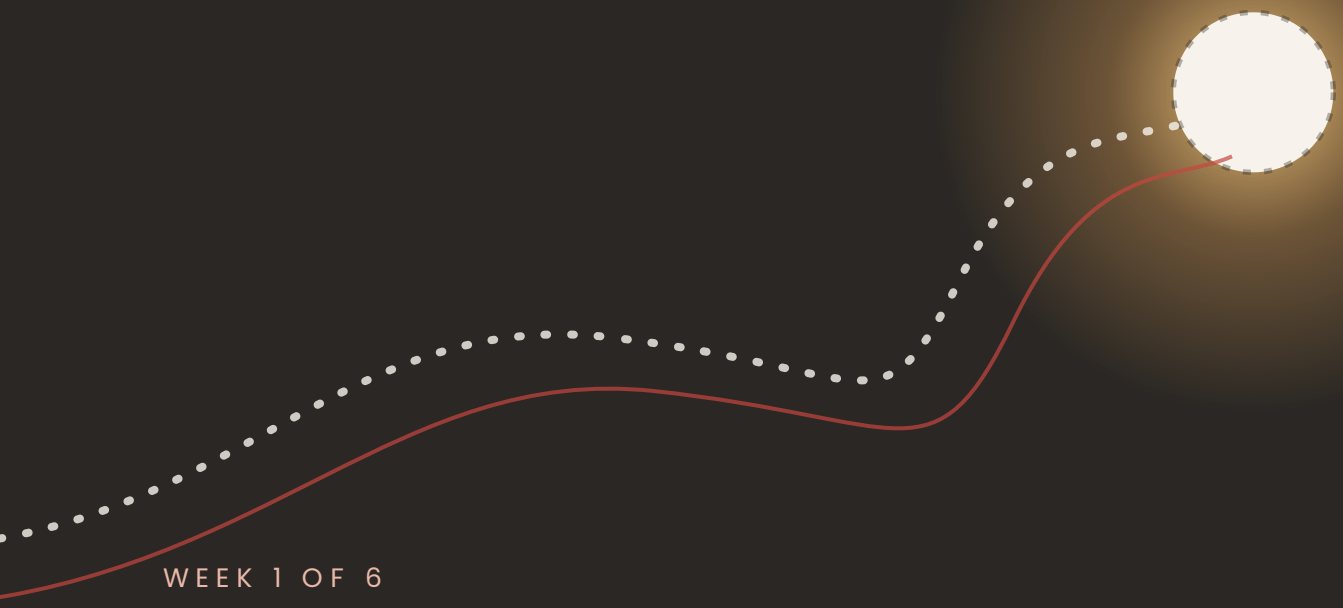
YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

LENT · EASTER



WEEK 1 OF 6

Into the Wilderness

Temptation · Matthew 4:1–11

THE ROAD.

A 6-week journey to the cross and the empty tomb

Inside: 45 / 60 / 75-minute plans · Word-for-word scripts · Activity Menu with 4 games
Response activity · Discussion · Joys & Concerns · Pastoral prayer · Student pages + devotional

DAHAM
NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

Into the Wilderness

Theme: Temptation · Main text: Matthew 4:1–11 · Memory verse: Hebrews 4:15

THE BIG IDEA

Temptation isn't proof you're failing. Jesus faced it too, and he fought back with who he was and what God said.

The question to carry all night

"What voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?"

By the end, students will…

- See that being tempted isn't the same as failing
- Notice how Jesus answered: "It is written"
- Leave with a Sword Card and one small step

NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	45 MIN	60 MIN	75 MIN
Welcome	Greet new students by name and grade; your announcements	—	—	5
Game 1	Pick from the Activity Menu (next page)	8	10	10
Game 2	A second game from the menu (optional)	—	—	10
Hook + Message	"Just One More" · Matthew 4:1–11	10	12	12
Response Activity	Sword Cards + My One Step	10	12	12
Small Group Talk	Pick 3–4 questions	—	8	10
Joys & Concerns	"I lift up ___ to God." / "Lord, hear our prayer."	10	10	10
Pastoral Prayer	Leader prays over what was shared + send-off	5	5	5

Supplies

- 2–3 index cards per student (Sword Cards) · pens
- Game supplies for your picks (see Activity Menu)
- Student pages (last 3 pages), one set each
- Bibles or a Bible app · a phone timer
- Optional: a small plant or rock to set the "wilderness" mood

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Matthew 3:16–4:11 once through
- Practice the hook out loud one time
- Think of one small temptation *you* fought as a teen
- Pray for each student by name

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOUR GROUP

Activity Menu

Welcome to the first week of Lent. Some nights you have fifteen students bouncing off the walls; some nights you have four quiet ones and a visitor. Pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every game ends with a debrief that points back to tonight's question.

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Don't Say It Describe the word without the easy words	Medium	Print or copy cards, 5 min	You want laughs and the strongest link to the message	10
B. Desert Survival Ranking Rank 10 items for 40 days in the wild	Low–Med	Copy the item list	You want real conversation and teamwork	10–12
C. Fly Swatter Race Race to swat the right answer on the wall	High	2 fly swatters, answer sheets, tape, 10 min	Students need to move and cheer	10
D. What's in Your 40? Pairs talk through "give it up" prompts	Low	None	Small or quiet group; lots of new faces	8–10
E. Sword Cards Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Index cards	Every night: this is the heart of the week	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

C. Fly Swatter Race → A. Don't Say It → Message → E. Sword Cards

Small group (4–6)

B. Desert Survival Ranking (one team) → Message → E. Sword Cards in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

D. What's in Your 40? → C. Fly Swatter Race → Message → E. Sword Cards (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

A. Don't Say It → Message → E. Sword Cards → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. If a game ever starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

A. Don't Say It

10 min · Medium energy

Purpose: A fast describing game where the easiest words are off limits. It gets teams talking and laughing, and it sets up the message perfectly: saying no to the easy word takes focus.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before group, copy the cards below onto index cards: the **big word** on top, the **4 forbidden words** underneath.
2. Split into two teams. One "describer" from Team 1 gets the stack and 60 seconds.
3. The describer gets their team to say the big word **without saying any forbidden word** (or rhymes, or "sounds like").
4. Someone from Team 2 watches the card. If the describer says a forbidden word, they call "Don't say it!" and the card is skipped.
5. Correct guess = 1 point. Teams switch and a new describer goes each round. Anyone can pass on being the describer.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "This game is easy until it isn't. You're going to describe a word to your team, but the words you *really* want to use are banned. Like, describe 'pizza' without saying cheese, slice, Italian, or pepperoni. Good luck. If you slip, the other team yells 'Don't say it!' Sixty seconds. Go!"

CARDS (BIG WORD → FORBIDDEN WORDS)

BIG WORD	DON'T SAY…	BIG WORD	DON'T SAY…
Pizza	cheese, slice, Italian, pepperoni	**Desert**	sand, hot, dry, camel
Snack	food, chips, eat, hungry	**Phone**	call, text, screen, apps
Netflix	show, movie, watch, binge	**Homework**	school, teacher, math, due
Sleep	bed, tired, night, nap	**Bread**	toast, sandwich, loaf, bake
Mountain	climb, tall, snow, hike	**Angel**	wings, heaven, halo, Christmas
Candy	sugar, sweet, chocolate, Halloween	**Video game**	play, controller, Xbox, level
Forty	number, four, ten, zero	**Temptation**	want, bad, resist, sin
Lent	Easter, give up, forty, church	**Stones**	rock, throw, hard, pebble
Birthday	cake, party, presents, old	**Selfie**	picture, phone, face, camera

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** No teams. Go around the circle; everyone guesses, and the group tries to beat its own score in 3 minutes.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

- **Silent round:** Act it out, no words at all.
- **Student cards:** Let students make one card each (you approve it) for a final round.

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "What was the hardest part? Not saying the word that was right there on the tip of your tongue, right? The easy word kept trying to jump out. That's kind of what temptation feels like: the easy option is right there, and it's really hard not to grab it. Tonight's question is: **what voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?**"

B. Desert Survival Ranking

10–12 min · Low–Medium energy

Purpose: Teams imagine being stranded in the wilderness for 40 days and have to agree on what matters most. Everyone gets a voice, nobody is put on the spot, and it opens up the story of Jesus in the wilderness.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into teams of 3–4. Mix friends up so new students are with a regular.
2. Read the scenario: "You're stuck in the desert for 40 days. You can keep these 10 items. Rank them 1 (most important) to 10 (least)."
3. Teams get 5 minutes to agree on a ranking. Everyone has to explain at least one choice.
4. Each team shares their top 3 and their #10, and defends it in 30 seconds.
5. Last question: "What would be the hardest thing about 40 days out there that isn't on this list?"

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Bad news. Your team is stuck in the desert. No town, no Wi-Fi, no DoorDash. You'll be out there for forty days. You get ten items. Your job is to rank them from most important to least. You have to agree, so talk it out. Five minutes. Go!"

THE 10 ITEMS

- A 5-gallon jug of water
- A big tarp
- A pocket knife
- A box of 40 granola bars
- A lighter
- A first-aid kit
- A phone at 10% with no signal
- A sleeping bag
- A small mirror (for signaling)
- A friend who's been there before

Bonus items to swap in: a Bible, a guitar, a hammock, a bag of Takis, a map, a flashlight, sunscreen.

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One team. Rank together on a whiteboard, then everyone argues for one item that "deserves to move up."
- **Quick version:** Each person picks only their top 3 and explains to a partner.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

- **Twist round:** "Day 20: you have to give up one item. Which one goes?"

> **LEADER NOTE** *There's no right answer, so every choice is fair game. If a team gets stuck, ask: "What do you need first: water, shelter, or a friend?"*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "After forty days out there, you'd be hungry, tired, and alone. That's exactly where Jesus was when the tempter showed up. And when you're running on empty, a lot of voices get louder. So tonight: **what voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?**"

C. Fly Swatter Race

10 min · High energy

Purpose: Pure energy and cheering. Two players race to swat the right answer taped on the wall. It works for new students because teams do the cheering, and anyone can pass.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before group, write each answer below in big letters on its own sheet of paper and tape them all over one wall.
2. Split into two teams in two lines, about 10 feet from the wall. Give the first person in each line a fly swatter.
3. Read a clue. Both players race to the wall and swat the right answer. First swat = 1 point.
4. Swatters touch the wall only, never people. Hand the swatter to the next person and go to the back.
5. Teammates can shout help. Anyone can tag in a teammate instead of going.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "See all these answers on the wall? I'm going to read a clue. The first two people race to the wall and swat the right answer. Swat the wall, not each other. Your team can yell to help you. Ready? Here's the first one."

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

CLUES (ANSWER ON THE WALL)

CLUE	ANSWER	CLUE	ANSWER
How many days was Jesus in the wilderness?	**40**	The largest desert on Earth (it's cold!)	**Antarctica**
The tempter said to turn these into bread	**Stones**	This animal has three hearts	**Octopus**
"Man shall not live by ___ alone"	**Bread**	This food never spoils, even after 3,000 years	**Honey**
Jesus' answer every time: "It is ___"	**Written**	The ship of the desert	**Camel**
Where the devil set Jesus on the top	**Temple**	Most-ordered pizza topping in the U.S.	**Pepperoni**
Showed "all the kingdoms of the world"	**Mountain**	The season before Easter	**Lent**
Who came and served Jesus at the end?	**Angels**	The river where Jesus was baptized	**Jordan**
Who led Jesus into the wilderness?	**Spirit**	The first day of Lent: Ash ___	**Wednesday**

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Everyone plays at once. Each correct swat earns a point; the leader keeps score.
- **No swatters:** Use rolled-up paper, or just slap the sheet with a hand.
- **Sword round:** Last round, read the start of a verse and players swat the ending.

LEADER NOTE *Keep the wall area clear of chairs. Mix Bible clues with fun facts so students who are new to church can win too.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Did you notice who won the races? Not always the fastest person. It was the person who already *knew* the answer. When the clue came, they didn't have to think. Tonight we'll see that Jesus had his answer ready when temptation came. So think about it: **what voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?**"

D. What's in Your 40?

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm pair conversation built on light "give it up" prompts. It introduces Lent in a fun way, and students learn real things about each other without any pressure.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

HOW TO PLAY

1. Students find a partner they know the *least*. Pair new students with a regular.
2. Read a prompt. Partners each answer and explain why in about 45 seconds.
3. After 3 prompts, switch partners.
4. Finish by asking a few volunteers: "What's the hardest thing your partner said they'd give up?"

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Lent is forty days before Easter. A lot of people give something up during Lent. So let's practice, just for fun. I'm going to ask what you'd give up for forty days. Tell your partner, and tell them why. No wrong answers. Here's the first one."

PROMPTS

- Chips or candy for 40 days: which is harder?
- Your favorite app: which one would hurt most?
- Music or TV shows?
- Hot showers or your bed?
- Fast food or dessert?
- Your phone for 40 hours: what would you do instead?
- Talking for a whole day: could you do it?
- Your favorite drink (soda, coffee, energy drink)?
- Wearing your favorite hoodie or shoes?
- Sleeping in on weekends?
- Video games or YouTube?
- What's one thing you'd *add* for 40 days instead?

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Stay together in a circle. Everyone answers each prompt in one sentence.
- **Thumbs vote:** Before pairs talk, the whole group votes "easy" or "impossible" with thumbs.

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Some of those were easy. Some were basically impossible. Here's the thing: Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness with no food at all, and right at the end, the tempter showed up. Tonight's question is: **what voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?**"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Hook: "Just One More"

2 min

SAY

"Be honest. Who here has ever said 'just one more episode' at 11 p.m.? And then it's 2 a.m.? Or you're lying in bed, not hungry at all, and suddenly you hear the kitchen calling. The 3 a.m. snack. You know you don't need it. You get it anyway."

"Those are tiny temptations. Pretty harmless. But everybody in this room knows the feeling: part of you wants one thing, and part of you knows better."

"Today starts something called Lent. It's forty days leading up to Easter, and it's based on the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, where he faced temptation too. So here's our question: **what voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?**"

Message: "It Is Written"

10 min

1. Jesus was tempted right after hearing who he was

SAY

"Right before this story, Jesus gets baptized, and a voice from heaven says, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' Huge moment. And what happens next? Not a party. The wilderness. Listen."

> [1] *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.* [2] *When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry afterward.* [3] *The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."* [4] *But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"*
>
> MATTHEW 4:1–4 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Notice this: Jesus was tempted, and he was still God's beloved Son. Being tempted didn't mean something was wrong with him. So if you're facing temptation, it doesn't mean you're a bad Christian or that God is done with you. **Temptation isn't proof you're failing.**"

2. Temptation hits where we're weakest

SAY

"When does the tempter show up? After forty days. When Jesus is hungry, tired, and alone. That's not an accident. Temptation loves to show up when we're tired, bored, lonely, stressed, or up late with a phone in our hands."

"And listen to the first words: '*If* you are the Son of God…' It twists the truth. It makes you doubt what God already said. It sounds like: 'If God really loved you, you wouldn't feel this way.' 'Everybody does it.' 'Nobody will know.'"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about a temptation you fought as a teenager (keep it age-appropriate), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Students trust leaders who go first.*

3. Jesus answered with "It is written"

SAY

"The tempter tries three times. Food. Proving himself at the temple. And then the biggest offer of all."

> [8] *Again, the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory.* [9] *He said to him, "I will give you all of these things, if you will fall down and worship me."* [10] *Then Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.'"* [11] *Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and served him.*
>
> MATTHEW 4:8–11 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Every single time, Jesus answered the same way: 'It is written.' He didn't argue for an hour. He didn't just try harder. He remembered who he was and what God said, and he said it out loud. Jesus had God's words ready before the wilderness ever started."

4. He understands, so we can come to him

SAY

"Here's the best part. Jesus doesn't look at you from far away and say, 'Why can't you just be good?' He's been there. Listen:"

> [15] *For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.* [16] *Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace for help in time of need.*
>
> HEBREWS 4:15–16 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"When you're tempted, or even when you've already given in, you don't have to hide from God. You can come to him. With boldness. He gets it, and he helps."

"So tonight's question, and I want you to really think about it: **what voice do I listen to when I'm tempted?**"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

E. Response Activity: Sword Cards

12 min

Purpose: Help students name their real temptations privately, then do what Jesus did: answer back with "It is written." They leave with pocket-size cards they can pull out when temptation hits, plus one small step for the week.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Give every student 2–3 index cards. These are their **Sword Cards**.
2. **Front:** Students privately write one temptation they face per card. They can use a code word if they want. Nobody will see it.
3. **Back:** Students write "It is written:" and copy a verse from the Verse Bank that answers that temptation.
4. In pairs, students read *only the back* of one card out loud to each other. Never the front.
5. Share the optional Lent practice (box below) for anyone who wants to try it.
6. **My One Step:** Students fill in "My One Step This Week" on their student page. The default step: "When I'm tempted, I'll pull out a Sword Card and read it out loud."

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY (FRONT)**
> "On the front of each card, write one thing that tempts you. Could be small, like staying up too late or snapping at your little brother. Could be bigger. Use a code word if you want. Nobody is collecting these. Not me, not your friends. It's between you and God."
>
> **SAY (BACK)**
> "Now flip it over. Jesus answered every temptation with 'It is written.' So write 'It is written:' and pick a verse from the Verse Bank that fights back against what's on the front."
>
> **SAY (PAIRS)**
> "Find a partner. Read the *back* of one card out loud to them. Just the back. It might feel a little weird. That's okay. Jesus said his out loud too."
>
> **SAY (ONE STEP)**
> "Keep these in your phone case or your pocket. Your one step this week is simple: when temptation shows up, pull out the card and read it. Write it on your student page so you remember."

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Verse Bank · "It is written..."

- "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matt 4:4)
- "No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful..." (1 Cor 10:13)
- "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)
- "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." (Ps 119:11)
- "Walk by the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Gal 5:16)
- "Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom 12:21)
- "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13)
- "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Ps 46:1)
- "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it is the wellspring of life." (Prov 4:23)
- "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you." (Ps 56:3)

Example Sword Card

Front: *Scrolling in bed until 2 a.m.*

Back: *It is written: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it is the wellspring of life." (Prov 4:23)*

Optional Lent Practice

Give up one app or habit for the 40 days of Lent, and replace that time with 5 minutes with God (read your Sword Card, the devotional, or just talk to him). Totally optional. Keep it small, and no skipping meals.

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. Each person reads the back of one card aloud, and the group answers, "It is written."
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the pairs. Students read their card backs silently: "Read it like you're saying it back to the tempter."
- **One card only:** Short on time? One card, one verse, done.

LEADER NOTE *Never collect or read the fronts of the cards, and don't have students share them. Some may write something heavy. If someone looks upset, check in quietly later. See the Care Note at the end of the leader guide.*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"You just did what Jesus did. You named the temptation, and you answered it with what God says. The temptations won't disappear this week. But now you've got something to say back. **So what voice will you listen to when you're tempted?**"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Small Group Talk

8–10 min · Optional

Groups of 3–5, with one adult or student leader per group if possible. Pick 3–4 questions that fit your group.

WARM UP

1. What's your "just one more" weakness: episodes, snacks, games, scrolling?
   Follow-up: What time of day does it usually win?
2. If you had to spend forty days somewhere alone, what would you miss most?
   Keep it light. It's a warm-up.

GO DEEPER

3. Why do you think the tempter showed up right after God called Jesus "my beloved Son"?
   Does temptation ever show up right after a good moment for you?
4. Temptation hit Jesus when he was hungry and alone. When are you most likely to give in?
   Tired? Bored? Stressed? Late at night?
5. The tempter twisted the truth: "*If* you are the Son of God..." What lies does temptation tell people our age?
   Example: "Everybody does it." "Nobody will know."
6. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was "tempted like we are." Does that make it easier or harder to come to him when you mess up? Why?

TAKE IT HOME

7. Which Sword Card verse do you think you'll need most this week?
8. Who is one person you could text when temptation hits, so you're not fighting alone?

LEADER NOTE *Silence is okay. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself briefly and honestly, then ask again.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Joys & Concerns

10 min

Purpose: Students practice praying *for each other*, not just hearing about prayer. It's often the moment new students realize this group actually cares about them. Tonight it fits the theme: temptation grows in isolation, and we fight better together, bringing our real lives to a God who understands.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Sit in a circle if you can. Explain the response: when someone shares, they end with **"I lift up ___ to God."** Everyone responds together: **"Lord, hear our prayer."**
2. Start with **joys** (things to thank God for), then move to **concerns** (things we're worried about or carrying).
3. The leader goes first to model it, with one joy and one concern.
4. Anyone can share, or pass. "Unspoken" requests are welcome, too.
5. Jot down what's shared (first names only) so you can pray for each one in the Pastoral Prayer.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Jesus went into the wilderness alone, but we don't have to. Tonight we heard that he understands what we're going through, so we can come to him with boldness. Let's do that together. What's something good that happened this week you're thankful for? Or something you're worried about, for yourself, your family, or a friend?"
>
> "When you share, end with 'I lift up ___ to God.' And all of us will say together, 'Lord, hear our prayer.' Let's practice. I lift up this group to God..." (*All: "Lord, hear our prayer."*)
>
> "I'll go first. My joy is ___. I lift up ___ to God. My concern is ___. I lift up ___ to God."

Joy starters (if students are stuck)

- A good grade or finishing a big project
- A birthday, new sibling, or new pet
- My team won / a great practice
- Someone I love got good news
- Starting something new for Lent

Concern starters

- A test or tryout coming up
- A grandparent or relative who is sick
- A friend who's going through something
- Something I keep struggling with
- "I have an unspoken request."

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle so everyone gets a turn, and everyone is allowed to pass.
- **Big group (12+):** "Popcorn" style: anyone shares when ready. Cap it at about 8 minutes.
- **Written version:** Students write joys and concerns on slips of paper. The leader reads them (no names) and the group responds.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

LEADER NOTE *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

Pastoral Prayer

3–5 min

Pray this over the group. The **[bracketed]** lines are where you name the joys and concerns students just shared.

Jesus,

Thank you for every person in this room. Thank you that you walked into the wilderness for us, that you were hungry and tired and alone, and that you know exactly what it feels like to be tempted.

Thank you for the good things you've given us this week. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Ava's new puppy, for Marcus's great game on Saturday..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

And we bring you the things we're carrying. *[Name the concerns: "Be with Liam's grandpa in the hospital. Give Emma peace about her test..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

You know the temptations we wrote on our cards tonight. Some are small, and some feel way too big for us. When we're tired, bored, lonely, or up too late, help us hear your voice louder than every other voice. Put your words in our hearts so they're ready when we need them. And when we fall, remind us that we don't have to hide. We can run to you, and you will meet us with mercy and grace.

For anyone who is new here tonight, thank you for bringing them. Help them feel at home. As we begin these forty days of Lent, walk with us, and help us take our one small step this week.

In your name we pray, amen.

SEND-OFF

"Take your student pages home. There's a five-day devotional in there, just a few minutes a day, and a tracker for your one step. Keep your Sword Cards on you. For the next six weeks we're asking one question: **What would it look like to follow Jesus all the way?** Next week is called **'The Long Walk Home.'** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 by asking students to look at their One Step tracker. "How many days did you use a Sword Card? Did anyone try a Lent practice? What helped? What got in the way?" Celebrate any progress, even one day. Then ask: "Did you notice *when* temptation showed up this week?" This leads naturally into next week's story about coming home.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Care Note for Leaders

Talking about temptation can stir up shame. Some students are quietly fighting real struggles: pornography, vaping or other substances, gaming or phone use they can't control. Others may hear "temptation" and think of self-harm urges. Never shame or expose a student. Be warm, calm, and private.

- **Stay calm and thank them** for telling you. "I'm really glad you told me. You're not alone in this."
- **Separate the struggle from their worth.** Remind them that Jesus meets us with mercy, not disgust.
- **Don't promise to keep secrets** if someone's safety is at risk, including any mention of self-harm or not wanting to be here.
- **Follow your church's safety policy** and tell your lead pastor the same day.
- **Connect them to trained help:** parents or guardians, a school counselor, or a licensed counselor. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

You're not expected to be a counselor. Your job is to listen well, take it seriously, and make sure they're connected to the right people.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

THE FULL SERIES

THE ROAD · 6 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any Wednesday during Lent. Taught in order, the six weeks walk with Jesus from the wilderness to the empty tomb, and keep asking one question: *What would it look like to follow Jesus all the way?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**Into the Wilderness** Temptation	Matthew 4:1–11
2	**The Long Walk Home** Repentance & grace	Luke 15:11–24
3	**Take Up Your Cross** The cost of following	Mark 8:34–37
4	**The Towel** Servant love	John 13:1–15
5	**It Is Finished** The cross	Luke 23:32–46; John 19:28–30
6	**He Is Not Here** Resurrection	Luke 24:1–12

Every week includes

- 45 / 60 / 75-minute schedules
- Activity Menu with 4+ game options
- Word-for-word leader scripts
- Scripture (World English Bible) and one big idea
- Response activity + "One Step" challenge
- Tiered discussion questions
- Joys & Concerns prayer time
- Pastoral prayer with space for your group
- Student pages and 5-day devotional
- Next-week follow-up

Built for real youth groups

These weeks were written for a real Wednesday night group: 5 to 15 students, often with a new face or two, led by a pastor or volunteer with limited prep time. Games never single anyone out. Every activity has a small-group version. And every leader script can be read word for word when you're short on time.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together. All rights reserved.
Purchasers may photocopy and share the student pages and leader guide for use within their own church or ministry.
Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (public domain).

Name: _____ Date: _____

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

Temptation isn't proof I'm failing. Jesus faced it too, and he fought back with who he was and what God said.

THE STORY · MATTHEW 4:1–4

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the _____. He fasted _____ days and was hungry.

The tempter said, "If you are the _____ of God, command that these stones become _____."

Jesus answered, "It is _____, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _____ that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

TEMPTATION CHECK (JUST FOR YOU · NOBODY COLLECTS THIS)

HOW OFTEN DOES THIS TEMPT ME?	NONE	SOME	A LOT
Staying up way too late on my phone	☐	☐	☐
Gaming or scrolling longer than I planned	☐	☐	☐
Lying to get out of trouble	☐	☐	☐
Gossip or talking behind someone's back	☐	☐	☐
Copying homework or cheating	☐	☐	☐
Snapping at family when I'm stressed	☐	☐	☐
Looking at stuff online I know I shouldn't	☐	☐	☐
Doing something risky just to fit in	☐	☐	☐

VERSE MATCH (DRAW A LINE FROM EACH VERSE TO ITS PHRASE)

1 Corinthians 10:13	"...tempted like we are, yet without sin."
James 4:7	"...hidden your word in my heart..."
Psalm 119:11	"...will also make the way of escape..."
Hebrews 4:15	"Resist the devil, and he will flee..."

VOICE CHECK

When I'm tempted, the voice I hear says: _____

It is written (what God says instead): _____

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Keep it small enough to actually do.

When I'm tempted to _____

I will pull out my Sword Card and say: "It is written…"

Optional Lent practice: For 40 days I'll give up _____

and spend 5 minutes with God _____ (when?)

Example: "When I'm tempted to scroll in bed, I'll read my Sword Card and put my phone across the room."

MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you did your step.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

MY PRAYER LIST

Write down the joys and concerns people shared tonight (first names only) and keep praying this week.

JOYS: THANK YOU, GOD, FOR…	CONCERNS: PLEASE BE WITH…

✂ CUT OUT AND KEEP IN YOUR PHONE CASE, WALLET, OR BIBLE

"For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin."

HEBREWS 4:15

It is written: _____

My step: M ☐ T ☐ W ☐ T ☐ F ☐ S ☐ S ☐

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

5 Days in the Wilderness

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. That's it.

DAY 1 Matthew 4:4 · More than bread

Jesus said we live by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." What are you hungry for right now, and what might God say to you about it?

DAY 2 Hebrews 4:15–16 · He gets it

Jesus was tempted like we are. What's one thing you'd tell him honestly today, knowing he understands?

DAY 3 1 Corinthians 10:13 · A way out

God promises "the way of escape." Think of a temptation you face. What could your way out look like?

DAY 4 James 4:7 · Resist

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." What's one small way you can say no today?

DAY 5 Psalm 119:11 · Hidden in my heart

Pick one verse from your Sword Card. Try to say it from memory, then write it here.

A prayer you can pray this week

Jesus, you know what it's like to be tempted. When I'm tired, bored, or alone, help me hear your voice first. Put your words in my heart so they're ready when I need them. And when I mess up, help me run to you instead of hiding. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **The Long Walk Home**

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together