

## September 20: the Wasteland

*Gather: Bible, paper for a poster, writing utensils/decorating utensils*

### **Life in the Wasteland:**

Many times in our lives can make us feel as though we are trapped in the middle of a wasteland or desert. Can you think of such a time in your own life? Maybe when the drastic repercussions of COVID-19 first hit and shut down schools, shops and more? Maybe it's now as you're going back to school with all the changes happening. Maybe it was years ago. Whatever that time was – how did you feel? How did you respond?

Deserts are dry, hot and can be quite dangerous. In some places you could be surrounded entirely by sand and sun with nothing else in sight. The cool thing about deserts, though, is that even deserts have life in it. The plants and animals that live in the desert find different ways to cope with the hardships they endure. For example:

Addax antelopes. They live in the Sahara and can go a surprisingly long time without drinking water because they get all they need from plants. They have light coloured fur to reflect the sun and keep them cool (unlike other varieties of antelopes).

Like addax and other desert dwellers, we need to find ways to cope when we are in the desert places. So how do we do that? How do we handle the times that drain us of our energy, make us feel alone, weary, exhausted, fearful, anxious, and more?

**Coping in the Wasteland:** Identify the problems and address those needs. Here are some things you may be feeling in the wasteland and some of God's words to encourage us/bring us to him during those times. Read through the passages below:

- Isolation: Psalm 139:1-18
- Fear: Isaiah 41:10; Isaiah 43:1-3
- Anxiety: Psalm 55:22
- Sorrow: Psalm 147:3
- Weariness: Matthew 11:28-30
- Guilt: Ephesians 1:7; John 3:16-17
- Pain: Jeremiah 17:14; Romans 8:18
- Suffering: James 1:2-4
- Anger: Proverbs 29:1,11
- Despair: Isaiah 43:18-20

Highlight the ones above that you connect the most with or need to hear often. Create a poster for yourself with the above feelings and corresponding passages. Post it somewhere you'll see it often and refer to the passages when you are feeling those things.

Along with our spiritual needs, we also need to take care of other needs while we are in the wasteland.

- Physical – get a good amount of sleep, exercise, eat healthy
- Social – keep communicating with people, make friends, build stronger relationships with people you're already connected to. Seek help from those

you trust when you are in the hard times and when you're not, offer help to those that are.

- **Emotional:** Stay in tune with what you're feeling. It's not wrong to have emotions! Share them with God and share your triumphs and trials with him. He will walk with you through it all.

Are you in the wasteland? What needs aren't being met? How can you get them met? Who can you turn to for help with those needs?

**Memory Verse:** Isaiah 43:18-19 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

**Prayer:** If you feel like you're in the wasteland right now, tell God about it! Be honest about your feelings and struggles and ask him for help through it. If you aren't in that time of life, spend some time praying for those who are. Pray for the preparation to stay strong when those times do come.

**Challenge:** Reach out to someone you know who may be going through a hard time. Offer them a listening ear, an encouraging word, or something else they may need to get through it.

If you are feeling like you're in a wasteland, find a friend, parent, leader or someone else you trust and share with them your struggles. Get support from your community that can pray for you and walk with you through these times of hardship and change!