

Jesus Was Tempted

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 4:1-11

MAIN POINT: Jesus was tempted and never sinned.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

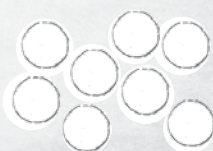
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness. Jesus fasted for 40 days, and He was hungry. There in the wilderness, the Devil, who is the agent of temptation and father of lies, appeared to Jesus. The Devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

If You are the Son of God? The Devil knew who Jesus was. He challenged Jesus to prove it. The Devil wanted to ruin God’s plan of redemption which was set in motion in Genesis 3. In the garden of Eden, Satan used a seemingly innocent question to arouse doubt in Eve: “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1).

Adam and Eve ate the fruit God had forbidden them to eat, and sin entered the world.

Jesus came to reverse the curse, to succeed where Adam failed. The Devil's aim was to use a similar trick as in Eden to get Jesus to sin, to disqualify Him from the role of sinless Savior.

The Devil targeted Jesus in His weakness. He tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, to put Himself in danger, and to worship him as a way to fulfill His mission without going to the cross. "Go away, Satan!" Jesus replied.

The writer of Hebrews said that Jesus, our High Priest, can sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tested in every way we are, yet He never sinned. Jesus' actions are an example for believers, but what happens when we do give in to temptation?

Emphasize to kids that we can boldly approach God's throne to receive grace to help us through temptation, and mercy and forgiveness when we sin. (See Heb. 4:14-16.) We have hope because Christ died for sinners.



Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use dramatic dialogue:** Stand in one spot when telling Jesus' words. Then turn and face that spot as you speak the Devil's words.
- **Emphasize repetition:** After each time the Devil tempted Jesus, pause and ask, "Do you think Jesus gave in to temptation?" Kids should reply, "No!"

Jesus Was Tempted

Matthew 4:1-22

After Jesus was baptized, He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. **Jesus did not eat for 40 days and 40 nights.** He prayed and thought about God's plan for His life. **When those days were over, Jesus was hungry.**

Then the Devil, who tempts people to sin, **came up to Jesus.** He said, "If You are really God's Son, prove it. Tell these stones to become bread."

If Jesus used His power to turn the stones into bread, He could eat them so He wouldn't be hungry anymore. **But Jesus refused.** Instead of using His own power, **Jesus chose to trust God to meet His needs.** Jesus said, "God's Word says: **Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**"

The Devil tempted Jesus again. He took Jesus to Jerusalem, which was called the holy city. The Devil took Jesus up **to the top of the temple.** Jesus stood on the roof, and **the Devil said, "If You are really God's Son, prove it. Jump off this temple and trust God to protect You."**

Then the Devil said: "God's Word says: **God will order His angels to keep You safe,** and they will protect You so that You will not even strike your foot against a stone."

The Devil had used words from Scripture, but Jesus knew the Devil's command was foolish. Jesus reminded him, "God's Word also says: **Do not test the Lord your God.**"

Finally, the Devil took Jesus to a high mountain. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and how

great they were. **The Devil said to Jesus, “I will give You all the riches and power of these kingdoms.** They belong to me, and I can give them to anyone I want. **If You want them, all You have to do is fall down and worship me.”**

Jesus resisted temptation again. He replied, “Go away, Satan! God’s Word says: Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.”

The Devil left Jesus, and angels came right away to serve Jesus. Throughout all these temptations, Jesus never sinned.

After that, Jesus began His ministry. He preached and said, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!” Jesus called some fishermen to follow Him. Peter, Andrew, James, and John left their nets and followed Jesus.

Christ Connection: Jesus was tempted, but He trusted God and never sinned. Jesus is perfect and righteous. A perfect sacrifice was required to take away sin. Jesus was that perfect sacrifice. He died on the cross to free us from sin and to give us the power to say no to temptation.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that Jesus was tempted and never sinned. As a result, Jesus is the perfect sacrifice to take away sin. Jesus is Lord of all. (Acts 10:36) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Tempted

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 4:1-11

MAIN POINT: Jesus was tempted and never sinned.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group.

Invite kids to share about a time this past week they did something they knew they weren't supposed to do. Prompt kids to also consider a time they did not do something they should have done.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete "It Is Written ..." on the activity page. Demonstrate how to use the code to fill in the words Jesus said when He was tempted to sin. When kids finish, invite volunteers to share their answers.

SAY • These are all things Jesus said when He was tempted to sin. Do you think Jesus ever gave in and sinned? We will hear more about this in today's Bible story.

- "It Is Written ..."
- activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

LOW PREP

- paper bag
- empty egg carton

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: No peeking!

Instruct kids to close their eyes. Explain that you are going to tell them a story. They may hear some unusual noises as

they listen, but tell them not to peek!

Hold a paper bag containing an empty egg carton. As you begin to tell the story, open the paper bag slowly.

SAY • Oh, wow! You won't believe what I have here in my bag. This is the coolest thing ever. You all will be so surprised when you see it. Let me describe it to you. Rustle the bag and describe the item inside to pique kids' curiosity. Tell kids about the item's shape, color, purpose, and so on. Then invite kids to open their eyes.

SAY • Raise your hand if you were tempted to peek while I was talking about the object. Did any of you actually peek? Today's Bible story is about a time Jesus was tempted. Do you think He gave in to temptation?

OPTION 2: A good fight

Write the following on separate index cards: *fire, bear attack, the flu, shark attack, bullies, a bad grade*. Form up to six groups of kids and give each group an index card, markers or crayons, and a large piece of paper.

- index cards
- markers or crayons
- large pieces of paper

Instruct kids to imagine they are facing the scenario on their card. How would they fight it? Encourage kids to discuss within their groups possible solutions and then draw a picture of the best defense. After several minutes, lead groups to share their solutions.

SAY • Those are some good solutions to some tricky problems. In today's Bible story, we are going to hear about how Jesus fought against something we all face—temptation. We will find out what Jesus did when He was tempted.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

• backpack

• Bible

• large box with lid

[Large Group Leader enters carrying a backpack, Bible, and large box with lid. Leader sets down the backpack and Bible.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! It is good to see you. You see this box here? My grandma sent it to me, and I can't wait to find out what's inside! The only problem is that she gave me very clear instructions. She said, "Do not open the box until your birthday!" And my birthday isn't for awhile. I really want to peek inside!

Have any of you ever been tempted to peek at a present before you were supposed to open it? It is so hard not to. *[Set the box aside.]* But I know my grandma will be happy if I wait, so I will wait until my birthday to open that box.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's review our big picture question. We have been learning this question the last several weeks.

I'll say the question, and you shout out the answer. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.*** Remember, Jesus—who is God the Son—came to earth and took on the form of a man. But Jesus didn't stop being God the Son. Let's find out how today's Bible story shows us that ***Jesus is fully God and fully man.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • First, we heard how Jesus came to earth as a baby.

Jesus' earthly family included Abraham, David, and others. We heard about His humble birth in Bethlehem and how He went to the temple as a boy. **Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan.** When He grew up, **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.**

Today's Bible story is called "Jesus Was Tempted." We will see how Jesus experienced life like we do. He was tempted to sin like you and I are tempted. Listen closely to this story.

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 4:1-22. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Was Tempted."

LEADER • After Jesus was baptized, He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. For 40 days and 40 nights, Jesus ate nothing. The Devil knew Jesus was hungry, so he came to Jesus and tempted Him to turn stones into bread. But Jesus refused, using God's Word to defeat the Devil.

Next, the Devil told Jesus to throw Himself off the top of the temple; surely the angels would save Him.

• Bibles
• "Jesus Was Tempted" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster

Again, Jesus refused. The Devil tempted Jesus a third time by offering Him all the riches and power of the world, if only Jesus would worship him. Does that sound like a good idea? No! Jesus refused again and answered with the Word of God.

Three times the Devil tempted Jesus, and three times Jesus defeated him by using the Word of God.

Incredible! I think if I had been in Jesus' situation, I would have sinned. I can hardly go one day without food. Imagine 40 days! And the promise of a big earthly kingdom ... wow. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.*** I am so thankful that we have this story in the Bible. **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.**

Christ connection

Refer back to the giant timeline or big story circle. Point out the Bible story "Sin Entered the World."

LEADER • Do you remember anyone else who was tempted by the Devil? Adam and Eve were tempted, and they did sin. When sin entered the world, everything was affected. We are all sinners too. That is why we need Jesus. **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.**

Because Jesus is perfect and righteous, He is the only One who could free us from sin. A perfect sacrifice was required to take away sin, and Jesus gave up His life by dying on the cross for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us the power to say no to temptation.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

Tip: Use Scripture
and the guide
provided to explain
how to become a
Christian. Make sure
kids know when
and where they can
ask questions.

• Key Passage Poster
• "This Saying" song

together 1 Timothy 1:15. Divide the room in half; call for kids on the right half of the room to say the key passage together. Then call for kids on the left half to say it.

LEADER • Great job! Our key passage tells us why Jesus came—to save sinners! Jesus was able to take the punishment for our sin because He lived the perfect life we failed to live. That makes me want to sing!

Lead kids to sing together “This Saying.”

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • What kinds of things tempt you? Think about that as we watch this video.

Show the “Unit 19, Session 6” discussion starter video.

Guide kids to talk about what Benjamin was tempted to do.

(disobey his mom by eating a cookie) If Benjamin did choose to eat the cookie, what should he do next?

LEADER • The Bible says that God gives us power to resist temptation. When we say no to sin, we show God that He is most important in our lives—more important than doing what we want to do.

Open your Bible to 1 Corinthians 10:13. Choose a volunteer to stand and read the verse aloud.

LEADER • **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.** Jesus answered the Devil’s temptations with God’s own Word. Jesus gave us a good example for how to say no to sin, but we also know that we are all sinners.

Jesus was tempted in every way that we are tempted, but He never sinned. Jesus is perfect and righteous, and He took the punishment we deserve for our sin. When we do sin, we can repent—or turn away from our sin—and turn back to God. God will forgive us!

• “Unit 19, Session 6”
discussion starter
video

• “The Savior We Need”
song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • The Bible says that before we trust in Jesus, we are slaves to sin. Sin has power over us. Jesus came to be the perfect sacrifice required to take away sin. He died on the cross and rose again to free us from sin and to give us the power to say no to temptation. That is such great news! Let’s sing to Him.

Sing together “The Savior We Need.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Dear God, thank You for Your Word. We look to You for help to fight temptation and say no to sin. Thank You for Jesus who was tempted but never sinned. We trust in Him alone to save us. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Small Group LEADER

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Display the key passage poster. Invite a volunteer who thinks he has memorized 1 Timothy 1:15 to stand at the front of the room with his back to the poster.

Challenge him to say the key passage backwards, one word at a time. Other kids may check for correctness. Then prompt him to say the key passage from beginning to end.

Allow additional volunteers as time allows. Lead all the kids to say the key passage backward and forward together.

SAY • I love this key passage! If you haven't already, memorize 1 Timothy 1:15. This verse reminds us why Jesus came into the world. Our Bible story tells us that **Jesus was tempted and never sinned**. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. All of us are sinners! We can trust in Him for our salvation.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Main Point Poster

Form three groups of kids. Distribute Bibles and assign a passage of today's Bible story to each group: Matthew 4:1-4; Matthew 4:5-7; and Matthew 4:8-10.

Ask a volunteer from each group to read its assigned passage aloud. After a group reads its passage, ask the

following questions. Repeat for each group:

1. Where was Jesus?
 - Group 1: in the wilderness, Matt. 4:1
 - Group 2: at the top of the temple, Matt. 4:5
 - Group 3: on a mountain, Matt. 4:8
2. What did the Devil tempt Jesus to do?
 - Group 1: turn stones into bread, Matt. 4:3
 - Group 2: throw Himself down from the temple, Matt. 4:6
 - Group 3: worship the Devil, Matt. 4:9
3. How did Jesus respond? (*with God's words*)
 - Group 1: "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).
 - Group 2: "It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God" (Matt. 4:7).
 - Group 3: "It is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him" (Matt. 4:10).

SAY • Raise your hand if you have ever been tempted. Keep your hand raised if you have ever said no to sin. Now put your hand down if you have ever failed and sinned.

The Bible says that **Jesus was tempted and never sinned**. Jesus is different than us. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.*** Jesus knows how hard it can be to say no to sin. When we are tempted to sin, we can pray and ask Him to help us say no to sin.

Reassure kids that when we do fail and sin, we can repent and turn to Jesus for forgiveness. Jesus lived the perfect life we cannot live and died the death we deserve to die so that we could have forgiveness and eternal life.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Act it out

Form three groups of kids. Assign each group a scenario and give them a few minutes to plan how they will act it out:

- Someone is tempted to cheat.
- Someone is tempted to hit another person.
- Someone is tempted to lie.

Call on groups one at a time to act out their scenario.

Before the scene resolves, direct the actors to freeze. Prompt the rest of the kids to talk about how the person could react to say no to temptation. Repeat for each scenario.

SAY • *Jesus is fully God and fully man.* When He came to earth, He experienced temptation just like we do. **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.** We can turn to God for help to say no to sin.

OPTION 2: Bible memory book

Invite each kid to make a book to help them memorize a passage of Scripture. Give each several large index cards. Kids should fold the cards in half and stack them to form a book. Staple the fold to bind the cards together.

Provide markers for kids to write the key passage reference, *1 Timothy 1:15*, on the front cover of the book. On the first page, kids should write out the entire verse. On the next page, they should write it again but leave out the first two words. On each following page, kids will rewrite the verse, leaving out more words.

SAY • **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.** He trusted God and responded to the Devil's temptations by saying God's words.

Jesus is perfect and righteous. A perfect sacrifice was required to take away sin. Jesus was that perfect

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- large index cards
- markers
- stapler

Option: Allow kids to choose another Bible passage.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

sacrifice. He died on the cross to free us from sin and to give us the power to say no to temptation.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Prompt kids to list in their journal pages some temptations they face. Remind kids that what is tempting to one person might not be tempting to someone else.

SAY • Just like the Devil tried to trick Jesus to sin, the Devil wants us to sin too. But the Bible says that when we resist the Devil, he will go away. [See *James 4:7*.] God gives us power through the Holy Spirit to say no to sin. Let's pray.

Dear God, thank You for giving us the Bible to show us what You are like and to help us fight temptation. Thank You for telling us about Jesus' temptation. Jesus showed us how to use Scripture and faith to fight against the Devil's temptations. Most of all, Jesus never sinned. We trust in Him as our perfect sacrifice to take away sin. Please forgive us when we give in to temptation, and give us strength to follow You. We love You. Amen.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "What Happened Next?" on the activity page. Kids should number the pictures in the order the events happened. Then encourage them to label each picture with the Scripture reference describing the scene.

Allow volunteers to briefly retell what happened in today's Bible story. (Answers: 3. *Matt. 4:5-6*; 4. *Matt. 4:8-9*; 2. *Matt. 4:3*; 1. *Matt. 4:2*)

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "What Happened Next?" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.