

36. Temptation



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

**Matthew 4:1-11, 1
Corinthians 10:13,
Hebrews 4:15-16**

Jesus is tempted by the
devil



AIMS

To help the children understand how using God's Word, the Bible, can help us resist temptation, and to encourage them that they can pray to God for help when they are tempted.

The devil tempted Jesus to do wrong, but he resisted by referring to the Scriptures. We all face temptation too, but knowing what the Bible says can help us too, and we can also pray and ask for God's help.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- How did Jesus use Scripture to fight against the devil's temptation?
- How does Scripture help us resist temptation?
- When have you known God helping you in this?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ A Sad and Solemn Occasion

This game will work best with a medium-large group. Get everyone to stand in a circle. Choose one person to start. They have to say the words, "This is a sad and solemn occasion, is it not..." and then add the name of someone in the circle, referring to them as Brother or Sister, e.g. "This is a sad and solemn occasion, is it not Brother Jamie?" The person chosen then replies, for example, "It is indeed a

very sad and solemn occasion, Brother Ross." Then everyone in the circle has to put their hands together and bow, making a humming noise.

The person who was chosen to give the response (in this example, Jamie) then begins the dialogue again, choosing someone else.

The main point of the game is to avoid the temptation to laugh. Anyone who laughs at any point is out and must sit down in the circle. People can use silly voices and facial expressions to try to encourage others to laugh, but they must be careful not to laugh themselves. The last one who is left standing is the winner.

▶ Staring Contest

Get the children to divide into

(continued overleaf)

pairs to compete in a staring contest. They have to maintain eye contact for as long as they can and the first one to blink, laugh, or look away loses. You could then get the winners from each pair to find a new partner and play again, and continue in this way until you have an overall winner.

▶ Marshmallow Test Clip

You will need: equipment to play video

You could show this clip to introduce the theme of temptation: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ

Several children are given a marshmallow and left alone in a room. They are told that they can either eat the marshmallow there and then, or they can wait until the adult returns and they will be given a second marshmallow. The children show different reactions to the temptation to eat the marshmallow they have.

EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap/ Introduction

Over the last two weeks we have been thinking about the start of the New Testament of the Bible. We heard about some of the events surrounding Jesus' birth, then last time we heard one of the first stories the Bible includes about Jesus when he was grown up - when he was baptised by John.

Do you remember what happened as Jesus was coming up out of the water after he was baptised? God's voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son who brings me great joy." Then the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the form of a dove. We talked about how the Holy

Spirit gave Jesus strength and power and how he needed it for what was going to happen next.

▶ Story of Jesus' Temptation

You will need: images printed out, or on PowerPoint, from Free Bible Images, as detailed below

Tell the story using illustrations from Free Bible Images: <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-014-jesus-temptation/> (The numbers in the script below correspond to the slides in the presentation.)

1. After Jesus was baptised, the Holy Spirit led him out into the wilderness.
2. He ate nothing for 40 days and he was very hungry. The devil came to him and tried to tempt him to do what was wrong.
3. First the devil said to him, "If you really are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread." He was trying to get Jesus to doubt that he really was God's Son, and he was trying to get him to prove his power. Jesus said, "No! The Scriptures say, "People do not live by bread alone."" He was quoting a bit from the Bible, from the Old Testament.
4. Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem, to the very highest point of the Temple, and he said, "If you really are the Son of God, jump off!" The devil tried to use words from the Bible to persuade Jesus. He said, "The Scriptures say, "He will order his angels to guard and protect you. They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even strike your foot on a stone.""
5. But Jesus saw through the devil's scheme, and he said, "No! The Scriptures also say, "Do not test the Lord your God.""

6. Then the devil showed him all the kingdoms in the world, and he said, "I have power over all these kingdoms and I will give it all to you if you will bow down and worship me."

7. Again Jesus used words from the Old Testament and he said, "No! The Scriptures say, "You must worship no-one else but God.""

8. Finally the devil left Jesus and angels came to care for him. Jesus returned from the wilderness and went back home.

So, three times the devil tried to get Jesus to do things that were wrong, and three times Jesus was able to resist the temptation. How did Jesus do it?

He knew what the Bible said, and he knew what God wanted, and that helped him to see through the devil's plans and not to do things that were wrong. It was also because the Holy Spirit gave him power.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

You will need: a Bible

Do you ever have times when you feel tempted to do something that you know is wrong?

Give some examples... e.g. your mum has said she doesn't want you to have a biscuit before dinner but she's gone upstairs to do something and you're sure she'd never notice if you took one, maybe a friend in school is messing around in class and trying to get you to join in, maybe someone has said something nasty to you and you're tempted to hurt them back.

I think all of us face times like that. Even when you grow up it's not always easy to do the right thing.

What could help you be able to do the right thing?

It could be having good friends or family that keep you on track, making a decision about it and being determined to do the right thing, thinking about the consequences.

If you used the marshmallow test video earlier, you could refer back to it here. The children had to decide whether it was better to do what they wanted now (to eat the marshmallow) or to wait and get two marshmallows. Some decided to eat the marshmallow straight away but that meant they missed out on getting a second one.

Something that tempts us might look good at the time and it might be what we want to do but thinking about what the end result might be can help us make the right choice. For example, thinking about how much trouble we could be in if our mum or our teacher catches us doing something wrong, or how we might hurt someone and ruin a friendship.

It must have been hard for Jesus to resist the devil's temptation. It must have been tempting to turn a stone into bread when he was really hungry, and it must have been tempting to show his power, but to him the most important thing was doing what God wanted, and the Holy Spirit gave him the strength to do what was right.

Christians believe that God helps his people when they are tempted to do what is wrong.

This is what it says later on in the Bible - read from 1 Corinthians 10:13. **"The temptations in your life are no**

different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."

We can pray to God and ask him to help us like he helped Jesus.

▶ Prayer Activity

*You will need: cards
printed double-sided from
additional document: Bible
Verse Cards, a Bible*

Jesus fought against temptation by using verses from the Bible, which is God's Word. We have God's Word in the Bible today too and that can help us when we feel tempted.

Lay out the cards with the sides that say "Tempted to..." face up. You may want to have multiple copies of the cards. Let the children take a moment to think about which temptation is the one they find the hardest.

Let them pick up the card with that temptation on it, and turn it over to read the Bible verse.

Read out Hebrews 4:15-16.

Because Jesus understands what it is like to be tempted, and because he is the only one who never gave in to temptation, we can pray and ask him for help.

Lead the children in prayer, and encourage them to take the card they chose home and keep it somewhere to remind them.