

# DESERT WANDERER

## AN EDGE NIGHT ON THE SEASON OF LENT

### SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:7  
Mark 2:17  
Matthew 4:1-11  
Hebrews 4:15  
James 1:17

### CCC

540  
1605

### YOUCAT

88

### KEY WORDS

Lent  
Penance  
Fasting  
Almsgiving

### SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Paper footprints
- Pens/pencils
- Sand
- Sandbox
- "Mary's Way of the Cross" handout pages 55-58

### MEDIA

#### SUGGESTIONS

- YouTube: "40 Days--Matt Maher" by avon712
- YouTube: "Ash Wednesday & Lent in Two Minutes" by bustedhalovideo
- Song: "40 Days" by Matt Maher (*Welcome to Life*, Spirit and Song)
- Song: "How He Loves" by David Crowder Band (*Church Music*, sixstepsrecords)
- Edge Video: "Yours Are the Hands" (Edge Video Support 16)

### EDGE NIGHT GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to discuss the real meaning of Lent and how we can more fully enter into this season of repentance and conversion.

### EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE

The night begins with a game of "Follow the Leader." After the game, there will be a short video followed by a teaching on the season of Lent and what types of penance we are called to do during this season. During small groups, the youth will have the chance to reflect on how they can make the acts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving their own. The youth will finish in the church by praying Mary's Way of the Cross.

### ENVIRONMENT

Cover all of the walls of your meeting space with purple cloth so that the youth feel like they are walking into the liturgical season. In the front of the room, place a large sandbox (at least 5 ft. x 5ft.) filled with sand, which will be used during the Break portion of the night. Place a few rocks in it or around it. Where the youth enter the room, place green and flowering plants (fake or real). Incorporate bowls or buckets of water with the greenery. Decorate the rest of the room with the colors and decorations your parish uses for Lent – purple fabrics, desert plants, priest vestments, etc. If you are using this night during Lent, consider giving the teaching in your church so that you can

point to the different elements of decoration as you go through the Proclaim.

## CORE TEAM FORMATION

In his 2014 Lenten Message, Pope Francis reflected on Saint Paul's words, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). The Son of God, out of His great love for us, emptied Himself and became poor. Jesus did not become poor for His own sake but rather so that we might become rich. Each year Lent reminds us that Christ emptied Himself completely, even to death on the cross, so that we might have everlasting life.

It is comfortable for many of us to simply allow Lent to remind us of what Christ did for us, but as Pope Francis encourages us, we as Christians are called to address the many different types of poverty in this world and spread the Good News of repentance and conversion. "In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it" (Pope Francis, 2014 Lenten Message).

- What different types of poverty do you see in the world?
- How can we help to alleviate the different types of poverty in this world?

- What are some ways that you can grow in deeper conversion during this Lenten season?

## TO THE PARENTS

Today at Edge your youth learned about the liturgical season of Lent. We learned that the 40 days of Lent is a time of penance and conversion in our Church. Through acts of penance, we unite ourselves in small ways to the mystery of Christ's fasting and prayer in the desert. We learned that we can perform acts of penance through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Through these acts of penance, we grow in love for the Lord. Penance helps us to properly align our passions for the things of this world so that they do not rule us but rather that we have control over them. Here are some questions for your son or daughter:

- Why did Jesus decide to go into the desert for 40 days?
- How can we as a family pray more?
- Are there things as a family we should fast from during Lent? (e.g. TV, eating out, time on the internet)
- What can we do as a family to give alms? (e.g. put aside money for a charity, volunteer at a soup kitchen/charity)

# GATHER

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

(5 min)

Gather in all of the youth. Introduce any youth that are there for the first time, and recognize any birthdays. Give a brief introduction to the night. Then open the night with prayer.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER GAME

(10 min)

Start by getting everyone in the group to stand/sit in a circle facing inwards. Then pick one person and send him or her out of the room. While he or she is out of the room, appoint a 'leader'.

This person is the one who will lead the group in various movements (e.g. stomping feet, clapping, singing, etc). Everyone else in the circle must mimic the leader without giving away who the leader is. Instruct the leader that he or she must change their movement every 15-20 seconds.

Bring the person back into the room, have him or her stand in the middle of the circle, and begin the game. The person who was sent out of the room should try to guess who the leader is as the group performs the various movements. They get three chances to guess. If the “guesser” picks the leader correctly, make sure to give them a prize. The “leader” then becomes the “guesser,” and the game continues.

# PROCLAIM

## “40 DAYS--MATT MAHER” VIDEO

(5 min)

Play the video “40 Days—Matt Maher” by avon712 from the Media Suggestions.

## “DESERT WANDERER” TEACHING

(10 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 52 to 54. Here are the main points from the teaching:

- Lent is a penitential season that gives us the opportunity to reflect on Christ’s 40 days of fasting and prayer in the desert.
- We are called to do acts of penance through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.
- Almsgiving is important because we are called to share all the good blessings God has given us with those who are less fortunate.

# BREAK

## WANDERING WITH A PURPOSE

(15 min)

Supplies:

- Paper footprints
- Pens

Break the youth into small groups, and explain this time of reflection. Here is an example:

*Sometimes we can feel that we are just wandering through life, but during Lent we are reminded to wander with a purpose.*

*Each of you will receive a blank footprint. Your blank footprint needs a purpose. Take some time to reflect and decide on how you will wander through Lent with a purpose. Write your commitment on your footprint to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.*

Play some quiet music while the youth reflect and write on their footprints. Then instruct them to come to the front of the room and place their footprints in the sand. This represents that we are also journeying with Christ through the desert, through these 40 days of Lent.

# SEND

## MARY’S WAY OF THE CROSS

(30 min)

Supplies:

- “Mary’s Way of the Cross” handout pages 55-58

Brings all the youth into the church and briefly explain to them what the Stations of the Cross are. Here is an example of an explanation:

*Tonight we will have the opportunity to journey with Christ through His suffering and death. On the walls of the church are fourteen stations that depict Christ throughout His journey to His Crucifixion and death. There are many different ways to pray the Stations of the Cross, but tonight we will be reflecting on them from Mary’s perspective. Try to imagine that you are walking with Mary as you watch Jesus willing walk to His death because of the unconditional love that He has for you!*

Begin *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...*

Using the “Mary’s Way of the Cross” handout found on pages 55-58, walk the Stations of the Cross. Allow the youth just a few minutes to sit and pray on their own about what they have just reflected on. Conclude the Edge night in the church.

**FURTHER ADAPTATION IDEAS**

- If you are unable to use the Stations of the Cross in the church, create a PowerPoint.
- If time permits, close the Way of the Cross with the song “How He Loves” by David Crowder Band.

Notes

# DESERT WANDERER

## TEACHING

### KEY WORD DEFINITIONS

**Lent** - Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert in fasting and prayer.

**Penance** - A conversion of heart toward God and away from sin, which implies the intention to change one's life because of hope in divine mercy.

**Fasting** - Refraining from food or another material thing as an expression of interior

penance, in imitation of the fast of Jesus for 40 days in the desert.

**Almsgiving** - Money or goods given to the poor as an act of penance or fraternal charity.

### THE SIGNS OF LENT

During **Lent** we see a drastic change in the decorations in our parish. The altar is stripped bare of any extra decorations, flowers and plants are also taken down. The liturgical colors also change to purple, much like during Advent, because Lent is also a time of preparation.

Lent is a time to enter into **penance**, deeper prayer, and **almsgiving** – all which will be later explained. We should take notice of how the environment of the Church changes because it indicates to us that there is something new happening in the life of the Church. In this case, the parish often resembles the barren desert in which we are called to enter into spiritually.

**Key Word**

**Key Words**

### INTO THE DESERT

Just like in our game where we followed the leader, we are called in our faith lives to follow Christ as our leader. During the season of Lent, we follow Him into the desert.

When we hear the word Lent, many of us relate it to just simply giving something up, and usually it ends up being chocolate, ice cream, cookies, or other food items. Although part of Lent does involve sacrifice, the season of Lent is a time of repentance and

**CCC 540**

renewal for each of us as we unite ourselves to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.

**Hebrews 4:15**

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert for 40 days without any food to be tempted by the devil. Can you imagine going 40 days without food? Can you even imagine going just a couple days? Take a moment to imagine how Jesus might have been feeling. He was probably tired, starving, dirty, and worn down by the sun. Despite all these many feelings, He stayed faithful to His heavenly Father when the devil tempted Him. We know that it was not easy for Jesus to say no to the devil's temptations, for St. Paul writes, "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin."

**Mark 2:17**

Just as Christ went into the desert for 40 days, we are called into a spiritual desert for the 40 days of Lent. Lent is a time for penance, symbolized by the color purple, where we turn from sin and return to God. Jesus came not "to call the righteous, but sinners." Throughout our lives, we may find that the material things of this world become more important than loving God. Lent is a time for us to concentrate on making God first in our lives.

**Genesis 2:7**

This solemn journey begins on Ash Wednesday, when we receive ashes upon our forehead. When we receive these ashes, we hear this prayer, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes are not a sign of how holy we are but rather a reminder to repent of our sins, humble ourselves, and renounce our own pride. Just as God formed man out of the clay of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life, He can breathe new life into all of us who have fallen to sin.

During Lent we are called to perform acts of penance as a way to help us turn away from our own sinfulness and follow Christ. Jesus even undertook acts of penance, so we must follow His example. These acts of penance can be done through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

## PRAYER

**CCC 1605**

Within each one of us is a desire that cannot be satisfied by anyone or anything, except for God. God created each of us out of love and also calls each of us to love. This is "the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being." Through prayer, which is a conversation with God, we experience God's love for us while also loving Him. Throughout Lent, we should strive to dedicate more time to prayer. There are so many ways we can pray. We can pray the rosary, read and reflect on Scripture, or simply sit and talk with God about our daily lives.

**Key Word  
Matthew 4:4**

## FASTING

By **fasting**, we show God that He is most important in our lives. Jesus tells us that "one does not live by bread alone, but by every

word that comes forth from the mouth of God.” We want to give up something that will “hurt” us a tiny bit so that in some small way we can unite ourselves to Christ who fasted for 40 days. Choose one or two things that you enjoy on a regular basis, and challenge yourself to give those items up during Lent. Some ideas include, chocolate, soda, coffee, Facebook, Twitter, or Vine. But whatever you decide to fast from, do not let that thing rule you again when Lent is over.

## ALMSGIVING

Another way of doing penance is through giving alms or giving money or goods to the poor. There are many people who are less fortunate than we are. Every good thing is a gift from our heavenly Father, and we are meant to share what we have with those who are less fortunate. If we end up fasting from something that costs money, we are called to donate that money rather than keep it for ourselves. And even if what we fast from does not cost money, we can still find ways to give alms. Even if you can only afford to donate just a few dollars, God will bless you. Remember, it is not about the amount but the intentions of our own heart. Maybe you cannot donate money or resources, but hopefully you can donate your time to a charity or someone who is in need. Talk with your parents about different ways that you might be able to give of yourself to others.

*James 1:17*

## CONCLUSION

The season of Lent is not simply about what we are giving up, but rather it is a time to return to the Lord who first loved us. God’s greatest gift was the gift of His only begotten Son on the cross. Christ died so that we might have life everlasting. During this season of Lent, we also die to ourselves so that we might wait in hope for the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.



# MARY'S WAY OF THE CROSS

## FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Meditation:

It was early Friday morning when I saw my Son. That was the first glimpse I had of Him since they took Him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks. Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment, asked the crowd why they wanted my Son executed. All around me they shouted, "Crucify Him!" I wanted to plead with them to stop, but I knew this had to be. So I stood by and cried silently.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, it is hard for me to imagine the anguish Your mother felt at Your condemnation. But what about today, when I hold a grudge towards my parents, my siblings, or my friends ...? "Crucify Him!" When I judge those who are different from me...? "Crucify Him!" Doesn't this bring tears of anguish to both You and Your mother? Forgive me, Jesus.

*Hail Mary...*

## SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Meditation:

Regaining a little strength, I walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and my Son stumbled out, the guards laughing behind Him. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on His shoulders. Then they shoved Him down the road. My pain for Him was unbearable. I wanted to take the cross from Him and carry it myself. But I knew this had to be, so I walked on silently.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I beg you to forgive me for the many times I have added more weight to Your cross when I chose to walk past a student who was sitting all alone. Forgive me for gossiping about

others and for doing nothing when I see someone at school being bullied or made fun of. Help me to be like Mary, always seeking to lighten the crosses of others. Forgive me, Jesus.

*Hail Mary...*

## THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Meditation:

I followed close behind my Son as He stumbled toward Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt me more than to see Him in such pain. I saw the cross digging into His shoulders. My heart dropped when I saw Him fall face to the ground, the heavy cross landing squarely on His back. For a moment I thought my beloved Son was dead. Now my whole body began to tremble. Then the guards kicked Him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped Him. I wanted to protect Him with my own body. But, I knew this had to be, so I walked on and wept silently.

Prayer:

Lord, how often have I seen You fall, and, unlike Mary, have left You there without concern? How often have I seen people make mistakes and laughed at them? How often do I find myself losing patience with my parents because I do not get my way? Mary offered you her support through your entire suffering and death. Help me to do the same for You by the support I give to others. Lord, have mercy on me.

*Hail Mary...*

## FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Meditation:

I had managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my Son. I called to Him through the shouting voices. He stopped. Our eyes met, mine full of tears of anguish, His full of pain and confusion. I felt helpless; then His



eyes said to me, "Courage! There is a purpose for this." As He stumbled on, I knew He was right. So I followed and prayed silently.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the many times our eyes met and I turned mine away. Forgive me for the times things did not go my way and I let everyone know about it. Forgive me for the times that I have not stood up for You or my faith when others criticized my beliefs. Forgive me for the times that I have lacked the courage to ask for forgiveness when I have wronged someone that I love. Yes, Lord, our eyes have met many times, but fruitlessly.

*Hail Mary...*

## **FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS**

Meditation:

I could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of my Son as He tried to carry His heavy load. Each step looked as if it would be His last. I felt His every pain in my heart, and I wanted the whole thing to end. Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten my Son's load. He asked the guards why this had to be. I knew and so followed silently.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I have many times refused to help You. I have been a selfish person who has often questioned Your Word. Forgive me for the many times that I have only thought of myself, not caring how my actions may have hurt others. Do not let me remain like Simon, but help me to be like Your mother, Mary, who always silently followed and obeyed.

*Hail Mary...*

## **SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

Meditation:

As I continued close by Jesus, a woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil, and began to wipe my Son's sweating, bloody face. The guards

immediately pulled her back. Her face seemed to say, "Why are you doing this to Him?" I knew, so I walked on in faith, silently.

Prayer:

Lord, this woman gave You the best she could. On the other hand, I have wanted to take more than I give. So many opportunities arise every day for me to give to You by giving to others, but I pass them by. Forgive me for the times that I did not help the new student at school or ran past a player on the field instead of helping them up. My Savior, never let me ask why again, but help me to give all I have to You.

*Hail Mary...*

## **SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

Meditation:

Again my Son fell, and again my grief was overwhelming at the thought that He might die. I started to move toward Him, but the soldiers prevented me. He rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing my Son fall, get up again, and continue on was bitter anguish to me. But, since I knew this had to be, I walked on silently.

Prayer:

Lord, of all people Mary was Your most faithful follower, never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt for You. I have many times turned away from You by my sins and have caused others to turn away from You. Forgive me Lord for the many times I have ignored Your greatest Commandments to love God above all things and to love my neighbor as I love myself. I beg You to have mercy on me.

*Hail Mary...*

## **EIGHTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

Meditation:

I was walking a few steps behind Jesus when I saw Him stop. Some women were there crying for Him and pitying Him. He told them not to shed tears for Him. They had the opportunity to accept Him as the Messiah; like many others, they rejected Him instead. He told them to shed

tears for themselves, tears that would bring their conversion. They did not see the connection between that and His walk to death. I did, and as He walked on, I followed silently.

Prayer:

My Savior, many times have I acted like these women, always seeing the faults in other - my parents, my friends, my teammates - and pitying them. Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness and asked for Your forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Lord, You have taught me through these women. Forgive me, Lord, for my blindness.

*Hail Mary...*

## **NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME**

Meditation:

This fall of Jesus was agony to me. Not only had He fallen on the rocky ground again, but now He was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion. The soldiers screamed at Him and abused Him, almost dragging Him the last few steps. My heart pounded as I imagined what they would do to Him next. But, I knew this had to be, so I climbed the hill silently behind Him.

Prayer:

My loving Jesus, I know that many times I have offered my hand to help people, but when it became inconvenient or painful to me, I left them, making excuses for myself. Help me, Lord, to be like Your mother, Mary, and never take my supporting hand away from those who need it.

*Hail Mary...*

## **TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES**

Meditation:

With my Son finally relieved of the weight of the cross, I thought He would have a chance to rest. But the guards immediately started to rip His clothes off his blood-clotted skin. The sight of my Son in such pain was unbearable. Yet, since I knew this had to be, I stood by and cried silently.

Prayer:

Lord, in my own way I too have stripped You. I have taken away the good name of another by talking bad behind their back and have stripped people of their human dignity because of the way that I look at them or think about them. Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended You through the hurt I have caused others. Help me to see you in all people.

*Hail Mary...*

## **ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

Meditation:

As they threw Jesus on the cross, He willingly allowed Himself to be nailed. As they punctured His hands and His feet I felt the pain in my heart. Then they lifted up the cross. There He was, my Son, whom I love so much, being scorned as He struggled for the last few moments of earthly life. But I knew this had to be, so I stood by and prayed silently.

Prayer:

Lord, what pain You endured for me. And what pain Your mother went through, seeing her only Son die for love of me! Yet, both You and she are ready to forgive me as soon as I repent of my sin. Help me, Lord, to turn away from my sinfulness.

*Hail Mary...*

## **TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

Meditation:

What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her Son die right before her eyes! I, who had brought this Savior into the world and watched Him grow, stood helplessly beneath His cross as He lowered His head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but mine was greater than ever. Yet, this had to be, and I had to accept it, so I stood by and mourned silently.

Prayer:

My Jesus, have mercy on me for what my sins have done to You and to others. I thank You for Your great act of love. You have said that true love is laying down your life for your friends. Let me

always be your friend. Teach me to live my life for others and not fail You again.

*Hail Mary...*

## **THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS**

Meditation:

The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped. I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of our Savior, my Son. Then two men took the body from the cross and placed it in my arms. A deep sorrow engulfed my being. Yet, I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my Son, but it had also brought life to all of us. I knew this had to be, and I prayed silently.

Prayer:

Lord, Your Passion has ended. Yet, it still goes on whenever I choose sin over You. Through my own sinfulness I have had my very own role in crucifying You. Now, my Savior, I beg Your forgiveness with all my heart. Help me to live a life worthy of You and Your mother.

*Hail Mary...*

## **FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB**

Meditation:

We brought Jesus' body to a tomb, and I arranged it there myself, silently weeping, silently rejoicing. I took one more look at my loving Son and then walked out. They closed the tomb, and before I left, I thought, I knew this had to be ..... it had to be for You! I would wait in faith silently.

Prayer:

Yes, my Lord, this had to be because You love me, and for no other reason. All You ask is that I live a holy life. You never said such a life would be easy. Lord, help me to leave sin behind and live for You alone by loving your heavenly Father and everyone that I encounter.

*Hail Mary...*

*(Adapted from Mary's Way of the Cross by Fr. Richard Furey, CSSR)*

# EDGE NIGHT CHECKLIST

## EDGE NIGHT DATE:

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## EDGE NIGHT TOPIC:

\_\_\_\_\_

## CORE TEAM ASSIGNMENTS:

Environment \_\_\_\_\_

Opening Prayer \_\_\_\_\_

Games \_\_\_\_\_

Proclaim \_\_\_\_\_

Closing Prayer \_\_\_\_\_

Videos: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Songs: \_\_\_\_\_

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## WEEK PRIOR TO EDGE NIGHT:

- ☐ Hand out/email the Edge Night to the Core Members
- ☐ Assign duties to the Core Team
- ☐ Pick videos and/or songs
- ☐ Gather all the supplies
- ☐ Email Core Team the Edge Night Core Formation

## WEEK OF THE EDGE NIGHT:

- ☐ Prep for games and the environment
- ☐ Meet with the Core Member doing the Proclaim (if applicable)

## DAY OF THE EDGE NIGHT:

- ☐ Email parents the information about the Night and any announcements
- ☐ Gather and set-up for the night
- ☐ Pray!

Notes

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# EDGE NIGHT EVALUATION

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Evaluation is a key to successful ministry. Use the following questions to discuss and evaluate your Edge Night.

What is going well at our Edge Nights? What can we improve?

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Would you be interested in leading prayer, explaining games, or giving a Proclaim teaching?

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Was there one particular part of this Edge Night you did not think was necessary? What and Why?

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Are our Core meetings effective? How can I better serve you as a youth minister? What can we do to better serve our youth?

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Notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dashed lines.