

# A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW021)

## Lent: In the Wilderness

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## LENT: “IN THE WILDERNESS”

### Service Aim:

To teach that we like Jesus, will be tested at different points in our lives. To look at one of the main tests that we face in the “Wilderness School” ie: “Do we trust Father God or not?”

### Biblical Reference(s):

Mark 1:9-13, Habakkuk 3:17-18, Deuteronomy 8:2-4, Romans 8:28, Psalm 46:1-2, 2Corinthians 1:3-4, 1John 3:1a, John 1:12, 1Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 13:5b

### Outline of Service:

Welcome	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer:	Litany from Habakkuk 3:17-18
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs praising God the Saviour</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	Quiz introducing the fact that in many areas of our lives we are tested.
Bible Reading 1:	Dramatised Mark 1:9-13 with a “wilderness” created at the front of church
Interactive Link:	Jesus was tested in a physical wilderness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard times lead us into “The Wilderness School” where we are tested in many different ways. The service will look at one of the main tests.</li> </ul>
Song:	<u>Song about the wilderness</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 1:	Test: “Do we trust Father God or not?” We can trust Him to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for us</li> <li>• Bring good out of our situation</li> <li>• Be with us and bring us comfort</li> </ul>
Bible Reading 2:	Deuteronomy 8:2-4
Talk 1 cont:	We can be tempted to grumble rather than trust
Puppets:	“Moan, moan, moan!”
Confession:	Psalm 139:23-24 and confession of grumbling
Songs:	<u>Songs of trust</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 2:	Jesus was affirmed as God’s Son
Bible Readings 3:	1John 3:1a and John 1:12
Response:	Receive the truth of who we are; Children of God, using pipe-cleaners
Film Song:	<u>“It is well”</u>
Prayers:	Praying biblical promises and the Lord’s Prayer
Summary:	Summarize the main test we face in the “Wilderness School”
Lent Challenge:	Over Lent encourage people to deepen their trust in Father God as they follow Jesus on His journey to the cross
Final song:	<u>Final song of worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing	

## Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

**Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.**

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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## Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the service and to the theme of “Lent – In the Wilderness”

## Opening Prayer:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer
- a prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship”<sup>1</sup> that the congregation can say together,
- or the litany below from Habakkuk 3:17-18, (Good News Version) that the congregation can take part in.

Even though the fig trees have no fruit  
**and no grapes grow on the vines**  
 Even though the olive crop fails  
**and the fields produce no grain**  
 Even though the sheep all die  
**and the cattle stalls are empty**  
 I will still be joyful and glad  
**because the Lord God is my Saviour**

## Opening Songs:

A couple of songs praising God the Saviour as per Appendix 1

## Warm up:

Learning different things at school, college and work can be fun can't it?

- But who likes to be tested on what they have learnt? (*Receive responses*)
- That's not so much fun is it?
- Although if you have worked hard it can be wonderful to do well in a test or in an exam.

So how about we have a very simple test this morning between the right hand side (RHS) of the church and the left hand side (LHS) and see how much you have learnt?

- So the 1<sup>st</sup> question goes to the LHS.

1) What river was Jesus baptized in? (*Receive responses*)

- [It was the **Jordan River** (Mark 1:9b)]

The 2<sup>nd</sup> question goes to the RHS.

2) People look on the outward appearance, but what does God look on?

- [God looks on the **Heart** (1Samuel 16:7)]

The 3<sup>rd</sup> question goes to the LHS.

3) Who was in prison with Paul in Philippi when they were singing and there was an earthquake?

- [It was **Silas** (Acts 16:25-26)]

<sup>1</sup> Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603  
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And the 4<sup>th</sup> question goes to the RHS.

4) Who was thrown into the furnace for not worshipping the golden idol of King Nebuchadnezzar?

- [It was **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** (Daniel 3:19)]

So how did you do on the Bible knowledge test?

- Good as our Bible knowledge may be, that isn't the only thing in life that will be tested....

As followers of Jesus we will face many times where our faith and characters are tested;

- where we will have to make the choice to either follow God's way or our own way.
- Even Jesus went through a time of testing. Listen to this.

## Bible Reading 1:

The Bible reading is a dramatized version of Mark 1:9-13 and can be found in Appendix 2. It is essentially a narrated mime which could either be run in an impromptu way during the service; inviting 5 people to come and help you; giving them their costumes as they come to the front and then leading them through the mime, or you could invite people to take part earlier in the week and have a short practice together before the service.

Before the service create a "wilderness" area at the front of church by draping brown material / Hessian over the floor and over some chairs (to look like mountains!). Scatter a few large stones on top of the brown material and a plastic snake or scorpion if you have them. To one side of the "wilderness" area, lay a piece of blue material on the floor to represent the River Jordan. Stage the drama between the river and the wilderness.

## Interactive Link:

For this talk you will need about 12 pieces of white A4 card, a thick black pen to write with and a large piece of card on which you have written "Wilderness School." You will also need to project the picture of the Judean wilderness which you can find in Appendix 3.

After Jesus was baptized and had the wonderful experience of hearing God the Father tell him clearly that He was God's Son and that God was pleased with Him,

- Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the Judean wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights,
- to a place that looked like this. (*Project picture of the Judean wilderness – see Appendix 3*)

The wilderness was an empty place.....

- with a lack of food, drink and shelter.

The wilderness was a dangerous place where wild animals lived;

- including scorpions and snakes.

The wilderness was also a lonely place.....

- because you didn't find other people wanting to live there.

Here in the wilderness Jesus was tested.

He was tested<sup>2</sup> by Satan to turn away from the path that God the Father had called Him to walk.....

- the path of obedience that would eventually lead to the cross.

But Jesus didn't give in to Satan and 40 days later came out of the wilderness;

- full of the Holy Spirit and ready to begin His great mission.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek for "tempted" can also mean tested, which I have chosen to use for the purposes of this service

You and I and all other believers will also at many different points in our lives have our faith and characters tested in different ways.

- Quite often those tests will take place in the wilderness.

We won't be going to an actual wilderness place like Jesus did where there are rocks and sand, snakes and scorpions.

- Our tests will often take place in what I call "The Wilderness School,"
- the times when we face difficulties or when we suffer in some other way....*(Hold up piece of card that says "Wilderness School" and place in the "Wilderness area" at the front of the church)*

So our "Wilderness School" might be a time when we find that we have no friends.....

- maybe because we have moved house or school or for some other reason....*(Write NO FRIENDS on a piece of A4 card and place in the "Wilderness" area at the front of church)*

Can anyone think of any other times we might go into the "Wilderness School?" *(Receive ideas eg. losing job, having no money, losing your good health, losing a loved one, bullied on social media etc Write each idea onto a new piece of A4 card and place in the "Wilderness" area at the front of church)*

In the "Wilderness School" you and I, like Jesus will be tested to turn away from God's path.

- Today we are going to look at one of the main tests that we will face,
- But before we do that please stand as we continue to worship God.

## Song:

A song about the wilderness as per Appendix 1

## Talk 1:

This talk would benefit from some simple Power Point slides listing the main points with a relevant picture and words.

One of the biggest tests that we will face in the wilderness school is this:

- "Do we trust Father God or not?"

Imagine for a moment that you are in the "Wilderness School" having lost your job.

- All of a sudden you are faced with having not very much money at all, but you have a mortgage and bills to pay.
- Will you choose to trust Father God to **provide** for you in whatever way He chooses?

Or imagine that you are in the "Wilderness School" having had a car accident and are in hospital and cannot take your GCSE exams.

- Will you choose to trust Father God that He has your life in His hands and will **bring good** out of this situation for you?

Or imagine that you are in the "Wilderness School" having just discovered that your best friend has said horrid things behind your back.

- Will you choose to trust Father God to **be with you in** this situation and bring you His **comfort**?

All through life we will be faced with the question: "Do we trust Father God or not?"

- And at the root of that question is whether we believe that Father God is good or not.

If God is a good Father (as He has shown us in the Bible that He is), then:

- We can trust Him to **provide** for us. (Deuteronomy 8:3-4)
- We can trust Him to **bring good** out of this situation at some point in our lives. (Romans 8:28)
- We can trust Him to **be with us** and bring us His **comfort**. (Psalm 46:1-2, 2Corinthians 1:3-4)

God's people, the Israelites, wandered in the wilderness for 40 years after God had led them out of Egypt in a miraculous way.

- They discovered in the wilderness that their Heavenly Father was more than able to provide for their needs.
- Listen to what Moses said to them:

## Bible Reading 2:

The Bible reading is Deuteronomy 8:2-4 and can be read by a child, young person or adult in a modern version of the Bible.

## Talk 1 cont:

Moses reminded the Israelites how good Father God had been to them while they were in the wilderness for 40 years.

- Every day God had faithfully **provided** for them.
- They never went short of food, as God fed them with manna.
- The people's clothes never wore out and their feet never swelled up.
- That's amazing isn't it?

Our heavenly Father hasn't changed.

- He is still the good and generous Father who loves to **provide** what you and I need.
- He is still the good and loving Father who **brings good** out of our most painful times.
- He is still the good and loving Father who **will be with us** and bring us His **comfort** when we are suffering.

The question we have to answer especially when we are in the "Wilderness School" is this: "Do we trust Father God or not?"

- That was the question that God's people, the Israelites had to answer especially when they were in the wilderness.....and sadly often their answer was "no we don't trust Him."

These people often ended up grumbling against Father God,

- instead of remembering to give thanks to Him for all that He had done for them.

When you and I are in the "Wilderness School" and are being tested on whether we trust our Heavenly Father or not,

- we can be tempted to grumble too can't we?
- That's exactly what James did after he moved house....watch this.

## Puppet Script:

The puppet script is called "Moan, moan, moan" (see Appendix 4). This script works with a boy puppet "James"<sup>3</sup> and an older man puppet "Grandad." The aim of the puppet script is to encourage people to turn away from grumbling during times of testing and to give thanks instead for all that is good.

Alternatively, if you don't have puppets, you could use the puppet script as a drama script with the two characters of a Grandad and a young boy having a conversation together.

<sup>3</sup> You can purchase both a boy and a Grandad puppet from [www.onewayuk.com](http://www.onewayuk.com)  
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## Confession:

James didn't trust his parents did he?

- It took his Grandad to show him that actually his parents were working for his good even though it wasn't easy for him to move house.
- James chose to grumble and not see anything good in his situation.

You know Father God hates it when we grumble and moan, so let's allow Him to show us where we have grumbled and moaned instead of trusting Him.

Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24) PAUSE

Father God we ask you to forgive us for the times we have grumbled and moaned

**Father forgive us**

We ask you to forgive us for not trusting you

**Father forgive us**

We choose to trust that you are our good and loving Heavenly Father

**Father we choose to trust**

We choose to trust that you provide for us, bring good out of our most painful times and are always with us.

**Father we choose to trust. Amen.**

## Songs:

Songs of trust as per Appendix 1

## Talk 2:

This talk would benefit from some simple Power Point slides with relevant pictures and words.

Before Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tested, He was baptised.

- At his baptism Father God said these words to Jesus: *"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."* (Mark 1:11)

Jesus would have gone into the wilderness with these wonderful words ringing in His ears;

- that He was God the Father's Son,
- that He was loved,
- that God the Father was proud of Him.

These words would have helped Jesus to keep trusting His father during the 40 days when He was tested.

If we are going to be able to trust our good and loving Heavenly Father,

- then we too need to know who we truly are in His sight.
- Listen to these words from the Bible:

## Bible Readings 3:

The Bible readings are 1John 3:1a (*"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"*) and John 1:12 (*"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. And that is what we are!"*).

Read the 2 readings consecutively and they can be read by a child, young person or adult.

## Response:

For the response each person needs a pipe-cleaner<sup>4</sup>.

When we put our trust in Jesus, we become children of God.

- Children who are dearly loved by their Heavenly Father,
- Children who make their Heavenly Father proud.

We are going to pass around pipe-cleaners now.

- When you receive yours, mould it so that it forms the first letter of your Christian name.  
(Pass around pipe-cleaners and give time for people to mould them)

When you have moulded your pipe-cleaner, hold it in the palm of your hand.

- Look at it as I read these words to you and receive the truths into your spirit.

*“You are my Son, my Daughter (PAUSE)  
whom I love; (PAUSE)  
with you I am well pleased.” (PAUSE)*

*“You are my Son, my Daughter (PAUSE)  
whom I love; (PAUSE)  
with you I am well pleased.” (PAUSE)*

Take your pipe-cleaner home with you and let it remind you who you belong to,

- so that when you go through the “Wilderness School” you can choose to trust your Heavenly Father.

## Film Song:

Move straight into projecting the film song. The film song is called, “It is well.” You can find it on You Tube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) by putting “It Is Well - Kristene DiMarco - Bethel Music - with Lyrics” into the search bar.

## Prayers:

Pray through some biblical promises to encourage people as below. You may wish to use two people to pray alternate Scriptures. Use the response:

“Thank you Father. **Keep us trusting You.**”

Father,

Thank you that Your Word says that *“No test or temptation that comes our way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All we need to remember is that You will never let us down; You’ll never let us be pushed past our limit; You’ll always be there to help us come through it.”* (1Corinthians 10:13 The Message Version)

Thank you Father. **Keep us trusting You.**

Father,

Thank you that Your Word says *“and my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19)

Thank you Father. **Keep us trusting You.**

<sup>4</sup> You can purchase coloured pipe-cleaners from Hobbycraft, Baker Ross, Ebay, Amazon etc  
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Father,

Thank you that Your Word says *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

(Romans 8:28)

Thank you Father. **Keep us trusting You.**

Father,

Thank you that Your Word says *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

(Hebrews 13:5b)

Thank you Father. **Keep us trusting You.**

**Amen.**

End the prayers with the Lord’s Prayer.

### Summary:

Summarize the main points of the service by saying something like:

Today we have said that:

- 1) You and I and all other believers will at different points in our lives have our faith and characters tested in different ways. Quite often those tests will take place when we go through hard times, which we have called “The Wilderness School”
- 2) One of the biggest tests we face is: “Do we trust Father God or not?”
- 3) We can trust Father God because He promises to **provide** for us, **bring good out of our situation** and **be with us** bringing us comfort.
- 4) Grumbling grieves Father God so we need to choose to not do that.
- 5) Knowing who we really are as Children of God can help us trust Father God especially when we are in “The Wilderness School.”

### Lent Challenge:

Challenge people to deepen their trust in Father God as they follow Jesus on His journey to the cross.

### Notices:

If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that after the prayers. That way the flow of worship is unbroken.

### Final Song:

Final song of worship as per Appendix 1

### Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

As we prepare to follow you Jesus through this time of Lent on your journey to the cross, give us grace to follow your example and trust our Heavenly Father when we too go through “The Wilderness School,”

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

## Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs praising God the Saviour. Ideas include:

- Everyone's coming to praise (Nick & Becky Drake © 2011 Thankyou Music)
- Everyone needs compassion (Reuben Morgan & Ben Fielding © 2006 Hillsong Publishing)
- God so loved that He gave (Ben Cantelon © 2010 Thankyou Music)
- Hallelujah, what a Saviour (Ed Cash, Kendall Combes, Vicky Beeching © 2007 Thankyou Music)
- Jesus my King my wonderful Saviour (J.M.Harris Adpt.Andy Bromley ©2005 Thankyou Music)
- Light of the world (Tim Hughes © 2000 Thankyou Music)
- Lord I lift your name on high (Rick Founds © 1989 Maranatha! Praise Inc)
- My Jesus, my Saviour (Darlene Zschech © 1993 Darlene Zschech / Hillsong Publishing / Kingsway Music)
- Praise is rising (Paul Baloche & Brenton Brown © 2005 Integrity's Hosanna! Music)

ii) A song about the wilderness. Ideas include:

- Before the throne of God (Charitie Lees Bancroft, Vikki Cook © 1997 Sovereign Grace Worship)
- Blessed be your name in the land (Matt & Beth Redman © 2002 Thankyou Music)
- Father hear the prayer we offer (Love Maria Willis)
- Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord (Brenton Brown & Ken Riley © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- Through all the changing scenes of life (N.Tate)
- When the music fades (Matt Redman © 1997 Thankyou Music)

iii) Songs of trust. Ideas include:

- Father God I wonder how I managed to exist (Ian Smale © 1984 Glorie Music/Thankyou Music)
- When my heart is overwhelmed (God my rock) (Brenton Brown & Paul Baloche © 2012 Thankyou Music)
- Higher than the mountains that I face (one thing remains) (Brian Johnson, Jeremy Riddle & Christa Black © 2010 Bethel Music)
- Love the Lord with all your heart (Nick & Becky Drake © 2011 Thankyou Music)
- My God shall supply all my needs (Ishmael © 1993 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Our God is a great big God (Jo and Nigel Hemming © 2001 Vineyard Songs)
- The Lord's my shepherd (and I will trust) (Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou Music)

iv) Final song of worship. Ideas include:

- Forever (Nick and Becky Drake © 2011 Thankyou Music)
- From the breaking of the dawn (Keith Getty & Stuart Townend © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- In Christ alone (Keith Getty, Stuart Townend © 2001 Thankyou Music)
- There is a higher throne (Kristyn Lennox & Keith Getty © 2002 Thankyou Music)
- You are my vision (Arr.Rend Collective Experiment © 2011 Thankyou Music)

## Appendix 2 – Dramatised Reading: Mark 1:9-13

**Cast:** **Narrator**, **Jesus** (dressed in a white robe), **John the Baptist** (dressed in simple shirt and trousers) **Satan** (dressed in a dark or red robe) **Holy Spirit** (preferably a girl dressed in a colourful dress holding either a white flag or piece of white material that she can use to wave over Jesus' head), **God** (Offstage voice)

**Props:** Create a “wilderness” area at the front of church by draping brown material / Hessian over the floor and over some chairs (to look like mountains!). Scatter a few large stones on top of the brown material and a plastic snake or scorpion if you have them. To one side of the “wilderness” area, lay a piece of blue material on the floor to represent the River Jordan.

.....  
(Enter Narrator)

**Narrator:** At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

*(Enter John who stands by the river. Enter Jesus who goes to John. Then Jesus and John walk into the river and Jesus kneels down in front of John and John pretends to baptize Him)*

Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, *(Jesus stands up and looks towards heaven)* he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. *(Holy Spirit runs across in front of Jesus and gently waves the white flag/material over his head and then runs off again)*

And a voice came from heaven:

**God:** You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.

**Narrator:** At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, *(Holy Spirit runs on and grabs Jesus' hand and leads him into the wilderness area then runs off again. Exit John)*

and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tested<sup>5</sup> by Satan. *(As Jesus walks up and down through the wilderness area, Satan creeps around him whispering into his ear. Jesus keeps batting him away with his hand. Eventually Satan leaves)*

Jesus was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

*(Exit Jesus and Narrator)*

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<sup>5</sup> The Greek for “tempted” can also mean tested, which I have chosen to use for the purposes of this service

### Appendix 3 – Picture of the Judean Wilderness



## Appendix 4 – Puppet Script – “Moan, moan, moan!”

### Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a young boy puppet called “James” who wants to follow Jesus but keeps getting things wrong, and his wise old “Grandad” puppet who helps to sort him out. Each puppet is operated by one person from behind a screen and so it is essential that the voices are heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including <http://www.onewayuk.com/>

.....  
*Enter Grandad and James*

Grandad: James, how good to see you in your new home. I love your new bedroom. How’s it going?

James: Not good at all!

Grandad: Oh dear, what has happened?

James: There is no internet Grandad and I need it for my homework or I will get a terrible mark again.

Grandad: I am sure that your dad will soon sort that out....you could always go to the library.... it is only a five minute walk away.

James: And another thing Grandad the television isn’t even working. How am I going to survive without that? Dad says that he has got to sort out a BT package, but it could take weeks.....

Grandad: But James it is the summer time.....you don’t need the television when you could be out enjoying the park, which is at the bottom of your garden now.

James: Don’t even get me started on the garden. It is tiny....and there is no room for my football goal and there is no tree house.....

Grandad: Oh James.....you really can’t see anything good can you?

James: No I can’t Grandad because there isn’t anything good to see. I am missing living near the sweet shop, and seeing my friend who lived at the end of my old street, and I am totally fed up with soup!

Grandad: Soup?

James: Mum has been too busy to cook us any nice dinners since we moved into this house three days ago so we have been living off soup and bread ...and I don’t even like soup.

Grandad: It will take time James to unpack and settle into your new home but there are lots of good things about it.

- James: Well I can't think of any. I don't know why mum and dad have moved me to this dump.....the roof probably leaks and we could have rats!
- Grandad: Now that's enough grumbling James.... I know that your mum and dad have worked really hard to find this new home for you all. Instead of grumbling, why not try and find one good thing to be thankful for.....I am sure that your parents would love to see a grateful boy!
- James: Hmmmm.....
- Grandad: Come on James.....take a look out of your window. Can you see what I can see?
- James: Hmm....
- Grandad: It is long with a hoop at the top!
- James: Oh yes....well I suppose that is quite good.
- Grandad: Quite good.....a basketball hoop in the park at the bottom of your garden.....I'd say that is very good.
- James: All right Grandad.....it is very good
- Grandad: And look James there are some boys about your age playing a game.....you could go and join in with them and make some new friends.....you love playing basketball.
- James: I do Grandad.....yes I could go outside when we have finished our chat.
- Grandad: And another thing James, this new home of yours is much nearer to my house than your old one was. I will be able to see you much more often.
- James: Oh Grandad.....that is good news.
- Grandad: So perhaps mum and dad haven't made such a big mistake after all and it is time for you to stop grumbling and to start seeing the good things that they have provided for you.
- James: Perhaps.....
- Grandad: What do you mean perhaps?
- James: Well when I was feeling really really fed up I rang the Vicar and told him that I was having a terrible time, that I was half starved and that I needed new parents. He is coming round any minute now... he did sound rather worried on the phone.
- Grandad: Oh James!