



It's Tempting!

(based on Luke 4:1-13)

One day, John was baptizing many people in the river. Jesus came to John. Jesus asked John to baptize him too. And John did.

After Jesus was baptized, he heard God's voice speak to him: "You are my beloved Son. You make me very happy."

From the river, God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. The wilderness was a hard place. Not many people lived there.

It was very hot in the wilderness. It was very dry. Jesus stayed there for forty days and forty nights. It was a special time of learning and testing for him.

While he was in the wilderness, Jesus did not eat anything. At the end of the forty days, he was very hungry. Suddenly, a voice spoke into the quietness. It was Satan's voice.

"If you are God's Son," asked Satan, "why don't you turn some of these stones into bread? If you can make bread, the people will follow you."

Jesus remembered what God's Word said: "Bread is very important, but people need more than bread. People need God." Jesus knew what to say.

"No!" he said. "I will not turn the stones into bread."

Next, Satan's voice led Jesus to a very high place. Jesus looked out and saw all the cities of the world.

"Look at that!" exclaimed Satan. "You can have the whole world. All this will be yours. All you have to do is worship me instead of God."

Jesus remembered what God's Word said: "You must worship only God. Don't serve anyone else." Jesus knew what to say.

"No!" said Jesus. "I will never worship you. I will worship and serve only God."

Then Satan's voice took Jesus to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the temple.

"Jump off," suggested Satan. "If you are God's Son, God will send angels to catch you. You won't get hurt. When the people see the angels save you, they will be amazed. Then they will follow you."

Jesus remembered what God's Word said: "Don't put God to the test." Jesus knew what to say.

"No!" replied Jesus. "I will not jump. I will not test God."

"Fine!" exclaimed the voice. "Have it your way. I'm leaving!" Then suddenly it was quiet. Jesus found himself back in the wilderness.

It was time for Jesus to go into the world. He had been tested. God's Spirit went with him to Galilee. Now he was ready to teach everyone about living in God's ways.



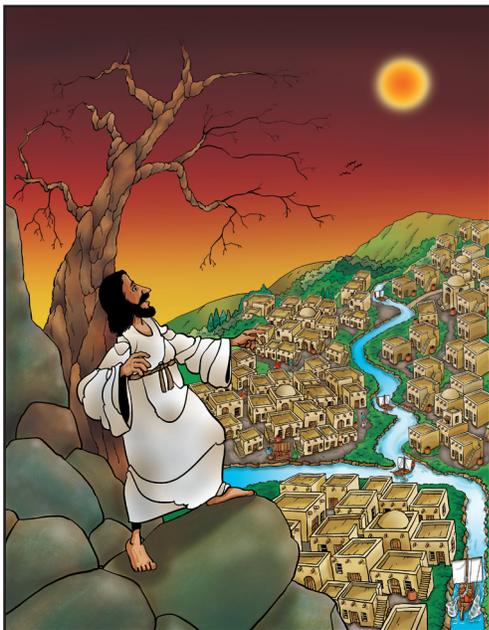
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your child—imagine and wonder.
- Imagine the wilderness in the story. Ask: What makes it a wilderness? Have you been in a wilderness like that one or a different kind of wilderness? What made it a wilderness to you?
- Put bread, a paper crown, and a tall chair in the middle of a room. Invite people to stand by the symbol that they think was Jesus' hardest test. Encourage everyone to name the test that would be hardest for him or her.
- Jesus used God's teachings to help him. Help everyone pick a Bible verse as a reminder to trust God, such as Psalm 37:40a, Psalm 46:1, Romans 8:26a, Hebrews 2:18, and Hebrews 13:6. Invite people to write or draw their verses on slips of paper and to put them somewhere they will be seen often.



Responding to God's Grace

- Put wrapped pieces of candy in a bowl on a table with a sign that says, "This treat is for later." Do not define when later will be. Let the candy sit there all week. Each day, invite people to share how it feels to leave the treat alone. Name something that is easier or harder to leave alone. At the end of the week, share the treat.
- Jesus spent 40 days alone praying, fasting, and talking to God. Try spending 4 minutes alone praying each day. Try giving up (fasting from) four treats this week.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- At the end of each day, invite people to celebrate making good choices by completing these sentences: "I felt tested when . . ." and "God helped me by . . ." Shout, "Thank you, God!" and clap loudly after each person tells about making a good choice.
- Pray the following prayer each day this week:

Dear God, be with me when I am tested. Help me make good choices. Amen.