

# CHRIST'S BAPTISM, TEMPTATIONS, & MINISTRY

## THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITH SAINT LUKE



**Theophany:**  
manifestation of  
God  
~  
Baptism of Christ



**Temptation:**  
the attraction of sin



**Healing:**  
the act or process of  
regaining health  
~  
Christ is the  
physician of our  
souls & bodies

### CHRIST'S BAPTISM

Read Luke 3:21-22

Take a look at the icon of Theophany. Last year, we learned how to read all the details of the icon. What do you remember?

Today, we want to focus on one aspect in particular from Luke's Gospel in the icon - the manifestation of the Holy Trinity. We see God the Father depicted at the top, center of the icon, "...and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You

1

#### GOALS

What is Theophany?  
How do we handle  
temptation? Christ is  
our physician.

2

#### AT CHURCH

Theophany is a major  
feast day.  
We go to Confession for  
healing.

3

#### AT HOME

Fasting, Prayer, and  
Almsgiving

are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’ “ We see the Holy Spirit depicted in the center of the icon as well, “And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him” - “Him” referring to Jesus.

## SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

Read Luke 4:1-13

This particular icon of the Temptation of Christ (on the first page of this lesson) is from Saint Mark’s Basilica in Venice, Italy. The iconographer chose to depict the account from Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew and Luke list the same three temptations, but they do not place them in the same order, which is fine. It really doesn’t matter which of the temptations occurred first. It’s important to understand that they agreed on the same three temptations and the lessons we will learn from this event below.

(Extended learning opportunity: Read both Matthew 4:1-11 & Luke 4:1-13 to understand how the icon depicts Matthew’s account of the Temptation of Christ.)

Satan was present at Jesus’ baptism and is perplexed because He heard God the Father say this was His beloved Son, yet Jesus is fully human.



The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness and Jesus is all alone when the devil comes to test Him. Is Jesus really the Son of God?

## EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

*The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor*  
by Fr. Lawrence Farley pages 88 - 114

*The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke*  
by Blessed Theophylact pages 44 - 55

*God, Where is the Wound: Healing Remedies for Today’s World*  
by Schemanun Siluana Vlad

Search the Scriptures Live Podcast: [Temptations in the Christian Life](#)  
by Dr. Jeannie Constantinou



All three of the synoptic gospels tell us about Jesus' temptations by Satan in the desert, although Matthew and Luke provide us with more details than Mark. Satan tests Jesus three times: 1) Commands him to turn stones into bread 2) Takes Jesus high onto a mountain and shows Him all the surrounding kingdoms, then promises to give Jesus authority over all of them if only Jesus will worship Satan. 3) Then Satan brings Jesus to the very top pinnacle of the Temple and tells Jesus to throw Himself down and see if the angels will catch Him.

Satan tests Jesus, "If You are the Son of God..." as he attempts to persuade Jesus to prove Himself by performing with a miracle. However, Jesus never does anything of the sort.

### Jesus teaches us some things here:

- We *will* be tempted after our baptism.
- How do we deal with these temptations when they occur?

Jesus responds calmly and with meekness, never showing off, teaching us that we should never brag or display our talents. Our talents should be used for the glory of God, not for our own glory.

Jesus had been praying and fasting before the devil came to Him. Both fasting and prayer help us, along with humility, because we learn to recognize our own weakness and our need for Christ's help in all things.

Additionally, we learn that the devil cannot cast us down. He told Jesus, "...throw Yourself down" from the top of the Temple, but he didn't throw Jesus down himself. The devil can attempt to persuade us, but he can only make suggestions to us. We do harm when we listen to him.

### What are some ways that we might face temptations?

- **Despair:** I'll never be able to do this. This is too hard. I'm not good enough. I'm not making a difference in anyone's life, including my own.

Mother Siluana provides us with a way to seek happiness: [A Simple Recipe for Happiness](#) (YouTube Video)

- **Thoughts:** When we allow ourselves to entertain fantasies (ways we wish our life could be "better"); judging others around us; justifying to ourselves why we don't have time to go to church; etc.

St. Paisios instructs us, " 'The best way to face attacks of thoughts,' he taught, 'is contempt. You should treat them like they are not the least bit important. It's dangerous to talk with a thought - a hundred lawyers together could not beat one little demon.' " (*St. Paisios of Mt. Athos*, Chapter: *Watchfulness*, page 460)

- **Passions:** *Food* (when made the object of our desire), *video games*, *social media*, *electronic time* (when we make them the priority in our life above all else - e.g. we don't look up when someone talks to us; we don't take care of our bodies or spend time with people around us because we don't want to stop what we're doing on the electronic; when we neglect doing our school work or chores to spend time on an electronic), *shopping* (when we buy way more than we need), etc

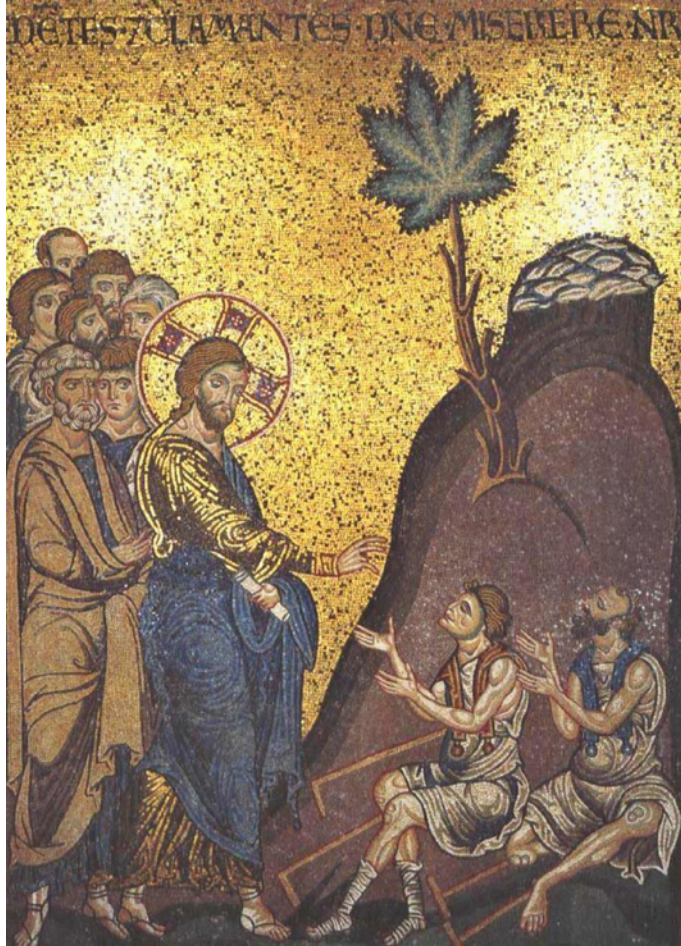
Saint Paisios often read St. Isaac's works and put them into practice, "He was quite pleased to sleep on his ascetic bed, with a log as a pillow and planks for a mattress. His back became black with bruises, but he was full of joy, having read Abba Isaac's words that 'Self-love precedes all the passions, and scorn of ease precedes all the virtues,' because 'ease nourishes and increases [the passions]'. (*St. Paisios of Mt. Athos*, Chapter: *An Unquenchable Thirst for Asceticism*, page 396)

# JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

Read Luke 4:40

*And while the sun was setting, all who had any ailment with various diseases brought them to Him, and laying His hands upon each one of them, He was healing them.*

Mother Siluana explains that what is distinctive in Orthodoxy is the view of the Church as healing. The first work of Jesus as he begins his public ministry was to heal us. After Christ's temptations in the desert, he begins healing people: the man possessed by a demon, Peter's mother-in-law who was sick, and then goes on to heal all who were ailing with various diseases. Mother Siluana continues as she explains that if we don't see sin as an illness, then we won't be able to see our relationship with God as healing. Our healing occurs when we seek God through prayer, fasting, love for others, humility, and most especially repentance for our sins.

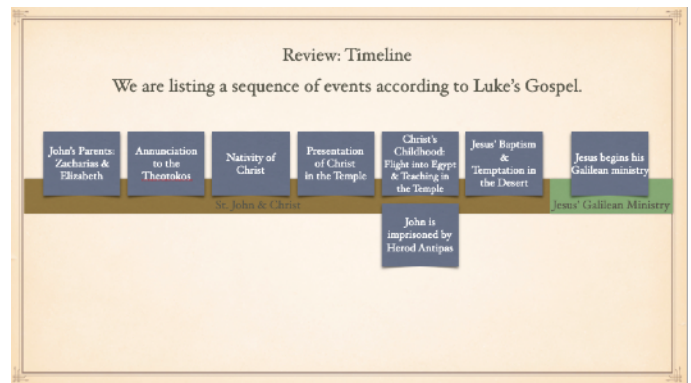


# ACTIVITIES

Timeline

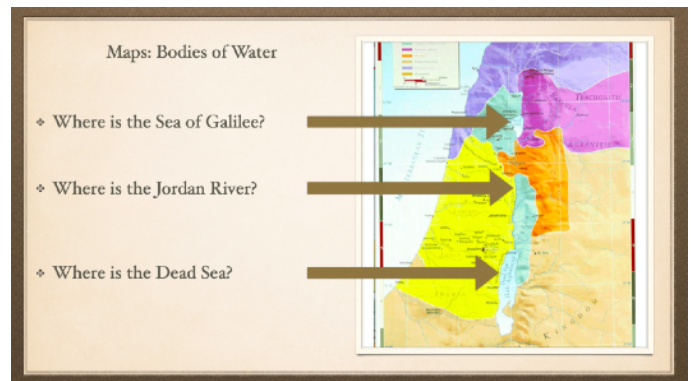
On two post-it notes, summarize Christ's baptism and temptations. Then place them on the section labeled "St. John and Jesus."

On a third post-it notes, summarize the meaning of Christ beginning his ministry by healing people. Place this post it note on the section of the timeline labeled "Christ's Ministry in Galilee."



Map of Israel

Locate the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River (where Jesus was baptized), and the Dead Sea.



SING:

**Middle School:** Save O Lord Your People

**High School:** More Honorable Than the Cherubim

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## AT HOME

### FOR PARENTS

**H**ere is where we need to help people to not think that “the demons are now imprisoning people.” I prayed a lot about this, I said: “God, what is it with these devils that enslave us? Didn’t You already free us? And I received an answer from a story in the Paterikon: “An Elder sees a demon dragging a

*Christian by a chain. And the Elder: ‘You wretched creature, this is God’s image, and he is baptized, how do you dare keep him in chains?’ And the demon replies: ‘Father, are you blind? Don’t you see that I am only dragging the chain, and he is holding on to it?’*

Schemanun Siluana Vlad

God, Where is the Wound? Healing Remedies for Today’s World

### HOME ACTIVITY #8

#### Read / listen and discuss together:

- *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis (Option: You can download from Audible and listen in the car)

#### Watch together:

- *Human Transformation through Repentance: St. Mary of Egypt* (YouTube) from Trisagion Films



