

## Take temptation seriously

### Matthew 4.1-11

Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness where he undergoes a time of temptation. He is challenged to perform miracles to gratify himself, test God and worship the devil. On each occasion, Jesus uses Scripture to help him overcome the temptations. The devil leaves him and he is assisted by angels

Now read **Matthew 4.1-11** see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

These temptations examine Jesus' relationship with his Father. He knows that he can rely on the word of God to sustain him. He is also confident in his Father's love recognising that he will follow his mission to the end, remaining loyal to his Father.



With your family or friends, find some Bible verses that might be helpful in times of testing – e.g. Psalm 141.3; James 4.7-8; Hebrews 2.18 (use an internet search to help you find others). Write the verses out, fold them up, put them in a hat. Draw one each at random. Try to think of creative ways to help each other learn the verse – e.g. with a mime or dance moves, or a cartoon drawing. Play this more than once to see how many verses you can learn in a week.



What temptations can you see in this painting?

## Write

This week's Bible passages invite us to explore who we trust in testing times. Despite severe temptation, Jesus put his wholehearted trust in God. Try writing an acrostic poem using each letter of TRUST to start a line – e.g. T=Truthful, R=Reliable – to remind you of God's trustworthiness. Keep it somewhere prominent to inspire you when you are facing difficult times. Can you write a different poem for each day of the week?

## Prayer



I wonder if Jesus modelled the Lord's Prayer on his time spent in the wilderness? So much of it fits with his experience. Use the Lord's Prayer as your daily prayer this week, but challenge yourself to do it in different ways – e.g. by learning it in sign language <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5INr-nOEmyE>

or another spoken language [https://www.wordproject.org/bibles/resources/our\\_father/in\\_many\\_languages.htm](https://www.wordproject.org/bibles/resources/our_father/in_many_languages.htm)

or using actions. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOugEQpcc\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOugEQpcc_k)

Alternatively, say each line really slowly, asking God to highlight a particular aspect of it for you to focus on each day. Is there anything God is asking you to do as a result of this prayer?



## LOOK



There are a variety of images available on the internet depicting Jesus' temptations. Here are links to three (by Salvador Dali, O'Donnell and Briton Riviere). Use these images as a talking/thinking point. Reflect on how they depict temptation. What do they show Jesus wrestling with? What do they make you want to say to Jesus? Why not paint or draw your own picture after reading the passage again. Let all these images become a stimulus for prayer.

<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/salvador-dali-jesus-is-tempted-by-satan>

[https://outsidein.org.uk/galleries/odonnell/attachment/image\\_631/](https://outsidein.org.uk/galleries/odonnell/attachment/image_631/)

<https://www.heritage-print.com/christ-wilderness-1898-1912-14911384.html>

## RESIST



Practise resistance using your favourite chocolate bar or other indulgence (e.g. a favourite game on your phone...or anything). Choose a day when you are at home most of the time. Put your treat near you all through the day. How do you feel when you see it there? Write a prayer to say every time you're tempted to enjoy the treat. Are you able to resist? At the end of the day, ask yourself: What have I learnt about myself and God?

## Matthew 4.1-11

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

**T**hen the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tested. To be tested by the devil. For 40 days and for 40 nights Jesus ate nothing and, after that, he was so, so hungry. Then the devil came to him and said,

'If you are God's Son, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.'

But Jesus answered, 'It is written in the Scriptures, "No one can live only on food. They need every word that God speaks."'

Next the devil took Jesus to the holy city and put him on the highest part of the Temple, saying to him,

"If you are God's Son, throw yourself down from here. It is written in the Scriptures that God will tell his angels to catch you in their arms, so that you won't even hurt your foot on a stone."

Again Jesus answered him, 'It is written in the Scriptures, "Do not try to test God."'

Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms on earth and their power.

'All this is yours,' he said, 'if you will fall down and worship me.'

Jesus answered, 'Go away, Satan! It is written in the Scriptures, "Worship the Lord your God and serve only him."'

Then the devil left Jesus and, suddenly angels arrived to take care of him.

Matthew 4.1-11



### Did you know?

- Satan means the devil, the evil one, an enemy of God.

## Matthew 4.1-11 (NRSV)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."'

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will

bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.