? Is there something you would like to try to do differently for the next few weeks, to live out your faith?