

}\. Good Shepherd
Story of Jesus

J eS1JS in the Wilderness

Adapted by:
Brenda J. Stobbe

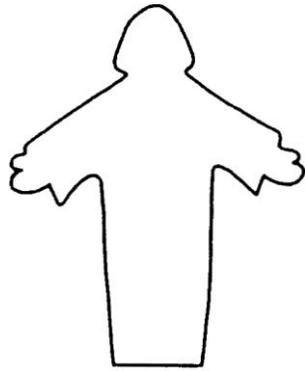
Illustrations by:
Jennifer Schoeneberg

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JESUS IN WILDERNESS MATERIALS

- medium wicker basket to hold:

- wooden Jesus figure
- wooden temple
- 3 stones



Jesus

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS •... MATTHEW 4:1-11

ACTIONS

After speaking, get the story from its shelf.
Return to your spot in the circle.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence while you reverently touch the wooden figure to center yourself and the children.

Place the Jesus figure in the center of the storytelling area. Place the three stones around him.

Shake your head.

Touch the stones as you speak.

Shake your head once, firmly.

Place the temple to right center of the area and put Jesus on top of it.

Again shake your head once.

Move Jesus to left center.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me while I find all the words to this story?

After Jesus had been baptized by John, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness.

For forty days and forty nights he ate no food.

When he was hungry the one who tells lies came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, make these stones into bread."

But Jesus said, "No. The scriptures say that people don't live by bread alone but by all the words of God."

Then the one who tells lies took him to Jerusalem and set him on top of the temple.

Then the evil one said, "If you are really the Son of God, throw yourself down and God's angels will catch you and save you. "

But Jesus shook his head and said, "The scriptures say that we shouldn't test God."

Finally the one who tells lies took Jesus to the top of a mountain. From there Jesus could see all the kingdoms of the land.

Sweep your arm from left to right to show ALL the kingdoms.

With both hands push an imaginary person away.

Place Jesus, the temple and the three stones back into the basket.

After speaking, carry the basket back to its shelf.

Dismiss the children to their work ONLY after everyone has had a chance to choose what they will do.

Then the one who tells lies said, "If you fall down and worship me, I will give you all these kingdoms."

Then Jesus said, "Go away teller of lies, for the scriptures say that we shall worship only the Lord, our God. "

The one who tells lies left and God sent angels to comfort Jesus and make him feel better.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder how hungry you would feel if you didn't eat for forty days?

I wonder if God was happy when Jesus didn't worship the one who tells lies?

I wonder if the angels who came to Jesus were the same ones who sang to the shepherds when he was born?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around the circle and choose what we will do.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS TEACHER HELPS

This can be a very difficult lesson to teach because it deals with a personified evil. We have chosen to use the term "the one who tells lies" or "the evil one", rather than the name Satan. The reason for doing this is to help the children understand the nature of this evil. In the wilderness Satan tempted Jesus with untruths and half-truths. Jesus found his strength in the responses of the scriptures.

Note that the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness. He was brought to the wilderness for a specific purpose. And Jesus did not go against that purpose. I believe that after his time in the wilderness Jesus came away with a clear understanding of what his ministry and time on earth was to be about. All in his life prepared him to face the tempter and he was able to withstand the real temptations the evil one put to him.

By this time Jesus understood his power. He had the ability to turn stones to bread or to use his great powers to rule kingdoms. But Jesus did not let himself be taken in by the temptations of this world. Rather, he came back to Satan each time with the words he had learned in the synagogue and at his mother's knee in Nazareth.

Notice that God did not intervene at any time in the temptations. Not until Jesus had run off the one who tells lies did God send the angels to minister to Jesus. Jesus, like each of us, had been given all the tools and skills he needed to face temptation. But, he had to do it on his own. When we each face temptation it finally comes down to us and the one who tells lies. No one else is responsible for the outcome of that situation.

As we begin the wondering questions we are asking children, most of whom have never missed a meal out of necessity, to imagine hunger. Their responses will be limited. The purpose of the question is to help them to begin to think of what hunger, real hunger, would be like.

The second question is included because I encourage children to wonder about God's feelings. I think it's helpful for them to believe that God is happy and sad. If God has feelings, then God can understand our feelings.

The final question is just for fun. I like to think that maybe those same angels who appeared to the shepherds came back to the now grown baby and comforted him after his time of temptation. The children may have totally different ideas, but the question should stimulate their imagination.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

At the time when Jesus' life was most difficult there was no one around from his family or friends that could help him. Think of a time when you had to be completely on your own. How did it feel?

Jesus was tempted with many things in the wilderness. It was not easy for him to turn down all those things. What things are hard for you to turn down?

Jesus had to be a very strong person to resist the temptations in the wilderness. When are you strong? When do you wish you could be stronger?

If Jesus had taken one of the temptations offered to him, would God still have loved him?