



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

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 8, 8a, 15, 21, 22

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

green cloth

candle

medium-size bowl

pitcher of water

Responding

Claiming

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

Celebrating

copies of **GN 2 and**
GN 3

Extra

copies of **GN 4** on card
stock, one 18" length
and one 20" length of
heavy yarn or twine for
each child, aluminum
foil, cardboard
(optional)

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Post **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.

The “Extra Activity” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Greet the children by name and with the words “Grace be with you, beloved child of God.” Prompt them to say the same words.

Invite the children to set up a worship space, using their creativity. Provide a Bible, the medium-size bowl, a candle, and a green cloth.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Ask for several volunteers to practice reading the Scripture passage from the Bible.

Talk with the children about tests. Ask them to tell you what tests are and to talk about the kinds of tests they have in school. Broaden the discussion to include tests of character (*for example: opportunities to cheat, steal, or lie*).

Show children the stop sign on **SCM 8a**. Suggest that when we have a life test or have to make a tough decision, a good plan might be to (1) stop, (2) think, and (3) pray about the choice. Give children art supplies to make stop signs as reminders to stop, think, and pray before they make choices.

Singing

Invite the children to gather at the worship space with their stop signs. Admire their efforts to create them.

Play “You Are My Own Dear Son”—**SCM 21**—to remember that Jesus is God’s son. Remind the children that the Bible story they heard last week about Jesus’ baptism included those words. Encourage the children to sing along.

Praying

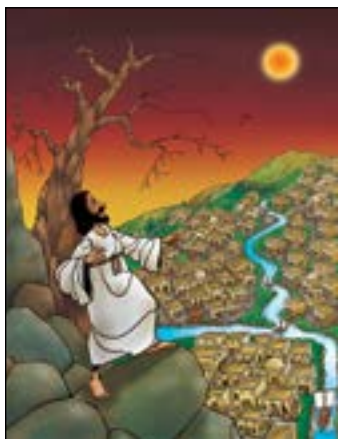


Say, “Jesus is the Light of the World,” and turn on the candle. Invite the children to join an echo prayer. Ask a volunteer to lead the prayer today as you hold the bowl.

Dear God, /
we are like this bowl. /
Fill us with your Spirit. /
Fill us with your light, /
Jesus Christ, our Lord. /
Amen. /



Seeing where the story is found in the Bible reinforces the importance of this book for the church.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Preparing to Hear the Story

C L

Begin a discussion about the wilderness or desert. Wonder what the children imagine when they think of such a place. Some may live or have visited a desert environment. Consider what may be different about a wilderness. Ask the children what they think they would need if they took a long trek, forty days, into a desert or wilderness.

Tell that today's story is about what happened to Jesus after his baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended on him and God called him beloved son. Explain that sometimes the word "tested" and sometimes the word "tempted" are used to describe what happened to Jesus in the wilderness. Some translations say it was the devil, and others say it was Satan, or the evil one, who tempted Jesus. Being tempted or tested meant to go against God's way.

Hearing the Story

M L

Invite a child to find Luke 4 in the Bible and volunteers to read Luke 4:1–13. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God." Place the open Bible on the worship table.

Say that Jesus was faced with three choices. Encourage the children to raise their stop signs when they hear the choices Jesus must make as you read the story again using **SCM 8** or the story audio. If you read it, express the emotions of the story with your voice, expressions, and gestures.

Reflecting on God's Grace

C

Ask the children what they think it means that Jesus was tested or tempted. Review the three tests and the choices Jesus made. Ask them to identify what Jesus did each time he responded. (*He remembered God's Word in Scripture.*) Jesus was faithful and followed God's way.

Suggest that we face temptations and tests. Our tests may not seem big in comparison to the tests Jesus faced, but they are big to us. Invite the children to share what things tempt or test them. Some suggestions might be wanting to have something that isn't theirs, wanting to be popular at the expense of being kind to others, or wanting to go somewhere they shouldn't go.

Ask them how the stop sign actions (stop, think, and pray) could help them respond to a particular test that is before them.

Singing

Sing "God Is with Me" to thank God for God's love and grace. As you sing, point out the words on **SCM 15** so the children can follow along. Use repetition.



T For children who struggle with transitions, this may be a good time for an adult helper to come close to one or more children to model and encourage appropriate responses.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God's Grace

C FM

Wonder together about times when you and the children may have been tempted or tested to do something that would not be following God's way. Help the children recognize that we make decisions and choices every day—sometimes the right choices and sometimes the wrong choices. Explain that following God's way is sometimes a hard choice to make, but it is always the correct choice.

Form two groups and hand out one of the scenarios on **GN 1** to each group. Invite volunteers to read the scenarios aloud to their group and then have the group discuss the questions.

After the children have had a chance to discuss in their groups, gather the children together and have them share their thoughts about the scenarios. Ask if there were additional choices they might have made, other people or places that could have received help, and other Bible stories that may help them to follow God's way.

Celebrating God's Grace

C LD

Celebrate the Word of God with the children. Ask the children what Jesus said each time he responded to the test. (*He quoted Scripture.*) Tell the children that they will make a small book to learn and memorize Scripture verses. Hand out copies of **GN 2** and **GN 3** and have the volunteers take turns reading the verses. Instruct the children to cut out the pages for the book. Tell the children that there are two blank pages so they can add some verses they find to memorize. Encourage them to keep adding pages as they learn more verses.

Have the children punch holes in the marked spaces. Show the children how to assemble the book by stacking the pages. Then have them loop one end of rubber band through one hole and the other end through the other hole, back to front. Hold the two loops of the rubber band in place with a craft stick or large paper clip.

Invite the children to choose one verse and try to memorize it. Suggest the following method:

- ▼ Say the first phrase. Repeat it three times.
- ▼ Say the second phrase. Repeat it three times.
- ▼ Now, say the verse and the reference. Repeat both three times.
- ▼ Continue to add additional phrases if needed, using this method.



When they feel they have memorized the verse, tell them to color and decorate the page. Encourage them to do this each time they memorize a verse.

Suggest that learning Scripture will be helpful in times of testing or temptation, as it is another way to know God's presence with us.

Offering God's Grace

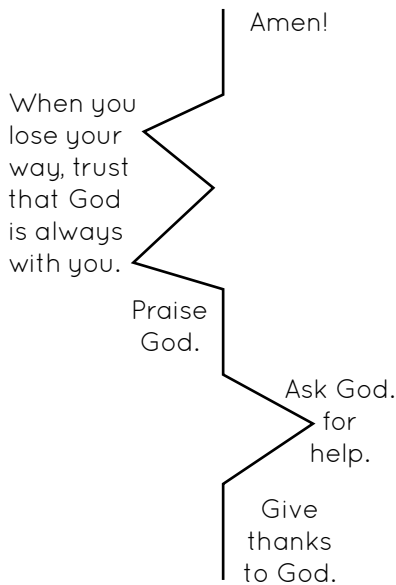


Create a prayer path as an offering to others in your church. Use painter's tape to create a path on the floor of a common area for people in the church to walk. Make a straight path for several feet and then a short angle to the right and back again to the direction of the straight path. Continue straight for a couple of feet, then zigzag off to the left for several feet, and then return back to the direction of the straight path.

Invite the children to make the following signs to post along each part of the path.

1. Give thanks to God for the blessings in your life. *(post along the straight part of the path)*
2. Ask God for help when you stumble in following God's ways. *(post along the angle to the right)*
3. Praise God. *(post along straight part of the path)*
4. When you lose your way, trust that God is always with you. *(post along zigzag part of the path)*
5. Amen! *(post along final part of the straight path)*

Invite the children to walk the path following the prayer prompts. Then encourage them to invite folks in the congregation to walk and pray the prayer path.



Extra Activity



Provide each child a copy of GN 4 on card stock, an 18" and a 20" length of heavy yarn or twine, tacky glue, and a paintbrush. You may wish to glue the paper to cardboard for more stability.

Tell the children that they will create a finger labyrinth to use when they want to pray silently. Show the children how to put glue along the black lines, an inch or two at a time. Then place the yarn or twine along the glue line beginning with the 20" length at the center. Continue to do small sections until the black line is covered. Repeat with the 18" length on the other line. Allow time for the glue to dry.

Provide each child a piece of aluminum foil large enough to cover the page with room to spare. Put some glue thinned with water in a cup. Have the children paint a light layer of glue over the yarn and page. Tell the children to place the foil on top. Beginning at the center, work the foil around the yarn to create a raised labyrinth.



Demonstrate how to trace the path with a finger, beginning at the outside opening and going into the center. Suggest that this inward action can be when the children name the situation for which they want to pray. When they reach the center, they can stop to think about the situation. When they follow the path back out, suggest that a prayer can be said. Challenge the children to use the finger labyrinth to stop, think, and pray about situations that come up each day.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—SCM 22.

Invite the children to gather around the bowl. Pour water into the bowl.

Choose one child to begin a chant. After the child has spoken his or her name, the rest of the group repeats the name and then says in unison: “You are God’s beloved child!” Scoop water with two fingers and say:

We leave today in the name of the Father, *(all scoop water)*
and the Son, *(all scoop water)*
and the Holy Spirit. *(all scoop water)*
Help us grow as your beloved children, O God. Amen.
(all raise hands above head)

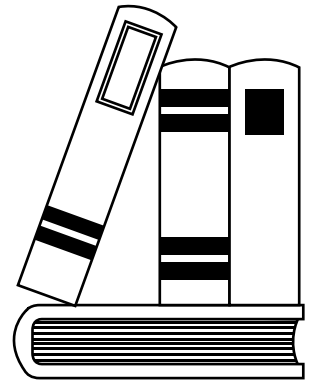
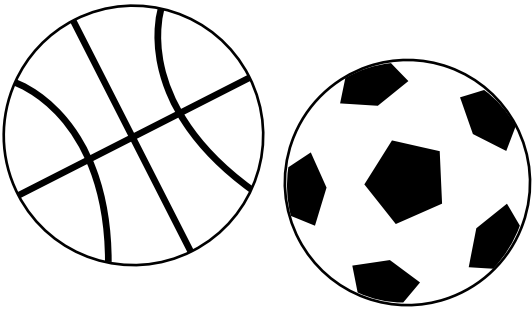
Give each child a blessing. Say to each one: “(Name), you are growing in God’s grace every day. Remember and be grateful.”



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

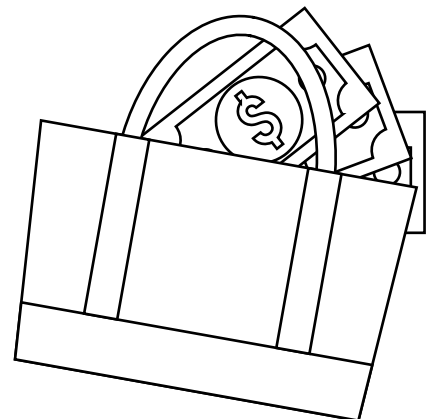
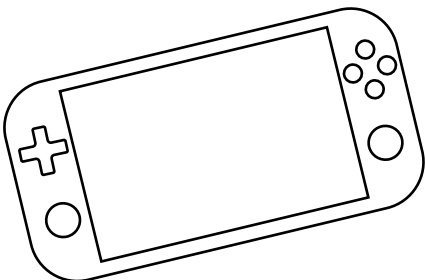
Story 1: A new boy moves into your neighborhood. After meeting him and playing with him for a while, you are not sure you want to be his friend. He is different from you and your other friends. You like to play sports, he likes to read books and play board games. You like to listen to music and try new experiments in the kitchen, he likes to go for hikes and play ball with his dog. You would likely be bored and maybe embarrassed if your other friends saw you playing together.

- How are you being tested or tempted in this scene?
- What are at least three choices you could make?
- How could you get help with your choices?
- What do you think the Bible, God's Word, says that could help you?



Story 2: You want a new video game or toy. You ask your parents, and they say you have to use your own money to buy it. You don't have enough money. Later that day, you see your mom's purse sitting open with her wallet in it.

- How are you being tested or tempted in this scene?
- What are at least three choices you could make?
- How could you get help with your choices?
- What do you think the Bible, God's Word, says that could help you?



Be strong and courageous;
do not be frightened or
dismayed, for the LORD your
God is with you wherever
you go.

—Joshua 1:9

So we can say with
confidence, “The Lord is
my helper; I will not be
afraid. What can anyone
do to me?”

—Hebrews 13:6

I can do all things through
him who strengthens me.

—Philippians 4:13

Trust in the LORD with all
your heart, and do not rely
on your own insight. In all
your ways acknowledge
him, and he will make
straight your paths.

—Proverbs 3:5-6

Your word is a lamp to my
feet and a light to my path.

—Psalm 119:105

And whatever you do,
whether in word or deed, do
it all in the name of the Lord
Jesus, giving thanks to God
the Father through him.

—Colossians 3:17

