

WILDERNESS

Brainstorm everything you know about deserts. How are they formed? What is distinctive about them? What plants and animals are typically found in them?

Can you think of any stories that take place or have a scene in the desert or wilderness area?

What thoughts, feelings, and senses are stirred up inside of you when you think about the desert without provisions?

List as many Bible stories as you can recall that feature the wilderness.

Read this selection of verses and ponder God's use of this theme in Scripture:

Genesis 16:1-16 & 21:14-21
 Exodus 16:1-35 & John 6:47-51
 Exodus 17:1-6 & John 7:37-39
 Numbers 21:4-9 & John 3:14
 1 Kings 19:1-8
 Psalm 63:1-5
 Isaiah 35
 Mark 1:1-13

Explore this Hebrew word & picture:

Midbar (H4057)
 מִדְבָּר

God is intentional with numbers. Ponder God's use of "40" in His story.

40 Days: Matthew 4:1-4
 40 Weeks: Psalm 139:13-14
 40 Years: Deuteronomy 8:1-18

Take some time to reflect on all you've learned. How does the wilderness illustrate God's living story? Have you made any new discoveries?

ENGAGE IN WONDER

How does the wilderness illustrate God's living story? Reflect on all you've learned.

Here are some additional questions to ignite your curiosity and imagination:

- What are our most important needs in the wilderness? How is physical hunger & thirst related to spiritual hunger and thirst?
- God had manna "rain down" from heaven and water "spring up" from the ground, rocks, or wells. Why do you think God chose to illustrate it this way?
- Do you think there's a correlation between venomous creatures and our sin? Ponder Numbers 21:4-9 & John 3:14
- Can you think of any other Bible stories or creation illustrations that feature 40 days, weeks, years? How does God use those seasons to prepare us? How is hunger and thirst related?
- There aren't many places to take cover and hide in the desert. Do you think God intended this? How does that impact us in a spiritual sense?
- The Feast of Booths (Sukkot) is celebrated every year by building a temporary shelter in remembrance of God's provision in the wilderness during those 40 years (Leviticus 23:33). List all the physical illustrations you can think of that metaphorically represent Jesus as the provider of our needs.
- In Mark 1:11, the Father speaks audibly of His love for Jesus and then immediately sends him into the wilderness to be tempted. What does that teach you about wilderness seasons?