

# First Sunday of Lent

## Temptation in the desert

### INTRODUCTION

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, and we remember the forty days which Jesus spent fasting and praying in the desert. We are called to turn away from our selfishness and to grow closer to God's love.

### SIGN OF THE CROSS

### LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light the candles we listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah (cf *Isaiah* 9:2-3, 6-7):

The world was full of darkness and shadows, but now it is filled with light so everyone can see. God sent us his only Son, Jesus, to fill our world with peace and love.

### SORRY

Ask the children to close their eyes and to make the words of this prayer their own:

Do not be afraid,

God will always love you.

Whatever you have done,

God will always love you.

As a Father loves his child,

He will always love you.

Come back to him and know,

God's love lasts forever.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4:

*Praise the Lord. Praise to you O Christ King of Eternal glory.*

### GOSPEL (cf *Luke* 4:1-13)

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus went into the desert to pray and be close to God.

He stayed there for forty days and during that time he had nothing to eat because he was fasting. He looked at the stones around him and knew that he could change them into bread; but he chose not to.

As he walked through the desert he knew that he could make himself king over all the land; but he chose not to.

When the forty days had past Jesus went to the Temple in Jerusalem and climbed the stairs to the rooftop. He knew that if he jumped from the top, God would save him from harm, but he chose not to.

### DISCUSSION

How many days did Jesus spend in the desert?

Forty days is a long time! How many weeks are

there in forty days? – There are almost six full weeks in forty days.

Jesus went into the desert to be close to God and to think. What do we call the time of year when we spend six weeks looking carefully at our lives and trying to grow closer to God? – Lent is the time when we stop and think about our lives, and turn back to God if we have wandered away from his love. During the six weeks of Lent we try to do something for God, to show how much we love him. It is a chance to say sorry for any mistakes we have made, and to make a fresh start.

Did Jesus find it easy in the desert? – On several occasions Jesus was tempted to take the easy way out, but he chose not to. During Lent we too will find it hard when we feel tempted to give up, but we must try not to.

Can you remember the three temptations which Jesus refused?

1. To turn the stones into bread. Jesus knew that God would provide him with everything he needed, and that he had been sent to take care of the needs of other people.
2. To become king of all the land. God is the king of all creation, and Jesus knew that his kingdom was more important than anything on earth.
3. To jump off the roof of the Temple and test God's love. Jesus trusted in his Father's great love; he did not need to ask God to prove it.

What can we learn from today's Gospel? – Jesus showed us the importance of spending some time looking at the good and bad things in our lives, and growing closer to God through prayer. Like us, he did not always find it easy to do, but with God's help he was able to choose to do the right thing, and to turn away from temptation. With help from our heavenly Father we can do the same!

### ACTIVITY

Photocopy the illustration and help the children to complete the temptations which Jesus had to face.

### CREED

### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you never gave up even when you found it most difficult. During the six weeks of Lent, help us to be strong and to keep our promises as a sign of our love for you.