

Finding Your Story — Lent Exercise

Week 2, March 7 through 20 on your own

This exercise is something you can do on your own outside of class to enhance your wilderness time.

“Lent begins in the wilderness. The Spirit guides Jesus into the wilderness where he comes face to face with temptation and struggle. Yet, in his forty days of fasting, resisting, and wandering, Jesus is shaped and formed for ministry. Similarly, through the wilderness of Lent, we are invited to surrender to the wild leadings of the Spirit. We rarely enter the wilderness willingly, but hopefully through our wandering we remember who we are and whose we are. The wilderness can become sacred even if it remains dangerous. There is no wilderness space too harsh or threatening for God’s love. This Lent, we welcome you to the journey.” — Sanctified Art, our worship resource

This exercise should help you experience wilderness. The dictionary meaning of the word wilderness is “a wild and uncultivated region, as of forest or desert, uninhabited or inhabited only by wild animals; a tract of wasteland.” The oldest and central root word in wilderness is wild. As we think about what the word wild means in our lives, we can look to poets and writers. The most well known is probably from Mary Oliver’s poem *The Summer Day*

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?”

How do you envision wilderness? Don’t shy away from the word “wild” as you try to imagine wilderness.

Take a blank sheet of paper and begin making a rough drawing of the wilderness where Jesus spent his forty days. (No one will see your drawing so it doesn’t matter how it looks.) Draw what you see in your mind’s eye. Include anything you wish.

Add anything to the picture that you think may have tempted or tormented Jesus.

How does it make you feel to think about Jesus spending forty days in this place?

Looking at the picture you drew, how would you feel about entering this place?

What frightens or torments you about this place?

What do you like about this place?

What do you think might tempt you in this place?

How would you prepare if you were to decide to spend one day in this place?

How would you prepare to spend forty days in this place?

How do you think being in this place would make you struggle?

If you've learned to do clustering, cluster one or more of the words that make you think about this wilderness.

Does doing this exercise change anything about your thinking of Jesus's time in the wilderness?

Did you learn anything about yourself by doing this exercise?

Did anything about this exercise change how you envision your Lenten journey?