



seeking:

Who will you listen to?

children's curriculum

MATTHEW 4:1-11

by Rev. Anna Strickland

MAIN IDEA: *I can listen for the truth from people I trust.*

engaging the story

storytelling materials

- **wilderness:** Tan piece of felt, fabric, or paper.
- **Jesus, the Tempter, and angels:** Clothespin people, [Godly Play®](#) people of [God figures](#), or felt figures.
- **stones:** Small pebbles or gravel, marbles, or glass stones.
- **Temple:** Small box or wooden block.
- **mountain:** [Aquarium cave](#) or [Godly Play®](#) tomb, or papier-mâché tomb with the opening toward the back, or a large rock.



scripture retelling

*(Stage directions are in italics. Words to speak aloud are in **bold** text.)*

When Jesus had been baptized, he went into the wilderness to listen to God. *Lay down the wilderness backdrop. Move the Jesus figure onto the backdrop.*

After forty days, the Tempter came to try to trick Jesus into disobeying God. *Move the Tempter figure onto the backdrop next to Jesus.*

scripture retelling *(continued)*

The Tempter knew that after not eating for so long that Jesus would be very hungry. He told Jesus, "If you really are God's son, you could turn these rocks into bread." Place the rocks in front of Jesus.

But Jesus did not listen to the Tempter. He said, "God tells us that we do not live on bread alone." Remove the rocks.

Then the Tempter took Jesus to the very top of the tallest building in Jerusalem. Place the Temple on the backdrop and place Jesus and the Tempter on top.

And the Tempter told Jesus, "If you really are God's son, you could jump off this building and angels would catch you. The Bible says so." But Jesus did not listen to the Tempter. He said, "The Bible also says not to test God." Remove the Temple.

Then the Tempter took Jesus to the very top of a mountain where they could see all of the kingdoms of the world. Place the mountain on the backdrop and place Jesus and the Tempter on top.

The Tempter told Jesus, "I'll give you all of these kingdoms." Motion around the mountain as though showing off all of the kingdoms.

"Just bow down and worship me, and all the riches and power of the world will be yours." But Jesus did not listen to the Tempter. He said, "God tells us to worship only God." Remove the mountain.

Realizing that he could not trick Jesus into disobeying God, the Tempter left. Remove the Tempter figure.

Then angels came to take care of Jesus. Add angel figures around Jesus.

This is one of our sacred stories.

wonder wall

Ask the children what questions they have about the story. Add these questions to your "Wonder Wall." To model, you might ask some of the following questions:

- I wonder... What did the Tempter look like?
- I wonder... Was Jesus afraid when he was high up on the building?
- I wonder... How was Jesus so brave?

discussion

- Even when the Tempter quoted the Bible at Jesus, Jesus didn't listen to him. How do you think Jesus knew not to listen to the Tempter?
- How do you know who to listen to?
- Who are some people you trust?

prayer

Dear God, sometimes it is hard to know who we should listen to. Thank you for our trusted family members, friends, and teachers who show us the best way to live. Help us to listen to them like Jesus listened to you. Amen.

extension activities

Depending on time, you might add one or more of the following activities. We also recommend making storytelling materials available to children to retell the story, either as an option for independent play during the Sunday School hour, as a take-home kit, in worship bags, or any combination of these. Instructions and templates to create felt storytelling kits for children are included separately with this resource.

Activity A) Play a Game: Who Will You Listen To?

Materials:

- One set of sorting cards (*included*), or make your own sorting cards by writing messages on each card, such as the following:
 - The pastor says, "God loves you."
 - Bullies say, "You're a nerd."
 - Your family says, "You are special."
 - Kids at recess say, "Let's sneak out the gate."
 - The teacher says, "You are smart."
 - The Bible says, "Love one another."
 - A classmate says, "I'm better than you."
 - A commercial says, "This will make people like you."
 - Your friend says, "You're really great."
 - Jesus says, "Love your enemies."
 - The radio says, "Being bad is cool."
 - The TV show says, "You can do anything you set your mind to."
- Two small baskets or trays for sorting the cards (optional).

Instructions:

Print the included sorting cards on cardstock and cut them apart. Alternatively, you can make your own sorting cards using index cards. If you know of particular situations in the children's lives, you might include some relevant people and messages. Place the cards face-down on a table and invite children to take turns selecting a card and reading its message. Together as a group, determine whether this is a person or message we should listen to or not. You might have some small baskets or trays to sort the messages into, especially if children are playing independently.

Activity B) Read a Book: *Yes, I Can Listen!*

Yes, I can Listen! Written by Steve Metzger, illustrated by Susan Szecsi. Parenting Press, 2019.

This collection of short rhymes reminds us of all the good people and messages we should listen to. Read the book together or make it available for older children to read independently. You might also choose to read this book as a children's moment in worship or send a video read-aloud to parents during the week.

extension activities *(continued)*

Activity C) Creative Expression: Comic Book

Materials:

- Comic book page for each child (included).
- Pencils, crayons, and/or markers.

Instructions:

Print the included comic page for each child. Invite them to draw a comic strip version of the Bible story or another story from their own imagination where the main character chooses to listen to God or a trusted person. If there is time, invite children to share their story with the class.



about the creator

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Anna Strickland (*she/her*) looks for the Divine in the everyday like treasure in clay jars and first encountered God in the integration of her spiritual self and artistic self. She is a native Austinite and graduated from the University of Texas where she now works as a college minister, especially serving LGBTQ students.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.