



SESSION **3**

Baptism and temptation



MEETING AIM

To explore why Jesus' baptism and temptation were so significant and what they teach us about trusting and following God.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 3:1-4:13



BACKGROUND

The story of Jesus' baptism and temptation marks a key phase in Jesus' life and ministry. This session will begin to explore some of the symbolism contained in these important moments and explore what Jesus' actions teach us about the way we should respond when we face temptation and testing.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and ask them to talk about something they, or someone else have done this week that has made them feel proud. Or a time when someone in their family has told them they are proud of them. Be careful about family situations, and only raise this second question if appropriate to the children in your group.

+ GAME



You will need: stopwatch

Arrange the children so they face the front of the room and ask for two volunteers to come to the front. One who believes they can maintain a straight face no matter what anyone does to them, and a second who wants to act as chief mischief-maker. Establish the ground rules as to what the second player is and isn't allowed to do, depending upon your group. Use a stopwatch to time how long it takes to make player one crack a smile. You can repeat the game with further volunteers, to decide which player in the group can avoid the temptation to laugh for the longest.

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: blue scarf; dove picture or ornament; smiley face; sand; Bible; stone; crown; angel picture or ornament

Invite the children to sit in a circle with a large space in the middle which you will use to place the symbols as you tell this story:

After Jesus was born, the Bible tells us very little about his childhood and what happened next, until he grows up and is ready to begin his ministry.

Jesus' cousin, John, had been sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus. He was baptising followers of God in the river. *(Lay a blue scarf out in the centre of the group.)*

One day, Jesus came to John to be baptised. While he was praying, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove. *(Place a dove ornament, toy or picture on top of the blue scarf.)*

A voice was heard from heaven saying: "This is my son. I am very pleased with him!" *(Place a smiley face down with the other symbols.)*

Then Jesus was led into the wilderness. *(Add a handful of sand.)*

For 40 days, the devil tested and tempted Jesus to do things that went against God's teaching. *(Lay a Bible down.)*

When Jesus was hungry, the devil told him to change stones to bread, but Jesus said no. *(Add a stone.)*

Then the devil told him if Jesus worshipped him, he would give him the world, but Jesus did not fall for his tricks. *(Place a crown in the scene.)*

Finally, the devil tried to trick Jesus into jumping from a high cliff, to test if the angels would rescue him. *(Add an angel ornament or picture.)*

Again, Jesus said no. Even when he felt tired, weak and hungry, he held on to the truths and ignored the lies of the devil. When the 40 days were over, he returned from the wilderness, ready to begin his work on earth.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What is your favourite part of the story?
- Do you have any questions you want to ask?
- When do you think we do things that make God very pleased with us?
- When might we feel tempted to do the wrong thing?
- What do Jesus actions teach us about

the way we should deal with tricky or testing times?

- What do you want to say to God after hearing this story?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: stones; acrylic paints; brushes

The devil tried to tempt Jesus into changing the stones into bread and to jump from the rocks. Jesus held onto the 'rock-solid' truths that he knew to be true about God and God's kingdom.

Provide a selection of stones and access to acrylic paints and paint brushes. Invite the children to choose a stone from the collection available and paint something on the stone that reminds them of the certainty of who God is. They may choose to include a symbol from the storytelling, the words of a key verse or perhaps something they already know about God and his rock-solid dependability.

Give the children enough time to complete this, and try not to intervene too much. When finished, invite the children to share their completed stones, explaining the symbols they have painted, as appropriate. At the end of the session, invite the children to take their stones away with them and put them somewhere that will remind them to stand firm, putting their trust in God no matter what they may face.

+ PRAYER



You will need: teaspoon per child

As you draw together to pray, give each child a teaspoon and invite them to pray aloud or silently, in response to the story, in the following ways. T: Thank-you prayers (what can we thank God for, from this story), S: Sorry prayers (when do we not resist temptation, as Jesus did), P: Please prayers (asking God to help us stand firm, when we face temptation in the week ahead). Draw the time of prayer to a close, praying for your group and offering to talk to and pray with anyone individually, for any particularly testing situations they may be currently facing.

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