Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Is Tempted

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God's Word helps us say no to temptation. Jesus answered every temptation with Scripture, so we need God's Word ready in our hearts.
Bible passage: Matthew 4:1–11. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." *Psalm 119:11 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), index cards, a marker, paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write each word of the memory verse and the reference on its own index card (14 cards). Make two sets.

1. Opening game: Ready Answer (5–10 minutes)

Show this sentence on the board for 15 seconds, then cover it: *"Man shall not live by bread alone"* (Matthew 4:4). Kids write it from memory. Show a longer one for 15 seconds: *"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* (Matthew 4:10). Kids write it again. Check together. Ask: *Which was easier to remember? What if you needed those words fast and had no time to look them up?* Say: "Today Jesus is tempted three times, and three times He answers with words from God's Word."

2. Bible story: It Is Written (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 4. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Into the wilderness. Right after Jesus was baptized, God's voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). **Look up Matthew 4:1.** The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, a dry, empty place, to be tempted of the devil. To be **tempted** means to be pulled toward doing wrong. Jesus **fasted**, which means He went without food, for forty days and forty nights. Afterward He was **an hungred**, an old way to say hungry (4:2).

Temptation 1: bread. Look up Matthew 4:3. The tempter said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." **Look up Matthew 4:4.** Jesus said, "It is written," and answered with words from Deuteronomy 8:3. God's Word is more important than bread. **Proceedeth out of the mouth of God** means comes from God.

Temptation 2: the temple. The devil took Jesus to the holy city, Jerusalem (Luke 4:9), and set Him on a **pinnacle**, a high point on the top of the temple (Matthew 4:5). **Look up Matthew 4:6.** The devil said, "cast thyself down," and he even said "it is written," using words from Psalm 91:11–12. But he used God's Word the wrong way, to get Jesus to test God. **Look up Matthew 4:7.** Jesus answered, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (from Deuteronomy 6:16). To **tempt God** here means to put God to the test, to try to make Him prove Himself.

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Temptation 3: the kingdoms. The devil took Jesus up into an exceeding high mountain, which means a very high mountain. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, which means all their greatness and riches (4:8). **Look up Matthew 4:9.** He said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." **Look up Matthew 4:10.** Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan," which means "Go away, Satan." "For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (compare Deuteronomy 6:13).

The devil leaves. Look up Matthew 4:11. The devil left Him, and angels came and **ministered** unto Him, which means they served Him and cared for Him. Jesus was tempted three times and never sinned once. **Look up Hebrews 4:15.** Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Being tempted is not a sin. Giving in is. Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted, and He shows us how to say no.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus was very hungry when the devil talked about bread (4:2–3). Why do temptations often come when we are tired, hungry or upset?
2. Jesus answered with Scripture all three times. Why didn't He just argue with the devil in His own words?
3. The devil quoted the Bible too (4:6). Why do we need to know what God's Word really means, and not just a few words of it?
4. Hebrews 4:15 says being tempted is not a sin. What is the difference between being tempted and sinning?
5. What is one temptation kids your age face? Which Bible verse could help?

Recall questions

1. How long did Jesus fast? *(Forty days and forty nights, Matthew 4:2)*
2. Where did the devil set Jesus in the second temptation? *(On a pinnacle of the temple, 4:5)*
3. What did Jesus say before every answer? *("It is written," 4:4, 4:7, 4:10)*

4. Memory verse: Verse Scramble (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **thy word** means Your Word, God's Word; **hid in mine heart** means learned it and kept it inside me, so it is there when I need it; **against thee** means against You, God. Read the verse together three times. Then split the class into two teams and give each team a mixed-up set of word cards. The first team to lay the verse out in the right order, with the reference, and read it out loud wins. Play twice.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus was tempted in every way like us, but He never sinned. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: learn Psalm 119:11 by heart, and pick one more verse to hide in your heart. When you are tempted, say it, and walk away from the wrong thing.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point. For early finishers: the **temptation of Jesus crossword** (vbshq.com/puzzles/temptation-of-jesus-crossword) or **worksheet** (vbshq.com/worksheets/temptation-of-jesus-worksheet).

1. Matthew 4:1: Who led Jesus into the wilderness? *(The Spirit)*
2. Matthew 4:2: How long did Jesus fast? *(Forty days and forty nights)*
3. Matthew 4:3: What did the tempter want the stones to become? *(Bread)*
4. Matthew 4:8: What did the devil show Jesus from the mountain? *(All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them)*
5. Matthew 4:11: Who came and ministered unto Jesus? *(Angels)*
6. Deuteronomy 8:3: Man doth not live by bread only, but by what? *(Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD)*
7. Hebrews 4:15: Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are, yet what? *(Without sin)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Help us hide it in our hearts, so that when we are tempted we remember it and say no, like Jesus did. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child is afraid of the devil: answer simply and calmly. Jesus is far stronger than the devil, who had to leave when Jesus told him to go (Matthew 4:10–11). "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, KJV). Keep the focus on Jesus and God's Word.

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