



SENDTHEFIRE.CA

theme: Who do you think you are? (Luke 3:21-22, 4:1-13)

materials: Bibles, news story, paper, pencils

welcome

Play a game of "Who am I?". Write the name of a celebrity, dead or alive, on a small piece of paper. Pass it to the person on your left, but don't let them see the name you wrote. They have to stick the paper on their foreheads so that everyone else can see the name, and then they have to ask questions to discover their identity. Give each person a few minutes to try and figure it out.

Bring in a news item about your neighbourhood, city, country or world that you can discuss with the cell. Where do you see God in this story? Ask other members of cell to bring in stories to discuss in subsequent weeks.

worship

Where have you seen God this week? Where have you experienced community this week? Do you have any prayer concerns this week?

Read **Psalm 2** together. How do you honour the Son of God in your lives? What are some specific ways that you do this? What makes this hard for you? What things distract you, or stand in the way of making honouring God your top priority? In other words, what are the things that most test and tempt you?

Sing the song "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" together, and then pray for each other, asking God to remove distractions and to help us focus on him and his word.

word

Have different people read **Isaiah 42:1**; **Luke 2:48-49**, and **Luke 3:21-22, 4:1-13** (we will be focusing on the last passage).

What are some of the connections between these passages?

What is happening at the baptism of Jesus? What does it mean that the "heavens were opened"? Why does the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus? And if Jesus already knew he was God's Son, why did the Father need to tell him again?

Why would the Holy Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness immediately after his baptism? And why does Jesus allow Satan to test him?

Does Jesus' one on one confrontation against a powerful enemy on behalf of Israel remind you of any story from the Old Testament? (think BIG)

How is Satan testing or tempting Jesus? What is he offering him? What is he tempting him to give up? How does Jesus answer? Go through each of the temptations and Jesus' answers, and try to figure out what was at stake here.

Are we ever tempted in similar ways today? How do you answer these temptations?

Where did the Scripture come from that Jesus quoted? Why might it be important that Jesus quotes this part of Scripture while he is in the wilderness facing temptation?

How does this episode foreshadow the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus?



witness

Jesus answers Satan with Scripture. Do you know Scripture well enough to answer questions, testing and temptation? Try to understand and memorise a scripture verse a day, (which means you also have to read the verses around it and know what the verse is really saying in context). Your conversation will eventually become sprinkled with scripture verses. See if you can share one of the verses you know each day to someone new.

action points

Continue reading through the entire books of Luke and Acts with one other person. If the other person is a fellow believer, read them through in a public place, like a café (not yelling it out or anything, just reading it to one another). Make a regular time to come in and read together, and more likely than not someone will eventually ask you what you are reading and why.

If the other person is not a fellow-believer, perhaps choose a less public place to read, but again set regular times, daily if possible, to get together and read the Gospel. You don't have to read it all at once. Read two to three chapters at a time, and then meet another day to read some more.

The Salvation Army sponsors children around the world who are living in circumstances of poverty and oppression. Any offerings given at cell meetings go towards covering the costs of these sponsorships. Please challenge your cell to bring loose offerings each week, and bring a container to collect any such offerings that are given. Cell is also a great time to bring your cartridges or tithes to the Church.

leader's guide

The stories of Jesus' baptism and of his temptation in the desert are separated in the book of Luke by a lengthy genealogy of Jesus, but they definitely should be read and understood together. This is made clear by **4:1**, which says that Jesus, full of the Spirit following his baptism, returns from the Jordan where he was baptized and is led out by the Spirit into the wilderness.

The baptism of Jesus should be understood in the light of his self-understanding at the age of twelve in the Temple as God's Son, and of the prophecy from **Isaiah 42:1** which speaks of the chosen servant of God, in whom God delights, having the Spirit poured out on him so that he will bring forth justice to the nations. This is what is going on in the baptism of Jesus, which was a truly remarkable event. Here we see Jesus, already aware of his own relationship with the Father, having this relationship confirmed in him as the Spirit is poured out on him in fulfillment of prophecy. Here we see the Trinity in action: Father speaking love, Spirit descending, and Jesus receiving and being empowered for his mission. Jesus is not adopted as a Son here; he already is the Son of God. But his identity and vocation is affirmed, as is the constant presence of the Holy Spirit with him.

This Spirit then leads Jesus into the wilderness. The purpose was to fast and pray and to commune with his Father. But he is also tested and tempted by Satan who is trying to destroy this relationship between Son and Father. Jesus' wilderness testing is reminiscent of Israel being lead into the wilderness following the Exodus and the giving of the Law, to be tested before they entered into the Promised Land. Israel was in the desert for 40 years; Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. Israel failed its testing in the desert and consistently gave into temptation; Jesus overcame Satan and prevailed against the temptations, answering them by quoting the



SENDTHEFIRE.CA

Word of God. The Scripture he quotes is from **Deut 8:3, 6:13,16**, which is significant because these were passages dealing with Israel's time in the wilderness. Jesus is tempted here so as to stand in the place first of Israel and then of all humanity, facing sin and temptation and overcoming. It also foreshadows the trials and tests that are to come in Jesus' life, as his life is a constant struggle against the kingdom of the devil. At the end of this passage it states that the devil goes away to wait for another opportune time to test Jesus. We later see him on the scene in **Luke 22:3**, starting the proceedings for Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion. In both the temptation and the crucifixion we see the devil intending to defeat Jesus through temptations and trials, but God uses both events to defeat the devil and bring glory to His name. And in both cases the devil seems to be initiating things, but in reality it is part of God's plan; we see this in the wilderness as it is the Holy Spirit who leads Jesus there, not the devil.

One other Old Testament story that should be mentioned here is that of David from **Samuel 17**. Just after David is anointed (dedicated as the new King of Israel, though he was still young and Saul was still on the throne) we see him facing up against Goliath on the field of battle, representing all of Israel. David is victorious, and returns to a hugely popular welcome in Israel. Jesus also is victorious, and returns to Galilee, being glorified by all (**Luke 4:14-15**). Once again Jesus can be seen as standing in line with the story of King David.

The point of Jesus' answers to Satan were not simply that he knew Scripture really well. Of course he knew Scripture really well; most Jews at that time would know Scripture incredibly well, and Jesus had the added advantage of being the Son of God! The test was not of Jesus' knowledge of Scripture, but of whether or not Jesus would obey the words of Scripture and submit to the will of his Father. The main emphasis of the devil's temptations is to drive a wedge between Jesus and his Father. The devil questions Jesus' identity, and tries to get him to follow his own path, rather than following the path set out for him by the Father. The first temptation tests Jesus to make bread from stones, a temptation to use his power and authority for his own ends, and thus turn aside from his Messianic task and his relationship with his Father. Jesus responds from Scripture that obedience to his Father is more important and life-giving than even food. The devil then offers him all the kingdoms of the world and all the glory from them. This is not truly the devil's to give, and the cost required is to give to the devil the worship that belongs solely to God. Again, the devil is trying to break the Father-Son relationship, and again Jesus answers with Scripture, saying that God alone is to be worshipped. Finally the devil takes Jesus to the top of the Temple in Jerusalem, and asks him to prove who he is through a miraculous sign. Jesus answers a final time from Scripture, saying that he will not put his Father to the test. He is secure in his knowledge of who God is and of who he is, and does not need to test it or prove it.

We may easily and often be tempted with material things, with striving for independence from God, with glory and power, with fame and being considered significant. But these are all distractions from the main thing, which is living out our relationship with God the Father, and being obedient to his will. This passage is not primarily a guide on how-to deal with temptation, but it almost certainly was used as an early model for Christian believers on how to overcome the tests that came with faith, and Jesus' responses and model are still instructive to us now.