

Confronting the Tempter
(Inspired by Matthew 4:1-4 NLT)

Note: Before the reading, make sure all candles are lit.

Reader #1 - God used temptations by the devil to test Jesus' loyalty.

Reader #2 - In the first temptation Jesus was faced with the discomfort of hunger.

Reader #1 - From the Gospel According to Matthew we read, "Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted there by the devil."

Reader #2 - "For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry."

Reader #1 - "Then the devil came and said to him, 'If you are the son of God, change these stones into loaves of bread.'"

Reader #2 - "But Jesus told him, 'No! The Scriptures say, 'People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.'"

Reader #1 - Thus we have learned through the Scriptures, Jesus proved his obedience to God in this and every temptation.

Reader #2 - Jesus' victory over temptation has stood throughout the centuries as a model for our resistance to the Tempter.

Now, please extinguish one violet candle ... and return to your pew ...

(Thank you!)

Revealing the Divinity
(Inspired by Matthew 17:1-9 NLT)

Note: Before the reading, make sure all but one violet candle are lit.

Reader #1 - Upon a high mountain Jesus gathered his inner circle of disciples: Peter, James, and John.

Reader #2 - It was there that Jesus would provide additional information about his full identity.

Reader #1 - From the Gospel According to Matthew we read, "As the men watched Jesus' appearance changed so that his face shone like the sun."

Reader #2 - "And his clothing became dazzling white."

Reader #1 - "Peter blurted out, 'Lord, this is wonderful!'" However, upon hearing the voice from the cloud say, 'This is my beloved Son,' the disciples were terrified and fell down on the ground."

Reader #2 - "Jesus came over and touched them. 'Get up,' he said, 'don't be afraid.' And when they looked, they saw only Jesus with them."

Reader #1 - Thus we have learned through the Scriptures, Jesus was the glorious manifestation of God himself on earth, God's Divine son.

Reader #2 - Jesus' glory has shown through the centuries. His light shines forth though this candle may be extinguished.

Now, please extinguish a second violet candle ... and return to your pew ...

(Thank you!)

Embracing the Stranger
(Inspired by John 4: 5-15 NLT)

Note: Before the reading, make sure all but two violet candles are lit.

Reader #1 - Upon ground acquired by Jacob, and designated for the family of Joseph, in Samaria Jesus comes to Jacob's well.

Reader #2 - It was there that Jesus would reveal insights to who he was.

Reader #1 - From the Gospel According to John we read, "Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Please give me a drink.'"

Reader #2 - "The woman was surprised ... saying to Jesus, 'You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?'"

Reader #1 - "Jesus replied, 'If you only knew the gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.'"

Reader #2 - "'But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket,' she said, 'and this is a very deep well. Where would you get this living water?'"

Reader #1 - "Jesus replied, 'People soon become thirsty again after drinking *well* water. The water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.'"

Reader #2 - "'Please sir,' the woman said, 'give me some of that water!'"

Now, please extinguish a third violet candle ... and return to your pew ...

(Thank you!)

Illuminating the Darkness
(Inspired by John 9: 1-11 NLT)

Note: Before the reading, make sure all but three violet candles are lit.

Reader #1 - In Biblical times, an affliction like being blind from birth was believed to be the direct result of sin.

Reader #2 - It was by such a healing that Jesus would demonstrate an aspect of his divinity.

Reader #1 - From the Gospel According to John we read, "As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth."

Reader #2 - "'Teacher,' his disciples asked him, 'why was this man born blind? Was it a result of his own sins or those of his parents?'"

Reader #1 - "'It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins,' Jesus answered, 'He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him.'"

Reader #2 - "The he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smoothed the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, 'Go and wash in the pool.'"

Reader #1 - "So the man went and washed, and came back seeing."

Reader #2 - Thus Jesus demonstrated the power of God in him to remove sin, no matter the origin.

Now, please extinguish a fourth violet candle ... and return to your pew ...

(Thank you!)

Awakening the Sleeper
(Inspired by John 11: 1-4 NLT)

Note: Before the reading, make sure all but four violet candles are lit.

Reader #1 - Jesus had previously made the claim, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Reader #2 - Such a claim was followed by the last of seven miracles conducted by Jesus and recorded by John.

Reader #1 - From the Gospel According to John we read, "A man named Lazarus was sick."

Reader #2 - "So the two sisters (Mary and Martha) sent a message to Jesus telling him, 'Lord, the one you love is very sick.'"

Reader #1 - "But when Jesus heard about it he said, 'Lazarus's sickness will not end in death.'"

Reader #2 - "Jesus continued, 'No, it is for the glory of God. I, the son of God, will receive glory from this.'"

Reader #1 - After some time, Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus, sealed with a stone, and shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus came out.

Reader #2 - Thus Jesus demonstrated his power over death and darkness.

Now, please extinguish a fifth violet candle ... and return to your pew ...

(Thank you!)

Entering in Humility
(Inspired by Matthew 21: 1-11 NLT)

Note: Before the reading, make sure all but five violet candles are lit.

Reader #1 - Jesus intentionally fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah by entering Jerusalem as the King coming on a humble colt.

Reader #2 - In this entry he was truly giving of himself for his people.

Reader #1 - From the Gospel According to Matthew we read, "The two disciples did as Jesus said. They brought the animals to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it."

Reader #2 - "Most of the crowd spread their coats on the road ahead of Jesus, and other cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road."

Reader #1 - "Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the crowds all around him were shouting,"

Reader #2 - "Praise God for the Son of David! Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in the highest heaven!"

Reader #1 - "The entire city of Jerusalem was stirred as he entered. 'Who is this?' they asked.

Reader #2 - "And the crowds replied, 'It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'"

Now, please extinguish a sixth violet candle ... and return to your pew ...

(Thank you!)