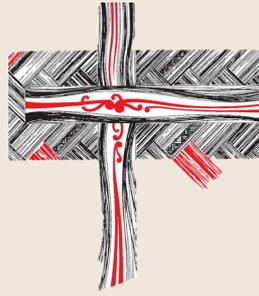




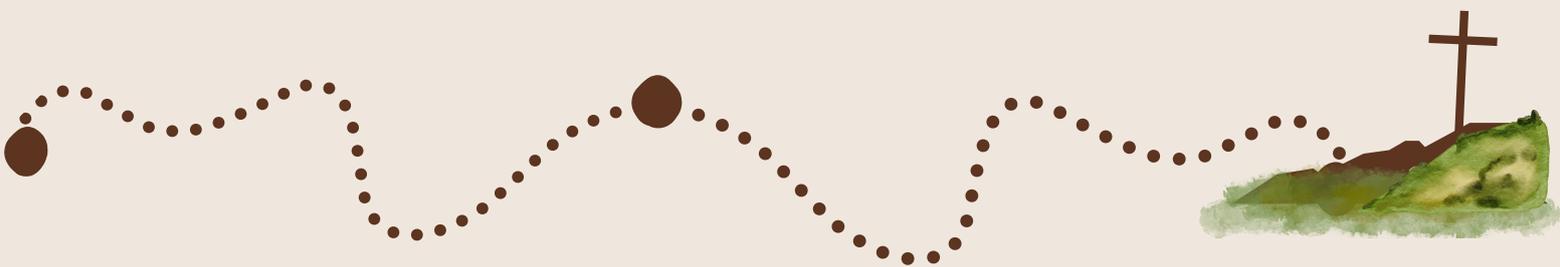
**A JOURNEY THROUGH
THE WILDERNESS**

Seek the Lord while He is near.
Scooch close to Him while He can be found.
Isaiah 55:6





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JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

Nav mai haere mai, welcome to this 7 week series on the journey toward Easter we call Lent. What is Lent? Lent is about turning away from anything that's getting in the way of God's Way in our life. It's about taking some time to think about what's going on in our hearts and minds and clearing the way to following Jesus. Over these 7 weeks, tamariki will learn about how to draw near to God and follow the Way of Jesus, while following Jesus journey towards the cross. If you are new to Lent, kei te pai! There will be plenty of info and tips along the way.

Preparing to Lead: Take some time to read Matthew 4:1-11. Watch [this Bible Project video](#) on the biblical theme of Wilderness. In which fresh ways is God speaking to you about Wilderness? What might this journey through the Wilderness with Jesus hold for you / wonder?

This curriculum is designed to provide teaching lessons and activities to deepen learning. Let me encourage you to find a good rhythm to your programme that includes more than what is covered here. There's a great planning resource on our website that will help you refine and reflect on your sessions. For more tips on how to set your sessions up for success, check out the STRANDZ website.

For this 7 week series, you might want to include decor or themed spaces that tie in with exploring the wilderness. Tamariki are really into shows like "Alone" where human limits are tested in the wilderness. Get creative with how you draw on this theme. You'll notice the animals on the cover page, all are actually present in the Judean wilderness!

Each akomanga/lesson has the lectionary scripture reading, as well as 7 lesson components, each with a corresponding symbol:



Whakaaro
Reflection



Kupu Hou
New Words



Matau
Hook



Kōrero
Story



Karakia
Prayer



Tākaro
Play



Hanga
Create

created by:

WEEK 1: INTO THE WILDERNESS

MATT 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The accuser came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' Then the accuser took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' Again, the accuser took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' Then the accuser left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.



Whakāro/ Thoughts for leaders

Our theme for this Lent season, is the idea of a journey through the wilderness. If you haven't done so already have a look at [the bible project video](#) on the biblical theme of wilderness.

The wilderness is a place of struggling. It's the reality that we aren't home yet. But in the Bible, time and time again. God meets His people in the wilderness.

Over and over again, we see how God uses the tragedy and sadness of the wilderness to prepare His people for future garden life, (the Biblical theme of garden being connect to heaven.)

So in a shocking twist, the wilderness, is in fact the place where God meets with His people and transformation happens. It's where we become the people who are ready to really enjoy the future garden life that God promises.

Have a listen to [this podcast](#) on Jesus' journey through the wilderness.

Have a think about which wilderness you are in right now.

What are the trials and temptations you face?

In which ways might God be meeting you in the wilderness?

What helps you hold on to the garden hope of future life with Jesus?



Kupu Hou/New Words

Kia tata mai: Come close to me

Try this phrase when you start today's kōrero.

Tata (close) is also in our memory verse for this series.

"Rapua a Ihowa i tona kitenga ai; karangatia atu kei TATA ana ia." Ikaia 55:6 (Isaiah 55:6)

Throughout this Lent wilderness journey Jesus calls to our tamariki "Kia tata mai."

WEEK 1: INTO THE WILDERNESS



Matau/Hook

Pull out the wilderness map/banner.

Ask: What might this be for?

Explain: We will be going on a special journey into the wilderness with Jesus.

Ask tamariki to count the dots on the map, "what might they mean?" (7 stops on our journey, over 7 weeks.)

Ask: Have a look at where we are heading. What might the cross symbol at the end mean? And have a look at what's at the first dot, where we are starting today? Where else have we seen a sneaky snake in the Bible? What was he up to?



Kōrero/Story

Resources: Jesus figurine,
Rock for figurine to stand on
Beatitudes cards A & B

Say: We call this wilderness journey towards Easter, Lent. Lent is a special time that churches all over the world travel in our hearts and minds together every year in the weeks before Easter.

We will be learning about what Lent is, why we celebrate it, and why it's so awesome over the next 7 weeks. But today we'll read about Jesus' real life wilderness time.

Read: Matthew 4:1-11

Ask: I wonder how it felt for Jesus to be without food for 40 days?

I wonder how Jesus felt at the start of His journey?

I wonder how he felt at the end?

I wonder what gave him hope and courage to keep going when the accuser was giving Him such a hard time?

Some people think that the best way to summarise what the accuser was saying to Jesus was "Don't be a loser"

Ask: Has anyone ever said that to you?

I wonder why it's so hard to resist the temptation to do the wrong thing when someone says "Don't be a loser?"

Say: When people do and say mean things to us, it's really hard to make the right choices. In fact no human has ever managed to make the right choice every time EXCEPT Jesus. In the wilderness He is going through a big test, a test that every other human being had failed, and guess what... He passes!

I wonder what it means that Jesus, God with skin on, is the only human to ever pass the accusers test?

Teaching Tip

It takes tamariki, on average 10 seconds to come up with an answer to a patai/question. As adults we are so tempted to jump in with more patai or thoughts. Count to ten in your head after asking a question. Even if some tamariki are ready to answer, give everyone a window for thought. Awkward silences are your friends.

WEEK 1: INTO THE WILDERNESS



Tākaro/Play

Surviving the Wilderness

You'll need: 2 x backpacks, wilderness survival gear i.e. torches, hats, sunblock, maps, compass, matches (empty box!) etc, PLUS some random NON essentials. Toys, lollies etc and "Obstacles" cushions, cones, etc.

Ask: What do we need in the wilderness? As a team you've got 2 minutes to pack a bag, choosing ONLY 5 items and be at the starting line.

After bags packed

Ask: What might we need to survive a wilderness journey of our hearts with Jesus, a journey that might take us through hard times?

In Jesus' story, what helped him to survive the things that the accuser said to Him?

Game cont....One child from each group to wear the back pack, blindfold them and have their team call them through a "wilderness" of obstacles. Do this one team at a time.

Then get tamariki to call a leader through. Leader to "give up" at various points saying "I'm a loser!" "This is too hard" and get tamariki to call out encouragement. You might like to set up an "accuser" leader to tempt you with treats.



Karakia/Prayer

"Jesus, you invite us into the wilderness. Wilderness can be hard and scary as well as exciting. Help us to remember, that you faced the wilderness and you won the ultimate battle against the accuser. You are the best leader to have in the wilderness. Keep us close to you, Kia tata mātou ki a koe. Āmine."



Hanga/Create

Lenten Koru

You will need: Copies of the whānau lent journal (one per family), air dry clay (400g per whānau) small birthday cake candles, hard surface (i.e. icecream container lid) that clay can be taken away to dry on.

Have tamariki roll out clay into a long sausage and coil it up into a koru shape.

Then press the base of the birthday candle into the clay koru 40 times, so there are 40 evenly spaced candle shaped holes in the top of the koru.

In combination with the journal, whānau can journey toward Easter with a short daily practice of moving the Lenten candle forward one space and lighting it, then completing the simple reflection in the journal.