

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Lent, like Advent, is a season of preparation. And like Advent, Lent carries us away from the chronological telling of Jesus' story, into an abstract time frame that can be very confusing to children. We backtrack to the time just after Jesus' baptism, when he went alone into the wilderness to work out his understanding of his Messiahship; and we jump ahead to his death on the Cross. In Lent we strip down Jesus' work among us to the bare bones: like the Creed, which passes in one breath from his birth to his crucifixion, Lent reminds us that the one single most important thing that the Son of God came to do was ... to die.

Jesus' time in the wilderness was a preparation for his work of ministry, but it was just as much a preparation for his death. We too prepare for his death by going out into the wilderness. In Lent we try to face the hardness in our lives—the place where we make the choices that reveal who we are, and what we are made of. With God's help, can we begin to change? Can we, out of mere love for God, renounce some part of our lives (it may be a bad habit, or it may be something entirely harmless) so as to make room for some new good—for our own growth, or for the good of others? Can we choose simplicity and austerity, out of solidarity with the many whom God loves who have no such choice?

Lenten disciplines are an old and worthy tradition. Their value is not so much that they raise funds for the needy, or punish us for our sins, or charge a tax on our pleasures; nor that they make life dreary so that Easter will feel that much more festive by contrast. Lent is a place to meet ourselves, and the God who calls us, and the one who tempts us to reject God. The figure of Satan is part of the desert into which Lent drives us. We meet him in the world, in others, and in ourselves. Jesus believed in Satan; so do most children. The world is scary—it is a place of light and life, and of darkness and death. Giving that darkness a name and a face helps children comprehend it, and begin to believe that they can resist it, and choose instead the One who offers us life.

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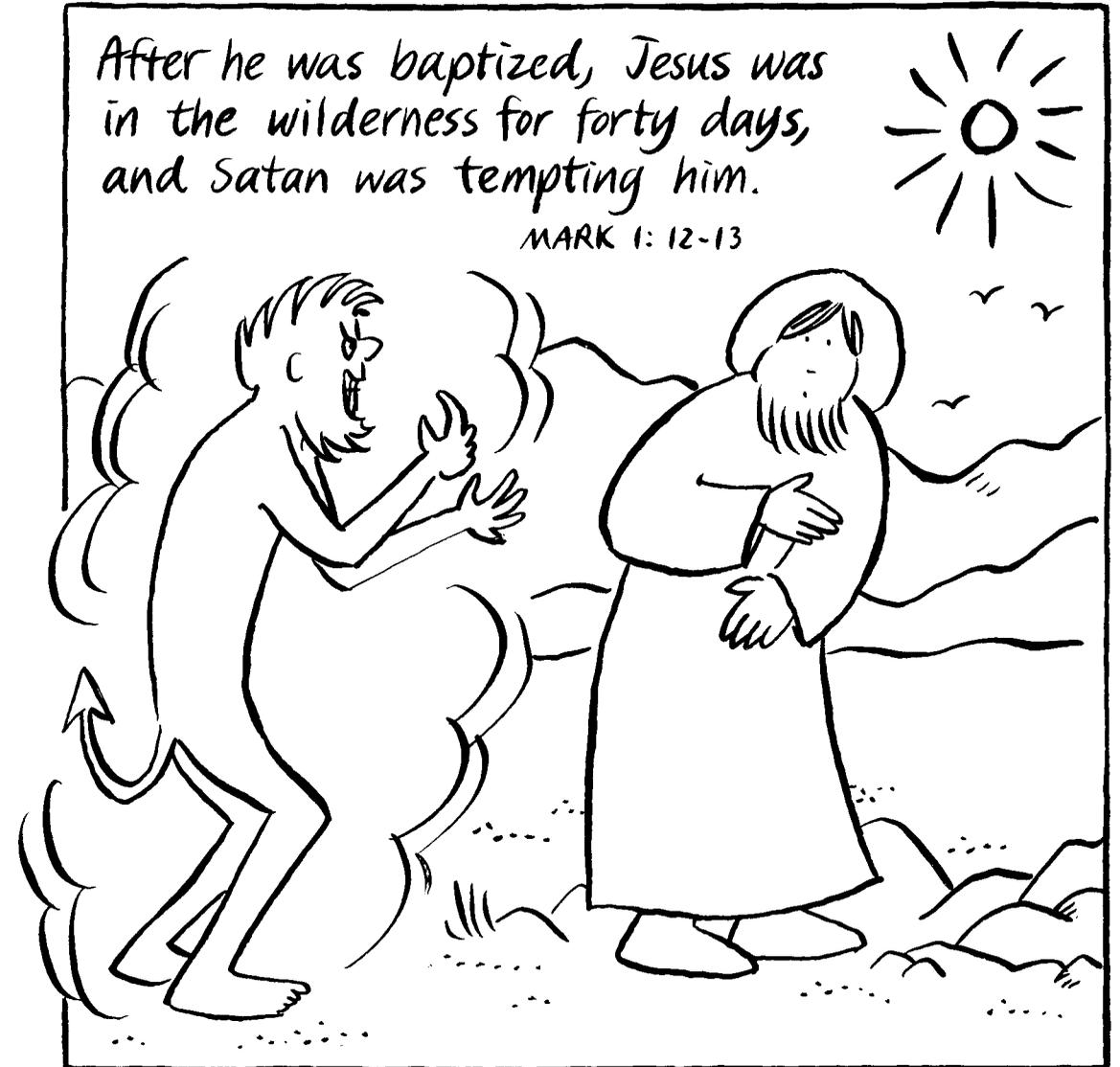
# THE SUNDAY PAPER

# JUNIOR

Year B  
1st SUNDAY  
in LENT

After he was baptized, Jesus was  
in the wilderness for forty days,  
and Satan was tempting him.

MARK 1: 12-13



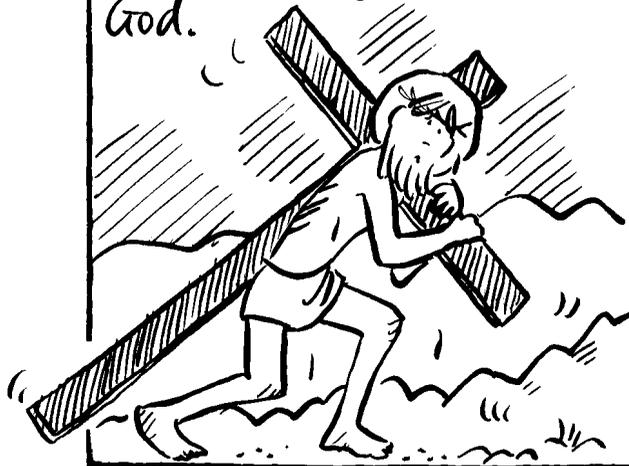
THIS IS THE SEASON OF LENT.

Lent lasts forty days. In Lent, we remember that Jesus spent forty days in the desert.

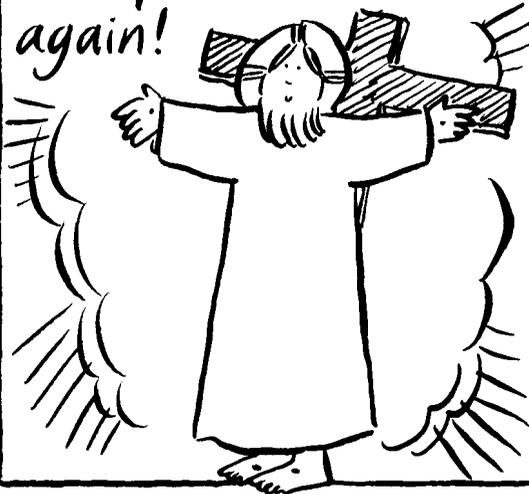


He had to choose what to do with his life. He had to choose to listen to God, or to the devil.

In Lent, we remember the hard things Jesus chose to do, to bring us back to God.



In Lent, we get ready for Easter, when Jesus died for us and rose again!



Jesus was God's beloved Son. He did what God wanted him to do. God did not make Jesus do these things. Jesus chose to do them, because he loved God and he loved us. He chose God's way, even when it was hard.

God does not make us obey him either. We have to choose, just as Jesus did. In Lent, we practice choosing God's way, even if it is hard.

Draw yourself, choosing to do something that God wants.