



STORY 56

The Sin That Wasn't

MATTHEW 4

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 4.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

“All the promises of God find their Yes” in Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20). The Snake Crusher who was promised to Eve? Yes! The long-predicted son of Abraham who would bless the nations? Yes! The long-awaited Son of David who would rule an everlasting kingdom? Yes! Immanuel—God with us? Yes! Jesus is the fulfillment of lots of old prophecies and promises. But he is more! Jesus came and lived perfectly, unlike the people of Israel. And Matthew doesn't want us to miss that point. He shows us how Jesus repeatedly got it right when Israel had gotten it wrong. Jesus left Egypt just like Israel left Egypt (Matthew 2). Jesus entered the Jordan River similar to Israel's crossing the Red Sea (Matthew 3). And Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for forty days just like Israel was tempted in the desert for forty years (Matthew 4). Israel, like Adam before them, failed when

1

Read

2

Teach

Satan tested them. But what about Jesus? Jesus doesn't fail the test, like Israel did in the wilderness or like Adam did in the garden. Let's see how.

TELL THE STORY

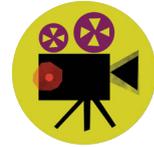
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the Bible passage together



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus resisted
Satan's temptation
through the word
of God.

After Jesus's baptism, "the Spirit [led him] into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. 4:1). The fact that the Holy Spirit was leading Jesus shows us that Jesus's temptation was part of God's plan. While in the desert, Jesus fasted from food. That means he stopped eating for a reason. No peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. No apples and oranges. No cheeseburgers and fries. Not even wild honey and locusts! The Bible says "he was hungry" (4:2). He sure was! So, guess what temptation Satan ("the tempter"; 4:3) started with? He said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" (4:3). That must have been so tempting! Jesus was really hungry, and he had the power to do what Satan asked him to do. Fresh warm bread—so good! But not on that day. He knew that obeying God's word was more important than obeying his stomach's cry for food! He answered Satan with a Bible verse, "It is written, 'Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God'" (see 4:4). Jesus passed the first test.

For the second test, the devil took him to the top of the temple. "Jump, Jesus," he told him. "Because if you are God's Son, the Bible says that God will send angels to rescue you." Satan was twisting the Bible, and Jesus knew this. That is why he responded with another Bible verse, "It is wrong to put God to the test" (see 4:7). Jesus passed the second test.

The final test was perhaps the toughest. Satan brought Jesus to a very high mountain, and as they looked down as far as the eye could see, Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. He saw their riches and power. Their earthly glory! “If you bow down before me,” Satan said, “then I will let you rule over these kingdoms.” Jesus refused. “We should worship God and him alone!” Jesus also told the devil to get lost: “Be gone, Satan!” (4:10). Jesus passed the third test. Where Adam and Israel failed, Jesus succeeded. A+++.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

The devil wanted Jesus to clamor for bread (like Israel had done), to put God to the test (like Israel had done), and to worship other gods (like Israel had also done). Three times the devil tried; three times he failed. Three times the Son of God was tempted; three times he passed the test. The third test, however, wasn't Jesus's last test. He was tested throughout his life to skip suffering and go straight to ruling as king—to take the crown before the cross. His final temptation was on the cross, moments before he died. People who walked by him, as he was suffering on the cross, said to him, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40). Imagine how tempting that must have been. Jesus the powerful Son of God, could have pushed the nails out of his hands and feet, jumped to the ground, and saved himself from death. But he didn't! Why? Because he knew that the only way to save sinners was to die for sinners, the only way to offer the good news of salvation was to die. How wonderful that Jesus succeeded on the final test so now all who trust in him can be saved.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What were some ways that Jesus's life was similar to Israel's? What happened to both of them in the wilderness? How did Jesus's temptations end differently?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus relived Israel's story and got it right.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
You shall worship
the Lord your God
and him only shall
you serve.

MATTHEW 4:10

2. QUESTION: How did Satan first tempt Jesus? What did Jesus use to resist? What was the second temptation? How did Jesus respond? And what was the third temptation? Did Jesus give in? What did he say to Satan?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus resisted Satan's temptation through the word of God.

3. QUESTION: Did Jesus stop being tempted by Satan after he left the wilderness? What was the final temptation he experienced? What does it mean for all of us that Jesus did not leave the cross but stayed and died?

TAKEAWAY: Because Jesus passed the final test on the cross, we can be saved.

4. QUESTION: Even though Jesus's death means that we all can be saved from our sins, will we still be tempted to disobey God? How can we resist Satan's lies like Jesus did in the wilderness?

TAKEAWAY: When we are tempted, we should follow Jesus's example and trust God's word more than Satan's lies.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: The Floor Is Lava

Supply List: paper, tape, marker

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make safe spots around the room by writing "God's word" on paper and taping the papers to the floor.

Tell children that they should move around the room until the leader calls out, "The floor is lava!" They will then have until the count of five to get both feet onto a safe spot. Anyone who is not on a safe spot after the count of five is out. Continue play until one child remains, removing "safe spots" as the number of children in the game gets smaller. Remind children to run to the safety found in God's word to resist temptations.

Option 2: Temptation Tag

Supply List: paper, tape, marker

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make safe spots by writing Prayer, Scripture, Worship, and Fellowship on paper (or using pictures) and taping the papers to the floor.

Assign one child to be “It.” Begin a game of tag. A child is safe from being tagged when standing on a safe spot, but they may only stand on the safe spot for ten seconds before running again. If a child is tagged, he or she becomes “It.” Play continues as time allows. Remind children that resisting temptation is possible with prayer, God’s word, worship, and help from friends who love Jesus.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Hit Away Temptations Relay

Supply List: paper, marker, pool noodles, trash cans

Before Class: Gather supplies. Write different temptations (e.g., cheat, steal, lie, disobey, unkind words, etc.) on papers (one word per paper, one set per team). Set up pool noodles at starting line and trash cans on the opposite side of the room.

Divide children into teams, line them up by the pool noodles, and give them a set of “temptation” papers. The first child on each team takes a temptation paper, crumples it into a ball, and tries to hit the temptation into the trash can using the pool noodle. The child must keep trying until she gets it in. Once it lands in the trash can, she can hand the pool noodle to the next player, who repeats the process. The first team to hit all their temptations into the trash wins.

Option 2: Resist Temptation

Supply List: cups, permanent marker, balls

Before Class: Gather supplies. Write Temptation on nine cups per team, and write Truth on one cup per team.

Set the cups right side up in a bowling pin formation about 15 feet from the starting line. Divide children into teams of two to three. Give each team a ball. On “Go” one person from each team rolls the ball to try to knock over his team’s Temptation cups without knocking down the Truth cup. He then retrieves the

ball and hands it to the next player, who rolls next. If someone knocks down the Truth cup, that person must set all the cups back upright and start over. Play continues until a team knocks down all their Temptations cups without knocking down their Truth cup.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Rock Decorating

Supply List: rocks, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Satan tempted Jesus to show his power by turning stones into bread. Give each child a 4- to 6-inch smooth rock. Have the children color/decorate their rock then write *NO!* with markers to remind them to resist temptation like Jesus did.

Option 2: Victory Ribbon

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, markers, stickers

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print out award ribbon templates (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child an award ribbon template. Set scissors, markers, and stickers on tables. Have children write “I can win over sin!” on the circular part of the ribbon, then decorate it using provided supplies. Have children cut out their decorated ribbons. Remind children that Jesus can help us have victory over sin.

Option 1: 3D Heart

Supply List: cardstock, yarn, colored pencils, markers, scissors, hole punches, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print 6-inch hearts (three per child). Cut yarn into 8-inch pieces (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child three hearts and one piece of yarn. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children write the Big Truth on the first heart, the Memory Verse on the second heart, and their own message on the third heart. Decorate all three hearts. Cut out hearts and fold them in half. Have children glue the back of one half of a heart to the back of another half of a heart. Repeat the process so all three hearts are connected. Have children punch a hole through the hearts and thread the yarn through for hanging. Remind children that God loves us and we can trust his word.

Option 2: Stone Tic-Tac-Toe

Supply List: large resealable plastic bags, small stones (ten per child), masking tape, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a plastic bag. Have them use masking tape to make a tic-tac-toe board on the outside of the bag. Have them decorate the tape with markers. Give each child ten small stones that will fit in the tic-tac-toe gameboard spaces. Have them color or mark five of the stones with markers so there are five marked stones and five unmarked stones. The stones can be stored in the bag and taken out to play on the taped board. Tell children that the stones can be reminders that when Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread, he resisted temptation and trusted God. When we are tempted, we can also trust God and resist temptation.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.