First Sunday of Lent, Cycle C

Sunday, March 9, 2025

**First Reading**
*Deuteronomy 26:4-10*
Moses describes the offering of praise for God's deliverance of Israel.

**Responsorial Psalm**
*Psalm 91:1-2,10-11,12-13,14-15*
A prayer for God's protection

**Second Reading**
*Romans 10:8-13*
Paul teaches that we are saved by faith.

**Gospel Reading**
*Luke 4:1-13*
In the desert, Jesus is tempted by the devil.

**Background on the Gospel Reading**

In each of the three Synoptic Gospels, after his baptism, Jesus is reported to have spent forty days in the desert, fasting and praying. In Luke and in Matthew, the devil presents three temptations to Jesus. The devil tempts Jesus to use his power to appease his hunger, he offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus will worship him, and he tempts Jesus to put God's promise of protection to the test. In each case, Jesus resists, citing words from Scripture to rebuke the devil's temptation.

Each temptation that Jesus faces offers insight into the spirituality we hope to develop as we keep the forty days of the Season of Lent. We can trust God to provide for our material needs. We worship God because God alone has dominion over us and our world. We can trust God to be faithful to his promises. Jesus' rejection of the devil's temptations shows that he will not put God to the test. Grounding himself on the Word and authority of Scripture, Jesus rebukes the devil by his confidence in God's protection and faithfulness.

This Gospel highlights for us one of the central themes of the Season of Lent. We are dependent upon God for all that we have and all that we are. Anything that leads us to reject this dependency or to distrust its sufficiency, is a temptation from the devil.

Luke ends his report of Jesus' temptation in the desert by noting that the devil departs for a time. The implication is that the devil will return. Jesus knows that he will be tempted again in the Garden of Gethsemane. The depth of Jesus' trust in God is shown most fully when Jesus rejects the temptation to turn away from the task God has given to him. Jesus' final rebuke of the devil is his sacrifice on the Cross.

Jesus' responses to the temptations of the devil teach us how we can respond to temptation. As we start our journey through Lent, this Sunday's Gospel calls us to adopt the same confidence that Jesus had in the face of temptation: God's word alone will suffice, God's promise of protection can be trusted, and God alone is God.

**Gospel Reading**[Luke 4:1-13](http://www.usccb.org/bible/luke/4%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
In the desert, Jesus is tempted by the devil.

**Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)**

Younger children have a sense of right and wrong and are beginning to develop their consciences. Help them see that Jesus is our guide to living a holy life and trusting in God.

**Materials Needed**

* a green “Go” sign and a red “Stop” sign made from colored paper or posterboard

**Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**

1. Show children the Go and Stop signs. Say: **Jesus loves us and calls us to make good choices. He teaches us how to live happy and holy lives. Sometimes we might be tempted to do something that we know is wrong.**(Hold up the Stop sign.) **We show our trust in God when we make a good choice instead.** (Hold up the Go sign.)
2. Hold up both the Go and Stop signs. Say: **I’ll tell you about a child. If the child is going to make a good choice, point to the Go sign. If the child is tempted to make a bad choice, point to the Stop sign.**Give children these scenarios. After each “Go” answer, say, **“Yes, the child made a good choice and showed trust in God.”**After each “Stop” answer, ask: **What choice can the child make to show trust in God?**
• **Paul is thinking about keeping a toy that doesn’t belong to him.**(Stop!)
• **Miguel finds Rachel’s new game and gives it back to her.**(Go!)
• **Sarah is tempted to tell a lie so she won’t get in trouble.**(Stop!)
• **Maria wants to watch TV instead of doing her chores.**(Stop!)
• **Carlos shares his snack with his little brother.**(Go!)
3. Say: **Let’s hear about a time that Jesus was tempted by the Devil.**
4. Read aloud today’s Gospel, Luke 4:1–13.
5. Say: **The Devil tempted Jesus three times.**Ask: **Did Jesus give in to temptation, or did he trust in God?**(He trusted in God.) **Jesus showed that he loved and trusted God. Every time we make a good choice, we show our trust in God too. We can ask Jesus to help us make the right choice.**
6. Conclude in prayer thanking Jesus for showing us how to trust God and asking him to help us choose to do what we know is right.

**Gospel Reading**[Luke 4:1-13](http://www.usccb.org/bible/luke/4%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
In the desert, Jesus is tempted by the devil.

**Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)**

Older children are learning to distinguish between the things they need and the things they want. We can help them to resist negative temptations by teaching them to distinguish between needs and wants.

**Materials Needed**

* Poster with two columns: title one column “Things We Need” and the second column “Things We Want”
* Magazines or catalogues
* Scissors
* Glue
* Markers

**Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**

1. Say: ***It is easy for us to confuse our needs and our wants. Many of the things we need are provided to us so readily that we seldom think about these things; we take them for granted. We sometimes wish for more than we need and are easily tempted to confuse things we want for things we need.***
2. Prepare a poster with two columns. Title one column “Things We Need” and the second column “Things We Want.” Tell the children to identify two or three things that they would place in each column. Distribute magazines and catalogues, scissors, and glue. Suggest that the children might find an image to represent each of these things in the magazines or catalogues. Tell them to cut out and place these images in the appropriate column of the poster. If necessary, allow them to write a single word describing what each cutout picture represents. Display the finished poster.
3. Introduce today's Gospel. Say: ***On the first Sunday of Lent, we hear about how Jesus was tempted by the devil in the desert. One way to think about the temptations described in this Gospel is to describe them as temptations to want more than we need. Let's listen carefully to this reading and think about how the devil tempted Jesus and how Jesus responded.***
4. Ask a volunteer to read aloud this Gospel, Luke 4:1-13.
5. Ask: ***What were the three things that the devil tempted Jesus to do? What did the devil say that Jesus would show or receive if he gave in to each temptation?***(turn stone to bread to prove he was the Son of God; worship the devil and so receive power and glory; jump off a high place to test God) ***Did Jesus need to show or receive any of the things the devil proposed?*** (no)
6. Say: ***Jesus didn't need to prove that he was the Son of God, he didn't need power and glory, and he didn't need to test God. Jesus knew that God would give him all he really needed. Jesus wants us to know this, too. During Lent we can practice resisting the temptation to think that we need more than we have been given. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help us to correct our perceptions about the things we “need” and the things we “want.” They remind us of our dependence on God and they help us to remember that God gives us everything we need.***
7. Say: ***When Jesus rebuked the devil he quoted Scripture. Each of these Scripture quotations was about having trust in God. Is there a word or phrase that you can use to remind yourself to trust God in all things?*** Invite the children to identify a word or phrase that will help them remember to trust God to give them everything that they need. Suggest that they use this word or phrase as a prayer during Lent.
8. Conclude in prayer. Say: ***When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask for God's help to resist temptation in our lives. We say, “Lead us not into temptation.” Let's pray this prayer together remembering that God gives us everything we really need.*** Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

**Gospel Reading**[Luke 4:1-13](http://www.usccb.org/bible/luke/4%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
In the desert, Jesus is tempted by the devil.

**Making the Connection (Grades 7,8,9)**

In the decisions they make each day, young people show their values and priorities. We can invite them to reflect on what values they demonstrate by the choices they make in their lives.

**Materials Needed**

* Paper
* Pencils

**Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**

1. Ask the students to identify some of the ways that they spend their time each week. Write these things on the board as they are named and then ask the students to draw a pie chart that shows an approximation of how they spend their time during a typical week. The activities listed on the board can help them as they think about their weekly schedule.
2. Say: ***The choices that we make each day and each week tell us much about our priorities. In particular, how we choose to spend our time can tell us a lot about what is important to us. As you look at your pie chart, what do your choices tell you about your priorities?***Allow time for quiet reflection.
3. Say: ***One of the greatest temptations we face is to be unreflective about the use of our time. This temptation can lead us to neglect spending time and energy on important things. Let's think of some examples.*** (For example, sometimes we are tempted to devote more time to watching television than doing our homework or helping with household chores.)
4. Introduce today's Gospel. Say: ***On the first Sunday of Lent, we hear about how Jesus was tempted by the devil in the desert. In each of the temptations described, Jesus was faced with the choice of spending his time and energy on activities that would lead him away from God.***
5. Read aloud this Gospel, Luke 4:1-13.
6. Ask: **What were the three things that the devil tempted Jesus to do?** (turn stone to bread to prove he was the Son of God; worship the devil to receive power and glory; jump off a high place to test God) ***What did Jesus show was of greatest importance to him in the choices that he made?*** (Jesus chose to trust God and to reflect this value in each of his choices.)
7. Say: ***During Lent we can think more carefully about how we spend our time. We might choose to spend more time and energy on activities that lead us to God. Jesus' response to the devil's temptations reminds us that God is to take priority in our lives. Our Lenten practices prepare us to choose God above everything else in our lives.***
8. Encourage the students to write personal prayers for Lent indicating things that they will choose and things that they will give up to show that God has the place of greatest importance in their lives. Close by praying together the [Act of Love](https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers/prayers-every-catholic-should-know/act-of-love).
9. **Family Connection**
10. In Luke's Gospel, the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert appears just after Jesus' baptism and before Jesus begins his public ministry. We can imagine this as a time of transition, a turning point in Jesus' life. Perhaps we can liken it to one of the important turning points in our own lives: the decision to marry, the birth of a child, the acceptance of a new job, or the decision to move to a new home. After the moment of decision, having reached the point of no return, we sometimes begin to wonder if we are prepared and ready for the task before us. Turning points can be times of doubt and insecurity. Jesus' response to the temptations of the devil offers an example for responding in faith when our doubts and insecurities tempt us to distrust God's sufficiency. Jesus rebukes the devil by quoting Scripture. Each citation is an affirmation of trust in God. We learn to trust in big things by practicing trust in little things. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving invite us to trust God in these small ways. They remind us that God will suffice for us. They prepare us to trust in God in all things, especially in moments of doubt and uncertainty.
11. As a family, talk about ways in which trust has been built among members of the family. Observe how being trustworthy in small matters enables us to trust one another in more important matters. Offer specific examples if possible (e.g., children who establish their responsibility in household tasks can be granted greater independence and freedom to choose how they perform these tasks). Today's Gospel shows us how Jesus trusted God in all things. Read aloud today's Gospel, Luke 4:1-13. Discuss how Jesus showed his trust in God when he resisted the devil's temptations. Invite family members to name times when they have trusted God in matters small or large. Write a family prayer together. You might write the prayer so that each line begins with a letter in the word “trust.” Pray this prayer together.