

BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Lesson 2: Temptation

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness without food, and during that time the devil tempted him. Even though Jesus was hungry and tired, he resisted the temptation. Knowing this can help us understand the grace and mercy of God. This lesson will help your students see how Jesus can help them in their battles with temptation because he has faced temptation, too.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: At the beginning of his ministry, Scripture tells us that Jesus was sent by the Spirit to the desert for 40 days to be tempted by Satan.
2. WHY: Jesus faced the very same temptations that we do and met them head on, helping to more deeply validate Christ's mercy for sinners.
3. HOW: Students will discuss how Jesus was tempted and the tools he used to defeat Satan, and they will talk about the grace and mercy he has for sinners because he went through similar experiences as God in the flesh.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 4:1-11

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 10:13

TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.

Read Matthew 4:1-11.



LEADER
TIP



Matthew recounts the 40-day temptation experience Jesus endured in the desert (you also can find parallel accounts in Mark and Luke, with the Luke passage offering the more detailed account). The Bible doesn't tell us why Jesus was sent by the Spirit into the desert for 40 days with no food to be tempted by Satan, but we can surmise that his desert undertaking served as a way for God in the flesh to be able to validate, understand, and have compassion for the temptations that we face. Since Christ went through times of anger, desperation, hunger, temptation, frustration, and fatigue, he completely understands when we walk through troubling times in our lives.

In each instance in Matthew 4, Jesus used Scripture to defeat Satan. He models the success of using God's Word as a defense strategy against the devil's evil schemes. This shows us that at the moments when we are tempted or hearing the lies and negative words of Satan, we, too, are able to use Scripture as a protection and a shield against Satan.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What kinds of temptations do most teenagers face? Let's talk about it when the group meets this week.
- Does Jesus know what it's like to face temptation? He sure does. Learn more tonight!

Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.



Dear parents,

We've wrapped up our series on the beginnings of Jesus' ministry, and this week's conversation focused on the way Jesus handled his temptations in the wilderness, in Matthew 4. All of us encounter situations when we are tempted. This week we studied the temptation of Jesus and had some great conversations regarding temptation and what situations and circumstances are tempting.

In order to continue the discussions about Jesus, consider asking your teenager the following questions:

- How does knowing what Jesus went through help you when you are going through your own struggles with temptation?
- Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What are some surprising ways God has helped you escape from temptation before?
- If you resist temptation today, it may return tomorrow—is that discouraging? Why or why not?

Have an amazing week!



BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Lesson 2: Temptation

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

You'll need index cards and pens or pencils for the opening activity.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students in this activity:

You will need to bring a 3 X 5 index card and pen or pencil for each of the students. Have each of the students write down on a blank card three things that are most tempting to them—or if they feel uncomfortable writing their own temptations, they can write three things that are tempting to most teenagers. Have them fold the cards and give them to you.

Mix up the cards and then discretely read each of the cards out loud so that no one knows whose card you are reading. You may want to include your own list so that they can see the similarities and so that you can show them that adults have many of the same temptations as students.

ASK:

- *What was most surprising about some of the temptations in that list?*
- *What did you learn from this list of temptations? What patterns or common themes did you hear?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *We all experience moments of temptation. Even Jesus was tempted, as he spent 40 days with no food in the wilderness. There is a right and a wrong way to handle tempting situations. And the way Jesus handled it was perfect.*

TEACHING POINTS

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) Jesus got hungry and vulnerable, (2) Even Jesus faced temptation, and (3) Scripture helps us overcome temptation.



LEADER
TIP





Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Reread Matthew 4:1-11 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus spent 40 days without food, having the devil tempt him. Knowing this can help us understand the grace and mercy of God. Let's see what we can learn from this passage of Scripture.*

1. Jesus got hungry and vulnerable

ASK:

- *Think of a time you were hungry or tired and made a bad choice. What was that like?*
- *What kinds of emotions do you experience when you're hungry or exhausted?*
- *How does knowing what Jesus went through help you when you are going through your own struggles with temptation?*
- *How does knowing this help with your relating to God on a deeper level?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Some people assume that Jesus was this guy who walked around with a halo over his head teaching people. They think that he never really got his sandals dirty and everything worked out perfectly for him. We can see from Scripture that this isn't true at all. He got hungry and tired. Even though he was perfect and was God in human form, he still experienced the same things we experience as humans.*

2. Even Jesus faced temptation

ASK:

- *Have you ever felt guilty because you were tempted, even if you didn't give in to the temptation? If so, tell us about that.*
- *When are you more likely to face temptation: when you're alone or when you're with a group of people? Why?*



- *Why do you think Jesus was sent to the wilderness to be tempted?*
- *Look through the things that Jesus was tempted to do—how might they be rephrased if Satan was attempting to tempt you today?*
- *Why are some people vulnerable to certain temptations that other people have no problem resisting?*
- *Clearly, you face some specific temptations that Jesus didn't face because of changes in culture and technology. But what truths and principles from this passage can still help you in those situations?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus is perfect and unable to sin, but I bet that given the situation he faced and the hunger he was suffering from, he thought about Satan's words. His anguish must have been overwhelming. But he didn't give in, and that helps us remember that being tempted is not the same thing as sinning—just because you're being tempted doesn't mean you've chosen to sin. It's how you handle the temptation that matters.*

3. Scripture helps us overcome temptation

ASK:

- *Why do you think that Jesus used Scripture to defeat Satan?*
- *Why is Scripture a powerful tool in defeating temptation?*
- *What do you think Jesus was trying to show us through his desert journey?*
- *If you resist temptation today, it may return tomorrow—is that discouraging? Why or why not?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *I love how Jesus shows us the struggle he faced as he spent 40 days in the desert being ridiculed by Satan. When we read the Bible and learn about what Jesus went through when he was on Earth, it helps us understand that Jesus is real, has emotions, gets angry, and knows how we feel. And even though temptation may return, we can continually turn to God and to Scripture for strength. Remember, if God helped you resist the temptation today, he can help you resist it tomorrow, too.*

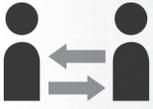


ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

ASK:

- *Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What are some surprising ways God has helped you escape from temptation before?*
- *Have you ever shared a struggle with someone and realized that they cannot relate to any of what you are sharing? How is Jesus different from that?*



PAIR SHARE

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

APPLICATION

ASK:

- *What steps can you take this week to overcome temptation? Let's come up with some specific strategies we all can consider using.*
- *How can you read, learn, and memorize the Bible in a way that will help you with temptations?*
- *How can you pray that God gives you the strength to move away from tempting situations and to bring verses to mind to beat down Satan?*



SUMMARY



End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]



Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).

