

Session 3: Know Your Enemy

Genesis 3:1-13 · Matthew 4:1-11

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

SESSION OVERVIEW

Discovery Aim. The group discovers the enemy's actual tactics by watching two foundational, deliberately contrasted campaigns: Eden, where the campaign succeeds, and the wilderness, where every move fails. They learn to recognize the same grammar of attack in their own campaigns, and they learn the Church's sober rules of engagement: what is ours to do against the enemy, and what is deliberately not.

Catholic Touchstone. The reality and the limits of Satan (CCC 391-395: "the power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite"); the petition "lead us not into temptation" (CCC 2846-2849); and the Church's ordered ministry of exorcism (CCC 1673).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Tonight requires the steadiest hand of the whole study, because two opposite errors sit in every room that talks about the devil. Some participants half-believe he is a cartoon, and for them the session restores biblical realism. Others are afraid of him, perhaps privately very afraid, and for them the session must end with the fear smaller, not larger. Your north star is CCC 395: Satan is real, active, malicious, and a creature on a leash, "not infinite" in power, permitted to act only within limits set by a Providence that is stronger and kinder than he is cruel. If the room only remembers one sentence, make it that one.

Watch his method in Genesis 3, because it is his whole playbook; he has never needed another. Move one: question the Word ("Did God say...?"), introducing not an argument but a fog. Move two: deny the consequence flatly ("You will not die"), the first flat denial of God's word recorded in Scripture. Move three: reframe God as a rival ("God knows that when you eat of it... you will be like God"), recasting the Father's protection as jealousy, his command as a cage. Notice what the serpent never does: he never forces. He has no hands in the garden. In Eden, his entire arsenal is the sentence; Eve's hands do everything else. That is tonight's central comfort disguised as its central threat: in the campaign for your consent, which is the war this study fights, his weapon is the lie, and the lie is disarmed by the truth. (Scripture also shows permitted affliction beyond words, Job above all, always under God's limits; but a wall is built by consent, and consent is won by lying.)

Then the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), the same three-move campaign run against the new Adam, and this time the ground is not a garden but a desert, the combatant is not full but starving, and every move fails. The first two temptations open with "If you are the Son of God...", and all three attack trust in the Father, each offering a shortcut past the Father's timing: bread without dependence, vindication without obedience, kingdoms without the cross. Jesus answers all three from the same small stretch of Scripture, Deuteronomy 6-8, Israel's own wilderness manual: he fights as true Israel, with the memorized Word, and the group will discover this themselves in the session's central discovery moment. Note carefully for Question 5: the devil quotes Scripture too (Psalm 91, torn from context). The

Word in his mouth is bait; the test of any voice is where it leads, toward trusting obedience or toward testing God and taking shortcuts.

Third text: 1 Peter 5:8-9 and James 4:7 give the Church's standing orders, and their verbs are chosen with precision. Be sober; be watchful; resist, firm in your faith; submit yourselves to God. Notice what is not on the list: panicking, conversing, negotiating, commanding. The promise attached is flat and glorious: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." The promise is real, not poetry, though Luke's "until an opportune time" reminds us the rout is not always final: resistance genuinely wins ground even when the siege resumes. St. Antony's witness (Session 1) stands behind the verse: demons intimidate with noise and apparitions, and steadiness in prayer routs them.

Finally, tonight carries the study's formal guardrail on deliverance, and you should teach it plainly rather than apologetically, because it is not bureaucracy; it is battlefield doctrine, and the steelman chain will let the group discover the scriptural case for it themselves (Acts 19). The short version you will teach: every baptized person is armed to resist; commanding is not our lane. The defined rule: solemn exorcism is reserved to a priest with his bishop's permission (CCC 1673; canon 1172). The broader rule of this study, matching the Church's discipline and long pastoral wisdom: laypeople do not address, interrogate, or command demons; we renounce, resist, and pray to God. The first-person renunciation we teach ("in the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that...") is a personal adaptation inspired by the baptismal renunciation of Satan, not the rite's own wording. If anyone in your group fears something beyond ordinary temptation is happening to them or their family, a prudent and safe path: see your pastor (and go to Confession), and do not delay ordinary medical or mental-health care while you do; any diocesan inquiry will itself insist on serious medical and psychological evaluation, because grace and good medicine are allies. No demon-hunting, no diagnosing others, no occult fascination, and no fear: the room should leave tonight less afraid than it arrived.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Genesis 3:1-13. The tactics manual, read tonight as a main text: fog the Word, deny the death, slander the Father. And the aftermath teaches too: shame, hiding, and blame-shifting (vv. 7-13) are the enemy's occupation policy once the wall is breached. Every stronghold keeps all three on staff.

Deuteronomy 6-8. Jesus's entire wilderness arsenal: "man does not live by bread alone" (8:3), "you shall not put the LORD your God to the test" (6:16), "you shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him" (6:13, with "him only shall you serve" in Jesus's citation). Forty years of Israel's failure answered by forty days of the Son's fidelity. The group finds these in the central discovery moment; do not name them in advance.

Job 1:12 and 2:6. The leash, for the Dig Deeper box: in the Bible's great drama of permitted affliction, the accuser must ask, and God sets the limits, twice, explicitly. Whatever else the book of Job is doing (and the Church leaves latitude on its genre), on this it is unambiguous: the enemy operates on permission he does not grant himself.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Ignatius of Loyola

Spiritual Exercises, Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (First Week)

St. Ignatius teaches, in substance, three rules that map directly onto stronghold warfare. First, the enemy is weak before firm resistance and strong before wavering: met with a decided front at the

first suggestion, he loses heart; coddled, he grows bold. Second, like a false lover he demands secrecy: his whispers depend on staying whispers, and he is undone the moment the soul discloses them to a confessor or a wise guide. Third, like a commander besieging a fortress, he circles the walls and strikes where the defenses are weakest.

For our purposes: notice that the third rule is literally a stronghold image; the great tactician of discernment assumed the siege picture this study is built on. And notice which rule costs the least and wins the most: telling someone. Secrecy is not privacy; it is the enemy's supply line.

Presented as a faithful summary of the First Week rules (in the region of Rules 12-14); not a direct quotation.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Francis de Sales

Introduction to the Devout Life, Part IV

St. Francis de Sales teaches, in substance, that temptation itself, however long, violent, or disgusting, is not sin, and that the soul is stained only when the will consents. The feeling of the temptation and the yes of the will are two different things; and so long as the yes is withheld, the battle, far from displeasing God, honors him. He counsels the tempted not to be alarmed at the fierceness of the attack: intensity of temptation is not evidence of defeat.

For our purposes: this is Session 2's concupiscence teaching wearing armor, from the Doctor of the Church popularly known as the gentleman saint. As spiritual writers like to put it (the image is ours to use, not his): the enemy besieges most furiously the city he has not taken. The intensity of your temptation is not evidence of your corruption; it may be evidence of your resistance.

Presented as a summary of his teaching on temptation in Part IV of the Introduction; not a direct quotation.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Teresa of Ávila

The Book of Her Life, and her teaching generally

St. Teresa writes, in substance, that the devils frighten only the souls that hand them the advantage, and that a soul in God's grace need not be cowed by their threats: fear itself is the ground they trade on, and the soul that stays close to its Lord finds the terrors shrink to their true size.

For our purposes: this is the exit door from tonight for anyone who arrived afraid. St. Teresa's witness is that clear sight of the enemy and deep confidence in Christ grow together: she feared him little precisely because she looked at him only while looking at Christ.

Presented as a summary of her well-attested teaching; wording varies by translation, so no direct quotation is given.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

- **CCC 391-395.** Satan is not a symbol but a fallen angel, a creature: originally good, self-ruined by irrevocable choice, active in hatred of God and his kingdom, and strictly limited. "The power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite" (395), and he acts only within the permissions of Providence. The Church's constant teaching adds the clarification this study leans on: he cannot force the free consent of the will.
- **CCC 2846-2849.** On "lead us not into temptation": God tempts no one; the petition asks that we not be allowed to enter into temptation's consent, and it distinguishes trials (which grow the soul) from

temptation (which aims at sin and death). The battle of prayer and the battle against the enemy are one battle.

- **CCC 1673.** Exorcism: the Church's public and authoritative petition, in Jesus's name, for protection against the power of the Evil One and, in its solemn form, for expulsion; solemn ("major") exorcism is reserved to a priest with the bishop's permission, exercised with prudence and in strict observance of the Church's rules, and never a substitute for the care of medicine, whose domain the Church herself insists on distinguishing. This paragraph anchors tonight's guardrail.

THREAD WATCH (LEADER ONLY)

THE LIAR'S VOICE (develops strongly tonight). Genesis 3 is where the voice is first recorded, and "You will not die" is its signature cadence: flat denial of consequence, delivered with perfect confidence. Tonight the group learns to recognize the voice's grammar. Its owner is named, and its defeat by the truth is cashed, in Session 8; if someone quotes John 8:44 ("a liar and the father of lies"), affirm it and park the full text.

THE ARMOR HE TRUSTED (develops tonight; resolves Session 4). Tonight inventories the enemy's Eden armory and finds only sentences: the fog, the denial, the slander. Next week Luke 11:22's "armor in which he trusted" meets Ephesians 6, and the group reaches the study's synthesis: his trusted armor is best read as the lie, stripped at the cross; ours is issued by God, piece by piece. If anyone says "wait, his weapon is words," smile and hold it one week.

THE SWEPT HOUSE (background). The wilderness ends with "then the devil left him" (Matthew 4:11), and Luke's parallel adds "until an opportune time." Resistance is real and the enemy is persistent; occupancy (Sessions 5-6) is still the answer to return visits.

THE WALL (sealed sheets, unopened). Two sessions from opening. Tonight's disclosure teaching (St. Ignatius's second rule) may move someone to tell a confessor or friend what their sheet says. That is not a breach of the mechanic; it is the mechanic working. The sheet stays private to the group; it was never meant to be private from grace.

SESSION GOALS

1. Establish the enemy's reality and his limits in the same breath (CCC 391, 395): real, malicious, on a leash.
2. Map the three moves of Eden: fog the Word, deny the death, slander the Father; and the occupation policy: shame, hiding, blame.
3. Watch the same campaign fail in the wilderness, and discover Jesus's arsenal (Deuteronomy, memorized) by group hunt.
4. Learn the standing orders and their exact verbs: sober, watchful, resist, submit; never panic, converse, or command.
5. Teach the deliverance guardrail plainly (CCC 1673) and let the steelman's Acts 19 discovery show why it is battlefield doctrine, not gatekeeping.
6. Send everyone home with a countersword verse and one act of disclosure; the room leaves less afraid than it arrived.

TIMED PLAN (90 MINUTES)

- Welcome, covenant, opening prayer: 8 min

- Win questions: 10 min
- Build: Genesis 3:1-13, the three moves: 20 min
- Build: Matthew 4:1-11 with the Deuteronomy discovery: 22 min
- Build: standing orders (1 Peter 5, James 4) and the steelman with Acts 19: 15 min
- Send, Live It This Week, St. Michael prayer and closing: 15 min

If time runs short: cut the Dig Deeper box and compress Genesis 3 to verses 1-6 with the three moves named by you rather than drawn out. Do not cut the guardrail teaching or the Acts 19 discovery; they are the safety rails for everything this study says about the enemy.

WHAT IS OURS TO DO, AND WHAT IS NOT (TEACH THIS ALOUD TONIGHT)

OURS, BY BAPTISM: prayer in Jesus's name; the sacraments, above all Confession and the Eucharist; renunciation in the first person ("in the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that..."), a personal adaptation of the baptismal renunciation we renew each Easter; sacramentals used with faith (holy water, the crucifix, the St. Michael prayer); Scripture memorized and spoken; resisting, firm in the faith (1 Peter 5:9); telling the truth to a confessor or trusted guide.

NOT OURS: addressing, questioning, conversing with, or commanding evil spirits; freelance "deliverance sessions"; diagnosing other people's afflictions as demonic; occult experimentation of any kind, including the divination and spiritism the Church names as grave (CCC 2116-2117). Solemn exorcism belongs to a priest with his bishop's mandate (CCC 1673).

IF SOMEONE IS AFRAID something beyond ordinary temptation is at work: no drama, no shame, and no internet rabbit holes. A prudent path: your pastor and Confession, with the diocese involved if warranted, and ordinary medical or mental-health care never delayed in the meantime; any Church inquiry will itself insist on serious medical and psychological evaluation, because she refuses to let spiritual language displace real care. Reassure them: the ordinary means of grace are not the consolation prize; they are the arsenal.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you walked into the desert on purpose, hungry, to meet the tempter on our behalf, and you won.

Tonight we study an enemy you have already beaten.

Give us clear eyes and steady hearts: sober, watchful, unafraid.

Let nothing in this room glorify him, and everything in it glorify you.

Amen.

WIN: OPENING QUESTIONS

1. In sports or games, how much of winning is simply knowing the other side's tendencies? What changes once you have seen an opponent's favorite move often enough to see it coming?
2. What is an advertising or sales tactic you can now spot instantly (the countdown timer, the "only 2 left")? How did learning the trick change its power over you?

BUILD: INTO THE TEXT

Read Genesis 3:1-13 aloud.

3. Track the serpent's words in verses 1-5. What are his moves, in order? Write them on a whiteboard if you have one; the list matters.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Move one: fog the Word. "Did God say...?" (v. 1): not an argument, a haze; the command is misquoted and made to sound absurd. Move two: deny the death. "You will not die" (v. 4): the first flat lie in Scripture, consequence erased with total confidence. Move three: slander the Father. "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (v. 5): the protecting Father recast as a jealous rival, the command recast as a cage.

Fog, denial, slander. He has never needed a fourth move. Every stronghold in this room was built with some mix of the three.

4. Now notice what the serpent never does in the entire chapter. What is missing from his attack, and why is that the most important tactical fact of the night?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

He never forces anything. He has no hands in this garden; he touches neither the fruit nor the woman. In this scene his entire arsenal is the sentence. Eve's eyes, Eve's hands, Adam's consent do all the physical work. In the campaign for consent, the enemy fights as a propagandist, not an army.

Feel both edges of that. The threatening edge: your own faculties can be enlisted against you by nothing more than a believed lie. The comforting edge, which is bigger: where his weapon is the lie, and in the war for your consent it is, the truth fully disarms him. He cannot make you do anything; he cannot force the will. He can only make suggestions sound true. That is why this war is winnable

by ordinary people, and why the weapons (truth, prayer, sacrament) look so unmilitary. And mark his occupation policy once the wall falls (vv. 7-13): shame, hiding, blame. A useful rule of discernment (not a diagnosis; shame has ordinary human causes too): conscience convicts concretely and draws toward the Father; the accuser condemns globally and drives into hiding.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 aloud.

5. Same enemy, same playbook, different ground. Where do you see the Eden moves repeated here, and what do all three temptations attack first?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Twice he opens with “If you are the Son of God”: the fog again, aimed now at identity, and aimed at the exact sentence the Father spoke over Jesus in the immediately preceding scene, at his baptism (“This is my beloved Son,” Matthew 3:17). Each temptation then offers a shortcut past the Father’s timing: bread without dependence, a spectacle of vindication without obedience, the kingdoms without the cross. And note the escalation in move three: in Eden he implied God was withholding; here he openly demands worship.

Watch verse 6 closely: the devil quotes Scripture (Psalm 91) selectively (he drops “to guard you in all your ways”) and tears it from context, to bait a shortcut. The Word in his mouth is a lure. The test of any voice, even a Bible-quoting one, is where it leads: toward trusting obedience, or toward testing God and grabbing early.

DISCOVERY MOMENT (THE HEART OF THE NIGHT)

Say: Jesus answers all three temptations with “It is written,” and all three quotations come from one small stretch of one Old Testament book, a manual written for people in a wilderness. Hand out Bibles, give the trailhead (Deuteronomy, chapters 6 through 8), and let the group hunt down all three: they are looking for Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13.

When all three are found, ask: what wilderness history is Deuteronomy addressing? (Moses, at the end of the forty years, reviewing where Israel failed: bread, testing God, false worship.) What is Jesus doing in forty days? (Retaking Israel’s failed ground as the true Son.) Then the practical edge, and press it warmly: Matthew shows Jesus answering at once, with the Word already internalized, no scroll in the desert. Ask the group what they currently have memorized and loaded for their own recurring fight. Tonight’s Live It puts a sword in everyone’s hand.

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9 and James 4:7 aloud.

6. These are the Church’s standing orders. List the verbs we are given. Now list the verbs we are conspicuously not given. What do the two lists teach?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Given: be sober, be watchful, resist, stand firm in the faith, submit yourselves to God. Now set beside it what the Church’s discipline and long wisdom decline to hand us (this second list is teaching, not something the verses print): panicking, fleeing from him in terror, negotiating, conversing, investigating, commanding. The posture is a soldier on watch, not a hunter on safari and not a refugee in flight. One distinction keeps the verbs straight: we do flee temptation’s occasions (1

Corinthians 6:18 and 10:14 command exactly that); we do not flee the devil, because resisted, he is the one who flees.

And the promise attached is flat: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Notice who does the fleeing, and remember the promise is real without being a timetable: attacks can resume “at an opportune time,” and resistance still wins. St. Antony’s witness from Session 1 stands behind the verse: demons trade on noise and fear; steadiness in prayer routs them. Note also the order in James: submit to God first, then resist. Resistance not rooted in submission is willpower in a costume.

Build, Then Press: The Deliverance Question

BUILD THE OBJECTION AT FULL STRENGTH

A zealous friend from a deliverance-ministry background says: “Why does your Church chain up the weapons? Jesus gave his people authority over the enemy: he told the seventy, ‘I have given you authority... over all the power of the enemy’ (Luke 10:19), and the Gospel promise says it outright: ‘in my name they will cast out demons’ (Mark 16:17). Every Christian has that authority, and telling laypeople they cannot command the enemy in Jesus’s name leaves the army disarmed while the officers do the fighting. That is institutional gatekeeping, not the New Testament.”

Give it its full weight: it is quoting real verses, it takes the enemy seriously, and it flatters something in all of us that would rather command than confess.

DISCOVERY MOMENT (INSIDE THE STEELMAN)

Say: the New Testament actually records what happens when freelancers command demons in Jesus’s name without being sent. It is in Acts 19, and it did not go well. Let the group find Acts 19:13-16 and have it read aloud, including the demon’s answer: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”

Read Jude 9 aloud (one verse).

7. Now press: put Luke 10, Acts 19, and Jude 9 side by side. What does authority over the enemy actually look like in the New Testament, and what is the Church protecting with her rule?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Grant what is true: the authority is real, the enemy does flee at Jesus’s name, and the Church has never taught that laypeople are unarmed; she arms them lavishly (grace, sacraments, Scripture, sacramentals, the resistance James promises will succeed).

But look at the pattern. The seventy commanded demons because Jesus appointed and sent them (Luke 10:1): the authority was given, specific, and ordered to mission, not ambient; and Mark 16:17’s promise lives inside that same sent, believing, ecclesial mission, which is why the Church has always regulated its exercise rather than denied it. The sons of Sceva in Acts 19 were not even Christians: freelancers wielding the name as a formula, without relationship or sending, and the demon’s reply exposes the whole difference: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” The name of Jesus is not a syllable-spell; authority in the kingdom is derived and ordered. And even the archangel Michael, disputing with the devil, “did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you’” (Jude 9): a witness of humility that supports, though it alone does not

prove, the Church's reserve. If Michael defers the duel to the Lord, the baptized can be content with the arsenal actually issued to them.

So the Church's rule (solemn exorcism reserved to a priest with his bishop's mandate, CCC 1673) is not the officers hoarding the weapons. It is the ancient battlefield doctrine that duels are for the sent, and it protects the very people it frustrates. Meanwhile the promise to every baptized person stands untouched and unbeatable: submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. That is not the consolation prize. Ask St. Antony: it is how the war is actually won.

DIG DEEPER (IF TIME ALLOWS)

Job 1:12 and 2:6: the leash, stated twice. In Job's narrative the accuser acts only within limits God sets and he cannot cross. Whatever latitude the Church leaves on Job's genre, the point stands: the enemy operates on permissions he does not grant himself.

2 Corinthians 11:14: "even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." His best work rarely looks dark; it looks like liberation, self-care, enlightenment, or (v. 6 of Matthew 4) a Bible verse. Test the destination, not the costume.

Genesis 3:15: before the serpent leaves Eden, God promises enmity between him and the woman, between his seed and hers. The Church has always heard the first gospel here, and the tradition's devotion to Our Lady in this war (the Rosary above all) grows from this verse: the enemy has been promised a losing fight from the third chapter of the Bible.

SEND: TAKING IT OUT

8. Which of the three moves works best on you: the fog ("did God really say"), the denial ("nothing bad will happen"), or the slander ("God is holding out on you")? You know your wall from Session 1; you likely just met its architect's favorite move.

9. St. Ignatius says the enemy, like a false lover, demands secrecy, and is undone by disclosure. Who is your tell-someone person: the confessor, director, or trusted friend whose daylight your whispers cannot survive?

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- **Forge your countersword.** Pick one verse aimed at your recurring lie and memorize it cold this week; write it on a card and carry it. Fighting words, examples: for the fog, "The word of the Lord abides for ever" (1 Peter 1:25); for the denial, "sin is couching at the door" (Genesis 4:7); for the slander, "He who did not spare his own Son... will he not also give us all things with him?" (Romans 8:32). Jesus fought from memory. So will you.
- **Break one secrecy.** Tell your tell-someone person one whisper you have been keeping private: not necessarily your wall, any whisper. Do it in daylight, this week. Watch what happens to its volume.
- **Post the watch.** Add the St. Michael prayer to your night prayers this week, and pray it as a soldier reporting to the watch commander, not as a man whistling past a graveyard.

CLOSING PRAYER

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Lord Jesus, we have seen the enemy's three moves, and we have seen you beat all three, hungry, for us. Keep us sober, watchful, and unafraid, and bring us back next week for the armor. Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

James 4:7

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in Session 3, in order:

1. Genesis 3:1-13 (main reading: the three moves and the occupation policy)
2. Matthew 4:1-11 (main reading: the wilderness campaign; the devil quotes Psalm 91 at v. 6)
3. Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16; 6:13 (Discovery Moment: Jesus's arsenal, found by group hunt)
4. 1 Peter 5:8-9 (standing orders: sober, watchful, resist)
5. James 4:7 (standing orders: submit, resist, and the promise)
6. Luke 10:1, 17-19 (steelman: authority given to the seventy who were appointed and sent)
7. Acts 19:13-16 (steelman discovery: the sons of Sceva)
8. Jude 9 (steelman: even Michael said "The Lord rebuke you")
9. Job 1:12; 2:6 (Dig Deeper: the leash)
10. 2 Corinthians 11:14; Genesis 3:15 (Dig Deeper: angel of light; the first promise of enmity)
11. James 4:7 (memory verse)