

A Test in the Desert

Jesus is tempted
Matthew 4:1-11

Character Trait: Perseverance

(Estimated Lesson Time: 90 minutes)

Objectives:

- Children will recall the specific way Jesus resisted temptation.
- Children will discuss the importance of perseverance.
- Children will identify ways that perseverance honors God.

Supplies:

- *A Test in the Desert* loaded onto a tablet or phone in the *Bible App for Kids*
- Poster board or cardboard *(enough to cut out a shield for each child)*
- Aluminum foil *(enough to cover one, paper shield for each child)*
- Glue or tape
- Sequins, glitter, and plastic jewels *(optional)*
- Pencils or pens

Welcome Activity:

(5 minutes)

Welcome the children.

SAY: Raise your hand if you have ever played a game. Now, keep your hand raised if you have ever played a game, become tired, and run out of breath. *(Tell the children to put their hands down.)*

If you raised your hand, then you did not give up when you became tired. You kept going and continued playing. Not giving up and quitting, even when it becomes difficult, is a skill. The word we use to describe not giving up is "perseverance." Choosing to persevere is not always easy, as we may be tired and worn out. In today's lesson, we will learn about Jesus' perseverance and how He said no to temptation over and over again.

Review:

(5 minutes)

Guide the children in a brief review of the previous lesson by asking the following:

- **What did John say when Jesus came to him?** *("Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!")*
- **Why did John first say no to Jesus?** *(John said he should be baptized by Jesus instead.)*
- **What happened when John baptized Jesus?** *(God's Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove.)*
- **What did God say when Jesus was baptized?** *("This is My Son. I love Him. He pleases Me very much!")*

Today's Bible Story:

(10-15 minutes)

Show *A Test in the Desert* from the *Bible App for Kids* or share the story aloud:

- God's Spirit led Jesus into the desert.
- He had nothing to eat for forty days and nights.
- After that, Jesus was very hungry!
- Knowing that Jesus was hungry, Satan tempted Him.
- He pointed to a rock and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread."
- Jesus answered Satan, using God's words from the Bible.
- "It's not just bread that keeps people alive," He said. "Their lives also depend on what God says."
- Next, Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple.
- "If You are the Son of God, jump off! The Scriptures say that God's angels will rescue You."
- So Jesus used God's Word to give His second answer.
- "Do not put the Lord your God to the test," He said, quoting again from the Bible.
- Finally, Satan took Jesus to a mountain, and showed Him all the world's kingdoms and wealth.
- "This can be Yours," he said, "if You bow down and worship me."
- "Go away, Satan!" Jesus commanded.
- Then He quoted God's Word one more time.
- "For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"
- As soon as Jesus said it, Satan left Him.
- Then angels came and cared for Him.
- Jesus had faced temptation and hadn't sinned, not even once.

Discussion:

(15 minutes)

Encourage the children to think more about the story by asking the following:

Who led Jesus into the desert? *(God's Spirit)*

How long was Jesus in the desert? *(Forty days and nights)*

Who tempted Jesus? *(Satan)*

How did Jesus respond to temptation? *(He did not give in to temptation. Instead, Jesus used words from the Bible, Scripture, to defeat it.)*

How many times did Jesus sin? *(None)*

What did Satan do when Jesus did not give in to temptation? *(Satan left him.)*

Who came and cared for Jesus after He faced temptation? *(Angels)*

What can we learn from Jesus' example? *(We can also use God's Word to help us fight and win against temptation.)*

Do you think Jesus understands our struggle against temptation? *(Answers will vary but should include that He does because He was tempted to sin, too.)*

SAY: When we face temptations, we can follow the example Jesus set for us: We can use words from the Bible to help encourage us and make us strong enough to say no. For example, we read in the Bible that God wants us to treat others the same way we would want them to treat us. This gives us the guidance and encouragement we need in order to make choices that are right, not necessarily easy. We can also ask Jesus to help us. He understands our feelings and our struggles because He has faced temptation, too.

God's Bigger Story:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Jesus was tempted just like we are. But Jesus resisted temptation by depending on His Father, God, and His Word. We can follow Jesus' example and do the same.

Memory Verse:

(10 minutes)

People *(with palms up, lace fingers together and wiggle them)*
do not live by bread alone *(pretend to eat)*,
but by every word *(open your hands like a book)*
that comes from the mouth of God *(point both hands up)*.

Matthew 4:4b (NLT)

Activity:

(15 minutes)

Explain that you will be giving short directions for the children to follow. However, they must only obey instructions that begin with the words "Simon says..." If they obey an instruction that does not, then they are "out" and must sit down for the remainder of the game. Continue playing as time permits or until only one child is left standing. *(Sample instructions can include jump in place, clap your hands, stand on one foot, and put your hands on your head.)*

SAY: As Jesus showed us, God's Word is not only a powerful weapon against temptation. It also guides and directs us, too. Just as in the game you had to be careful when to follow the directions, we should be careful to follow God's Word and not our feelings.

Response Activity:

(10 minutes)

Provide each child with a stiff piece of poster board or cardboard. Show how to carefully cut out the shape of a small shield. Then, provide each child with a piece of aluminum foil large enough to cover the front of the paper shield. Demonstrate how to fold the foil around the edges of the shield. If necessary, provide glue or tape to secure the foil to the shields. If available, provide sequins, glitter, and plastic jewels for decorating the front of the shields.

SAY: God's Word is our shield against temptation. We can use the words from the Bible to help strengthen and protect us, just like Jesus did.

For younger children...
The paper shields can be cut out in advance for younger children.

For older children...
Encourage older children to write down the references for some of their favorite verses on their shields as a reminder to use God's Word to help them in their battles against temptation.

Character Trait: Perseverance

(10 minutes)

SAY: Perseverance means not giving up. No matter how many times Satan tried, Jesus did not give in to temptation. Instead, Jesus showed perseverance.

Encourage the children to think more about perseverance by asking the following:

- **Why is perseverance important?** *(It enables us to keep going and to not give in.)*
- **Why is perseverance sometimes difficult?** *(It requires the ability to keep going and keep working even when we may be challenged, tired, or worn out.)*
- **In what areas of your life do you show perseverance?** *(Answers will vary.)*
- **In what areas of your life can you improve your perseverance?** *(Answers will vary.)*
- **How can choosing to persevere honor God?** *(Answers will vary but may include by using the gifts, talents, and abilities He has given us and trusting in God's timing, not our own.)*

Connect with Others:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Choosing to persevere and not give up can be tiring and can wear a person out. Angels came and cared for Jesus after He persevered against temptation.

Think of a person you know that has shown perseverance. It can be someone who does not give up when trying to learn something new. Maybe it is someone who never gives up on teaching or caring for you. Now, think of a way that you can personally encourage this person. Turn to someone sitting near you and share. *(Provide an opportunity for the children to share aloud with one another.)*

Closing:

(2 minutes)

SAY: Resisting temptation is an ongoing battle that everyone faces. But we do not have to face it alone. We can pray to Jesus for help. We can read and use the words of the Bible to give us strength. We can talk with and seek help from other wise people around us for encouragement. God did not leave us alone and unequipped to fight temptation. With His help, we always have hope.

Prayer:

(2 minutes)

SAY:

Dear God,
Thank You for Your Word to guide and help us and for the example Your Son, Jesus, gave each of us to follow. Most importantly, we thank You for the hope and forgiveness Jesus provides, even when we make mistakes.
Amen.

Notes