Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Is Tempted

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus was tempted in every way we are, yet without sin, and He beat temptation with "It is written." God's Word hidden in our hearts helps us say no too.
Bible passage: Matthew 4:1–11. Students read it out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." *Psalm 119:11 (KJV)* and "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." *Hebrews 4:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Matthew 4:1–11, Deuteronomy 8:2–3, Deuteronomy 6:13–16 and Hebrews 4:15. Write both memory verses on the board.

1. Opening game: Shortcut or God's Way? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "shortcut" and the other "God's way." Read each choice. Students walk to the side it belongs on. 1) Copy a friend's homework so you can play sooner. 2) Do your chores before you ask for screen time. 3) Tell a small lie so you don't get in trouble. 4) Wait to buy something until you have saved the money. 5) Say something mean online because everyone else is. Ask: *Why are shortcuts so tempting? What do they promise, and what do they cost?* Say: "The devil offered Jesus three shortcuts. Let's see how He answered."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Matthew 4:1–11. Students take turns, two or three verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **led up of the Spirit** (4:1): led by God's Spirit; **wilderness**: a dry, empty land with no towns
- **tempted** (4:1): pulled toward doing wrong; the **tempter** (4:3) is the devil
- **fasted** (4:2): went without food; **an hungred**: hungry
- **proceedeth out of the mouth of God** (4:4): comes from God
- **pinnacle of the temple** (4:5): a high point on the top of the temple in Jerusalem (Luke 4:9)
- **give his angels charge concerning thee** (4:6): command His angels to protect you
- **tempt the Lord thy God** (4:7): put God to the test, try to make Him prove Himself
- **Get thee hence** (4:10): go away; **ministered** (4:11): served and cared for

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Talk through what happened: Jesus had just been baptized, and a voice from heaven had said, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). Twice the devil began with "If thou be the Son of God" (4:3, 4:6), trying to get Jesus to prove it his way. In the second temptation the devil quoted Scripture himself, Psalm 91:11–12 (Matthew 4:6), but he twisted it into a reason to test God. Jesus answered with the rest of God's Word: "It is written again" (4:7).

Where Jesus' answers come from: all three answers are words from the book of Deuteronomy. **Look up Deuteronomy 8:2–3.** God led Israel forty years in the wilderness and fed them manna, so they would learn "that man doth not live by bread only." Jesus quoted that after His own forty days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:4). Matthew 4:7 points to Deuteronomy 6:16, and Matthew 4:10 to Deuteronomy 6:13. Jesus knew the Scriptures and used them rightly.

Read out loud: Hebrews 4:15. Old words: a **high priest** stood between God and the people; **touched with the feeling of our infirmities** means He understands our weaknesses from the inside; **in all points** means in every way.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The first temptation came when Jesus was hungry after forty days (4:2–3). When are you most easily tempted (tired, hungry, bored, alone, angry)? What could you do ahead of time?
2. The devil said "If thou be the Son of God" twice (4:3, 4:6). How do temptations try to get you to "prove" yourself to others?
3. The devil quoted Psalm 91 to Jesus (4:6). How can someone use a Bible verse the wrong way? How do we guard against that?
4. Each temptation offered something: food, a show of power, the kingdoms of the world. What do temptations offer you? What do they leave out?
5. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was tempted in all points like us, yet without sin. How does it help to know Jesus understands temptation?
6. Psalm 119:11 says hiding God's Word in your heart helps you not sin. What would it take to have a verse ready for the temptations you face most?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Psalm 119:11: **thy word** means Your Word; **hid in mine heart** means stored deep inside, memorized and believed; **against thee** means against You, God. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Psalm 119:11 this week; keep working on Hebrews 4:15 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus was tempted in every way, yet without sin, so He is the only one who never needed to be saved from sin. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is one temptation I face often, and when does it usually come?
2. Which verse could I hide in my heart for that temptation? (Look one up, or use Psalm 119:11.)
3. Write a short prayer asking God to help you say no and to remember His Word when you need it.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence. Early finishers can do the **temptation of Jesus crossword** (vbshq.com/puzzles/temptation-of-jesus-crossword).

This week: memorize Psalm 119:11 and one verse for the temptation you wrote about. When it comes, say the verse and walk away.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus was tempted like us and never sinned. Help us hide Your Word in our hearts, use it rightly, and say no when we are tempted. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about the devil: answer honestly and calmly. Matthew calls him the devil, the tempter and Satan (4:1, 4:3, 4:10). He had to leave when Jesus told him to go (4:10–11), and "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, KJV). Keep the focus on Jesus, who won, and on God's Word.

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