

# Jesus is Tempted in the Wilderness



Scripture Reference: [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

**Suggested Emphasis:** Satan tempts people to lead them away from God. He tempted Jesus and he tempts us. God is stronger than Satan so we should stand strong in the Word of God.

**Memory Verse:** So give yourselves to God. Stand against the devil, and the devil will run away from you. [James 4:7, ICB](#)



## Story Overview:

After Jesus was baptised, he had to decide the direction He would take in his ministry. Satan tried to get Him to be the wrong kind of Saviour. Although Satan tempted Him with pride, power, and popularity, this was equally Satan testing Jesus as to what kind of Saviour and royal Son he was going to be. Was Jesus going to faithfully trust God and do his will or not? Jesus stood strong in the Word of God and did not give in to temptation.

## Background Study:

This story can also be found in [Mark 1:12-13](#) and [Luke 4:1-13](#). Although Jesus could have called on all kinds of power, he chose to fight Satan's attack by using the Scripture. Remember this as you teach bible class. The Scripture you instil in your students now can be called upon years later when they face temptation.

After his baptism, Jesus seems to go to the desert to be alone with God. The place where Jesus was alone with God for more than a month is believed to be in the mountains near Jericho. This place is bleak and rocky. Jesus was in the desert for 40 days. In an interesting parallel, the Israelites wandered in the desert 40 years ([Deuteronomy 8:2](#)).

Fasting (going without food) was a common way to concentrate on prayer and devotion to God. Jesus purposely made himself open and vulnerable to God in this way. Jesus had to decide the direction that he would take in his ministry. He sought God's direction. Sensing a possible victory over someone who was weak and hungry, Satan attacked. Jesus answered every attack by quoting Scripture written during the time when the Israelites were in the desert (on their way to the Promised Land).

Basically, Satan attacked Jesus in 3 ways:

1. Firstly, Satan tried to get a very hungry Jesus to turn stones into bread. His hunger was no different than what we would have felt. When Jesus "became flesh" ([John 1](#)) he was able to suffer the pain and emotions as humans do. His ability to do miracles was not to be used to satisfy human cravings. His power was to be used to draw men to God. Jesus did not give into this temptation but used the Scripture to point out the fact that God is more important than food ([Deuteronomy 8:3](#)).
2. Secondly, Satan tried to get Jesus to test God's power by throwing himself off the highest point (pinnacle) of the roof of the temple. If Satan could get Jesus to doubt God's ability to save him then he would reveal a basic distrust on Jesus' part. This did not work because Jesus had complete trust in God. If we trust someone, we do not have to test them. Jesus quoted Scripture one last time ([Deuteronomy 6:16](#)).
3. Finally, Satan offered Jesus a chance to win the world without going through the suffering of the cross. He took him to the top of a mountain to look down over the kingdoms of the world. At first glance, this might not seem like a temptation to us. But remember, Jesus loved the world completely. God's plan was that Jesus would suffer on the cross and people in the world would have a choice to follow him or not. But here was Satan offering to just GIVE the world to him. If he bypassed God's plan then he could save the world all at once. Yet once again Jesus chose the way of God and answered Satan with Scripture. Jesus would never worship Satan! He would only worship God ([Deuteronomy 6:13](#)).

[Matthew 4:11](#) shows that angels took care of Jesus following the temptations.



## Way to Introduce the Story:

Divide the class into two teams and play a game of "tug of war." After the game, talk about how it feels to be pulled in two directions. "That is how temptation is. God is trying to pull you in the direction of doing what is right. Satan is trying to pull you in a direction where you are doing wrong. No matter how good you are being, Satan still tries to get you to do bad things. In today's story, we are going to learn about how Satan even tried to get Jesus to do wrong. That's right, the Devil even tempted Jesus!"

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## The Story:

We cannot see God but we know he is always near us. He helps us and takes care of us. He always wants us to do the right things so we will be happy. He wants us to come live with him when we die.

We cannot see Satan but he is alive too. He is very bad. He tries to get us to do bad things. He does not want us to

go to heaven when we die. Heaven is a happy place where God lives. Satan wants us to go to a bad place called hell. No one is ever happy in hell because God is never there.

### Temptation:

- Sometimes we want to do the wrong thing. Wanting to do the wrong thing is called “temptation.”
- Sometimes we know to do something good but we want to just forget about it and not do it. When we feel like not doing something that we know is good that is also temptation.
- Temptation is when bad and wrong things look really good to us. Satan tempts us. He hates it when we are good so he tries to make bad things seem good to us. Sometimes he makes them look so good that we forget what God says and just do the bad thing.

After Jesus was baptised he went away to the desert to be alone. He decided that he wanted to pray and think about God for 40 days. Jesus did not want to be distracted by anything so he fasted.

- To fast means to not eat so that even our bodies make us think about God every time we feel hungry. Jesus fasted and did not eat for 40 days when he was in the desert.

Satan did not like it because Jesus only thought about God. Satan hated it that Jesus was so good all the time. He decided to tempt Jesus and try to make him do bad things. Satan came to Jesus and tempted him in three ways.

Temptation 1: Satan knew Jesus was really hungry so he tempted Jesus to use his powers in a selfish way all for himself. Satan said, “If you are really the Son of God then use your special powers to turn these stones into bread.”

Jesus was hungry but he knew that God wanted him to only use his special powers to help people. His power was not just for feeding himself! Jesus wanted to do the right thing. He knew the best way to answer Satan was to use God’s words. Jesus had memorised a lot of scriptures so he knew exactly which scripture to say to Satan. He said this verse from the Bible, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Temptation 2: Next, Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem to the temple. Both Jesus and Satan knew that the temple was a special place to God.

They stood at the highest point of the temple. Satan wanted to get Jesus to doubt God’s power. He told Jesus that he should give God a test to see if his power worked. Satan told Jesus to jump off the temple and see if God’s angels would catch him.

But Jesus did not need to give God a test. Jesus already knew that God’s power was stronger than anything in the world. Jesus told Satan another Scripture from God’s word. “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Temptation 3: You would think that Satan would have learned his lesson but he REALLY wanted Jesus to mess up. Maybe Satan thought, “If only I can get Jesus to do things MY way then I will be more important to him than God is.”

So Satan had one more thing he could do to tempt Jesus. Maybe this time he could get Jesus to sin. Satan took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. They could see the whole world from the top of the mountain.

So Satan said, “You say you love all the people of the world. You say you want them to go to heaven. How about a deal? I will help all the people of the world go to heaven if you will just do one simple thing. All you have to do is to bow down and worship me instead of God.”

Do you think Jesus gave in to this temptation? No! Jesus had had enough. He told Satan to go away. Of course he

would never worship Satan! Jesus loved God. He would only worship God. Jesus quoted from the Old Testament one more time, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."

Then Satan left Jesus. Angels came and helped take care of Jesus after that.

Do you think Satan gave up trying to tempt Jesus? No, he did not give up. Over the next 3 years Satan tried again and again to tempt Jesus but Jesus never did wrong. God understands that temptation is very difficult. It was even hard for Jesus.

Sometimes we are tempted to do the wrong thing too. God understands Satan's sneaky tricks and he can help us say "no" to temptation. We need to remember God's true words just like Jesus did.

### **Other Bible Verses About Temptation:**

- [James 1:13-15](#)
- [James 4:7](#)
- [Luke 22:39-40](#)
- [1 Timothy 6:9](#)
- [1 Peter 4:12](#)
- [1 John 4:4](#)

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## Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion. [Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here to download the pictures to print.](#)

Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasize in this lesson.

## Review Questions:

1. What does it mean to be tempted? The devil tries to get you to do bad things.
2. Where was Jesus when He was tempted? Wilderness
3. What did Jesus do every time Satan tried to get him to do wrong? He quoted a scripture from the Word of God.

## Song Suggestions:

- [If You Love Jesus Song](#)
- [1-2-3 The Devil's After Me Song](#)
- [Shake the Devil Off Song](#)
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- ["I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy"](#)
- Use the church songbook to find and sing songs about temptation.

- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

## Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

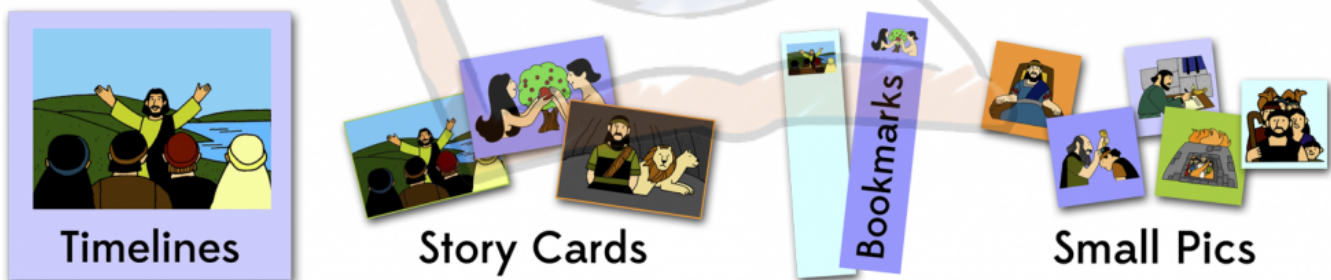
*Activities:*

- Practice saying this term's memory verses. Think of situations where these scriptures could help us fight temptation. Example: [Luke 1:37](#) when you think it would be impossible to tell the truth.
- Make an acrostic (each letter of the word is the first letter of another word) using the letters in the word TEMPTATION. Write the letters on the chalkboard and let your students discuss answers. All of the words can be things that are tempting to your students. Examples: T=television, E=evil words, M=money, etc.
- Play the "Temptation Game". Before class you should write statements of faith on cards. Examples might be "We will not lie" or "We will not kill". Divide the class into two groups. One team draws a card and reads the statement of faith on the card out loud. The other team tries to think of things that might tempt the other team to do what they said they would or would not do. The first team thinks of ways they would fight the temptation. Finish the game by reading [1 Corinthians 10:13](#).
- Use a bible dictionary or commentary to find a drawing of Herod's temple (the temple during Jesus' day). Find out which part would be the highest point ([Matthew 4:5](#)).
- Read [Hebrews 4:15-16](#). Discuss the difference between temptation and sin. Jesus was tempted but he did not sin. Show older students how to use a concordance to find verses about "temptation".

*Crafts:*

- Write "Jesus helps me to be good" on pieces of paper. Younger children can paint this and decorate it with happy faces and hearts.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Jesus Tempted in Wilderness" printables to print on A4 size paper](#)

[Click here for "Jesus Tempted in Wilderness" printables to print on Letter size \(USA\)](#)

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## Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and worksheets about the temptation of Jesus \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Youtube 2.24 minute video clip of the story from youtube](#)
- [A video of children explaining what to do when you are tempted \(PursueGOD Kids\)](#)
- [Great object lesson using a doorknob. is wanting to open the door. Giving in to the temptation is choosing](#)

[to place our hand on the knob and then turning it \(Children's Ministry Deals\).](#)

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