

WEEK 7: CONCERNING THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST & THE FIRST DISCIPLES

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

Why does God allow temptation?
Who were the first disciples of Jesus?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Icon, Bible, worksheet

Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 50-61

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 38-43

Homilies XIII - XIV on Matthew by St. John Chrysostom

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

Matthew 4:1-11 ~ *While reading these verses, show the icon of the Temptation of Christ from St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, Italy.*

Through His own life, Jesus leads us by example for how we should live our lives. As we read the story of the temptation of Christ by the devil, we learn many important lessons:

Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. He is alone and the devil is both curious to see if this man is truly the Son of God (because he heard the voice of God at Jesus' baptism saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.") and also seizes the opportunity to test Jesus.

How did the devil tempt Jesus? First, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." We all need to eat, even Jesus - but one loaf of bread would be enough for Jesus' needs. The devil tells him to turn multiple stones into loaves of bread. He does this to see if Jesus will eat more bread than is necessary - indulging in gluttony. Jesus does not do as the devil asks and instead shows self control by way of His fasting.

As an example, a waiter approaches your table and asks everyone sitting with you, "Would you like some dessert tonight?" Then you hear someone at your table respond, "That's tempting, but no thank you."

We know that having dessert after a meal is not necessary. Our bodies do not *need* a sugary treat. In fact, if we eat too many treats, we can damage our bodies. This is an example of a person facing a choice - indulging in the desire to have a delicious dessert after dinner or restraining oneself from unnecessary foods. Sometimes these choices are easier than others, but there are times when they are incredibly hard and we struggle to find the strength to resist the temptation placed before us.

Our parents make sure we practice learning how to read and how to solve math problems. They do this so we will be prepared later when we need to read a book, review a contract for buying a car, as well as, calculate if we've been charged the correct correct amount on our electric bill or paid the right amount on our paycheck. We practice reading and math from a young age in order to get good at it and be prepared for when a situation arises and we need these skills.

The same is true with fasting. We are provided with opportunities to learn and practice how to fast in an age appropriate way - from the time we are learning our ABC's and counting numbers. We are learning to not give into everything we want and this is incredibly difficult!! Fasting is as necessary a life skill as learning to read or solve math problems.

Additionally, temptations can be subtle or obvious as we face them throughout our lives. We have to make choices all the time when we go to the store and choose what goes into our carts. Are we going to buy everything we want or only the stuff we need? Are we going to choose to stay home and relax or put forth effort to go to church? We need to practice not giving into the little things that tempt us in order to say no to the big things that will tempt us. (When you're first starting to exercise, you lift light weights before you lift the heavy weights. Fasting is strength training for dealing with temptations.) What's going to happen when you go to a party and friends are pressuring you to try drugs or alcohol with them? First of all, it's incredibly important to surround yourself with like-minded friends. Good friends will help support you in making the best choices. You don't want to purposely place yourself in tempting situations simply because you want to be accepted by the popular kids. Secondly, when you're faced with temptations (and you will!), you want to be strong enough not to give into anything that is damaging to you.

God allows us to experience temptations because they strengthen us. Every time we choose not to give into the small things we want in our lives, we get stronger and hopefully will be able to resist the big temptations in our lives. What are some small temptations we face in our daily lives? What are some big ones?

Next, the devil takes Jesus to a high point on top of the temple in Jerusalem. The devil challenges Jesus again - IF He is the Son of God - then He should throw Himself down to the ground from this high spot because the angels will catch Him. Jesus responds humbly back to the devil, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." The miracles of Jesus were always for the benefit of others, never for Himself. Think about the miracles we've read in the Bible. Each of them are subtle - the water turns to wine without any performance, countless people are healed by a few words from Jesus and sometimes without any at all - as with the woman who simply touched Jesus' clothes and was instantly healed. If Jesus threw himself off of the pinnacle of the temple, it would be to show off and boast to others that He is so amazing that even angels would catch Him. But...God never casts anyone down, that is the devil's work. God always heals. He always lifts people up. We are called to do the same as Jesus - to use our gifts and talents in support of one another, without ever shining a boastful or prideful spotlight on ourselves. What are some ways we are faced with the temptation today to show off by shining a spotlight on ourselves?

Finally, the devil takes Jesus up on a very high mountain and tells Jesus that if He worships him, then the devil will give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. This is a temptation all of us face - to turn away from God and seek high status in the world - through the best job, the best house, acquiring the most money, etc. Jesus reminds the devil that it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve." In Matthew 6:24, Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." What does this mean?

The devil leaves at this point and the angels come to minister to Jesus. St. Theophylact tells us that the angels will also serve us after our victory over temptations.

In these three events, Jesus shows us how to battle:

- **Gluttony** (love of food) with **Fasting**
- **Vainglory** (pride over one's own achievements or abilities) with **Faith and Humility**
- **Avarice** (desire to gain and hoard wealth) with **Detachment or Asceticism**

Directions: Your teacher will divide you up into groups. Using the lesson provided, sketch what happened during each of the temptations and write a caption for each:

What was the 1st temptation of Christ?	What was the 2nd temptation of Christ?	What was the 3rd temptation of Christ?
Caption:	Caption:	Caption:

Directions: Jesus did not give into any of the temptations of the devil. Discuss the three passions Jesus conquered during each of the temptations and how we can work towards conquering these passions in our lives as well. (Use the lesson as a guide)

1. What passion was conquered by Jesus?	2. What passion was conquered by Jesus?	3. What passion was conquered by Jesus?
1. How do we practice conquering this passion in our own life? Give an example.	2. How do we practice conquering this passion in our own life? Give an example.	3. How do we practice conquering this passion in our own life? Give an example.



WEEK 7: CONCERNING THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST & THE FIRST DISCIPLES

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

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Directions: As a class, discuss and identify the three events that occurred between Jesus and the devil in the wilderness. Write the students' answers on the white board.

What was the 1st temptation of Christ?	What was the 2nd temptation of Christ?	What was the 3rd temptation of Christ?

Directions: Jesus did not give into any of the temptations of the devil. Discuss the three passions Jesus conquered during each of the temptations and how we can work towards conquering these passions in our lives as well. (Use the lesson as a guide)

1. What passion was conquered by Jesus?	2. What passion was conquered by Jesus?	3. What passion was conquered by Jesus?
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WEEK 7: CONCERNING THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST & THE FIRST DISCIPLES

3RD & 4TH GRADE

GOALS

Why does God allow temptation?
Who were the first disciples of Jesus?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Icons, Bible, Map of the Holy Land, Timeline Paper, Pencils

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FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED AS DISCIPLES

Matthew 4:18-22 ~ *While reading these verses, show the icons of Sts. Peter, Andrew, James, and John.*

VOCABULARY BUILDING:

On the white board, write each of the following vocabulary words and ask your students what they think each of the words means. This will help them gain confidence in decoding these words correctly when reading them in the Bible.

disciple: A person who leaves everything behind and follows Christ.

Sea of Galilee: A freshwater lake in Israel

Pull out your laminated maps of the Holy Land and ask your students to find the Sea of Galilee.

Peter and his brother, Andrew, are fishing in their boat on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus asks them to be His disciples. He tells them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

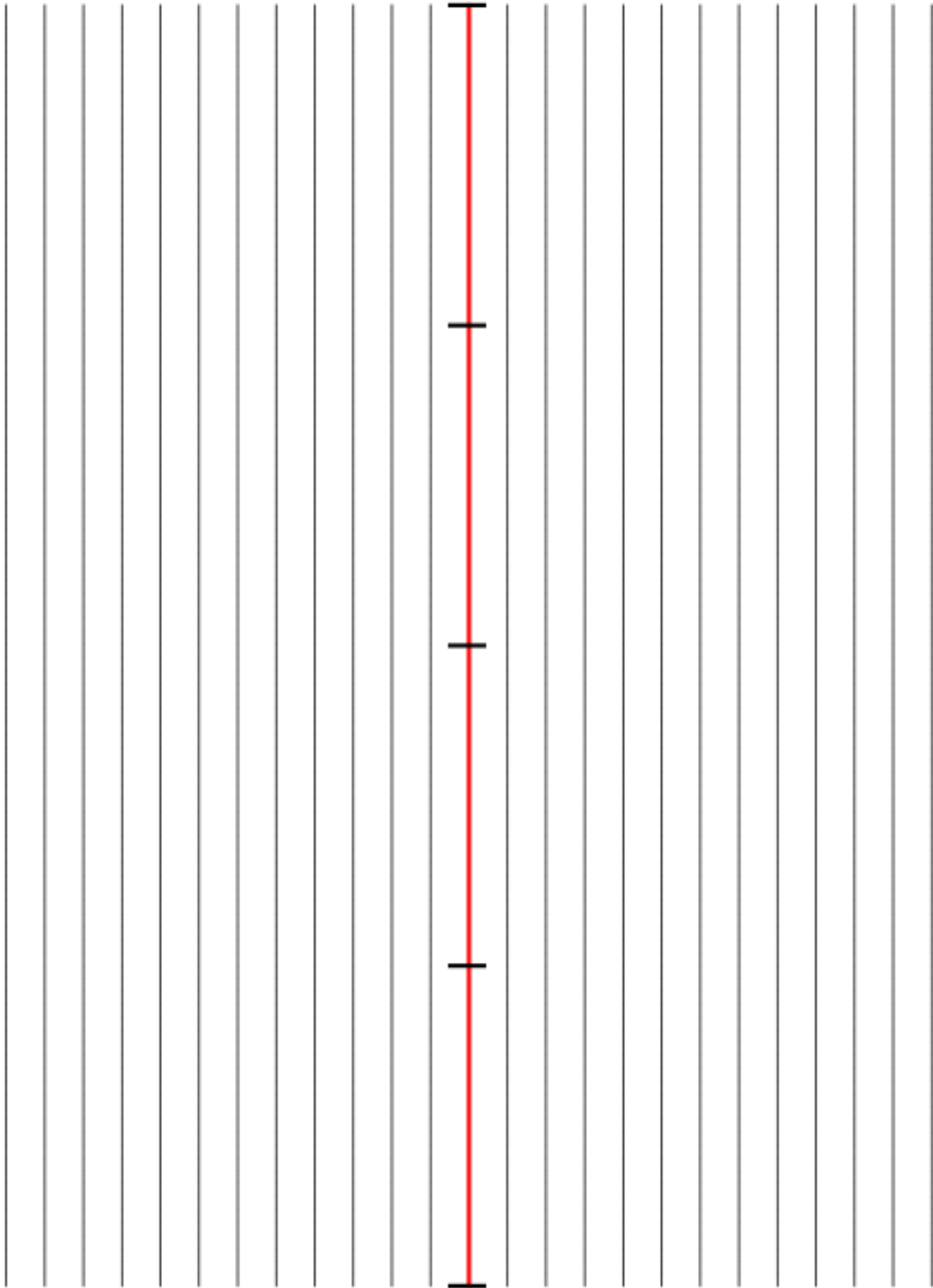
A fisherman is someone who catches fish from the water. What does Jesus mean when He asks Saints Peter and Andrew to become fishers of men? *(He is telling them they will no longer be catching fish, but “catching” people instead. They will follow Jesus as He’s teaching and healing the huge crowds that follow Him, and then later they will travel great distances to teach people about Jesus.)*

Jesus continues walking and sees two more brothers - Saints James and John - and asks them to be His disciples as well. Jesus has gathered the first four of His twelve disciples from ordinary fisherman. These men were working on their boats when Jesus approached them and they left everything behind to follow Him. We learn here that the most important thing we do everyday is to place God first in our lives. What are some ways we can do that? *(Saying a prayer before we go to school, saying a prayer before we eat breakfast, honoring our father and mother with a hug or kiss before we go to school, getting ready for liturgy on Sunday mornings without being told by our parents)*

TIMELINE:

Each student will keep track of the sequence of events and the people we read about in the Gospel of Matthew this year using a timeline. Above the line for each event on the timeline, each student can either sketch the event or person with colored pencils or use clipart provided by the teacher. Under the visual depiction of the event, write a short description of what happened and who was present.

- Jesus’ Genealogy (A list of Jesus’ ancestors)
- Jesus is Born in Bethlehem (The Nativity of Christ)
- The Magi (Wise Men) Bring Jesus Gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh
- Joseph, Mary, and Jesus Go to Egypt
- Herod kills all the boys in Bethlehem and the surrounding area who are 2 and younger
- Joseph, Mary, and Jesus return to Israel and live in the region of Galilee, in the city of Nazareth
- John the Baptist baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River
- Satan tempts Jesus: 1) Asks Jesus to turn stones into bread 2) Tells Jesus to jump off of the top of the Jewish Temple 3) Brings Jesus to the top of a high mountain and offers Him all the kingdoms if Jesus will worship him - and Jesus does none of these things.
- Jesus begins teaching the people in Galilee
- Jesus calls His first four disciples: (brothers and fishermen) Peter and Andrew and also (fishermen and brothers) James and John (the Evangelist who writes the Gospel of John)



TIMELINE EVENTS

Students are encouraged to draw their own events for the timeline. It does not need to be as detailed as an icon. The act of drawing their own visuals encourages the brain to store the information in long-term memory because they had to neurologically form the images themselves instead of simply cutting out an image.

Make sure to have the students label what is happening during each event and who was present.

JESUS CALLS PETER AND ANDREW TO BE HIS DISCIPLES



Photo by Nick Thompson
Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy

Saints Peter and Andrew were brothers and the first two Disciples of Jesus.

SAINT JAMES THE GREAT



SAINT JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN



Saints James and John were brothers. Jesus asked both of them to be His Disciples.

WEEK 7: CONCERNING THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST & THE FIRST DISCIPLES

1ST & 2ND GRADE

GOALS

Why does God allow temptation?
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LESSON

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CLASS ROUTINE

Continue routine - move photo, light candle, venerate icon, prayer before beginning lesson

FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED AS DISCIPLES

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VOCABULARY BUILDING:

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A fisherman is someone who catches fish from the water. What does Jesus mean when He asks Saints Peter and Andrew to become fishers of men? *(He is telling them they will no longer be catching fish, but "catching" people instead. They will follow Jesus as He's teaching and healing the huge crowds that follow Him, and then later they will travel great distances to teach people about Jesus.)*

Jesus continues walking and sees two more brothers - Saints James and John - and asks them to be His disciples as well. Jesus has gathered the first four of His twelve disciples from ordinary fisherman. These men were working on their boats when Jesus approached them and they left everything behind to follow Him. We learn here that the most important thing we do everyday is to place God first in our lives. What are some ways we can do that? *(Saying a prayer before we go to school, saying a prayer before we eat breakfast, honoring our father and mother with a hug or kiss before we go to school, getting ready for liturgy on Sunday mornings without being told by our parents)*

Students can retell the story to you using the felt Bible characters.

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Continue practice singing, "Lord, have mercy" in multiple languages

JESUS CALLS PETER AND ANDREW TO BE HIS DISCIPLES



Photo by Nick Thompson
Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy

Saints Peter and Andrew were brothers and the first two Disciples of Jesus.

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WEEK 7: CONCERNING THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST & THE FIRST DISCIPLES

PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

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