



Lent Appeal 2019

Service Materials

Inspire your congregation to travel lightly as they reflect on the wilderness experience, which for many people in our world is a daily reality. These materials provide you with the elements you need to put together an engaging service for all ages.



Welcome

By dedicating a service to All We Can, you can connect your congregation to people in the Bible and across the world today who tackle injustice, and give them a chance to join in and make a practical difference.

This service can be run during Lent, or at any other time of the year. It also has the option to be run in conjunction with All We Can's *Travel Lightly*, a 6-week (40-day) booklet of reflections, prayers and activities, for your congregation to follow either as individuals or to use in groups.

These booklets are available to order from allwecan.org.uk/wilderness

All We Can is an international development and emergency relief organisation. Focusing on those in greatest need, it has always been inspired by Christian principles and is an integral part of the Methodist family. All We Can helps find solutions to poverty by engaging with local people and organisations in some of the world's poorest communities, to end the suffering caused by inequality and injustice.

What you need

Provided in this pack is an order of service, prayers, an interactive activity, a talk and song suggestions. **Please adapt these materials to suit your congregation and situation.** With the wide selection of material available, we are confident that you will be able to create an inspiring and impactful service.

All resources can be downloaded from allwecan.org.uk/wilderness

Gift Aid envelopes, giving leaflets and *Travel Lightly* devotional booklets can be ordered by calling the All We Can office on

020 7467 5132

or emailing info@allwecan.org.uk

Additional resources required:

- Laptop, projector and speakers
- PowerPoint: *Travel Lightly (Lent Appeal 2019)*
- Film: *The Wilderness (Lent Appeal 2019)*
- For the interactive activity: discarded items such as milk cartons, toilet rolls, bottle tops, cardboard boxes etc., and glue
- For the intercessions: plasticine, play-dough or clay
- *Travel Lightly* booklets, Gift Aid envelopes and giving leaflets for members of the congregation

Suggested order of service

In the electronic version of this document, you can click on any underlined item in the list below to be taken to the relevant activity:

- [Call to worship](#)
- [Prayer of praise](#)
- [Hymn / Song](#)
- [Welcome & Introduction](#)
- [Prayer of thanksgiving](#)
- [Hymn / Song](#)
- [Interactive activity](#)
- [Hymn / Song](#)
- [Bible readings](#)
- [Talk notes \(Film: The Wilderness - Lent Appeal 2019\)](#)
- [Prayer of confession](#)
- [Hymn / Song](#)
- [Offering](#)
- [Prayers of intercession](#)
- [Hymn / Song](#)
- [Closing prayer](#)

Other elements in the pack:

- [Hymn / Song suggestions](#)
- [Church donation return form](#)

The theme

The theme of this service is *Travel Lightly* – to consider the wilderness experiences we all journey through, but which have become the daily reality of many people in our world – struggling for sustenance, feeling isolated, enduring conflict and a state of vulnerability. You may wish to challenge the congregation to travel lightly through Lent by decreasing the ‘footprint’ they leave each day. They can do this by reducing their consumption of the things we rely on – such as, petrol, plastic, electricity, food, coffee, digital devices, etc. While doing so, they can remember those people across our world who are going through wilderness experiences without access to the things we can so easily take for granted. The money they save can then be donated to All We Can to improve the lives of their global neighbours facing a daily wilderness. You may wish to have a travel-themed display in the church, such as suitcases and backpacks with various items for people to consider what is important for them. We would be appreciative if, as part of your service, you take an offering to support All We Can’s work.



Call to worship



Psalm 63:1-5

¹ You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.
² I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
³ Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
⁵ I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of
foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

SLIDES 2-3



Prayer of praise

A prayer to say with the congregation

God, present in all places,
We seek you and we long for you.
Your love restores us and lifts us.
You fulfil our desires –
the deep yearnings of our soul.
We praise you for who you are,
We thank you for all you’ve done.
You are our present help in times of trouble.
Praise to you alone.
Amen.

SLIDE 4

Hymn/song

Click on the heading above to be taken to a list of suggested hymns and songs (page 7).



Welcome / introduction

What do you pack when you go away on a journey? [You can ask for suggestions and/or pack a bag with items.] Clothes, passports, your favourite snacks, a book or two, your phone and other devices – perhaps your favourite teddy or another item that gives you comfort and reminds you of home?

During Lent, we remember a journey that Jesus took. He withdrew from his usual patterns of life, from his friends and family, from familiar resources (including food). For 40 days and 40 nights, he was in the wilderness; in a desert place where he was tested. The words we read in the psalm at the beginning of worship, are the words of someone experiencing a desert place. It says: “my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.” In the desert place, with all other things removed, we feel our need for God more acutely than ever.

For many people in our world, the wilderness experience is a daily reality – a struggle for sustenance, feelings of isolation, enduring conflict and a state of vulnerability. But alongside these challenges, there are many remarkable instances of ingenuity, resilience, faith and love. In the desolate wilderness, there is yet the potential for life.

Over Lent, we can travel lightly by decreasing the ‘footprint’ we leave each day. We can reduce our consumption of the things we use daily – such as, food, drinks, devices, magazines, etc. The things we may put in our backpack without a second thought. Through this, may we become more aware of our need for God, and remember our global neighbours who are going through wilderness experiences without access to these things that we so readily take for granted. We can donate the money we save to the work of All We Can.

During our service we will be taking a collection for All We Can, helping people in some of the world’s poorest communities to not only survive, but to thrive in life and to fulfil their God-given potential. Please give generously today, so you can travel home more lightly!

Note: If the congregation is not yet aware of our ‘Travel Lightly’ devotional booklets, give some out before the service or place them on the seats for when people arrive. This booklet provides people with 40 days of reflections, prayers and activities. These are available to order from allwecan.org.uk/wilderness



Prayer of thanksgiving

A responsive prayer with the congregation.

Leader: God, we thank you for being present at all times and in all places.

All: We thank you God for your presence.

Leader: God, we thank you for your love and concern for all people in our world.

All: We thank you God for your love.

Leader: God, we thank you for listening to the prayers of your people.

All: We thank you God for responding to us.

Leader: God, we thank you for your faithfulness which never lets us down.

All: We thank you God for walking closely with us.

For all the ways you are active in our world, we thank and praise you. Amen.

SLIDES 5-6

Hymn/song

Click on the heading above to be taken to a list of suggested hymns and songs (page 7).



Interactive activity

Note: For this activity, you need to have a collection of discarded items such as milk cartons, toilet rolls, bottle tops, cardboard boxes etc., and glue/tape.

Activity: Invite the young people to volunteer to perform a task. The task is for the young people to create a tower (or another object you choose such as a flower or an animal) using the resources available. They have three minutes to do it. Then share:



We live in a disposable world where we so easily discard something once we believe it’s fulfilled its purpose. What the young people have shown us is that it is possible to reimagine what is in front of us. These young people have turned trash into treasure, rubbish into recreations. When God looks upon his world, including you and me, he sees the potential. Where we might see despair, he sees hope. Where we might see a wilderness, he sees the potential for life. As Christians, may we be able to use our imaginations when we look at our world, to see things the way God sees them.

Hymn/song

Click on the heading above to be taken to a list of suggested hymns and songs (page 7).



Bible readings



Ezekiel 37:1-14

Mark 1:12-13



Talk / Sermon notes

Note: For this talk you will need the film: *The Wilderness – Lent Appeal 2019*. These notes have been provided for you to adapt and make appropriate for your situation.

Introduction

The ‘wilderness experience’ is a term used to describe times of testing in our lives. Perhaps you can recall times in your own life that have been particularly trying and hard?

Ezekiel lived in one of the most tragic times of his people’s existence. Babylonian armies had decimated Judah, deporting large groups of people into captivity. The vision he was shown was perhaps not too far removed from his own experience – seeing the bodies of Israelites strewn outside Jerusalem and even scattered along the desert road that led him and many others into exile. The closest we may get to visualising this, is the news footage we see on our screens. War footage streamed from Syria. Horror stories of burnt villages and mass killings told by surviving Rohingya refugees. Fatalities left in the wake of an earthquake. What awful scenes to behold! The pain, the suffering, the death. People’s lives irrevocably altered.

Valley of dry bones

Ezekiel is taken to a place of desolation. He passes through the open grave. There is no life in this valley of dry bones. These bones represent the Israelites, in their deathlike experience of the Babylonian exile. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off’ (v11).

They feel life ebbing away, leaving a restricted existence, a shadow of their former selves.

When day after day we experience the same struggles, it is hard not to despair; not to feel trapped in a relentless cycle that we cannot escape; not to be tormented by the question, ‘When will it end?’

Equally, it is hard not to despair on behalf of others, when we hear that more than 1.3 billion people in our world live below the poverty line; that one in nine people in our world will go to bed hungry tonight; and that there’s over 68 million displaced people in our world. The scale can overwhelm us. We see a valley of dry bones. Where is hope?

What do you see?

God asks Ezekiel, “Son of man, can these bones live?” Well, the obvious answer is, “no”. They are dry bones. Dried out and bleached from much time in the sun. There is no flesh left. The vultures have had their fill. There’s no sign of life. How can these dry bones live?

Ezekiel answers, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know”. Because with God, there is always a possibility that, no matter how dire and desperate the situation, things can change. Like Ezekiel, we can come to God with the knowledge that all things are possible with him. *We can hope.*

The task of obedience

What’s more, Ezekiel is to play a part in the change. God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy. As he does, the bones move together, and tendons and flesh form. Ezekiel’s role was simple – be obedient to God’s instructions. Speak when he says speak, use the words God gives. The Bible is full of instructions, including how to love our neighbour as ourselves, showing particular concern for the most vulnerable. For people in dire situations of marginalisation, poverty and injustice, their daily struggles can seem relentless and overwhelming. A ‘cycle of poverty’ is an often-used description. A wilderness

experience of constant challenges, with no room to flourish or thrive.



Play the film: *The Wilderness* (Lent Appeal 2019)

However, cycles of poverty *can* be broken. All We Can works with people like Chikumbutso and Monica in some of the world's poorest communities, supporting them to find solutions to the poverty and injustice they experience. All We Can helps to ensure long-term change. There is a way out of the poverty cycle. As we respond to God's instruction to love our neighbours, God uses us to bring hope. Like Ezekiel, we face the wildernesses of this world and are given a vision of its potential. At first glance, we see only dry bones – but with God we know that a flourishing life is always possible.

Bringing life

With Ezekiel's prophetic words, breath enters the newly formed bodies. This echoes the time when human life was first created – God breathed into Adam. The environment of this barren valley couldn't seem further removed from the well-watered Garden of Eden. Can life emerge in this wilderness? It can, and it does. God is present in the wilderness, as much as he is in well-watered gardens. His concern for those he created is unending; his love for us, relentless.

Conclusion

There will be times when we face wilderness experiences, whether directly ourselves or as we engage in the injustices stifling our world. We have a choice: to despair or to hope, to see barrenness or potential, to accept the signs of death or to act to bring life. Just as God's Spirit lifted Ezekiel and opened his eyes, may God's Spirit lift us and open our eyes as we obediently follow him where he leads – to a flourishing life, for us and for others.



Prayer of confession

A prayer said by the worship leader

God of potential and life,
We confess that we have failed to notice the potential in ourselves, in others and in our world.

We have missed seeing what other people could become, what we could become and what our world could become.

We ask that in your mercy you will forgive us.

God of forgiveness and hope,
We ask that you will help us to see ourselves, others and our world through your eyes;
to see the potential that you can see;
to be people of love,
to be quick to forgive;
to be bringers of hope.

Amen.

SLIDES 7-8

Hymn/song

Click on the heading above to be taken to a list of suggested hymns and songs (page 7).



Offering / collection

Share: We now have the opportunity to give to All We Can, to help people in some of the world's poorest communities to find solutions to poverty, to end the suffering caused by inequality and injustice. All the money given today will enable All We Can to support people like Chikumbutso and Monica – people across the world who are struggling to provide for their very basic needs; people who, driven by hope, are working hard to improve their lives.

You can either make a one-off gift, or you can sign up to give regularly, which will have an ongoing significant impact. Just fill in the relevant form. Also, if you are able, please Gift Aid your donation to make it go further.

You are also invited to consider how you can 'travel lightly' by reducing your consumption. You can write your pledge and place it in the offering.

Allow a few moments for people to fill in the Gift Aid envelope and their pledge, which they can write on their giving envelope or form.

SLIDE 9

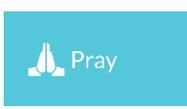
Pray

Intercessory Prayers

Prayer Activity: Give people some plasticine, play-dough or clay. Invite them to pray for the things that the service has focused on – situations of poverty and injustice. As they do so, they should mould something, such as a flower, tree or heart. Their small act is demonstrating the potential our prayers have in the hands of God as well as the potential in using our own hands (gifts, skills and talents) to bring change to our world.

Hymn/song

Click on the heading above to be taken to a list of suggested hymns and songs (page 7).

Pray

Closing prayer

A prayer said by the worship leader

We go, ready to travel lightly, aware of our need for God.

We go, as bringers of hope and advocates of life in abundance.

We go, looking for the potential in our world and acting to see that potential fulfilled.

In the name of Jesus, we go.

Amen.

SLIDES 10

Hymns and songs

Here is a selection of appropriate hymns and songs which you may like to use in your service. If you are not familiar with these hymns and songs, or if your church uses other song books, then consider gaining inspiration for your selection from the themes of breath, life, justice and potential.

	<i>Singing the Faith</i>	Other info
All I once held dear	489	
Breathe on me, Breath of God	370	
Brother, sister, let me serve you	611	
Dear Lord and Father of mankind	495	
Everyone needs compassion	627	
For the healing of the nations	696	
Give thanks with a grateful heart	78	
God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind	698	
God give us life	612	
God of Eve and God of Mary	119	
God of Justice	699	
God in my living	497	
God is love: his the care	403	
God's Spirit is in my heart	404	
God weeps at love withheld	700	
God with us	8	
Great is the darkness that covers the earth	405	
Hear the call of the kingdom	407	
Holy breath of God	380	
Holy Spirit, breath of heaven	381	
I will speak out for those who have no voices	702	
Jesus, stand among us	30	
Lead us heavenly Father, lead us	238	

Let love be real	615	
Lord God, your love has called us here	499	
Lord I come to you	471	
Lord Jesus Christ	594	
Lord of life	651	
Lord the light of your love is shining	59	
More like you Jesus	505	
O God, you search me and know me	728	
Over all the earth	63	
Praise is rising, eyes are turning	64	
Praise to the Lord	88	
Pray for a world	527	
Sacred the body God created	618	
Seek ye first the kingdom of God	254	
Send down the fire of your justice	413	
Sent by the Lord am I	239	
Show me how to stand for justice	713	
Teach me to dance	477	
Thanks for friends who keep on loving	619	
The Spirit lives to set us free	397	
There's a quiet understanding	36	
There's a spirit in the air	398	
We come from the mountains	417	
We lay our broken world	718	
When the bonds of love are breaking	656	
When we were in the darkest night	241	
Where can we find you, Lord Jesus our Master?	672	
You showed us mercy when we were in chains	488	



Church donation form

To be completed by the treasurer or All We Can co-ordinator. Please use BLOCK CAPITALS.

Church/Circuit/Group: _____

I enclose a cheque/CAF cheque payable to **All We Can** for £_____ to be used where it is most needed.

This gift is from (please tick as applicable):

a church collection church funds other fundraising

Would you like a receipt? YES NO By post/email (delete as applicable)

If you are sending in Gift Aid envelopes and regular giving forms with your church donation, please check that:

- the amount given is filled in on each envelope
- each person has completed their full name and full address legibly
- you only send All We Can Gift Aid envelopes and regular giving forms
- you keep the Giving envelopes and forms (containing sensitive information) secure, and send them to All We Can as quickly as possible.

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Contact details:

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

Contact address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

If you would like to receive updates by email about our work and how you can donate to us, please enter your email here (you can unsubscribe at any time). Email: _____

Thank you!

Return the form with your donation and any Gift Aid envelopes, including regular giving forms, to:

All We Can, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR

☎ 020 7467 5132

✉ info@allwecan.org.uk

💻 allwecan.org.uk

We promise to never sell or swap your details and you can change your preferences at anytime. All We Can holds your details to thank you for your gift, process Gift Aid, to send you occasional updates about our work and how you can support us. If you would prefer not to receive these updates by post, please tick here (you will still receive communications relevant to your church role).