

Sunday morning
teaching plan

Date:
1st Feb

TITLE:	Jesus in the Wilderness
THEME:	The life of Jesus
AIM:	Looking at Jesus' example of resisting temptation.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 2026 we are travelling through the life of Jesus. We have seen Jesus as a refugee, fleeing from Herod when He was 2 to find safety in Egypt. And then look at Jesus as a child in the temples beginning to reveal more of His heart and His calling. Last week we saw Him as an adult, right at the beginning of His ministry when Jesus got baptised. God announced loudly this is my Son! But before Jesus steps into public ministry, His next move is not into crowds or miracles—it's into retreat. Led by the Holy Spirit, Jesus enters the wilderness, commits to an extreme fast, faces temptation head-on, overcomes the devil, and fully dedicates His ministry to God.

WARM UP

Doughnuts and Desires

Eat doughnuts with sugar on outside without licking their lips. Start with a group of 2 or 3 who want to play, they need to eat the doughnut at the same time and take it in turns to say a word that is something that could be a temptation to do... (e.g. lying, gossiping, stealing, being selfish, cheating, wanting to be better than others, peer pressure, comparing yourself to others, spending too much time on social media/gaming etc, vaping, drugs, drink, breaking rules, etc.) but they can't lick their lips until the game is over. Any lip lickers are out.

MAIN TEACHING

1. Temptation

In pairs/small groups ask them to discuss **what temptation is and what it means to be tempted**. They can write on paper if they want.

Next ask them to discuss **some of the temptations that young people face in today's society and why they are so attractive to young people**.

Spend some time discussing their thoughts and answers.

Explain that today they are going to be looking at a time in Jesus' life when He went into the wilderness and faced lots of temptations from the Devil.

The Point: To introduce the concept of temptation and how it affects young people's lives.

2. The Tempter of Jesus

Read Matthew 4:1-11

Fill out the questions on the hand out sheets in pairs/small groups and then feedback answers.

Leaders notes for this:

The ways in which the devil tempted Jesus were examples of the tests that He would face in His ministry. He had powers to enable Him to heal the sick, feed the hungry and raise people from the dead to name but a few. Therefore, He had the choice and power to end His fast for God, but He didn't. Just like Jesus didn't save Himself from His death on the cross, He didn't give into temptation.

When we struggle with temptation, we should try and focus on Jesus' example. The devil tempts us through our weaknesses and struggles. It is through these that we are most likely to cave in.

Jesus resisted and quoted Scripture at the devil. We too can resist the ways in which the devil tempts us if we stay close to God through prayer and reading our Bibles to get to know God's word better. As we learn more from the Bible we will find it easier to understand what God expects of us in our lives and we will be able to quote Scripture in times of temptation, just like Jesus did. When we aren't sure if it is the devil or not we can test it against scripture. Does it match or not?

The devil isn't always obvious and there might be times where things appear like a good idea and harmless. Remember he is known as the father of lies and tries to make things seem attractive, just a bit of fun, without consequences.

'The devil.... He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies'. John 8:44

Nature and Actions of the Devil

Disguise: He masquerades as good to deceive people.

Scheming: He uses crafty acts to cause disobedience.

Accuser: He brings accusations and condemnation.

Defeated: Despite his activity, his power is broken by the "blood of the Lamb".

It is also really important to meet with other Christians to get support in times of temptation and also to make us stronger as we face temptations in our lives. They can help support us in looking at what the Bible says. It is often the case that when we declare the things we are tempted by; we find them easier to deal with. If we keep them a secret, then the Devil gains a stronger hold over us.

Note: it's important to not think and talk about the devil too much. It gives him much desired airtime and our thoughts should be on God who has overcome the world.

Verses to note to help with this and close the section:

James 4:7 'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

Ephesians 6:11 'Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes'

Revelation 20:10: Foretells the devil's ultimate fate, being "thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur".

1 John 3:8 'The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.'

John 16:33 'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'

3. Prayer

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,^[a] Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4: 14-16

1. On a piece of paper write down anything they feel like they are struggling with or would like to pray about. Just a single word is fine.

Remind them Jesus faced temptation and understands our struggles. He isn't disappointed in us—He walks with us.

Spend a few minutes here.

2. Then on the other side write a short praise or thank you prayer. Examples you can give:

- "...standing firm when You were tempted."
- "...showing us how to trust God."
- "...understanding what it's like to struggle."
- "...being stronger than sin for us."

This keeps the focus on **what Jesus did**, not on our failures.

Without Jesus resisting the devil in this way He wouldn't have been the perfect sacrifice for our sins and we wouldn't be able to have the same relationship with God as we are able to now.

Spend some time thanking Jesus for his sacrifice in the wilderness.

3. Invite volunteers to read **only their thank-you line**, not the temptation.

After each one, the group could respond with something like:

"We praise You, Jesus."

TAKEAWAY

Remind them to think of Jesus as all powerful and in control, rather than spending too much time thinking about the devil and his schemes!

EXTRA INFORMATION

Equipment:

Doughnuts

Bibles

Paper and pens

Handouts