

## Teen Devotion

Year A – Lent 1

Our Greatest Needs



**One truth shared:** Jesus is the champion you need.

*Then the devil left him.*

**Matthew 4:11a**

### Champion

Isn't it a nice feeling when you know you've got someone who will fight for you? It might be a sibling or parent who you know will always defend you no matter what happens. It might be a friend who stands up for you, or a teammate who's always got your back. It might be a pastor or teacher who always has a minute to talk to you or share a few kind words of encouragement when you need it.

In this week's Bible reading, God reminds us that we have an even greater champion than any of these in our Savior Jesus. Unlike even the most faithful of friends, Jesus will never move away or graduate. Unlike a parent or sibling or pastor, he will never get sick or die. No matter what happens, he's always ready to fight for you! Even better, when Jesus fights for you he's able to give so much more than any other champion. When you make mistakes, Jesus provides more than advice and support—his life and death on your behalf means that he has undone the eternal consequences you deserve by defeating your greatest enemies—sin and the devil.

That's what is happening in today's scripture reading. It's Jesus against the devil. An epic conflict, a battle to the eternal death out in the desert. Jesus is humanly hungry, thirsty, tired, and worn down as the battle rages for 40 days and 40 nights. The devil deploys every trick in the book, but it all comes to nothing. Gospel writer Matthew closes with these simple but beautiful words: "Then the devil left him." He gives up. He can't win. Satan slinks away with his tail between his legs, unable to corrupt the Son of God in any way.

Remember that victory on the days when it feels like you're at war and all alone and facing odds you can't possibly overcome. You're not alone—Jesus has your back. He provides the strength you need. He promises to work the events of your life for your eternal good. And, he promises that all these battles are temporary, because the war has already been won. The devil has been defeated, you're forgiven, and heaven awaits!

**Prayer:** Jesus our Savior, you are our champion. You fought the devil for us, and you won. Give us the perspective to live in the light of that victory, confident that you won it for us. On the days when we feel overwhelmed or isolated, comfort us with reminders of your constant presence and protection. Amen.

# Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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### Our Greatest Needs

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## Champion

**Starting the Discussion:** *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- Who would win? (Pose various animal pairings: lion vs. hippo, etc.) Then move onto Bible champions: David vs. Joshua. Goliath vs. Sampson.
- Point: Don't let this go for too long but make the point: *We expect whoever or whatever is stronger to win.*

**Connecting:** *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- Can you think of times in the Bible when it looked as though the stronger person DIDN'T win? (Examples might include David vs. Goliath, any number of Canaanite nations vs. Israel, Abraham vs. kings of Sodom, etc.)
- What do all of these "upsets" have in common? (*God intervened in the conflict.*)

**Digging In:** *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Describe the conflict happening in Matthew 4:1-11? Who did win, and why does it matter? (Jesus won. This is what we call "active obedience." Jesus didn't just die for you—he also lived for you. His death paid the price for your sins, but his life earned God's favor and heaven.)
- *Agree or disagree.* Jesus' primary work as Messiah was to die on the cross and pay for our sins. (Agree in the sense that it was the culmination of his work. Disagree in the sense that it was only half of what needed to happen to save us. Jesus was born under the law (Galatians 4:4) and lived perfectly under the law in our place.)
- Do you think people have the ability to fight the devil's temptation? Who usually wins? Why? (Answers may vary. It's easy to see examples of sin in the world—the devil obviously wins a lot.)
- Do you have the ability to fight temptation? Why or why not? (If we fight by ourselves, we lose. The devil is stronger. Only with Jesus do we find the strength we need.)
- If Jesus is fighting on our side, why do Christians fall into temptation? (This side of heaven, we are both sinners and saints. Our sinful nature is not gone—it continues to try and strangle us. See Paul's experience in Romans 7. Jesus is the only place we can find motivation and strength we need.)

**Conclusion:** *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

Describe some things a Christian should think about when facing temptation. Try to take it deeper than “Jesus is with me.” (Answers will vary. Ideas could include reflecting on Jesus’ sacrifice for you—not in the sense that “you owe him,” but in the sense that living for him and out of love for him is something worth doing. Concluding illustration: Think of it as two dogs inside of a Christian that are fighting (the sinful nature and the new man). Which one will win? Probably the one that you feed more...)