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TESTS

THE TEST OF THE DESERT

WEEK 1: THE TEST OF THE DESERT

SERVICE TIMELINE

- 1 INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)
- 2 VIDEO (20 MINUTES)
- 3 DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)
- 4 HOUSE BUSINESS (10-20 MINUTES)

*SUGGESTED TIMES, FLEXIBLE TO YOUR SETTING

FOCUS

THE TEST OF THE DESERT SHOWS US THAT THERE ARE LESSONS GOD TEACHES US IN UNCERTAIN TIMES AND HE WANTS US TO GET THROUGH THEM SO HE CAN BLESS US WITH HIS PROMISES.

KEY VERSE

And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.
Deuteronomy 8:2 (NKJV)

PREPARATION

SET UP DVD: WEEK 1, MAKE COPIES OF THE TEST WORKSHEET 1A, BLANK GAME CARDS FOR GAMES ON VIDEO (OPTIONAL), CANDY, 2 COPIES OF QUIET ON THE SET SCRIPT, PREPARE ROOM TO WELCOME STUDENTS

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TEACHER TIPS:

Change it up!

Here is another option for how to use this series if you are short on time or want a change of pace.

Week 1 - Play the video the first week straight through on DVD. (Each Video Lesson is broken into 6-8 sections and lasts a total of 15-20 minutes)

Week 2 - Utilize the written material the second week.

TEACHER TIPS:

Environment is BIG!

Make sure you give proper consideration to the setting your students are entering each week. Make it a place they *want* to be.

Everything communicates something whether it is intentional or not.

INTRODUCTION

TESTING...TESTING 1 - 2 - 3

(Everything throughout this Leader Guide that you see in **BOLD** is suggested to say aloud to the class.)

Who likes it when your teacher surprises you with a test that you forgot to study for? Nobody really likes tests, but we are given them by teachers to see how much we know. Usually tests are looked over by the teacher and we get a grade.

While “The Test” (provided in the appendix and on the resource CD) is being passed out, explain that everyone should keep their test turned over until you give the go ahead to look at it. Build it up that it is a really hard test, and that the student who answers all of the questions correctly will get a reward.

The students will obviously see how easy the test it is and finish it without a problem. **Who thinks they answered all of the questions correctly? Who thinks they failed the test? Who thinks they passed the test?** Go over the answers. Give everyone something sweet as a reward for passing the test.

This test was meant for you to pass. It was very easy. Did you know God gives us tests? All of His tests are meant for us to pass as well. The 4 big differences between this test and the tests that God gives us are:

- **God’s tests are much harder.**
- **God’s tests yield a much greater reward.**
- **God’s tests are not taken with a pencil and paper.**
- **God’s tests include God as our tutor through them.**

TESTS

THE TEST OF THE DESERT

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

This week, we are going to explore one of many tests that God may bring our way. It is called the test of the desert. Remember, God’s tests are not meant for us to fail. If we allow Him to tutor us, we will pass every single time!

Can anyone spell desert? (allow someone to give it a try.) **It is a word that means something completely opposite if you change just one letter.**

- The desert is dry and lonely.
- Dessert is rich and delicious and served at parties.
- The desert is made up of prickly cactuses.
- Dessert is made up of sweet cakes and ice cream.

Just like we were all rewarded with something sweet as a result of passing the test earlier, the desert can become a dessert if we realize it may be just a test God brought our way to see how we handle it.

GOING DEEPER

(Note to students / leaders) **Don’t mistake bad things that happen in our world as tests that God brings. The tests we will explore from God are tests of our character and obedience. Bad things happen as a result of sin in the world. God may bring good from bad, but terrible things that happen in the world are not to be mistaken as tests from God.**

ILLUSTRATE, ILLUSTRATE, ILLUSTRATE

Share a story of how you handled a test in your life that God brought you through before introducing the video.

Environment

Checklist:

- Make sure the room is clean and free of clutter.
- Lighting should be pleasant (dimmers are a great addition.)
- Appropriate music playing as students enter can make a big impression and set the proper mood.
- Series decor can show the students how important the topic you are exploring is. (i.e. it can be as simple as displaying the topic logo on your screens.)
- Greeters welcoming students and helping them make a connection with another student can pay big dividends in the environment you set.

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THE TEST OF THE DESERT

TEACHER TIPS:*Video Files*

If you would like to add each segment to a presentation program like Media Shout, Easy Worship, or Pro Presenter, the segments are also available on the resource CD as files. This may give you flexibility to pick and choose which segments and where in your service you would like to use them without having to use a DVD remote.

TEACHER TIPS:*Environment is BIG!*

Make sure you give proper consideration to the setting your students are entering each week. Make it a place they *want* to be. *Everything* communicates *something* whether it is intentional or not.

VIDEO

SEGMENT

DESCRIPTION

1

TEACHING ONE

Press play on the DVD: Week 1 entitled The Test of the Desert. Let it play and it will advance to the next segment automatically.

2

GAME

Each game requires an emcee to help the students interact with the video. Provide students with game cards each week where they can write their answers. Have students hold up their answers over their head when instructed to do so. (press pause if needed) You may also just have students shout out the correct answers.

3

TEACHING TWO

This teaching explores the story of the 12 spies in Numbers 13 and it plays automatically after the last segment on the DVD.

4

T'nT

This is a story about a test that happened in real life that led to a testimony. T'nT stands for tests and testimonies. Testimonies help us overcome circumstances. They are powerful and explosive like T-N-T!

TESTS

THE TEST OF THE DESERT

VIDEO

SEGMENT

DESCRIPTION

5

M'nM

This is a segment each week highlighting the key verse to **memorize** and **meditate** upon. Encourage students to say the verse aloud with Stephen or Gregg as they say it on the screen. This is purposeful to help the verse get into their heart. This weeks verse is Deuteronomy 8:2.

6

Q'nA

The Question and Answer segment is a great opportunity to measure what they are grasping and spark conversation. If possible, assign students to groups of 4-8 with a leader in each group to help facilitate the questions as they are asked on the screen. Once they anticipate this segment, it will also encourage listening and comprehension. Some of the questions are designed to challenge them to use their critical thinking skills and go beyond just a nice answer. Don't let the difficulty of a question cause them to shy away from participating. The goal of this time more than getting the perfect answer is to cause them to think about what they are learning. You may want to pause the video if you need more time with a question. This segment should transition nicely into your discussion time.

TEACHER TIPS:*M'nM*

The memorize and mediate segment can become a powerful time each week. The way Jesus made it while being tested in the desert by Satan was by quoting the Word of God. Our students will have confidence to pass the tests that come their way when they have the "sword of the Spirit" on their lips. Once it is memorized, they will be able to mediate on it (or repeat and think on it) throughout their week.

Taking it Further...

- Have students write down the verse in a journal you provide or one you ask them to bring.
- Ask them to write it in their own words or using word art with markers or colored pencils.

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THE TEST OF THE DESERT

TEACHER TIPS: LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!!

This is not Hollywood. Not everyone is an actor and not everyone can pull off a Broadway production. (unless you ARE in a church that is in Hollywood) So, learn to laugh at yourself and have fun. Quiet on the set is designed to be an optional appeal on the topic from a humorous perspective. Your goal is nothing more than to grab your student's attention before the discussion.

NO NEED TO MEMORIZE

If you have limited prep time, each Q.O.T.S. is designed for players so they may even hold their script while they "act". Remember: Have fun! The students will if you do.

DISCUSSION

QUIET ON THE SET

- (student sitting on a chair with an imaginary desk)
- Student (sweetly and softly) **Oh, please let me get an A...please let me get an A! Please, Please!**
- Teacher **OK, class, time is up, turn in your test.**
(teacher walks by student and collects his test)
- Teacher (VERY sweetly) **Great job!**
- Student **I studied allllllll weekend.**
- Teacher **Well it shows. You are a first class student.**
- Director **And...cut! (ANGRY) What was that people? That was disgusting. C'mon people. I need more anger here. And lights, camera rolling, action!**
- Teacher (shouting loudly and angry) **OK, class, time is up, turn in your test.**
(teacher walks by student and collects his test)
- Teacher (ANGRY) **Great.....job!**
- Student **I studied allllllll weekend.**
- Teacher **Well it shows. You...are a first class student.**
- Director **And...cut! (VERY sweetly) What was that people? Where did all that anger come from? Take it from the top and we need to see more compassion, more feeling, from the heart. Cameras rolling, action!**
- Teacher (sadly) **Great.....job.**
- Student **I...I...I (crying) studied all weekend.**
- Teacher **Well it shows. You..are..a..first class... (break out sobbing) student.**
- Director **And...cut! ALL WRONG! We are looking for happy here folks. Take 5. We'll try again after lunch.**

TESTS

THE TEST OF THE DESERT

DISCUSSION

RELATE

Life is not a movie set. However, God often allows more than one take at the situations we face. The test of the desert is an example. The people of Israel spent 40 years on their movie set. God, as the director probably called CUT more than a thousand times.

READ

Read Numbers 13:13-33 in groups and "spy" out where they failed their test of the desert this time.

Read Numbers 14:26-38 and see the consequences of failing the test of the desert which was meant to be a much shorter test.

REFLECT

What can we learn from the 2 good spies, Joshua and Caleb, about passing tests that seem impossible? (Allow for comments and discuss their answers. This causes students to internalize the material.)

What is your desert? Ask Jesus to help you navigate through it more quickly than they did. (allow a ministry moment to happen as you pray together)

Joshua and Caleb were some of the only ones in Numbers who turned their desert into a dessert by getting to go into the promised land flowing with milk and honey.

What will you do in your test of the desert so you can enter and enjoy your promised land?

SMALL GROUPS. You may want students to stay in the groups from Q'nA at the end of the video for the READ time with a leader in each group. You may also read the passages together if you'd like. Encourage students to bring and use their own Bibles at church. This will make them more comfortable reading them at home.

REFLECT.

We often rush moments where we assume our students are not relating. Preteens may check out, but sometimes we mistake that for genuine reflection going on in their hearts. Allow Jesus to direct your time and be sensitive to where He may prompt you to wait on Him to minister to a student.

TESTS

THE TEST OF THE DESERT

TEACHER TIPS:

HOUSE? BUSINESS?
All J12 Curriculum contains the underlying theme of Jesus at 12 years old. While He was in the HOUSE of God, He said to His parents, I must be about My Father's BUSINESS.

Although, weekly service elements may not be what He meant by that, make sure there is purpose to every "tradition" you use in your preteen gatherings.

Just as Jesus in Luke 2 went every year, according to tradition to Jerusalem, make every weekly recurring moment in your service meaningful and full of impact.

THAT'S NOT US
Every preteen

HOUSE BUSINESS

LIVE 2 GIVE

Live 2 Give emphasizes a preteen's responsibility to give back to the world around them. This value challenges a student's world that is full of self centered pursuits. It reminds them that their blessings are an opportunity to bless others.

Those who strive to be like Jesus at 12 Live to Give through their time, gifts, money, and acts of service. This is evidenced during gatherings through offerings, sponsoring, discussing, and letting tweens correspond with orphans, hands on social justice in-class opportunities, service projects, and missions films and videos.

- **Action:** Receive an offering for missions, church projects, general funds with the intent that we live to give in all areas of our lives.

R'nR & M'nM

R'nR stands for read and rewrite. This value encourages them to own their faith and comprehend what they read. Helping them begin to keep a journal is part of this value and is practiced in weekly gatherings in various ways. M'nM (as was introduced in the video series) stands for memorize and meditate. M'nM encourages preteens to hide God's Word in their heart, and know when to use it in their daily lives. During M'nM, methods to memorize and benefits of meditation on the Word are rehearsed weekly. M'nM and R'nR are encouraged at home in their alone time with Jesus.

- **Action:** Encourage the students to M'nM and R'nR on their key verse for this week.

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HOUSE BUSINESS

T'nT

T'nT (as was introduced in the video series) stands for tests and testimonies. When a preteen is spending quiet time with Jesus, practicing tradition in their lifestyle, and being open for the opportunity to serve others, tests and testimonies will be the result. Testimonies are proof of the truth they are learning. When a student shares a story of how, where, or why God is working, it serves as evidence that Jesus is being reflected in their lifestyle.

- **Action:** Ask for 2 or 3 students or other leaders to share a T'nT about the test of the desert that they have been through.

WORSHIP

Singing songs and spending time in worship helps tune our hearts to God's frequency. You may have a full student led band with singers and dancers, an accompaniment track, a worship DVD, or even an accordion. Whatever you use, it's a great element to teach students to spend time with God.

BIRTHDAYS & GUESTS

You may want to assign a leader to keep track and pass out birthday cards to students on their special days as you sing to them from the front. Have a grab bag of candy that each guests and the student who brought them is offered.

CRAFT & SNACK TIME

This may be a great element to use as students are arriving or waiting to be picked up.

group has a different culture that is rooted in your church life. These HOUSE BUSINESS elements are optional suggestions designed to spark creativity.

However, they are a tool that may prove very useful to you if you are looking for a different structure or building blocks to create your service order.

EXPLANATIONS

The long explanations are given to show purpose behind traditions. Make sure to read and understand them if you choose to use these House Business elements in your service.