

DESERT WILDERNESS – SAND MANDALA

March 4

Invitation to Join

Around 5:45pm ring the bell and say something like:

We will begin our Lenten activity in just a minute. Tonight, we are creating a sand mandala. All are welcome to join, come gather around this table now for an introduction or join whenever you are ready until it is time for church.

Once a group has gathered it is time to begin.

Opening Prayer

Start the time together with prayer saying:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, as we enter this season of Lent we offer ourselves to you. Be with us as we journey toward you. Help us to release things that get in the way or things we want to change. Help us also to see new things that will draw us closer to you. Amen.

Storytelling

Say:

Tonight, we are going to hear a story about Jesus in the wilderness.

Invite someone to read:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Ask for participants response to the reading:

- *I wonder what led Jesus to the wilderness?*
- *I wonder what it was like to fast, to be hungry, for 40 days?*
- *I wonder what Jesus felt when the devil tempted him?*
- *I wonder what the wilderness looks like in your life?*
- *I wonder what fast you might choose?*

Activity

Now it is time for our activity. Say something like:

Tonight, we are coloring mandalas. Mandalas are beautiful and intricate patterns that help us to enter into a meditative space. Often times people go out into the wilderness for time to think, to reflect on their life. Entering into the wilderness of our mind is possible through prayer and meditation, too.

We have a large mandala here which we will color with sand. It is important that we are very careful with the sand so that it stays where it belongs in the mandala. Creating sand mandalas is a tradition of Tibetan Buddhist monks. It is a highly ceremonial act, the mandala is created and dismantled with great care.

We also have mandala coloring sheets. We'll take turns with the sand, if there is not space for you to work on it please take a coloring sheet. If you are working with the sand, after you've had some time if others are waiting please invite someone else to take a turn.

Supplies

- Mandala coloring sheets
- Colored pencils
- Oversized mandala template
- Colored sand bottles
- Broom and dustpan

Set Up

1. Set out oversized mandala on one table with colored sand bottles.
2. Set out the coloring sheets and colored pencils on another table.
3. Keep the broom and dustpan nearby in case of spills.

Closing

When the bells begin playing it is time to wrap up. Invite participants to put the final touches on their project. Wait to clean up until after church so as not to disrupt the beginning of worship.