

Week 4 Facilitator Guide Revised

Male Initiation and Jesus in the Desert (Part 1)

Preparation:

- Review lesson
- Read Facilitator Lesson Background information in Appendix 1
- Facilitator laminates & prepares color hand-outs of Jesus' 'Spiritual Journey.'
- Laminate mixing bowl, ingredients, and bowl of soup pictures. Print chart on A4 to cut out.
- Set up lap top and LCD project to watch Y-tube video.

Purpose: Men will see the value of Jesus wilderness experience and be challenged to brainstorm ways in which this can be contextualized into a Cambodian Christian discipleship which can serve as an initiation rite into manhood.

Objectives:

- Recognize that Jesus submitted voluntarily to initiation into manhood and ministry.
- Name, identify, and describe the components of the desert experience that are transformative.
- Compare their experience and the desert experience of Jesus.
- Propose what might be duplicated in their lives and that of young men concerning the desert experience of Jesus.
- Deduce that pain & suffering are necessary parts of our transformation that we should embrace.

- I. **Introduction:** Facilitator welcomes those attending (2-3 mins) and reminds them of our rules about protecting each other's stories.
- II. **BRIDGE:** Each participant shares what is the closest thing they have experienced to any male initiation.

Should include some parts like an older person showing them that life is hard (hard work), how deal with emotional pain, using power, or letting go.

- III. **BODY:** The Desert Phase

LEARNING TASK 1:

- View <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KckHS5t2u9A> of Jesus in the desert.
- Then show slide two on PPT

Jesus through circumcision, temple sacrifice, and baptism was fully already a fully accepted religious male but there were some things he still had to learn about being a man through nature. His classroom was no longer a synagogue, but for 40 days it became an experience in nature. His teachers were solitude, silence, wilderness, heat and sun by day, stars and cold by night. After the nature classroom taught him, and transformed him, he used nature and life to teach others.

Jesus learned many important lessons about life and being a man during those 40 days. Just like every male, he needed to know this about men:

- Life is Hard (physical suffering)
- Men are in (emotional suffering) pain, and if you don't transform the pain, you transfer the pain.
- No man is in really in control
- If men are not taught to use power, they abuse power
- You will die.

LEARNING TASK 2: Comparison

Look at the picture provided below. Make sense of the order of the 2 pictures, the mixing bowl and ingredients. Take the following words, cut them out and paste them around the appropriate item (picture).

desert	prayer	contemplation	heat
cold	Wind	dust	Wild animals
loneliness	thirst	hunger	Emotional pain
solitude	silence	Leaving behind all support, comfort and distractions	Temptation with power, glory & control.
Emotional pain	mountains	meditation	valleys



+



You have the mixing bowl, and the ingredients, what is your final product? Good Soup! What was the mixing bowl in Jesus' second phase, and what were the ingredients? What was final product of Jesus' experience in desert? What specifically would the desert experience do for Jesus to finish the rest of his journey/ministry as a true man?

Before answering the question, Look at PPT 3, Jesus' next phase of ministry-Popularity

After the desert, Jesus was about to enter a period of great (although short) popularity and success. The whole desert experience was to prepare him for this phase and his next phases.

LEARNING TASK 3: Big Group Discussion:

- What exactly happened in the desert experience that prepared Jesus to handle success and popularity so well?
- "90% of Christian leaders pass the adversity test, but too many fail the prosperity test." This is true in most modern cultures today. Why do you suppose this true? Give some examples from the Cambodian Church.
- Think about the mixing bowl and ingredients. What could the elders of the Cambodian church put together like this to help prepare young men?



IV. Participant tells his story (20 mins). Relates any desert experiences.

V. Prayer and closing (5 mins)

Facilitator Background Info

This lesson is geared to help the men realize three things:

1. That the desert phase of Jesus' development was prepared by elders (God, Holy Spirit and John the Baptist) and that Jesus submitted to this process. Jesus had ritually gone through Jewish initiation rituals of circumcision and sacrifice, and now ritual purification through baptism in order to be a complete Jew. He was now initiated completely into the faith, so what more did he need?
2. It appears through examining his desert experience he needed more than a ritual to be a man. He needed an experience that went deeper than ritual. We men need a similar experience and will be lost without it.
3. How can we incorporate a desert experience into the lives of adolescents (14-17) so they can learn to respond to life in a healthy way?

Most scholars suspect that Joseph was a great father, but died early in the life of Jesus. There were yet things Jesus needed to learn to prepare him for the rest of his life and ministry to come. In lesson 3, we imagined how Jesus might have felt in the desert for 40 days and nights. **Physically** it was very hot in the day, and it was cold at night. It was dusty and windy. There were mountains and valleys to be climbed. He was coated with dust, his throat was dry and water was not easy to find. There were snakes, scorpions and wild animals he had to watch for day and night. There were bandits, and murderers. Rocks everywhere where he could break a leg, and valleys where he could slip and fall. Headaches from no water, blurry vision because of the heat. Here in the desert he learned how to experience physical pain and understand that **LIFE is HARD.**

Emotionally: Away from friends, family and community. Alone only with his thoughts, confusion about how his mission would turn out, and emotional pain of the past and present. He experienced silence and solitude and in that silence and solitude, he sat with and felt all his full emotional pain of loneliness, missing Joseph, hints of his future, etc. He learned how to **TRANSFORM the PAIN.**

Spiritually: Jesus, like Jacob wrestles with God in the desert. Because Jesus, like Jacob, voluntarily set aside all the safety nets and structure that supported him (friends, family, community, etc), God met him there. Jesus learned what it meant to **LET GO.**

Temptation:

- Social Power:** Satan tempted Jesus with social power, turning rock into bread, as he could have the support and praise of the masses of people by providing them with physical needs.
- Political Power:** Jesus was shown all the Kingdoms of world that he could immediately have political power over and rule the world.

- Religious Power:** By throwing himself off the top of the temple and having angels rescue him, he would be a miraculous religious hero and get the worship of many.

What Jesus learned in the desert through temptation was how to understand and use power.

What Jesus learned in the Desert:

- Life is hard
- How to transform the emotional pain
- How to use power
- How to let go of control (safety nets and systems)
- That he will die

Today's world is full of angry young men and bitter old men because they never had any elders or mentors in the lives nor did they have anyone to help arrange a desert experience for them where they could learn the 4 most important lessons of life like Jesus learned. This lesson is intended to help men examine their lives to see if their problems stem from not learning these lessons, and not being able to hand them down to their sons and other Cambodian young men. We want to see young men become initiated into manhood by creating a culturally appropriate initiation experience like Jesus in the desert.

He experienced physical pain, dealt with emotional pain, learned to use power, and how to let go of control. How can we duplicate this in our discipleship?