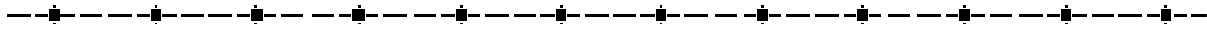


GOD'S BIG PLAN

Jesus Obeys God Matthew 3:1-4:11

Supporting Scriptures: Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:1-4:13; John 1:29-34; Psalm 91:11-12; Ezekiel 28:15-17; Isaiah 14:13-14; John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2



- Lesson Goals:**
- To see that Satan is God's enemy.
 - To see that Satan is strong, but he is no match for God.
 - To see that knowing God's word can help keep us from sin.

Scripture Memory I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't sin against you. Psalm 119:11 (NIRV)

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Tell it as a STORY, not as "He said. . . She said" or read. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

The Lesson: Let's review what we have learned so far. (Review the previous stories, focusing on the ones that specifically point to Christ's birth. Encourage more and more students to share.)

What wonderful announcement have we learned about lately? (Jesus' birth!) After Jesus was born, who announced His birth first? (An angel.) Who else shared about Jesus' birth? (The shepherds.) When Jesus was still very young, some wise men from the East came to visit. They worshipped Jesus and gave Him gifts. When the wise men left, what did an angel warn Joseph about? (To leave for Egypt because they were in trouble.) Did Joseph obey? (Yes.) Did they stay in Egypt forever? (No.) Where did they live when they returned to Israel? (Nazareth in Galilee.) What do we know about Jesus growing up? (That He always and only obeyed His parents. Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.) Beyond that, the Bible doesn't say much more about Jesus' earlier years.

Who remembers Jesus' cousin? He was born before Jesus. (John!) What do you remember about John? (He came to get people ready for Jesus.) Do you remember anything else about John? (He wore clothes made out of camel hair and he ate locusts and honey!) We also know that John began preaching. He told the people that God wanted them to be obedient. And John was baptizing people who wanted to turn away from their sins and follow God in obedience.

READ: Matthew 3:13-15 (Hold your Bible open throughout the story.)

When Jesus was about thirty years old, He left His home in Nazareth, Galilee. He walked south towards the winding Jordan River. John was there in his camel hair clothes and leather belt. He was baptizing there. Jesus walked up to John. Jesus wanted to be baptized. "I should be baptizing you," John said. But Jesus replied, "Do this for me now. It's the right thing to do to obey God." So John took Jesus into the river. John lowered Jesus all the way under the water to baptize Him. Then John brought Him right back up. At that very moment, heaven opened up. God's Spirit came down out of heaven like a dove. Then God spoke, "This is My Son and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him."

John shared with the people, "Jesus is God's Son. He was born after me, but He has been around forever. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. God wants you to know Him."

READ: Luke 4:1-2 (Hold your Bible open throughout the story.)

After Jesus was baptized, God's Spirit led Jesus into the desert. Jesus was there forty days and forty nights. That's more than a month! While He was there, He ate nothing. At the end of those forty days, Jesus was hungry. In the desert, the devil came and tempted Jesus.

First, the devil said, "If you are the Son of God tell these stones to become bread." Jesus was hungry, but more important than His hunger were the words of God, His Father. Jesus knew the things God had said, the things we now have written down for us in the Bible. Jesus answered Satan's lies with the truth, God's word.

Next, the devil took Jesus up to the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here and the angels will rescue you." But Jesus knew not to test God.

And last, the devil, that fallen angel from long ago, took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him many kingdoms. "That's all mine," he said. "If you bow down and worship me, I'll give it all to you." The prideful devil whom God had punished is telling the Creator of the Universe that he could give kingdoms to Him. Jesus ordered the devil, Satan, to get away from Him. He answered the devil, "The Bible says, 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.'"

Jesus didn't have to prove Himself to the devil. Jesus is the Son of God, but He didn't have to turn stone to bread or anything else to prove it. When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, He left until a better time. Angels came and cared for Jesus.

Review:

Let's review what you have learned. Who would like to retell the story? (Ask your group if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

In our story, we see Jesus ask to be baptized by John. Why should someone be baptized? What was it that John said? He was baptizing the people who turned away from their sins. Had Jesus sinned? (No.) Jesus was perfect. He had never sinned. So, if He had never sinned, why would He want to be baptized? (He did it because it was the right thing to do. He did it to obey God.)

Jesus is God and is perfect. We are not. You and I do bad things. We also don't do the good things we should. That is called sin. The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned, except Jesus. The Bible also tells us that what we deserve for that sin is death. Instead, God offers us life. God loves you so much that He sent His One and Only Son so that if you will believe, you can have eternal life in place of the death you deserve. Do you remember what John said about Jesus? He is the Lamb of God, like the Passover lambs, who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus died on the cross for you and for me. Three days later He came back to life! The Bible tells us that if you say with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," which means He is in control of everything, and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved! Is that something you would like to do today? If so, let's talk some more.

For those of you who have already accepted the wonderful gift God gives, what should you be doing? You should be hiding God's word in your heart. It's like getting a letter from someone you care about and reading it over and over again until you know everything it says. Do you love God? Do you want to know what He has to say to you? Do you want to stay away from sin? Then pick up your Bible, read it, and begin memorizing verses today!

**Planning for Next Week
Lesson 31 • The Twelve
John 1:35-51**

PRESCHOOL LESSON

SING: “The B-I-B-L-E”

SHARE: When Jesus was about thirty years old, He left His home in Nazareth, Galilee. He walked south towards the winding Jordan River. John was there in his camel hair clothes and leather belt. He was baptizing there. Jesus walked up to John. Jesus wanted to be baptized. “I should be baptizing you,” John said. But Jesus wanted to be baptized to obey God. So John took Jesus into the river. John lowered Jesus all the way under the water to baptize Him. Then John brought Him right back up. At that very moment, heaven opened up. God’s Spirit came down out of heaven like a dove. Then God said, “This is My Son and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him.”

After Jesus was baptized, God’s Spirit led Jesus into the desert. Jesus was there forty days and forty nights. That’s more than a month! While He was there, He ate nothing. At the end of those forty days, Jesus was hungry. In the desert, the devil came to tempt Jesus.

First, the devil said, “If you are the Son of God tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus was hungry, but more important than His hunger was his obeying God. Jesus knew the things God had said, the things we now have written down for us in the Bible. Jesus answered Satan’s lies with the truth, God’s word.

Next, the devil took Jesus up to the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here and the angels will rescue you.’ But Jesus knew not to test God.

And last, the devil, that fallen angel from long ago, took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him many kingdoms. “That’s all mine,” he said. “If you bow down and worship me, I’ll give it all to you.” Jesus ordered the devil to get away from Him. He answered the devil, “The Bible says, “Worship the God. He is the only one you should serve.”

Jesus didn’t have to prove Himself to the devil. Jesus *is* the Son of God, but He didn’t have to turn stone to bread or anything else to prove it. When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, He left until a better time and angels came and took care of Jesus.

PRAY: Thank you, God, for the Bible. Help me to obey the way Jesus did.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - Write each word of the memory verse on a paper heart. Hide the hearts around your Bible Study area. Have your students search for the hearts, ordering them as they are found. Practice saying the entire verse each time a new word is found.
- Make doves. Doves can be made with paper bags, origami, etc.
- Reenact the story. Select students to play Jesus, John, the devil (or do that yourself), and the angels. Use robes and wings for clothing. A blue sheet or plastic tarp could serve as the Jordan River.
- Have a Sword Drill (or Bible Drill). Practice finding books of the Bible, then verses that you have memorized this year.
- Talk about temptation. Remind your students that Jesus didn't sin. He was tempted in the desert, but temptation and sin are two different things. Try activities to drive home the point. Send one of your students through a barrage of wadded up paper with no protection. Then, give that student a cardboard shield. Which was better? Walking protected! Explain how knowing God's word, memorizing scripture, is the protection we need to keep from sinning.
- For adults or older students: Bring pickles for snack and review what you looked at a few weeks ago about baptism compared to pickle making. (The word used throughout the New Testament when either John or Jesus' disciples were baptizing (baptizo) is often confused with a word that simply means "dipping." A Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C., explained the difference clearly by explaining a recipe for making pickles! The recipe uses both words. "Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptized' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change." Baptism itself doesn't change us, but it signifies a lasting, permanent change that has taken place within us as we come accepting Jesus and turning from our sins.)