



## It's Tempting!

**Goal:** To learn that we can put our trust in God even when we are tested.

### RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

#### . . . In Luke 4:1-13

The account of Jesus' temptations shows us that all people will be tempted to turn away from God's will and follow our own wills. This was at the center of what Jesus experienced. He was being lured toward doing things that would be contrary to God's will. Those actions would draw him away from obeying God fully.

Jesus' response to the temptations presented to him was to quote Scripture. In his time of testing, Jesus trusted that God's Word expressed in the Scriptures would give him guidance. God's Word would help him withstand the attractiveness of what was being proposed to turn him against obeying God's will.

In our own temptations, we can trust God to be with us. The Scriptures can be a resource for helping us withstand the desire to do our own will, instead of God's will. The Scriptures are a gift of God's grace to guide us and sustain us. God's Spirit is our constant companion to lead us in God's ways and away from ways of life that can deceive and destroy us.

Temptations come to everyone—even to Jesus! However, we can be grateful for resources God gives to help us resist temptation.

#### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Being tempted or tested is a universal human condition. Today's story provides a great way into that conversation. The word temptation may be beyond the children's understanding, but they can relate to making choices and the consequences that come with those choices. Your children are constantly working on appropriate boundaries and learning how to interact kindly with one another.

As you read today's story and invite your children to experience it, they may ask about Satan. Older children may understand that Satan is not real but represents things we do that do not embody God's love and grace. Younger children may need help in understanding it. The image of a voice might help: the bad voice inside of us says, "Take that or say that—it doesn't matter"; the good voice inside us says, "Do the other—it shows God's love."

#### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

We hear how strong Jesus was in saying no to the temptations Satan offered him. It's not always that easy for us to say no. As you have conversations with the children, listen to their experiences of being tested by someone or being tempted to want to do something or say something that they know is not a good idea. Listen for how they resolved the temptation. A way to help them connect today's story with their lives is to suggest some simple ways of pausing, thinking, and praying to God before responding with words or actions: "God of my life, help me know the right thing to do when I am faced with a decision. Amen."

*Holy God, when I succumb to the tempter's voice, call me to repent  
in the assurance that I am forgiven in your love and grace. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

[bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies](http://bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies)

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 7, 8, 15, 22

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

blankets or mats

snack (optional)

## Guided Play

choice 1: large basin of water, tennis ball, metal toy car, shape cookie cutter, rock, leaf, sinkable items, blocks

choice 2: Bible storybooks

choice 3: magazines with pictures, copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**

## Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 2**

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**

## Book Suggestions:

- *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim, [pcusastore.com](http://pcusastore.com)

## GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

### Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i-ii**, "Your Visual Schedule," to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

### Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet the children by name and with the words "Grace and peace to you." Prompt them to respond, "And also with you."

Introduce yourself to the parents/caregivers who you do not know personally. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about Jesus' testing in the wilderness after his baptism.

Invite the children to choose a guided play activity to start:

- 1. Playing with Water**—Provide a large basin of water and common items, such as a tennis ball, metal toy car, shape cookie cutter, rock (about the size of a golf ball), leaf, sinkable items, or blocks. Let children take turns dropping the items into the water. Talk about which items float and which ones sink. Ask children if they've ever been underwater. Let children take turns scooping up water and gently pouring it over the hands of another child. Comment that the minister pours water on a person's head at baptism.
- 2. Reading**—Provide Bible storybooks. Have extra helpers on hand to read to children from books of their choosing or invite children to browse the books and pictures.
- 3. Making a Poster**—Provide copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to color the poster. Read the words aloud and encourage them to guess what the pictures show. Tell the children that this saying is a Bible verse that Jesus would have known very well.

**LD** Growing in Grace & Gratitude utilizes repetition as a way to foster better understanding and to strengthen connections that children make to the stories.



## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “You Are My Own Dear Son”—**SCM 22**—so they can celebrate that they are sons and daughters of God. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

### Follow the Leader



Invite the children to join you in a game of Follow the Leader. Ask them to watch and listen so they can follow what you do, such as:

- ▼ Follow me around the room, walking on your tiptoes.
- ▼ Follow me around the room, holding your hands behind your back.
- ▼ Follow me around the room, hopping on one foot.

Ask the children why they needed to watch you and listen to you. Comment that we follow God by doing what God wants us to do. Invite the children to name some things God wants them to do. Prompt if necessary, such as:

- ▼ Follow me around the room, praying to God. (*hold hands in prayer*)
- ▼ Follow me around the room, helping hungry people. (*pretend to give food to another person*)
- ▼ Follow me around the room, learning the stories of Jesus. (*pretend to read a Bible*)

Wonder what they enjoyed about following God, their leader.

### He Grew and Grew



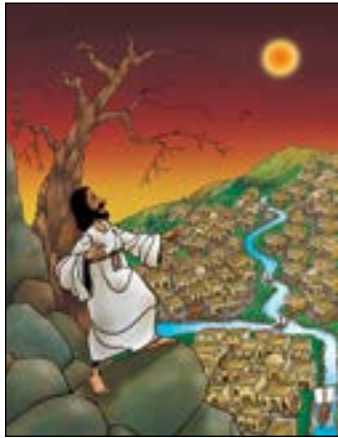
Invite the children to help create motions to the following poem:

Jesus was a baby. But guess what? He grew and grew and grew.  
You were a baby. But guess what? You grew and grew too.

Jesus went to the river; John baptized him there.  
You *are/can be* baptized too.

Jesus heard God say, “You are my beloved child.”  
You belong to God too.

Jesus did what God asked him to do.  
You do what God asks you to do too!



### Hearing the Story L

Open the Bible to Luke 4 and point out that the story comes from the Bible.

Read **SCM 8**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen."

Show **SCM 7**. Explain that the story you just read happened after Jesus was baptized. Say that when Jesus was baptized, he understood that he belonged to and was loved by God. God's love prepared him for what happened in today's story.

Help the children understand that Jesus was tempted to do things. Take this time to help children learn the word *temptation*. Explain that sometimes we want to do things that might not be good for us or for others. For example, we might want a toy that our friend is playing with. Ask: "What is the best thing to do then?" (*Leave the toy alone.*)

Jesus was tempted; so are we. We look to God to guide us when we are tempted, so that we show love to all people.

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Making Choices like Jesus FM

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and invite the children to color in the word **NO**. Cut the stand-up figure from **GN 2** for each child. Have the children turn it over and draw a picture of Jesus on the other side using the circle as Jesus' head. Invite the children to fold along the dotted line making the word **NO** lie flat. Show the children how to form a cone by overlapping the flat sides and taping them together.

Share with the children that Jesus made the choice to say no when he was tested. Invite the children to turn the word flap up and shout "NO!" whenever you mention one of the temptations that Jesus faced:

Jesus said **NO** to turning the stones into bread.

Jesus said **NO** to temptation.

Invite the children to think about choices they can make. For example, what can they do if they have candy but know that there are others who want some? They can choose to say no to eating all of it. Mention other examples. Invite the children to take the figures home and use them as a reminder that they, too, can make the choice to say no to things that are not God's will, just like Jesus.





## 2. What Do You Do? C

Review today's Bible story. It tells about a time after Jesus' baptism when he was sent into the wilderness. This was a time of testing for Jesus, and he had many choices to make. Some of the choices that he could make were not what God would want him to do. Wonder with the children what the choices were.

Jesus knew the words of the Bible and they helped Jesus make wise choices. Sometimes when we have choices to make, we need to trust God, just like Jesus did. When it is hard for us to make choices, we know that Jesus had to make hard choices too. Jesus understands how we feel when we have hard choices to make.

Play a game of "I Choose" with children answering what a beloved child of God would do in certain situations. Suggestions for questions include:

- ▼ If someone pushes you, what do you do?
- ▼ If someone takes your piece of candy, what do you do?
- ▼ If your friend asks for help picking up toys but you don't want to stop playing, what do you do?
- ▼ If your friend doesn't feel well and needs help but you are tired, what do you do?

Provide other scenarios to help the children think of hard choices.

## 3. Loving God C

Invite the children to think about and share something that Jesus would have learned as a child. Share with them that he would have been taught by his parents about God. He also learned from Scripture.

Say together, one phrase at a time, Deuteronomy 6:5 (CEB): "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength."

Invite the children to help create motions for each part of the verse. Practice the verse with the motions until the children are able to say the whole verse.

Encourage them to help their families learn the verse and to repeat it from memory every day.

## 4. Coloring Page FM

Hand out copies of GN 3 and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color by using the following wondering questions.

- ▼ I wonder, "How did Jesus feel when he was walking in the sun?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What did Jesus think about when he was alone in the wilderness?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did Jesus know that God was with him?"

If learning the entire verse is too ambitious for your group, concentrate on the words *love, God, heart, being, and strength*. As you say the verse, the children can show the motions.

Use "wonder" questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wonder questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



**T** *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities such as squeezing your hands together, stretching, and so forth.*

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Encourage each child to put away one toy or object. Invite the children to sit around a table or on the floor.

Sing “God Is with Me”—**SCM 15**—while you serve the snack.

Say the following litany and ask the children to respond with “Thank you, God”:

Thank you, God, for Jesus. (*Thank you, God.*)

Thank you, God, for helping us know God’s ways. (*Thank you, God.*)

Thank you, God, for calling us to love you. (*Thank you, God.*)

Help us to share your love with others. (*Thank you, God.*)

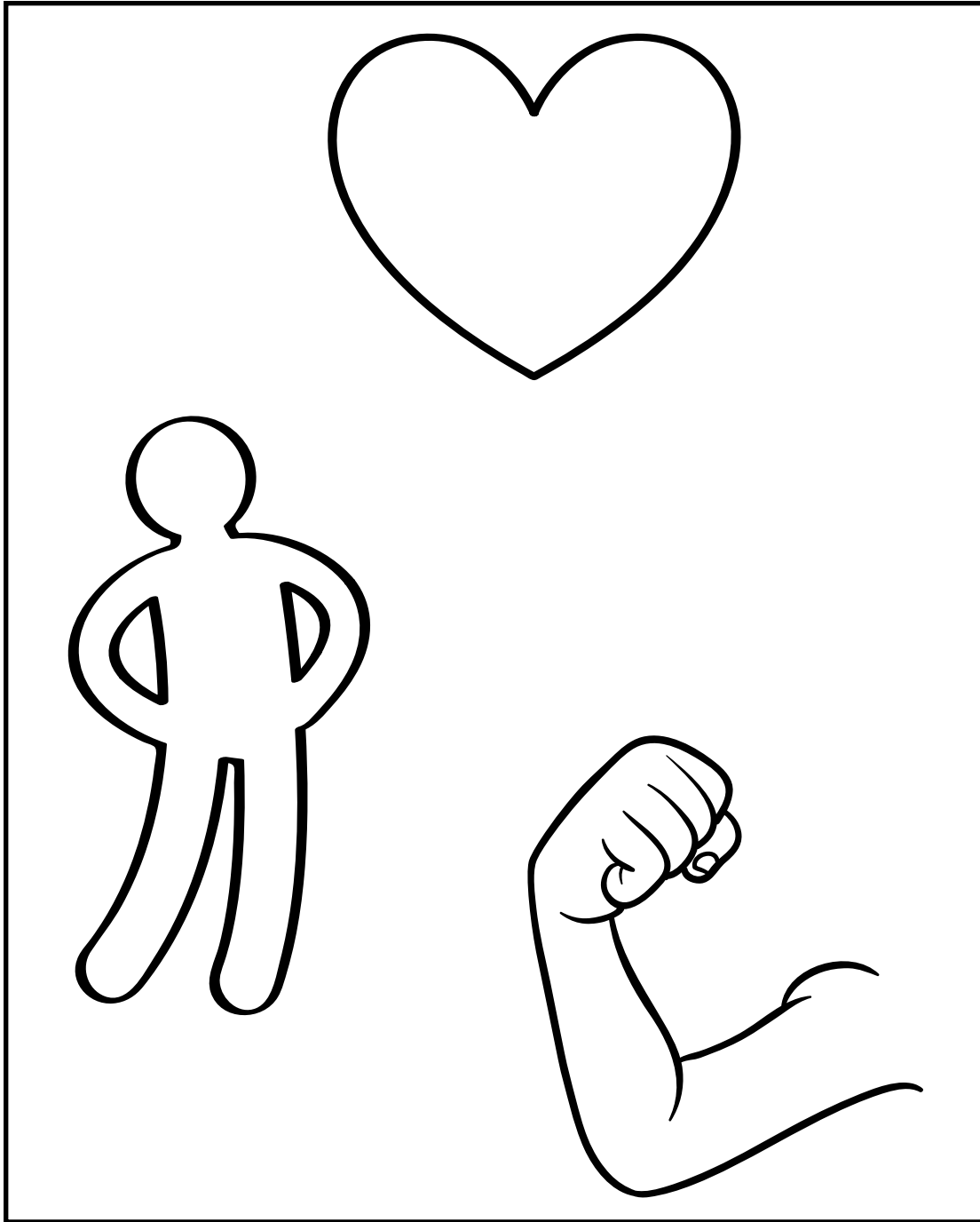
Amen.

As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), you are a beloved child of the church. The grace of God is with you.”



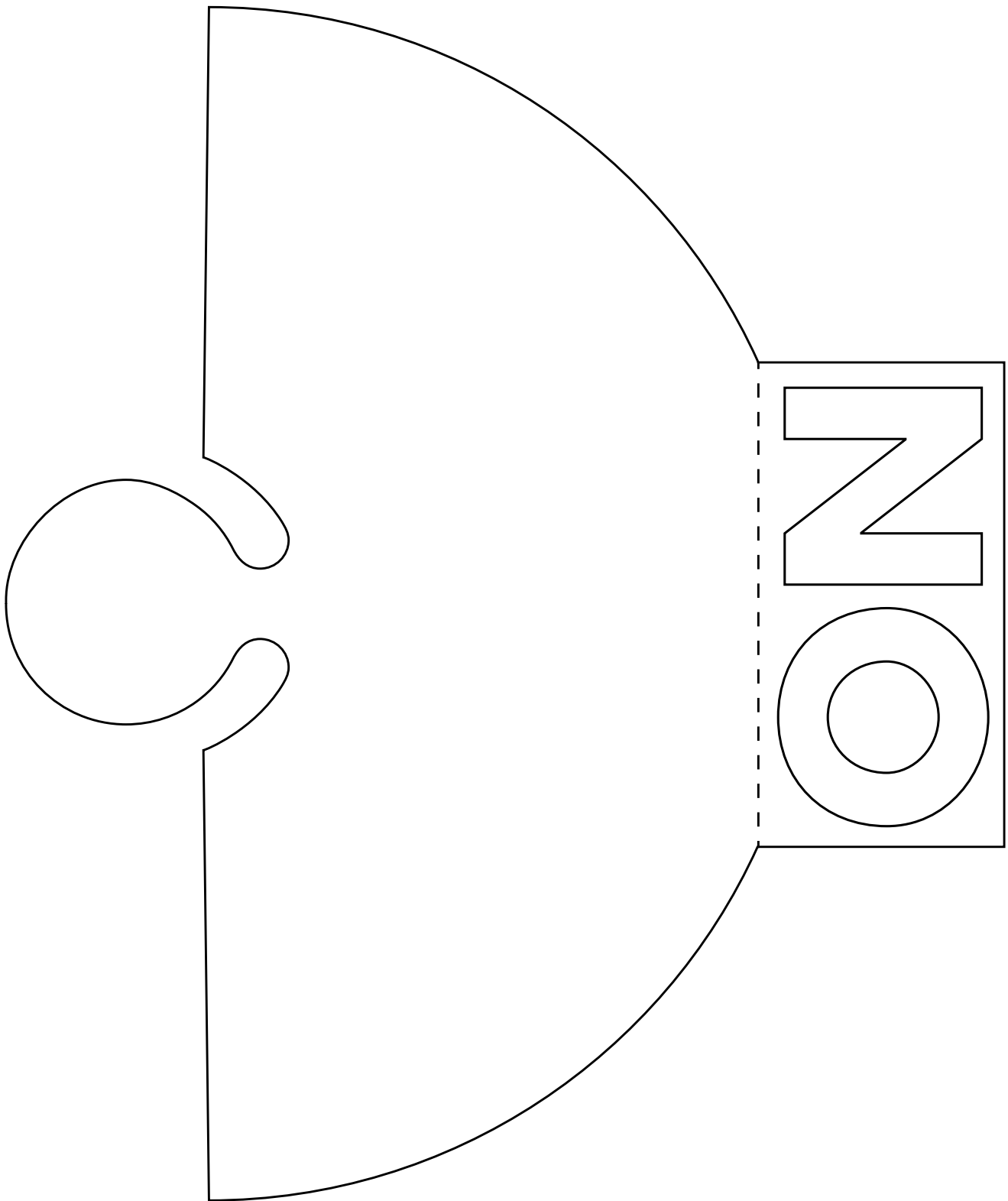
Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

Love God with all your



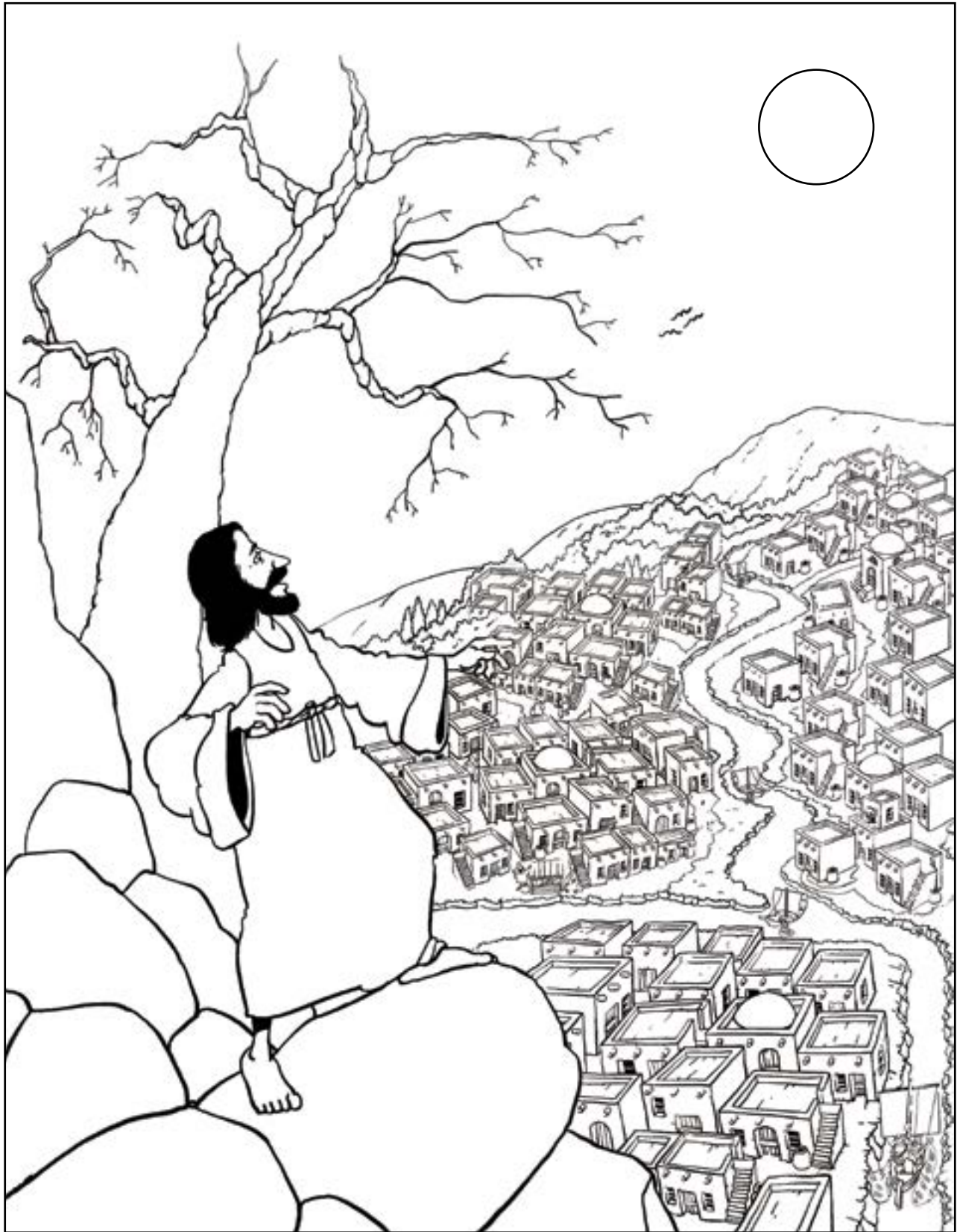








# It's Tempting!



Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. God was with him.

