

Chorus (Audience)

He walked where no one saw or knew,
In shadowed winds that cut right through.
But still He stood, though tempted sore—
And proved God’s word was so much more.

Bridge (All)

We too are led to desert ground,
Where voices lie and fears abound.
But there He waits, where trials begin—
The tempter flees, and truth will win.

Final Chorus (All)

So walk the road He walked before,
Through trial, hunger, silent war.
The wilderness is not the end—
But where the soul learns how to bend.

Reflection

Just as Jesus faced temptation in the wilderness and chose truth over comfort, applause, or power, so must we examine our own choices. When voices in our world promise easy answers or quick rewards, what will we trade away? This play asks us to see our own testing grounds—not as punishment, but as preparation. May we choose honesty over approval, compassion over greed, and connection over isolation, even when it is hard.

Nine: In the Wilderness

Scripture: Matthew 4:1 (NIV)

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

Cast

- **Drew**—A thoughtful, searching student trying to figure out who he is and what matters most. On the surface, he seems calm and prepared, but he’s burdened by questions of identity, purpose, and fear of letting others down. Drew’s struggle embodies every young person wrestling with competing voices and conflicting desires. His journey is the heart of the play: choosing integrity over simple answers.
- **Voice 1: Materialism** – Smooth-talking, persuasive, and logical. This voice tempts Drew with promises of success, comfort, and the validation that comes from “having it all.” Voice 1 embodies the cultural pressure to value wealth over meaning, pushing Drew to trade purpose for possessions.
- **Voice 2: Peer Pressure**—Charming, mocking, and intensely social. Voice 2 taunts Drew with visions of popularity and belonging—if only he’s willing to lose himself in others’ expectations. This voice symbolizes the lure of approval at the cost of authenticity.
- **Voice 3: Loneliness**—Quiet, unsettling, sometimes cruelly honest. This voice doesn’t promise anything, instead it tempts Drew to shut everyone out rather than risk pain. Voice 3 represents despair and the isolating fear that being true to oneself means being alone.
- **Narrator (Ruffy)**--The calm, guiding conscience voiced through Drew’s loyal dog, imagined as his conversation partner. Ruffy offers grounding wisdom and comfort, sometimes gently questioning, sometimes affirming Drew’s choices. As the Narrator, Ruffy symbolizes Drew’s better self—the voice that wants him to choose integrity, compassion, and truth.

Synopsis

A symbolic journey exploring the challenges of growing up. Alone in a wilderness campsite, Drew wrestles with the conflicting voices of greed, social acceptance, and isolation. Each Voice tempts him toward an easier but less authentic path. Through imaginary conversations with his loyal dog Ruffy, Drew begins to face his true fears and desires. Inspired by Jesus’ own time of testing in the wilderness, this drama invites us to reflect on what we choose when no one is watching.

Designed for simple staging, it can use shadow play, lighting effects, and a stuffed animal or puppet to represent Ruffy—who acts as Drew’s confidant and the medium for the Narrator’s voice.

Scene 1: Alone in the Wilderness

A simple campfire or tent setup onstage. Drew arrives alone, preparing to spend the night in the wilderness. He talks aloud to Ruffy, trying to explain why he’s here—to think, to figure out what he really wants. The silence is unsettling. He acknowledges he’s felt lost lately, pulled in too many directions, and hopes the solitude will bring clarity. The mood is contemplative, with an undercurrent of anxiety.

Scene 2: The Temptation of Wealth

Shadows, lighting shifts, or sound cues mark the Voice’s entry. Voice 1 emerges, seductive and rational, offering Drew the promise of success, money, and comfort if he’s willing to compromise just a little on his principles. Drew debates, tempted by visions of an easy, impressive life. Ruffy challenges him to consider what he might lose: integrity, purpose, real connection. Drew finally rejects the offer, but with visible struggle.

Scene 3: The Temptation of Popularity

Slightly brighter, more frenetic energy. Voice 2 appears, lively and persuasive, telling Drew he can be liked and admired if he just learns to “play the game,” say the right things, and fit in. Drew imagines parties, friendships, and applause. But Ruffy pushes back: “Would they even know you?” Drew realizes how hollow approval feels if it’s not based on who he truly is, and resists—though he admits wanting to belong.

Scene 4: The Temptation of Isolation

Darker lighting, quieter mood. Voice 3 emerges in almost a whisper, telling Drew it would be easier to shut everyone out—to avoid rejection, disappointment, and pain. This Voice is intimate and chilling, offering safety through withdrawal. Drew feels the truth in it, acknowledging he’s been hurt before. Ruffy gently questions whether loneliness is freedom or another prison. Drew wrestles with wanting to hide forever but chooses not to.

Scene 5: Choosing Honesty

Return to the neutral campsite. Exhausted by the inner battle, Drew speaks plainly to Ruffy about his fears and desires. He admits he doesn’t have all the answers but resolves to go back home and face things honestly—with his family, friends, even Amanda (a friend or love interest implied in backstory). It’s not a triumphant victory, but a real decision to try being genuine, even if it’s hard.

Scene 6: The Teaching

Spotlight on Drew and Ruffy or Narrator alone. The Narrator’s voice draws a clear parallel to Jesus’ time in the wilderness—tested by easy answers but choosing truth. Drew reflects on what it means to be tempted, realizing temptation isn’t just about dramatic evil but about shortcuts and self-deception. The play closes on Drew breaking camp at dawn, leaving with a sense of resolve, imperfect but committed to being true to himself.

Song: Into the Wilderness *((may read responsively and/or with music played from collection))*

Verse 1 (Leader)

Into the wilderness, led by the flame,
Tested and tried, alone but not shamed.
The silence was deep, the hunger was real,
But truth was the bread, and grace was the seal.

Chorus (Audience)

He walked where no one saw or knew,
In shadowed winds that cut right through.
But still He stood, though tempted sore—
And proved God’s word was so much more.

Verse 2 (Leader)

Not by the stone turned into bread,
Not by the heights where pride is fed.
Not by the world in glittering guise,
But by the Word that never dies.