

Bible Story

Jesus' Temptation • Matthew 4 (Mark 1; Luke 4)

Memory Verse:

“He must become greater; I must become less.” **John 3:30**

Big Picture:

Why did Jesus become human?

Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

FOR PARENTS ONLY: 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.)

Opening Activity - Say What?

Before you begin, print the idioms pages and cut apart or write the idioms below on separate index cards.

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

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

Ask: 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.

Bible Lesson: Jesus' Temptation • Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^[b]"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^[c]"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[d]"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'^[e]" **11** Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Discuss:

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, 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

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.

Questions from Kids, Bible Story Video

Show the **Questions from Kids** video (link on email) to the kids. You will also show the **Bible Story 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.

Missions Moment

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. 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.

Prayer

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.

CRAFT: Memory Verse Collage

What You Need: paper – can be any kind, magazines, scissors, colored pieces of paper or other mediums, glue (stick if able), pencil and paper or other medium to write the memory verse for kids to copy

“He must become greater; I must become less.” **John 3:30**

What You Do:

Write the memory verse and then show it to the kids. Show them the sample picture of the craft. Hand out a piece of paper (or cardstock) for the “base” and the other supplies. Let them cut various sized colored pieces of paper or other mediums of whatever medium you have chosen (can be tissue paper, material, etc.) and have them glue to the “base” for the craft. Remind them not to overdo the glue or they will be delayed in completing their craft. Set aside to dry while they do the next step.

Kids cut out letters or words from the magazines that are needed to make the words in the memory verse.

Next, have them arrange their letters into the words of the memory verse and place where they want to glue them on their “base”. Encourage them to set up the entire memory verse before they begin to glue the letters to get it just like they want it. Don't forget the quotation marks!

Here is a sample of a memory verse done this way. It is NOT our memory verse for today but it gives you an idea of the basic layout. Have fun!



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