

Use Week of:

Unit 20 • Session 2

Jesus' Temptation

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4

STORY POINT:

Jesus was tempted and never sinned.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 3:30

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why did Jesus become human?
Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

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

LEADER Bible Study

Satan wants to ruin God's plan. In Genesis 3, he tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. Sin entered the world, and the perfect relationship between God and man was broken. But all along, God had a plan to rescue His people through His Son. So when Jesus came to earth, Satan didn't back down. After Jesus was baptized—beginning His ministry and effectively declaring war on Satan—Satan tempted Jesus.

If Satan could just get Jesus to stray from God's perfect plan—if he could just get Jesus to sin—then Jesus would be disqualified to be the sinless Savior people needed. But Satan could not stop God's plan.

Jesus' temptation is not primarily an example to be followed but more a declaration of who Jesus is. He is the answer to God's promise of a descendant who would crush the head of the snake. (Gen. 3:15) Jesus is the perfect sacrifice required to take away sin. Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded. Adam brought guilt and death to the human race, but Jesus brings forgiveness and life to all who trust in Him.

Even today, the devil works hard “to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). Teach kids that the power to resist temptation comes from Jesus. Kids may struggle to understand that following Jesus won't mean instant eradication of sin and temptation in our lives. (Sanctification is a lifelong process!) Pray that the kids you teach would see Jesus as their greatest treasure—more valuable than any instant gratification the world has to offer.

Finally, give kids hope for when they fail. Jesus' perfect obedience is credited to those who trust in Him. Remind the kids that “if we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We can boldly approach God's throne to receive both grace and mercy when we need it. (See Heb. 4:14-16.)

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Temptation

Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit led Him 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 that 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 the top of the temple in Jerusalem and said, "If You are really God's Son, prove it. Jump off this temple and trust God to protect You."

The devil even said: "God's Word says that 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.

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.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Display a prop:** Each time you tell how Jesus responded to temptation, hold up the Bible.
- **Use dramatic conversation:** During dialogue, stand in various places for each speaker—Jesus and the devil.

INTRODUCE the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: John 3:30

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

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. Prompt kids to talk about how they decide if something is right or wrong. Have they ever known what the right thing to do was, but still wanted to do something different? What happened?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "What Would You Do?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "What Would You Do?" on the activity page. Guide kids to read each scenario and circle how they would respond.

SAY • Do you always choose to do what is right? Why or why not? [*Invite kids to share.*] In the Bible story we will hear today, Jesus was tempted. To *tempt* someone is to try to get him or her to make a wrong choice or do something that is wrong. We'll find out what Jesus did when He faced temptation.

LOW PREP

- index cards
- paper
- markers or colored pencils

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Say what?

Before the session, list common English idioms on separate

index cards. Prepare one per kid or, if your group is large, one per group of two to four kids.

Distribute the prepared index cards along with paper and markers or colored pencils. Instruct kids to read the phrase on their cards and then illustrate what it could mean literally. For example, *missed the boat* means “it’s too late” but might be illustrated as someone standing on shore as a boat pulls away.

SAY • Have you ever heard a phrase used in a way it wasn’t intended to be used? Saying someone spilled the beans usually doesn’t mean he literally spilled beans; it means he told a secret. In today’s Bible story, we’ll see one way someone tried to use God’s words in a way they weren’t meant to be used.

OPTION 2: Obstacle course

Create a simple obstacle course with items you have available. Arrange cones or chairs for kids to weave through or step over. Position hula hoops for kids to jump into and out of, run around, or crawl through. You may use masking tape to mark a zig-zag path or hopscotch pattern on the floor. Before kids begin, demonstrate how to navigate the obstacles. Invite kids to take turns completing the course.

SAY • Sometimes obstacles come up in life that try to keep us from following Jesus. The devil is against God and those who love God. The devil might tempt us to sin against God, but Jesus gives us power to resist temptation. Today we are going to hear a Bible story about a time Jesus was tempted.

Examples of idioms:

- a blessing in disguise
- cutting corners
- hang in there
- on the ball
- pull yourself together
- under the weather
- a perfect storm
- break the ice
- spill the beans
- elephant in the room
- on the fence
- seeing eye to eye

- cones or chairs
- hula hoops
- masking tape or painter’s tape

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· stop sign
· message board

[Leader enters wearing khaki pants, a reflective shirt or vest, and a hard hat. Leader carries a stop sign made from poster board attached to a tall broomstick. A traffic message board reads DANGER AHEAD.]

LEADER • Whoa! Hold up, everyone. Do you see that sign there? It says *Danger Ahead*. I think it would be a good idea if you all stopped here for a bit while we assess the situation. When it's safe to proceed, you can move on with caution. OK?

Hey, haven't I seen you here before? Yeah! I remember now. Some of you are frequent travelers through these parts. Well, in case you forgot, I'm [*your name*]. My job is traffic control while some construction is happening just down the road. I know construction can be inconvenient, but when these improvements are made, the delay will be worth it. While we wait, let me tell you a Bible story.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • As you listen, keep a big picture question in mind. Big picture questions help us to think about what God is up to. Our question is, *why did Jesus become human?* Here is the answer: *Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.* Now I'll ask the question, and you say the answer: *Why did Jesus become human?* [Let kids respond.] *Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.* That was great!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. • Giant Timeline

LEADER • Today's Bible story and the stories that happen before and after it have to do with Jesus getting ready for His ministry on earth. We heard about Jesus' baptism. **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.**

Baptism reminds us of Jesus' death and resurrection. It reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus. Today's Bible story is called "Jesus' Temptation." Let's find out what happened.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Temptation." • Bibles
• "Jesus' Temptation" video
• Big Picture Question Poster

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

• Bible Story Picture Poster
• Story Point Poster

affected. We are all sinners, and we need Jesus.

Do you know why the devil wanted to get Jesus to sin? The devil is against God and His perfect plan. If Jesus sinned, then He couldn't be the sinless Savior people needed. But the devil could not stop God's plan. **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.**

Think about the things the devil tried to get Jesus to do: He wanted Jesus to use His own power to meet His own needs. Jesus hadn't eaten in 40 days. He was hungry! Did Jesus sin? No. What did Jesus say? Look at Matthew 4:4. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*]

The devil wanted Jesus to test God by jumping off the temple. Did Jesus sin? No. What did Jesus say? Look at Matthew 4:7. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*] Finally, the devil offered Jesus kingdoms to rule over if Jesus would worship him. Did Jesus sin? No! What did Jesus say? Look at Matthew 4:10. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*]

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!

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Do you remember a time when God's people—the Israelites—were in the wilderness? After God delivered His people from Egypt, they traveled into the wilderness and rebelled against God. They

worshiped idols and complained. God punished the people by making them wander for 40 years. When Jesus was in the wilderness, He obeyed God perfectly.

Jesus is perfect and righteous. A perfect sacrifice was required to pay for our sins so we could have forgiveness and life with God forever. 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.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 125 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 20, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how Jesus was tempted. Guide them to discuss how we can recognize if we are being tempted and how to fight temptation.

• “Unit 20, Session 2” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • I want to introduce you to a great woman of faith. Betty Greene was the first female missionary pilot. She helped to start the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) that uses small airplanes to reach people in remote villages. MAF helps people and shares the stories of Jesus, like the one we’re learning: **Jesus was tempted but never sinned.** Let’s hear more about Betty Greene.

Ask a volunteer to read the story of Betty Greene. Display the photos and give kids the chance to look at them. Then pray, thanking God for missionaries like Betty Greene and for missionary pilots today.

• “Betty Greene Photos” printable
• “Betty Greene Story” printable

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 3:30.

• Key Passage Poster
• “He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease (John 3:30)” song

LEADER • In a world where popularity and influence are highly valued, we can be tempted to steal God’s glory to increase our own fame instead of His. But John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the One who deserves all glory and honor. We can echo John’s words about Jesus: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Lead kids to sing “He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease (John 3:30).”

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Take It to the Lord”
song
• Bible

Open your Bible and read aloud Hebrews 4:15-16.

LEADER • Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted. **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.** He died on the cross to free us from sin and to give us the power to say no to temptation. We can go to Him in prayer—without fear and shame—because He is gracious and will help us. Let’s sing.

Sing together “Take It to the Lord.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, Your Word is powerful. Jesus remembered the truth of Scripture when the devil tempted Him to sin. Help us remember Your Word. Call to mind the truth when we are tempted to believe lies about who You are and who we are. Lord, we confess that we fall short and give in to temptation. We trust in Jesus, who never sinned. Forgive us and strengthen us. We want to honor You with our lives. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- index cards
- marker

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 3:30 together. Provide index cards and markers. Instruct kids to write the words of the key passage on separate index cards—one or two words per card. Challenge kids to mix up the cards and arrange them in order again. Kids may choose to trade sets with a friend and continue practicing. As kids master the verse, let them race other kids to see who can arrange the words the fastest.

SAY • Good job, everyone. Can you think of some reasons why Jesus should increase and we should decrease? [*Allow kids to respond.*]

We have a choice to make about who will be on the throne of our lives. The devil will tempt us to live for ourselves instead of Jesus. We can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 4. Explain that today's Bible story is found in Matthew 4:1-11.

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. ***Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.*** That's good news!

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.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 4:3-4. Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Who tempts us to sin? Why? *Lead kids to recall that the devil tempted Jesus to sin. Assure them that God never tempts anyone to sin. Explain that the Bible says the devil is "the father of lies" (John 8:44). The devil is against everything that God loves. He might tempt us to sin because He does not want us to follow Jesus.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 1:13-14.)
2. How can we resist temptation? What should we do if we give in to temptation? *Lead kids to discuss how Jesus resisted temptation—by remembering the truth found in Scripture. Encourage kids to memorize Scripture and pray against the schemes of the devil. Emphasize that when we are tempted, God provides a way to resist it. When we do sin, we can repent and turn back to God. He will forgive our sins.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 10:13.)
3. Why is it important to know God's Word? *Invite kids to discuss the importance of knowing what is true about God and about ourselves. We are often tempted when we believe lies about God or ourselves. Knowing God's*

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

Word and treasuring it in our hearts can help us stand up against temptation.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 119:9-11.)

LOW PREP

· paper

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

· "Temptation Cards" printable

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Make paper airplanes

Distribute paper and encourage kids to make their best paper airplanes. Consider downloading some simple paper airplane patterns from the Internet for those who need extra help. Let the kids have a contest to see which airplane travels the farthest.

SAY • These paper airplanes can remind us to pray for missionary pilots like the ones with MAF. They can reach people in mountain villages, deep jungles, or remote islands that no one else can get to. Their willingness to serve God means people will be helped and hear about Jesus.

Note: Consider asking parents or church members to donate travel-size toiletry items for a mission project included in session 3 of this unit.

OPTION 2: Practice resisting

Form four groups of kids. Give each group a temptation scenario card and give groups a couple of minutes to plan how they will act out the scenario.

Call on groups one at a time to act out their scenario. Before the scene resolves, direct the actors to freeze. Lead all of the kids to discuss a right and wrong response. Then let kids act out the response showing a person resisting temptation. Repeat for each scenario.

SAY • *Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.* When

Jesus came to earth, He experienced temptation just like we do. **Jesus was tempted and never sinned.**

Just like the devil tried to trick Jesus to sin, the devil wants us to sin too. The Bible says that when we resist the devil, he will go away. [See James 4:7.] We can turn to God for help to say no to sin. God gives us power through the Holy Spirit to resist temptation.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for His Word. Praise Jesus for resisting temptation and pray that God would help kids hide His Word in their hearts so they can use it to resist the devil.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Temptation & Reply" on the activity page.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Temptation & Reply" 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.