

*Deut. 26:1–11*  
*Ps. 91:1–2, 9–16*  
*Rom. 10:8b–13*  
**Luke 4:1–13**

# Jesus Is Tempted

## Goal for the Session

*Third- and fourth-graders will identify the ways Jesus responded to temptation and reflect on ways to face their own temptations.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Luke 4:1–13

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Sharon H. Ringe

Jesus’ time in the wilderness is a time of “testing” (*peirasmos*). These are not “temptations” to do things that are desirable but not good for him (like our “temptation” to eat an extra piece of cake). Rather, these are tests to see whether even good things can lure Jesus from a focus on God’s will—or can lure believers into following a more comfortable messiah. In two of the three the devil’s hook to catch Jesus is the challenge “if you are the Son of God . . .” Does Jesus really believe what he has heard? Will God make good on the implied commitment? Let’s find out before you go charging off into dangerous places.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Lori Brandt Hale

The story is more about the responses Jesus gives to the temptations than to the temptations themselves. Jesus’ responses underscore his faithfulness to God, setting the stage for the whole of his ministry and, ultimately, his sacrifice. His responses come with the full knowledge that obedience to God will bring persecution, misunderstanding, and the cross. To say yes to the world would have required Jesus to say no to God, to the way of God, and to an idea of God’s kingdom that those followers simply did not understand. It would have required him to say no to the freedom and love for humanity that are the marks of his death and resurrection.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Jeffery L. Tribble Sr.

By taking on “intentionality” and “receptivity to God’s grace” during Lent, new converts and members gain the spiritual depth to be faithful to “the mystery of God-with-us” even in our unexpected trials and temptations. Jesus did not ask for trials and temptations; he accepted that they could not be avoided if he would do God’s will. Jesus’ season of testing was not for a day or two; his season of forty days of temptation suggests to us that we may have faithfully to endure seasons of long and protracted difficulty. Jesus did not have just one encounter of diabolical testing; he overcame multiple temptations. His temptations were real and riveting.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Kimberly M. van Driel

The text tells a story about how evil works on the basis of distortions and lies. The devil presents wants as needs, falsehoods as truths, distrust as faith. The devil’s second pitch is false, as revealed by the demand for false worship. At stake is who will be trusted and worshiped. We ask: Where else do we hear lies that sound truthful? From politicians or the media, or the pulpit? How might clinging to God’s word unveil such lies as lies? Also, of the first and third temptations, we could ask: Where else do we see wants presented as needs? Where are we tempted to think of faith as something God must earn?

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Luke 4:1–13**

## Focus on Your Teaching

The chance to copy a friend’s homework; a plate of cookies on the counter when Mom said, “No snacks”; the desire to tell a lie to avoid getting in trouble; the urge to send a mean text message. Children know what it is to be tempted! They are beginning to appreciate the consequences that can come from making a bad choice and giving in to temptation. Reading of Jesus’ temptations may offer reassurance that being tempted is a part of life and may help children begin to seek strategies to resist temptations when faced with them.

*God, it’s difficult to talk about temptation because sometimes I am weak.  
Lead me not into temptation, and deliver me from evil. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- purple cloth
- Christ candle
- matches or lighter
- newsprint
- marker
- Color Pack 1, 2, 35
- sweet treats
- Bible
- copies of Resource Sheet 1
- pencils
- Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)

For Responding

- option 1: Color Pack 3, 4; coins or buttons; one die
- option 2: newsprint or markerboard, markers
- option 3: Resource Sheet 2, scissors

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, copy the Lenten response in Gathering on newsprint. Being mindful of allergies, bring sweet treats that would be tempting to the children, such as cookies or donuts. Option: Bring copies of the words to the Lord’s Prayer that your church uses in worship. If you are using option 1 in Responding, tape together Color Pack 3 and 4 to create the game board. If you are using option 3 in Responding, cut apart the skit starters on Resource Sheet 2 (Temptation!), making additional copies if necessary so there is one skit starter for each pair of learners.

Greet the children by name as they arrive. Invite them to help you arrange a purple cloth in the middle of your learning space and place the Christ candle on it. Ask a volunteer to locate the beginning of Lent on Color Pack 1. Explain that the church year season of Lent includes the forty days before Easter, not including Sundays. It is the season when Christians learn more about Jesus’ life and reflect on their relationship with God. Light the candle as a reminder of Jesus’ presence with the group. Show the newsprint with the Lenten response and read it in unison.

*God is good!  
God is love!  
God is with us today!  
Easter is coming! Amen.*

Extinguish the candle. Save the newsprint to use next week.

Place the sweet treats in the middle of the group without offering them to anyone. Ask learners to offer definitions of the word *temptation*. Welcome a variety of meanings. Affirm that temptation is feeling a strong urge to have something or do something, especially something that we know we shouldn’t do or shouldn’t have. Ask if it is tempting to take one of the treats in front of them. Why or why not?

Invite each learner to take a treat. Offer a prayer of thanks for food before eating. As you enjoy the treat, say that today's Bible story is about being tempted.

## EXPLORING

Open your Bible to Luke 4 and say this is where today's Bible story is found. Ask the group to recite the names of the four Gospels: Matthew (*clap*), Mark (*stomp*), Luke (*clap*), John (*stomp*). Review that the word *gospel* means "good news" and that all four Gospels tell about Jesus' life and teachings.

Some learners may be frightened by the devil in this text. Explain that in Jesus' day, people understood the devil to be the leader of evil powers that work against God's will and God's people. Assure them that God is more powerful than anyone or anything.

Set the stage for today's story by telling how it takes place right after Jesus was baptized and just as he was beginning to go out to teach about God's love and God's ways. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Jesus Is Tempted) and explain that this sheet arranges the actual Bible verses into a script for a play. Ask for volunteers to read the various parts. If more learners want to take part, repeat the play with different actors. After the play, discuss:

- ✿ What kinds of things do you imagine Jesus thought about and prayed about while he was in the wilderness?

Show Color Pack 2 and invite learners to identify each of Jesus' temptations. Distribute pencils and ask them to circle each of Jesus' temptations on the resource sheet (vv. 3, 6–7, 9–11). Invite questions about these temptations.

Next, have learners underline what Jesus said to the devil (vv. 4, 8, 12) following each temptation. Explain that Jesus had grown up reading the Scriptures, and that each of his answers is based on words from the Old Testament part of our Bible. Discuss:

- ✿ How did it help Jesus to know God's word in the Bible?
- ✿ Why do you think the devil gave up on tempting Jesus? Do you think the devil tried again? Why or why not? (See v. 13.)
- ✿ What is most tempting to children your age? What do you know from the Bible or Sunday school that could help you when you are tempted by these things? How might you help one another resist temptation?

Assure learners that Jesus came to promise us that when we give in to temptation, we can ask for forgiveness. God is always ready to forgive us and give us another chance.

**EASY  
PREP**

## RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

- 1. Tempted! Game** Learners will identify strategies for resisting temptation as they play a game. Place the game board made from Color Pack 3 and 4 on a table or the floor. Form pairs. Give each pair a button or coin to use as a game marker. Have all pairs place their markers at the start space. Explain that each pair will have a turn to roll the die and move that number of spaces. If a pair lands on a "Temptation" space, the partners are to name two ways to resist that temptation or else move back to the space where they were. Play until all pairs reach the finish space. Invite learners to identify ideas they heard that will help them to resist temptation.

Some strategies for resisting temptation: pray for strength, take a deep breath and count to ten before doing anything, walk away or look away from the temptation, sing a Sunday school song in your head, ask a friend to help you say no, ask an adult for help, learn some Bible verses by heart, do something positive like exercising.

**2. Pray for Strength** Learners will work together to write a prayer for help in resisting temptation. Gather with learners and ask them to think of ways to finish the following statements. Record their responses on newsprint or markerboard:

1. Children my age are tempted to . . .
2. Things that will help us resist temptation are . . .
3. It would be great if we could be more like Jesus by being . . .

Pray the following prayer, inviting learners to choose two or three words or phrases to complete each line of the prayer, choosing from their answers to the questions above.

God, sometimes we are tempted to . . .  
 Give us strength to resist temptation, to . . .  
 Help us to be more like Jesus. Help us to . . .  
 Hear our prayers, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**3. Temptation Skits** Learners will act out their ideas for resisting temptation. Review the ways Jesus resisted the devil's temptations and brainstorm things that Christians today might do to resist temptation. Form pairs and give each pair one of the skit starters cut from Resource Sheet 2 (Temptation!). Instruct pairs to read the skit starter and then plan a way to act out the situation to show what the temptation might be in this situation and a way to resist that temptation. After a few minutes, have pairs perform their skits for the entire group. Applaud each effort. As time allows, have pairs switch stories and perform a second skit. Invite learners to tell which of the strategies for resisting temptation they are most likely to try.

## CLOSING

Gather around the Christ candle and light it. Show Color Pack 35 and sing "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" (*Singing the Feast*). Invite learners to tell what they will remember from today's story about Jesus.

Close with a circle blessing. To the child next to you, say "(Name), God bless you as you walk with Jesus during Lent." Have learners repeat this blessing around the circle.

Pray together the Lord's Prayer, using the words your church uses in worship. Option: Distribute copies of the Lord's Prayer for learners to use.

Tell learners that you will pray for them during the week and ask them to pray for you.

### Tell Me the Stories of Jesus

Tell me the stories of Jesus I  
 love to hear;  
 Things I would ask Him to  
 tell me if He were here;  
 Scenes by the wayside, tales  
 of the sea,  
 Stories of Jesus, tell them  
 to me.  
 First let me hear how the  
 children stood round His  
 knee,  
 And I shall fancy His  
 blessing resting on me;  
 Words full of kindness,  
 deeds full of grace,  
 All in the love light of Jesus'  
 face.

**Jesus Is Tempted**  
 Luke 4:1–13, CEB

**Narrator:** <sup>1</sup>Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. <sup>2</sup>There he was tempted for forty days by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and afterward Jesus was starving. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him,

**Devil:** Since you are God’s Son, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.

**Narrator:** <sup>4</sup>Jesus replied,

**Jesus:** “It is written, *People won’t live only by bread.*”

**Narrator:** <sup>5</sup>Next the devil led him to a high place and showed him in a single instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup>The devil said,

**Devil:** “I will give you this whole domain and the glory of all these kingdoms. It’s been entrusted to me and I can give it to anyone I want. <sup>7</sup>Therefore, if you will worship me, it will all be yours.”

**Narrator:** <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered,

**Jesus:** “It is written, *You will worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.*”

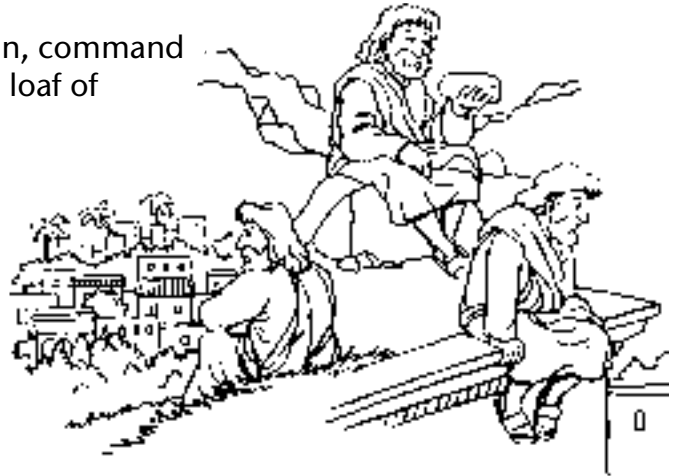
**Narrator:** <sup>9</sup>The devil brought him into Jerusalem and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him,

**Devil:** “Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down from here; <sup>10</sup>for it’s written: *He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you* <sup>11</sup>*and they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.*”

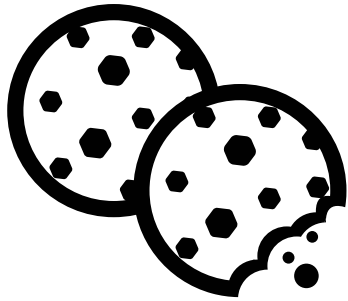
**Narrator:** <sup>12</sup>Jesus answered,

**Jesus:** “It’s been said, *“Don’t test the Lord your God.”*”

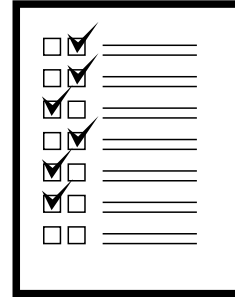
**Narrator:** <sup>13</sup>After finishing every temptation, the devil departed from him until the next opportunity.



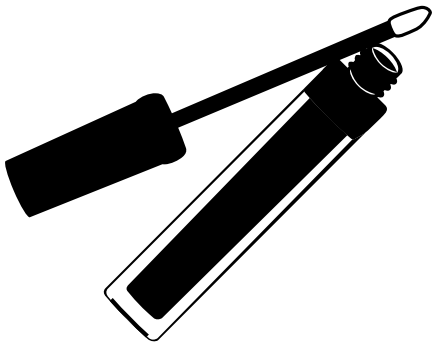
## Temptation!



1. John is really hungry, but Dad says absolutely no snacks before dinner. When John walks into the kitchen, he sees a bag of cookies on the counter.



2. Tori played video games when she should have been studying for the spelling test. Robby, who always knows how to spell the words, is sitting at the desk next to Tori.



3. Mallory is at the store with her friend. They are looking at new flavors of lip gloss. Mallory really wants the kiwi-flavored gloss, but she doesn't have enough money.



4. Rex is so mad at Ethan! At the soccer game last night, Ethan kept hogging the ball instead of passing it to Rex. And their team lost. At noon, Rex sees Ethan across the playground.