

The Wild Places

Zeteo 2020

OUR VISION

“Let us go to the wild...you and me.”

In Luke 5, there is a small passage that reads, “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places” or in another translation, “But Jesus often withdrew into the wilderness.” The Wilderness...the lonely places...the wild places. Christ himself, the one we are to follow as our example of how to live, often stepped away from the chaos of the everyday, the expected, the normal...into the quiet wild to meet with his Father. And just as Jesus needed a lonely place to chase the whisperings of his Father’s heart, so do we. The call persists: to leave the routine, to step past the barriers of what we think we know, and run into the wild in search of the deeper things God is stirring there deep within. It is there, in these wild places, that fears are faced, dreams grow, callings awaken, healing begins. It takes courage to step into the unknown, but what we find there in the Lord’s wild, is much more than we could ever ask or imagine.

This is our Vision for Zeteo 2020:

- To awaken an awareness of the deeply intimate and personal relationship that God desires with each one of us.
- To challenge students and leaders to step deeper into their faith and what the Lord is calling them toward—personally and for the Kingdom at large.
- To inspire students and leaders to look inward and discern the inner workings of their hearts. Places where the Lord wants to move, heal, grow, challenge, convict, and change.
- To dig deep into the brokenness, hurt, unforgiveness, sin, and limitations that keep us from fully trusting and running to the Lord.
- To provide a safe space for discussion, prayer and healing as we see ourselves through the lens of God and follow him into the wild.

Wild Places is the large- scale drama that runs throughout the event.

Included in this guide you will find:

1. An introduction to the world of the Wild Places including rules (or lack thereof), various settings, and the characters you will meet there.
2. The main theme and plot synopsis for each session.
3. Small group questions focused around the topics addressed in the drama and teachings for each session.

Legends of the Wild

The characters live in a world full of tales of the wild places. Everyone has heard very different things. Some characters are terrified of it. Some are fascinated. Some have gone, come back home and have never returned. Others have gone to the wild...and never returned. Each of the characters, and each person attending, will have to decide for themselves how they feel about the wild and what they are willing to give, sacrifice, face, or change to go there.

In the wild Places, very little makes sense the way we expect it to. Time works differently...it can be daylight for an hour and night for a week. The seasons can shift overnight or within miles. Winter is a place, not just a season. You can go over the barrier in one time and space and land somewhere completely different from where you started. The road home is always nearby...a temptation for those who are called deeper. There are gifts from the Lord that can provide extra time, direction, healing, and reminders. Past, present, and future can collide without warning, memories can appear as present friends, dreams can look like wildflowers. The characters meet the Lord as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Sometimes individually, sometimes all at once. God is one and three, a mystery that is hard to grasp but also deeply comforting. It might not always make sense, but the maker of the wild is good and can be trusted, even when we don't fully understand.

Places of the Wild

Barriers- Fences, Walls, Doors, Tree Lines- anything that divides the world in which the characters have always lived from the Wild.

The Mailbox- A place where messages within the wild can be left. When a character opens the mailbox, they will only find letters meant for them. Messages can cross time and space to reach the one for whom they were intended.

The Mountain- A beautiful place to meet the Lord, where the view is clear and the light is warm.

Rock Altars- Markers of a place where the Lord met someone. A sign to themselves and to other travelers that the Lord is faithful and will be faithful again.

Secret Place- A special place constructed by the Lord for each character. A secret place can appear anywhere in the wild if the character desires to go there to be with the Lord.

The Grove of Graves- a place where painful secrets are buried.

Dead end- Where the characters are forced to turn around and find another way, or wait for the Lord to make a way through.

Wildflower Field- Where the Lord plants dreams, stories, plans, and hopes...and they grow.

The Still Water- A place where one can look into the water and see a reflection of what they look like on the inside.

The Fire- A place where stories are told.

The path of comfort- Leads away from the wild toward whatever temptations of simpler comforts await.

The Giving Well- When a character takes a drink from the well, the water makes them aware of what they thirst for most.

The Lovely, Dark, and Deep- A place where characters will face their deepest fears, hardest memories, darkest thoughts, beautiful realities, and wildest truths in the Lord's presence.

The Table- where the Lord meets those who need extra strength for their journey.

Stars- Sitting under the stars long enough causes travelers to confess and ask for grace and forgiveness from the Lord.

Singing Caverns- Where all of the thoughts and feelings that have been kept inside...come outside.

The Altar- where characters are challenged to place the thing they love most...the thing they are most afraid to release, or something they must trust the Lord with more than they trust themselves. The characters trade these things for a love that is greater.

Winter- Where the world is especially quiet and nature's hymn of praise can be heard most clearly.

The Wagon Wheel- Where the trail splits into many directions—up, down, through, back, on—and the characters must choose where they are being called to next.

The Door- A chance to step through toward something more, though once one steps through they cannot return to where they started.

Character Overviews (in order of appearance)

Mother - Maeve and Willow's mother. Scarred by the wild for reasons we don't know, Mother very strictly enforces that her daughters should not go there. She insists they learn how to be proper and educated young women who will be successful in the real world instead of getting lost in the fantasies and legends of the wild. She disciplines and pushes her daughters to an often harmful degree.

Maeve (19) - Daughter of Mother and younger sister of Willow. Maeve goes to the wild at the insisting of her sister, Willow, and friend, Sima. There she begins to find altars that apparently, she built a long time ago which trigger memories of times before...where she knew the Lord and the Wild much more deeply than she does now. Why has she forgotten? Why did she leave and never go back?

Fox - A seemingly innocent friend to the travelers who turns rogue quickly. Fox is a symbolic character that represents the voice of Shame in the minds of the characters. She takes every opportunity to make the characters remember their mistakes, poor choices, and regrets...attempting to create an inescapable web where they feel isolated, alone, and unworthy. Fox cannot continue to speak or be present when someone has the authority of the Lord or calls the name of Jesus.

Maevie (8) - The younger self of Maeve. Full of wonder and excitement about the wild places and meeting the Lord for the first time. She sees Jesus as her best friend in the whole world, the Spirit as her source of wonder and dreams, and the Father as her protector. Her innocence and curiosity (and sister) pull her to the wild over and over again...and she serves as Maeve's reminder to the person she once was and the love she once knew.

Willow - Maeve/Maevie's older sister. She is the one who introduces Maevie to the Lord because she already has a deep and personal relationship with Him. Willow is bright and adventurous, energized and moved by the wild and what she learns there. But as the story unfolds, we begin to see the deeper and more painful parts of Willow's story. Though she appears joyful and hopeful to the world, she struggles with depression and anxiety on the inside as the expectations of her mother and her own sense of failure continually make her feel less than whole. Deep wounds emerge and Willow feels overwhelmed and unable to handle it, until she begins pushing away the One who loves her the most.

Sima - A friend of Maeve's who challenges her to go to the Wild because there are good things for her there. Though we don't see too much of Sima's journey, we meet her at the dead end, not sure of where to go but having a deep faith that God will meet her there and show her the way through. Sima is deaf and uses ASL and lip-reading to communicate and understand.

Miles (18) - An 18-year-old kid who has taken on the responsibility of caring for his two slightly younger friends, Meris and Dakota, who were abandoned by their Father. Miles finds purpose and a sense of belonging with his friends, and tends to take on the causes of those who need help. He finds his worth and purpose in being a hero or rescuer to those around him. As he ventures into the wild to find Meris after she goes past the barrier, what deeper purpose will he discover? What sense of belonging will he uncover? What will he find hiding in his own heart?

Dakota (17) - Older brother to Meris, and best friend to Miles. Dakota has a dry and sarcastic view of the world. He's mostly unnerved by the idea of the wild places and has avoided them and anything close to them his entire life. He seeks safety, comfort, what is known and proven secure. He is often frustrated by the seemingly illogical characteristics of the wild places and feels uneasy anything that causes him to come

face to face with his own heart of emotions. When he goes with Miles to find his sister, he may discover that the Wild demands more of him than he wants to give up, but will also give more to him than he ever expected.

Meris (15) - Younger sister to Dakota and very close with Miles. Meris longs for the kinds of adventures she's read about in fairy tales her whole life. She especially loves the tales of Peter and Wendy in Neverland. Though weakened by a chronic lung disease for which her prognosis is not favorable, Meris' spirit remains strong. She is constantly intrigued by the mystery of the wild places, and longs to go there despite the warnings and urgings of her older brother and Miles. When she meets a mysterious way-wanderer named Lyra who offers to show her the way, her desire for more cannot be quenched. She goes past the barrier and begins to find that the adventures she always dreamed of are deeper, harder, and wilder than she ever imagined.

Lyra (21) - A way-wanderer—one who has gone past the barrier to the wild places and come back to show others the way there and through. Lyra is wise beyond her years. Her adventures in the wild places with the Lord and with travelers has taught her much about the places there, and she has the experience to help the other characters understand what is going on around them. The natural leader of the group and many other groups before theirs, Lyra loves her calling but hopes for a new one. She has spent many years as a way-wanderer, leading adventures for others then saying goodbye to go back and show more the way. Often, we see her dreaming to be called deeper or to the mountain, or somewhere less lonely. And even for someone as wise and seasoned as Lyra, there are still traps, dead ends, and challenges to overcome.

God- Father, Jesus, and Fia- These characters represent the Lord- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As with other parts of the Wild, God's movement and ways are mysterious and not fully comprehensible to our logic or metaphors as humans. God is three and one simultaneously. Sometimes we will see only Jesus or only the Father or only the Spirit (known as Fia). But just because we only perceive one, does not mean the others are not aware of what is happening or are absent in any way. Multiple times we will see one member of the trinity interacting with a character, and another member will repeat the interaction or conversation later. Other times we will see all members of the Trinity together, moving and loving and speaking as one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit embody many characteristics of God—wonder, kindness, love, fire, protection, pursuit, wisdom, passion, sacrifice, knowledge, truth, the way...and more.

**We have worked hard to personify one example and metaphor of the Lord as the trinity. But with all human metaphor, we recognize that our representation will fall short and is not a perfect example of how God actually works as 3 in*

one. Please remember that this is a fictional drama attempting to communicate spiritual truth through metaphors, and that our human attempts to illustrate God will always fall short. He is God and we are human. He is kind enough to give us metaphors to show his character in ways we can understand, but no one metaphor will ever be able to do so fully.

Amos - Amos is a guide and friend in the wild. Though he may not look old, he has spent so much time in the wild that he has basically become a part of it. He seems to have the ability to travel quickly between places and find those who need him because he knows the Lord so well that the Spirit gives him quicker ways and flashes of understanding to bring wisdom and gifts to those who most need it. Though quirky and strange, he has a deep love for the Lord and sweet affection for all those with whom he crosses paths...and the stories they have lived.

Hunter - A close friend to Fox, and a friend in disguise to the travelers. Hunter is a symbolic character that represents the voice of Fear in the characters minds. He will most often appear when a character feels insecure, uncertain, or afraid. He plays on their natural emotion and attempt to get them to act on their fear—to turn back, to run away, to hide, to hurt. Similar to Fox, Hunter cannot continue to speak or be present when someone has the authority of the Lord or calls the name of Jesus.

Naomi - We see Naomi only a few times in the drama, and often she is lost or uncertain of what to do. It seems that the Wild Places befuddle and confuse her in a way that is far outside of her comfort zone. When she is tempted to leave the wild and go home...she takes the path of comfort and doesn't return...or does she?

ZETEO SESSION 1

“Let us go to the wild...you and me.”

Main point: God is calling us past the barriers we've built and into deeper relationship with him.

Section 1 Plot Synopsis:

Section 1 begins with the many legends and tales of the wild places, all the stories and things people have heard rumors about or seen glimpses of but have never fully experienced. We then meet a series of characters, all of whom feel a pull or a call to the wild in their own unique way. A young Maeve wakes up from a nightmare and her older sister Willow teaches her a song that the trees taught to her...a part of a holy hymn they sing to their creator. This small melody will become a theme throughout the characters' journeys. An older Maeve sits staring at the treeline wondering why she can't hear their song anymore, and her friend Sima dares her to go to the Wild

Places. Dakota, Miles, and Meris meet a way-wanderer, Lyra, by the barrier outside of town. Her stories inspire Meris to go to the Wild, but Dakota and Miles insist that she cannot and will not because it isn't safe. There are slight hints that Meris has feelings for Miles that are unrequited and that Meris is sick with a potentially fatal lung disease. Maeve runs after Sima only to find Willow waiting for her in the woods. Willow tells her she's found the edge to the wild places and urges Maeve to follow her, but Maeve is not so fast and loses her. Instead, she runs into a mysterious beautiful girl (Fia- the Holy Spirit, though Maeve does not know it yet) at the fence, who calls her past the barrier. Meris meets Miles in the treehouse and they read the story of Peter and Wendy together. Meris tells Miles she's going to meet Lyra to go to the wild places. The two argue over Meris' health and safety but Meris will not be convinced otherwise and cannot convince Miles to go with her. When Meris goes to the wall to meet Lyra she meets a kind stranger instead. He says that he too is waiting for someone to go to the Wild Places. Meris thinks he is talking about Lyra but then he assures Meris that he's been waiting for her and that her knows the way...as if it were a part of himself (because he is Jesus). He tells her of the great adventure waiting and invites her to come with him. She takes his hand and they run past the barrier. Lastly, we see Dakota and Miles searching for Meris when they run into a man who seems to know everything about them and Meris (the Father). He tells them to look up at the sky and asks them who made all of creation. As they gaze above them, they find themselves mesmerized by the beauty and mystery of it all. The thunder rolls, the wind howls and they follow him toward something wonderful. The song "Wonderful World" plays as the Trinity shows the characters glimpses of the wonderful journeys ahead of them in the wild and the characters decide to fall into step with the Lord and begin their adventure past the barriers.

Section 1: Discussion Questions

1. Willow tells Maeve of the word "Holy." Something so deep and true you'd give anything to know it more. What do you think Holy means? Have you ever had a holy moment? Have you ever witnessed something holy or felt something holy? Share with the group.
2. In this section, all of the characters have a reason to not go to the wild—weakness, being afraid of discomfort or safety, uncertainty of what is waiting, fearing what will happen, the opinions of family members or friends...what are some thoughts, fears, distractions, even people... that keep you from going deeper with the Lord?
3. Meris hears someone calling to her through the flowers – a voice that sounded like hers but she trusted it more. Lyra knows it to be the Lord and asks Meris what the voice sounded like. Have you ever felt like you heard the Lord's voice? What did it sound like?
4. Meris tells Miles that she fears many people of the world are infected with a numbness, living the same patterns of their lives thinking their alive but they aren't (Revelation 3:1-2). In your current walk with the Lord, do you

- feel you are more alive or dead? If you feel in between, where are you on the spectrum? What are the things keeping you numb and seemingly satisfied by the world? What is your most recent memory of a time you desired something more than those things? (For example: I feel more dead spiritually because I have been giving so much time to...but I remember a time in the Fall when I did this with the Lord and I wanted more of that...")
5. At the wall Jesus asks Meris, "What might happen if you don't go (to the Wild Places)?" and she responds, "I shudder to think of it." Is there something you know God is calling you to do that you haven't done? (This could be a command of his word to everyone or a specific call to you.) What might happen if you don't obey?

ZETEO SESSION 2

Are you the best friend in the entire world?

Main point: Jesus is our friend because he chose us, loves us, shares the secrets of the Kingdom with us, and died for us. And because of this, we can trust him to lead us and be with us in the unknown.

Section 2 Plot Synopses:

After going past the wall, Maeve, Lyra, Dakota and Miles find themselves in an uncharted part of the wild places. Lyra explains how people can come and go from the wild through openings or "doors". But everyone's doors work differently and one must learn how to read their timing to go back and forth. The timing and state of heart of a person determines how they get to the wild places, where they end up, and how they return. The group meets Amos who encourages Miles to be more focused on his own journey than the journeys of others and challenges Dakota to be less certain about what he thinks he knows. Amos gives each of the characters a gift. To Miles, five minutes of extra time. To Dakota, a compass that doesn't seem to work. To Maeve, a balm that can heal any wound but she can only use it once. And to Lyra, a song for her heart. As he leaves, a new path appears and the group follows it deeper into the wood.

Meris comes to the wild at a different spot than everyone else, searching for the kind stranger (Jesus) who invited her. But before she finds him, she meets Fox, a mysterious girl who seems to know the wild places well. She dares Meris to take a more adventurous path than what most travelers do, and instead of starting toward the high places or still water, convinces her to go to a grove of graves in the wood instead. Unable to pass up on her first daring adventure, Meris agrees and follows Fox.

We find our bigger group of travelers quickly learning that season make little sense in the wild, as the weather turns from fall to winter in a matter of hours...to

Dakota's chagrin. They come upon a strange mailbox that carries letters and packages for each of them, sent across time and space for them to discover there. Miles receives a letter inviting him to the giving well signed by his Father. Puzzled at this (since his Father is dead), Miles wonders what this could mean. Soon the Trinity appears and explains to him that the letter is not from his earthly Father, but his heavenly Father. As the Trinity speaks, finishing each other's sentences and knowing many things about the characters, Fia opens the mailbox and reveals a stack of prayers for Maeve from her sister Willow. Fia explains that Willow prays with the Lord often for Maeve. Maeve asks if anyone has seen her sister, since she came to The Wild looking for her. Jesus promises to help Maeve find her sister since he is good at finding lost things. Dakota opens the mailbox to find a rectangular package tied with string. At the sight of it, he becomes terrified and tells the others he doesn't want it, then runs away. The Father pursues him to a tree, carrying the package and asks Dakota to meet him at the mountain.

When we next meet Meris, she is following Fox to the grove of graves. Jesus calls after Meris until she hears him. He warns her not to go to the grove because she doesn't know him well enough yet to face it. Not understanding what he means and not fully knowing who he is, Meris stubbornly insists she can handle a great adventure and follows Fox anyway.

Lyra, Miles, Maeve, and Dakota come upon Time's River...water that moves backward and forward depending on the eye of the beholder. Miles and Maeve see the water running backward, meaning there are things in their past the Lord wants to address. Dakota sees the water moving forward, meaning there are things in his future the Lord wants to address. Maeve's water looks slow and lovely whereas Miles' looks dark and rough. Dakota's doesn't look special to him. Lyra's is still and clear as she waits for the Lord to set the water in a new direction.

As they stand there, Maeve notices a small rock altar covered by a blue blanket she recognizes. She runs over and picks up the blanket which transports her back into a memory of her younger self, Maeve. She remembers hiding under a blanket after disappointing her mother and talking to Willow about the best friend in the entire world. Willow introduces her to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and she becomes instant friends with the Lord. Together with Willow, they agree to build Maeve a secret place where she can always go to be with the Lord. As the sweet memory fades, Lyra tells Maeve her altar is beautiful and explains that altars represent a place where the Lord met someone, and where He may meet someone again. Maeve says she doesn't remember building it. Lyra hears the call to go on to the next thing and runs off without much explanation.

We finally see Willow following the song in the trees to meet with the Father. She and the Father walk together, but Willow is ashamed at how hard it is for her to stay consistent with meeting with him. The Father assures her that there is nothing she can do to earn or lose his love...that she is Chosen by him and nothing could change that. He urges her to come to a quiet place with him and rest.

Meris arrives at the grove of graves with Fox and is immediately uneasy. The graveyard is scary and she is wary of digging up someone else's treasures. Hunter appears with a shovel and assures her she doesn't need to be scared of digging up someone else's things, since they will be digging up HER secrets. Before she fully knows what's happening, Fox slams the shovel into the ground and a fear begins to play in front of Meris' eyes—Miles finding a love letter she wrote to him. Terrified and ashamed, Meris begs Hunter and Fox to stop as they mock her for loving someone who will never love her back. The shovel slams into the ground again and a memory plays—a doctor telling Meris she only has a few years to live because of her disease. Fox and hunter taunt her for being weak and being a burden to everyone. The shovel slams one last time and her most painful memory plays before her—Dakota telling her that he dad has left them...that he didn't want them. Hunter and Fox push Meris down, reminding her that no one wants her. Then they leave her alone, devastated in the grove. Jesus runs to her and tries to comfort her but she closes off her heart to him and runs away, telling him to leave her alone.

Lyra runs into the scene, excited for her next adventure...only to realize she has been called to a dead end. Heartbroken and angry, she kicks down the altars that have been constructed there, having trouble believing God could actually meet her at such a deserted place. Sima appears and the two talk about how they keep winding up at dead ends. Naomi joins them, wondering if maybe they were called here to help her since she keeps getting stuck thinking her story is over. Sima eventually reminds them that God does miracles and that he could do the same here—that their stories are not over. Lyra begins to remember the old stories, where God brought water from desert rocks and rainbows after forty days of rain. How he split seas and shut the mouths of lions. Every time the story appeared over, he made a way. The three decide to worship and praise even in the unknown, reminding each other who God is. The trinity appears behind them at the end of the dance, symbolizing how in their movements God has been present all along. At the end of the dance, they reconstruct their altars. Lyra and Naomi decide to go back to where they saw the Lord most clearly, and Sima decides to wait at the dead end, believing God will meet her there.

Section 2: Discussion Questions:

1. When God looks at you, what do you think He thinks?
2. How does it make you feel when you hear that God calls you friend?
3. What changes when you embrace that Jesus calls you friend?
4. Amos gives each of the travelers a gift specific to who they are what you need. Amos knows what to give because he knows the Lord. What special/ mysterious gift do you think the Lord might tell Amos to give to you for your journey? (Additional option: In your group, take a few minutes to pray for someone near you. What special/ mysterious gift do you think the Lord might tell Amos to give that person for their present journey? (Make sure each person has someone they are speaking to/hearing from.)

5. While Meris is on her way to the grove, Jesus tries to keep her from going there. He says, “Meris, I am the author of every good story, this one is not good.” Convinced she knows more about the kind of story she wants than he does, Meris goes anyway. Can you think of a time you stepped into circumstance that you knew wasn’t good? What is one small thing you can do to resist stepping into those sorts of stories in the future?
6. The characters find a strange mailbox where they can send or receive letters to anyone else who has been in the wild. The letters can cross time and space to get to their recipient. If you could send a letter to anyone or receive a letter from anyone in that mailbox, who would it be? What would you most like to say or read to/from that person?
7. Which character do you feel you relate to the most at this point in the story? What about their journey connects with you?
8. Dakota receives a package in the mailbox that he doesn’t want to open. Are there things in your heart that you are scared to face? Write down what those things are and see if you can have the courage to speak to one person about one of them this weekend.
9. The characters arrive at a place called “Time’s River” where the water moves in different directions depending on who is watching it. If the water moves backward, it means there are things the Lord wants to address with them in their past. If it moves forward, it means there are things the Lord wants to address in their future. The characteristics of the water then reflect how the character feels about their past or future: rough, dark, clear, normal, beautiful, slow, fast...From where you are right now in your life...how do you think you would see the water? What characteristics does it have? Is it running forward or backward? Is it moving slowly or quickly or steadily? Is it dark, shallow, clear, murky? If you tasted it...would it be sweet or bitter...cool or warm?
10. Maeve and the Trinity construct a secret place where Maeve can go anytime she wants to be with the Lord. They build a fort out of blankets and pillows and chairs and lights. If you imagined your secret place with the Lord, what does it look like? Is it outside or inside? Is it a place you know or a place that only exists in your mind? How do you feel there? Take some time to imagine it in detail and describe it.
11. Lyra, Sima, and Naomi come to a dead end and are frustrated to be stuck there with no way forward. What seems to be a “dead end”- a place or circumstance where things seem repetitively hopeless—in your life? They remember stories of where God made a way where there wasn’t one. What’s one of your favorite/most treasured stories of where God did a miracle? Do you believe he can do the same for you in the circumstance you thought of?

ZETEO SESSION 3

Too deep for words

Main point: In confession and vulnerability, we find the grace and freedom Christ freely offers us. Let us draw closer to him and resist the instinctual urge to run, hide, or withdraw from the true source of our strength and life.

Section 3 Plot Synopsis:

Meris leaves the grove and meets Amos along the road. He says he has something to give her but wants a story in trade. She tells him a story of when she was young and would be scared of the dark, how her Father would take her outside and tell her to breathe in rhythm with the fireflies. Amos thanks her for the story and gives her an empty glass jar that he calls "gold". Confused, Meris takes the jar and leaves to find her friends.

Maeve leaves the group to find more firewood and comes upon another altar in the woods with a small crown upon it. The crown takes her into her memories, running through the wildflowers with God and her sister. The Father tells her she will be a masterpiece when she grows up. Reeling from the memory, Fox interrupts Maeve's thoughts and slyly persuades her she is undeserving of such a gift and coerces her to give up the crown for someone more worthy. Miles interrupts Fox's lies and tells her to leave, Meris sees Maeve and Miles together and immediately interrupts and clings to Miles. Back at the campfire, the characters discuss their parents. Meris begs Miles to tell the story of the last time he saw she and Dakota's dad. Miles tells of how their Father came one night in the snow with two small wrapped packages for them and left for good, despite Miles trying to get him to stay. While Meris wishes they could have given her father another chance, Miles lashes out at her for hoping for impossible things. Hurt and stubborn, Meris pulls away from the fire, angry not only at Miles for the things he said but jealous of his connection with Maeve. As her insecurity about the two of them manifests, Fox and Hunter begin to whisper in her ear. They play into Meris' insecurity and fear of losing Miles to Maeve and persuade her to say some things to Maeve that will scare her into leaving the Wild Places. Energized by their influence, Meris insinuates that maybe the wild is too much for Maeve and that she should go home. When Maeve takes Meris' advice and leaves, Miles storms in and calls out Meris for manipulating Maeve into leaving. The two get into a heated argument and group disperses. A distraught Meris attempts in vain to catch her breath as the running and anxiety catches up with her lungs. Jesus appears and tries to help her find peace, but she can't hear him. Instead, she hears Fox, shaming her for what she did to Maeve, reminding her how stupid and unwanted she really is. With no one to speak the truth, and her heart closed off to Jesus, Meris agrees with these lies.

Willow meets Jesus in the woods and he takes her to the still water. As Willow peers into the peaceful water, she sees a reflection of what she looks like on the

inside. What she sees are many painful wounds. Disturbed by what she sees, she asks Jesus about them and he tells her they are hurts and pains she hasn't faced because she fears them. He tells her that what she must do to be well is come back to him each day...sit with him, walk with him, and he will show her how to mend, how to heal. She promises to come back and he promises the same.

Dakota meets Naomi and the two figure out how to use his compass. As it points them toward the lovely, dark, and deep, they decide they would rather not go there. Fia urges them that they should indeed go and they have found each other for such a time as this. Sensing their fear, Hunter appears and begins speaking to them of simpler comforts. He tells them that just down the road there is a warm bed, hot coffee, dinner and familiar things. He makes them remember what use to feel good and how easy it would be to turn back from all of these unknown, uncomfortable things the wild is asking of them. Despite the urgings of the spirit, Naomi and Dakota are convinced and follow Hunter toward the path of comfort.

Thinking of leaving herself, Maeve meets Lyra and Amos. They explain to her that even if she leaves the wild, the Lord will come after her and call her to come back again. Amos tells the story of the prodigal son and explains the unconditional and relentless love of the Lord. He reminds her that no one is too far gone that God's love will not pursue them still. In the dance "Covenant", we see the Trinity calling back the lost characters from their waywardness. All return except for Naomi.

Dakota returns and Fia takes him to the wildflower field. She shows him vast hills of dreams and stories that she has tended for him. Overwhelmed by the immensity of it, Dakota asks Fia to scale it down. He knows that these kinds of dreams will demand more of him than he is willing to give, and he'd rather have something simpler and easier. Hurt by his response, Fia attempts to remind Dakota of who he is, even though he has forgotten.

Miles finally makes it to the giving well, where Jesus tells him that if he drinks from it, he will discover what he thirsts for most. As Miles drinks, he senses a great hole inside of him, so deep that it feels like the water will just rush out again. Fia tells him "that's what happens when you keep a secret". They continue to speak of this secret that they know but we do not. Fia tells Miles to drink again, to discover what he thirsts for most...and that if he searches deeply enough, he will discover that what he thirsts for is the same thing everyone is searching for. At the very end, Miles asks for forgiveness for where he has sinned. The Father forgives him and they sit together as Miles works up the courage for what he must do next.

Section 3: Discussion Questions

1. Willow looks into the still water and sees how she looks on the inside. What do you think you would see if you looked into the still water?
2. Meris battles insecurity and jealousy when she sees Maeve and Miles talking. Hunter and Fox play on her insecurity and fear and convince her to act in a way that isn't aligned with who she is called to be. Has fear, jealousy, or insecurity ever propelled you into doing something you know

- was not what God would want you to do? How did it make you feel? What happened because of it?
3. Naomi and Dakota are persuaded to leave the wild because they want what feels comfortable and secure. What comforts and securities would most easily convince you to leave the wild adventures God has and turn back?
 4. Maeve is convinced to leave the wild because Meris tells her it's too much for her and that she is a burden to the group. What are some lies you believe about yourself that maybe make you feel like you can't handle what God is asking of you?
 5. If you drank from the Giving Well, what would it show you? What do you thirst for most? What part of who God is can fulfill this deep longing?

Section 4 Plot Synopsis

The entire group finally comes together at the giving well and find themselves at the edge of the lovely, dark, and deep. Fia calls them to come and see what the Lord has for them there. She explains that is the journey to the inmost parts, the ones too deep to be spoken of...not because they can't be, but because there are not words. Eventually, all of the characters decide to follow the spirit into the lovely, dark, and deep.

Willow meets Fia by the lonely tree, very tired and very low—feeling like she can't find the lost part of herself and that maybe she doesn't even want to. She cries and trembles as she feels the deep brokenness inside of her and wonders if it would be better if she disappeared altogether...then she wouldn't have to feel this hurt anymore. Fia emphatically tells her that these thoughts are not good, and that she needs to reach out for help. Though Willow is afraid of how her mother might respond, she agrees to try to tell her what is going on. When she does, her mother chides her for going to the wild places. She refuses to listen to Willow's cry for help and attempts to explain the hurt inside. Her mother makes her promise not to go to the wild places again and assures her that she will be fine. Willow is left feeling more broken and alone than ever.

Maeve finds herself suddenly alone in the lovely dark and deep, facing troubling memories of Willow and her mother. In a sequence of nightmares, we get the sense there is a particular memory she fears and is unwilling to face. Hunter and Fox mock her and her fear as she huddles into a ball, her nightmares too loud for her to overcome. Then suddenly the nightmares are silenced as Jesus calls her name. He carries her to a table where Father brings her a hot bowl of soup and Fia surrounds her with a warm blanket. They care for her and speak truth to her. Fia gives her sweet bread made of all her favorite fruits (joy, peace, kindness, gentleness...love.) Maeve feels safe and comforted in their presence.

The others come upon another part of the deep where the stars are bright and fiercely beautiful. Lyra explains how the sight of the stars is often enough to bring travelers to confess. As they walk they come upon Naomi, Willow, and Amos all confessing prayers and sins to the Lord. There is an empty chair with a brown

rectangular package on it. Miles knows it is for him. He sits in the chair and dreads confessing the truth to his friends. Fox and Hunter creep in, attempting to scare him and shame him out of speaking the truth aloud. Miles calls the name of Jesus and they are silenced. Jesus gives him courage to speak the truth in love. Slowly and painfully, Miles confesses that he has been lying to Meris and Dakota about their dad. He tells them that their father did want to come back to them and try again, but Miles told him to leave and never come back... that his kid didn't want him anymore after what he had done to them. Meris breaks down, shrieking at him in anger for making her father feel the way she has felt her whole life. So hurt, Meris runs away, completely devastated. Dakota also reproaches Miles, telling him he lied to them so he could be the hero and keep Dakota and Meris as his projects. As his friends abandon him, Miles screams at the Lord for not protecting what he loves. The Lord comes to him with gentle conviction, telling him that with time this will mend, but for now, he must wait.

Meris finds herself completely alone in the dark. She is frightened, hurt, and disappointed. She cries out to the Lord, asking for just a glimpse of him...to know him the way the others have. Slowly the darkness begins to illuminate with the flickering of fireflies and lights. And even though she cannot see God at first, slowly she is able to. And in the sparkling lights of fireflies, she dances with the light of the world.

Willow comes back to the woods, deeply wounded by her mother's indifference to her pain and feeling disappointed with the Lord for not helping her more in her conversation. In her anger and hurt, she pushes Jesus away. He pursues her still. But she pushes so hard she convinces herself that she can no longer see him and he disappears from her sight. Fox sidles up next to her and promises to take her to the singing caverns, where she can face all of the thoughts she most fears.

In search of his sister, Dakota stumbles along a trail of books that lead to a joyful Amos. Amos tells him that he is organizing them for The Storymaker. When Dakota asks who that is, Amos explains that the Father has many names, one of which is the Storymaker. Dakota eventually meets the Storymaker and asks him why he looked one way as Father and a different way as the Storymaker. The Storymaker explains how Dakota's image of Father is marred by the painful actions of his real Father, so if he can use a different metaphor to demonstrate to Dakota who He is, then he will. Together they open the brown package that the Father gave to Dakota earlier and find that it is a book with blank pages. The Storymaker tells Dakota they can write whatever they want together and then urges him to continue his journey up the mountain. He tells Dakota that though the walk is slow, most things worth having require the slow, steady measured pace of a walk...and that Dakota was made for walking with Him.

Maeve continues her journey through the lovely, dark, and deep and come upon another memory of her younger self and Jesus in the wild places. Maeve brings Jesus her mother's teacup and he tells her that they must break it. The teacup represents a lie—that Maeve must perform a certain way to be worthy of love—and this is not the truth. They decide to break the teacup and plant it in the wildflower

field, because Jesus can make something beautiful grow...even from this. But as the memory fades, Maeve has trouble believing anything good could grow. Fia explains to her that Maeve believes God has wounded her and when Maeve asks why, Fia says that Maeve will not let the Lord speak to this because she is so afraid of it. Together they walk to view Maeve's most painful and guarded memory.

Here we find Willow in the singing caverns, unable to hear her thoughts because the Lord is protecting them from her. Though the Lord fights for her and pursues her, Willow refuses to be comforted and pushes and yells and will not let Him help her. Deeply hurt on the inside, Willow finally decides that the only way to escape her pain is to take her own life. The Lord makes multiple attempts to stop her and tell her the truth but she will not listen. When Maeve discovers what has happened to her sister, she is completely distraught and pushes Jesus away, blaming him for not helping her sister. She tells him that she hates him and to get away from her. Older Maeve sits with Jesus and watches the scene, finally coming to the realization of what she has denied for so long...that her sister died. She cries in the arms of Jesus.

Section 4: Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt like Maeve...that the journey is too much for you? The Lord brings her comfort, provides her with food, speaks truth to her, and surrounds her with love. Right now, in the midst of your journey, what is it that you most need from the Lord?
2. Under the stars, many travelers confess before the Lord. What is a sin that you might need to confess? Take some time now to pray and confess it in your heart to him. If you feel bold, share it with the group. There is power and grace and forgiveness in repentance and confession.
3. How do you tend to react when you sin?
4. Is it hard to trust you can bring your sin before God immediately and experience grace and forgiveness? Why or why not?
5. What does it mean to repent? What are ways you can start repenting whenever there is sin in your life?
6. The Lord meets Meris in a very specific way that is unique to her story by coming to her in the light of the fireflies. Has the Lord ever met you in a way that was special and specific to you? Take a few minutes to write down and remember this moment as a reminder of his deep and specific love for you.
7. If you sat across from the Storymaker and he offered you the gift of a book with blank pages, saying that you could write whatever you wanted with him...what would you write? Where would you ask him to take you? Who would you ask him to help you become?
8. Maeve suggests to Jesus that they should break the teacup and plant the pieces in the Wildflower Field because she believes he can make something beautiful out of something broken. What is something broken in your life

that you would love to see God plant in his field and make something beautiful out of...even if it seems like that could never be from what you see right now?

9. Maeve experiences trauma and turns her anger and hurt onto the Lord. Have you ever been angry or disappointed with God? Did you admit your anger or keep it secret? What were the circumstances that caused it? Fia says “You believe I have wounded you...and even though I would never hurt you, a perceived wound can feel like a real one.” If you perceived that God has wounded you...have you been able to forgive him? Not because he was wrong but because of the healing it would bring you to do so?

Zeteo Session 4

Receive, Respond, Remember

Main point: As we hear the word of God and are challenged to follow him, let us respond in obedience, remembering what he has done and letting that fuel our faith to respond and obey over and over again.

Section 5 Plot Synopsis:

The Lord brings Maeve back to her secret place, and in “House on a Hill” draws her back into relationship where she can once again understand the character of the Lord all over again. In the quiet, stillness, and safety of her secret place, Maeve is able to open one of the letters from Willow...seeing how the things Willow prayed for her are coming to life before her eyes. The Lord leads her to the altar, and though she struggles with trusting Him after what happened to her sister, she places herself on the altar as an offering to the Lord—repeating that she loves Him and trusts him.

All of the characters finally meet again on the other side of the lovely, dark, and deep. Meris and Dakota reunite with Miles and forgive him. Lyra stumbles in, confessing that she fell into a trap set by pride. Meris crumbles, unable to catch her breath, suddenly extremely weak. Maeve runs in and they determine they need to carry Meris to the mountain. Late that night, Jesus awakens Meris and carries her to the altar. There the Lord asks her to place what is most precious to her on the altar and trade it for a love that is greater. Fearfully, Meris begins to recognize that the thing most precious to her is her story. After a battle with her own fear, Meris places her story on the altar and promises to let the Lord have it...no matter what. Jesus carries Meris back. The whole group is awoken a bit later by a song in the trees. Lyra explains that creation sings a constant hymn to the Lord...though the trees and sky make no sounds, their praise goes on...inviting us to join. And so they do.

The characters continue traveling until they reach “The Wagon Wheel”, a place where the path splits in many different directions. Each character feels a pull to a specific path. Maeve feels called back home to tell others what she has seen and

show them the way. Dakota feels called up the mountain, Lyra to the crooked valleys and wounded edges, Miles to a deeper and lonelier path.

Maeve travels home and tells her mother of the wild places. Her mother admits to Maeve that Willow tried to tell her how much she was hurting, but that she refused to listen. Maeve holds her mother and forgives her, knowing that her mother is hurting just as much as she is. She finds out that long ago her mother went to the wild too and was given a gift from Amos, the red ribbon that became Willow's. Maeve pulls out the balm Amos gave her and gently rubs it into her mother's hands. Her mother remembers going to the wildflower field with Fia and planting the dream of her family there. Though she does not remember the beautiful and good things in the wild, Naomi tells Maeve she can't go back, not today.

At the campfire, Miles and the Father discuss his next steps of the journey... paths he must walk alone for a little while, leaving his dear friends behind. Fia wakes Meris and shows her a beautiful door from which there is no turning back. Because of her time at the altar, Meris knows that this means she is going to die. The Lord allows her to say goodbye to her brother and Miles and as they do, she wishes for a just little more time. Miles uses his five minutes of extra time and they watch the sunrise together a little longer. In "New Country", each character senses a new call, to go deeper past the next barrier. Naomi returns to the wild, Miles goes on alone, Meris dies in the arms of the Lord, Maeve bravely brings her mother back, and Dakota looks on toward the mountain, Lyra toward the valley below.

When Naomi returns, Fox and Hunter try again to convince her she doesn't belong in the wild because of what she has done. But with Maeve's help, she remembers the authority she has to silence fear and shame by the power of the Lord. As they are silenced, she walks with the Father and together they take the red ribbon, with all of its pain and loss, and plant it in the wildflower field. Naomi and Maeve plant it in faith, that God will bring something beautiful...even out of this.

Dakota sits staring at the door where he last saw his sister. He mourns her death and feels as though he is undeserving to live the sorts of adventures she wanted. Lyra gives him Meris' storybook, left for him by Amos, and says his journey now is to tell the stories...to tell of the adventurous girl who was old enough to go to the wild places, and convince others to come just as she did. The two eventually decide to part ways, when the Trinity stops them and redirects them to walk together, they head toward the crooked valleys and wounded edges. But just before they go, Dakota pauses to read a bit of the story again, inviting all of us back to the wild.

Section 5: Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it is so easy to read the words of Jesus and yet so difficult to put them into practice?
2. What is something you can do to begin forming the habit of hearing from God and then obeying?
3. Talk about a time you saw God move in your life. How can you make sure you always remember that moment?

4. Because of what happened to her sister, Maeve has trouble trusting God with herself. Is there something that you have trouble trusting God with? How can you begin to take small steps to trust him with this precious thing?
5. When Miles returns, his friends are eager to forgive him. Is there a place in your life where you need to ask for forgiveness or extend forgiveness? What is keeping you from asking for it or extending it?
6. As the Lord asks Meris to put her story on the altar, she says, "There are so many things I'd love to see on these pages." As you look at the story you have composed for yourself, the one you see and want for the future...what is on those pages? What do you hope to see? Do you feel, like Meris, that you can place those dreams and desires for your story on the altar...trusting Him to make something beautiful more than you trust yourself to do so? If not, what stands in the way?
7. In the Winter Woods, the characters hear creation's hymn singing to the Lord. Do you feel like you have ever heard or seen creation worshipping? What did it look like? (fireflies, sunrise, thunderstorm?) What did it sound like? (waves, wind, crickets, birds?) How did it make you feel?
8. At the Wagon Wheel, Amos describes the different paths the characters can take, "Up, down, through, back, on..." If you were standing at the wagon wheel right now, what direction would you feel called to? Up toward the mountain? Down toward the lower places? Through the woods to another unknown? Back to somewhere you have been before and need to invest in? On to something new?
9. If you had a balm that could heal any wound, what wound would you heal? Would it be something in your own life or someone else's? How can you partner with the Lord to begin to heal this wound?
10. If you had five minutes of extra time, do you think you would ever use it? Where do you think you would be most likely to use it?
11. Maeve and Naomi plant Willow's red ribbon (a symbol of their pain and loss) into the Wildflower Field, trusting that God will grow something beautiful out of even their greatest loss. What is something broken, painful, or difficult that you could sit with the Lord and plant in his wildflower field? Do you think you could dream of a beautiful thing that could come from this broken thing, with his power and redemption?
12. You each put a rock on a rock altar to symbolize a place where God met you. Telling of these places and telling these stories is a powerful thing that can help us remember the faithfulness of God and inspire others as well. What was the place where God met you? Tell the story to others, so you can remember.