



TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Preschool-K • #NT6 • January 4, 2026

Concept

Jesus was tempted as we are, but never sinned.

Goal

Children will learn that Jesus was tempted to sin, just as they are, but He never sinned. Because everyone sins and needs forgiveness, Jesus died on the cross to pay for all sin. They can say “no” to sin by accepting His forgiveness and learning God’s Word.

Passage

Luke 4:1-13, Hebrews 4:15

Key Verse: “... Jesus was tempted just as we are, but He never sinned.”

Hebrews 4:15

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candy or treats preschoolers love, 1/child• 2 white bed sheets• 2 rocks• 4 dry, broken sticks from the woods• "Jewels"• Toy catalogues <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Praise Bible, Mack Thomas	<p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “God gives me what I need”, 1/child• Crayons, markers• Glue sticks

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the shaded areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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The story of Jesus' temptation in the desert is told in Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13. More than any other story, it clearly defines the humanity of Christ. He was hungry. He was thirsty. And at this time of sorest need, He was tempted to turn away from dependence on God and fulfill His needs Himself.

After 40 days of fasting in the desert, a physically weakened Jesus was tempted by Satan in an attempt to disqualify Him as the Messiah. "There is a parallel with the temptations of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3), described as 'the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life' (1 Jn. 2:16), which suggests that the temptations were typical of those which mankind as a whole has to face."² "The significance of Jesus' temptations, especially because they occurred at the outset of his public ministry, seems best understood in terms of the kind of Messiah he was to be. He would not accomplish his mission by using his supernatural power for his own needs (stones into bread), by using his power to win a large following by miracles or magic (jump off pinnacle) or by compromising with Satan (give kingdoms of the world). Jesus had no inward desire or inclination to sin, for these in themselves are sin (Mt. 5:22, 28)...Yet Jesus' temptation was real, not merely symbolic... He was confronted by the tempter with a real opportunity to sin."³ Jesus chose not to exercise His godly power and privileges, but consciously limited Himself to live here as a man. He was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin (Heb. 2:18; 4:15). He used God's Word to refute Satan's scripture-twisting lies with the truth.

Jesus was subject to all the hungers, drives and needs we experience and which seek to pull us into sin, but Jesus met every one of Satan's temptations with God's Word. Rejecting the privilege that was His by virtue of His deity, Jesus cast His lot fully with man. Because of this tremendous act of self-emptying, every human being can find hope. Jesus overcame temptation—as a human being! Because Jesus met temptation as a man, you and I can find victory too, by meeting our temptations as He met His!

² The New Bible Commentary: Revised, WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO., 1970, p. 821.

³ NIV Study Bible, notes on Matt. 4:1-11, p. 1446.

⁴ Richards, Lawrence O., The Teacher's Commentary, Victor Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1987, p. 535.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

- The week before class – Read through the lesson and pray that the Spirit will give you His burden for the lesson.

Activity Stations:

- **Temptation**
 - **Instructions:** Before the children arrive, place the delicious candies or treats all over one table. Have one teacher stand near the table to guard the treats. As the children arrive in the room, tell them that they can look at the treats, but they cannot touch them. The teacher talks with the children about how delicious the candy is. Wouldn't they just love to eat some? Would they make a bad choice in order to get some?
- **"Desert/Wilderness"**
 - **Instructions:** Spread the sheet out with the rocks and sticks laying on it as in a desert. As the children explore, talk with them about the characteristics of a desert. It is very hot in the day and very cold at night. There is no water – it is very dry. The ground is made of sand. People get very thirsty and plants will not grow. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert or wilderness. Forty days is a long, long time. During those 40 days the devil tried to get Jesus to listen to him and make bad choices. We will learn in our lesson what choices Jesus made.
- **"Kingdom/World"**
 - **Instructions:** Place this station across the room from the "Desert/Wilderness" station. Spread the sheet out with "jewels" and toy catalogues. Look through the catalogues and have the children look for toys they would like to have. Talk about the fancy "jewels." Ask them what they think about people who have a lot of toys and jewels. Most people think that those people are really lucky and are special. Jesus was offered all the riches of the world if He would follow the devil instead of God. We will learn in our lesson what choice Jesus made.

Introduction Lg. Group

Instructions: Have the children gather around the table where the teacher will eat a piece of the delicious candy.

Ooooh! This candy is soooooooo good!!!! (Further describe how it tastes, feels in your mouth, etc.) Wouldn't you just love to have this candy? It is so good! Wouldn't you just love to have a bite? What if I said that I would give you a piece, but first you have to make a bad choice? What if I said, "<<child's name>>, I will give you some candy if you will go over to <<child's name>> and hit him/her on the head"? (Allow the children to respond.) Would it be okay to do a bad thing to get a special treat? NO!

Introduction Continued

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group

Today we are going to learn about the time the devil told Jesus he would give Him special things if Jesus would make bad choices. The devil tempted Jesus to make bad choices. Okay, you may each take one treat.

Everyone, gather around, we are going on a hike into the wilderness.

Drama – "Reenactment" of the Temptation in the Wilderness

Instructions: The teacher will first lead the children to the "Desert/Wilderness" station. Have the children sit down. After teaching about the first temptation, move the children to the "Kingdom/World" station. You don't want to spend any longer than 5 minutes at each.

The Bible says that Jesus was in the desert for 40 days. That is a very long time. Who can count to 40? (Count with them to 40.) Boy, is that a big number and a long time to be in the desert! Well, Jesus didn't eat any food or drink any water for those 40 days while He was in the desert. Do you think Jesus was hungry and thirsty? (YES.)

All of a sudden, as Jesus was probably thinking how hungry He was, the devil appeared. Who is the devil? He is God's enemy. He tries to get people to make bad choices called sin. The devil knew that Jesus was very hungry so he tempted Jesus to sin. He showed Jesus a rock (hold up a rock) and said, "If you are God's Son, then you can turn this into bread!" Do you know that Jesus could have done that? But even though He was VERY hungry he said, "No, devil! God gives me what I need!" Let's hear you say, "God gives me what I need!"

Who helped Jesus make a good choice? God! Jesus did not want to listen to the devil! Our Bible verse for today is, "... Jesus was tempted just as we are, but He never sinned" (Hebrews 4:15). Even though Jesus was very hungry and could have turned that rock into bread, He didn't do what the devil tempted him to do. Even though you were tempted to eat the candy when you saw it on the table, you listened and did not eat it.

Let's go over to the "Kingdom/World" station. The devil told Jesus, "If you follow me and pray to me, I will give you everything in the world!" Can you imagine what it would be like to have all the toys and money in the world? That is what the devil offered to Jesus. What do you think Jesus said? "No, devil! I love God. I will follow and pray only to God!" Did Jesus make a good choice or bad choice? Should He follow the devil? Who was with Jesus the whole time that He was in the wilderness? (God.) Our Bible verse is, "... Jesus was tempted just as we are, but He never sinned" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus never, ever made bad choices, even when He was very hungry and very thirsty and the devil tempted Him to sin.

Lesson Continued

Jesus knew that even though all those things looked so good, that only God would give Him what was really good for Him.

Jesus always said, “No, devil! God gives me what I need!” Let’s hear you say, “God gives me what I need!”

Jesus was hungry, thirsty and tired after all those days in the wilderness. It would have been nice to have some food and water and all the things that would make Him comfortable. “... Jesus was tempted just as we are, but He never sinned” (Hebrews 4:15). We are tempted to make bad choices so we can have things that we want. But is it okay to make bad choices to get them? Do you ever make bad choices? (Teacher should share an appropriate bad choice they wrestle with.) Who will always help us make good choices? The Holy Spirit helped Jesus in the wilderness. When we ask Jesus into our hearts the Holy Spirit is with us to help us. The Holy Spirit helps us make good choices.

“... Jesus was tempted just as we are, but He never sinned” (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus never sinned. He never made bad choices. The Bible (hold up Bible) says that we make bad choices all the time. Jesus died on the cross for all of OUR bad choices. If we tell God we’re sorry for our bad choices and ask Him to forgive us, He will do that. Then the Holy Spirit comes to live in us and will help us make good choices like Jesus did.

Let’s pray. Let’s also ask the Holy Spirit to help us make good choices and teach us to follow Him.

Transition

Let’s make a picture to hang in your room to remind you that the devil tempted Jesus to make bad choices. Remember, “... Jesus was tempted just as we are, but He never sinned” (Hebrews 4:15). What did Jesus always say? “God gives me what I need!” Let’s hear you say, “God gives me what I need!”

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Craft – God Gives Me What I Need!

Instructions: Give each child a printed page. Have the kids draw 5 things that God has given them that they needed. If they need help thinking of things, brainstorm with them and consider examples from your own life that you can share with the kids. As the children work, talk about the choices Jesus made to depend on the Father for everything.

Transition

If you would like to read this story from the Bible, come sit with me.

Learning Activity#2 Sm. Groups

"Jesus is Tempted"

Instructions: Read the story on pp. 266-275 of The Praise Bible for a review of the lesson. Talk with the children about what it means to be tempted.

- Have you ever been tempted?
- It's hard to not do the wrong thing, like taking cookies from the cookie jar or bugging your brother or sister. None of us are perfect and we all make wrong choices. Why do you think it's so easy for us to make the wrong choice?
- Who can help us to not be tempted?

Let's pray and thank Jesus that even though He was tempted just as we are, He never made bad choices.

Temptation Zone
Puppet Skit for Lesson #NT6

Cast: Zack, Squeaker

Props: Coat for Zach, Cookie Jar, Plunger (taped like a candy cane)

Squeaker: (talking to the audience) Good Morning (evening). Is everybody having a good time? I am so glad to see you today. Does anyone like playing in the snow? I do. In fact today's story is about a boy named Zack who also likes to play in the snow but who isn't supposed to. Do you know what it's like to want to do something you know you are NOT supposed to do? Yep, I bet you do. It's called temptation. Well, let me tell this story. Let's pretend it's Saturday morning. It's a morning not unlike any other Saturday morning except this morning we are in the Temptation Zone.

(enter Zach)

Squeaker: (pointing to Zach) Meet Zach.

Zach: (waving to the audience) Hello.

Squeaker: Saturday mornings are a lot of fun for Zach – so much to do, so little time to do it. Lots of things that can tempt Zach to do the wrong thing. Let's watch Zach and see what happens.

Zach: (walking around) I like walking and playing in the snow. Snow is cool. (to audience) Do you like playing in the snow? Hey, here's an ice patch. I don't know about you but I just love to break ice patches. I like the sound of crunching ice. I just want to jump on it so it will break, but Mom says I shouldn't because I might slip and get hurt or wet. So I'll just walk around it and not step on it. (slowly circling the ice) Not stepping, not stepping. Okay, maybe one step on the ice but not jumping, stepping not jumping. (Jump hard and slip and fall) OWW!!! (staggering to get up, holding back) Oh man, that hurts. The ice wasn't all frozen and now I'm hurt and wet. What's Mom going to say now?

(Zach exits)

Squeaker: (to audience) What do you think? What was Zach tempted to do that he wasn't supposed to do? Did Zach resist the temptation? No, and now he has to face the consequences with his Mom. Let's look at Zach later that evening.

(enter Zach)

Zach: It's almost dinner time. We're having my favorite tonight — Sloppy Joes and French Fries. I can't wait. I... (sees cookie jar) OH BOY!! COOKIES!! I'll just have one before dinner. (reaches toward jar and pulls back) But I'm not supposed to have any cookies before dinner. But it's only one. (reaches toward jar and pulls back) What would Mom and Dad say? (thinking) Eating cookies before dinner will fill me up so I won't have room for dinner. So if I eat some cookies now I won't have room for my Sloppy Joes and French Fries. But cookies are so good. (reaches toward jar and pulls back). No!! won't eat any now and maybe I can have one for dessert. (runs off) Mom!!

Squeaker: (to audience) What do you think? What was Zach tempted to do that he wasn't supposed to do? Did Zach resist the temptation? Are any of you tempted to do things you aren't supposed to do? It seems every day is the Temptation Zone. Sometimes it isn't easy to resist those temptations. God helps us each time though so we can do the right thing. I... (smells) I... (smells) Boy! Those Sloppy Joes smell good. I'm going to see if I can have one. See you later.

(Immediately enter the "candy cane" with a sound)

Squeaker: Whoa! Look at that candy cane.

Voice: (in a gold voice) DO NO TOUCH THE CANDY CANE!

Squeaker: Do not touch the candy cane?!? I'm not going to touch it. I'm just going to stand over here and look at it. And it sure looks tasty...

(moves closer and sniff)

and it sure smells tasty. I'd better test it to be sure...

(take a quick lick)

Yep. It's very tasty.

Voice: (in a bold voice) DO NOT TOUCH THE CANDY CANE!

Squeaker: I didn't touch it. I only licked it a little.

(Raise the candy cane to reveal the plunger. Plunger Squeaker.)