



**seeking:**  
honest questions  
for deeper faith

# introduction to the children's curriculum

**FOR LENT-EASTER: YEAR A**

*Curriculum & projects designed  
by Rev. Anna Strickland*

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## about the curriculum

This curriculum is designed to help children (approximately ages 5 through 10, but it could be adapted for younger or older children) to engage in the RCL Year A gospel texts for Lent in light of our *Seeking* theme. The lessons include a variety of ways to connect: telling the story with visual and tangible materials, providing space for curiosity and wonder, and engaging further through crafts, books, and games. For seven Sundays (each Sunday in Lent, Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday), we have included the following elements. You are welcome to adapt and order these elements as best suits your context for use in Sunday School, worship, or take home kits.

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## storytelling materials & scripture retelling

Inspired by vintage flannel boards and Godly Play® lessons, we have included a script with suggested "stage directions" for visual storytelling. The directions assume a three-dimensional space, but you could easily adapt them for a flat surface such as a flannel board. We encourage you to be creative with the materials you use—to get you started we have listed some simple materials you might use in telling the story. For your convenience, we have also compiled a complete list of suggested materials on page 3 of this document. If you are worshiping online, you might choose to create videos of the stories to share with children.

***A note about imaging characters:*** When selecting a representation of Jesus to use for these stories, we encourage you to think critically about the images children see: what skin tones, facial features, clothing, and body types do we box Jesus into? Remember that you will name each character as they appear, so there is no need for a figure to be instantly recognizable. Similarly, be intentional about avoiding dark imagery for the Tempter and light imagery for the angels so as to avoid the colorism that is present in much of traditional religious art.

## wonder wall

Create a space for children to add questions throughout the series. This might be a large dry erase board or chalkboard, a large piece of butcher paper, or just a space on the wall where children can add their questions on sticky notes. Older children might write their own questions, while adult helpers can record questions for younger children.

# storytelling materials & scripture retelling

(continued)

## discussion

Use the included prompts to lead children in discussion. There might also be some questions from the Wonder Wall that invite further discussion. Resist the temptation to answer children's questions simply and quickly. Instead, follow the example of Jesus who frequently answered questions with more questions. Ask, "What do you think?"

## prayer

Before closing in prayer, you might ask children if they have any prayer requests or if any of them would like to pray. Inviting children to pray helps them build their language of prayer and invites children's leaders a glimpse at what's weighing on their hearts and minds.

## extension activities

These activities can be used to elongate the Sunday School time, set up "centers" in the children's area for further learning, extend the theme into childcare during worship, or send to parents as suggestions to reinforce the lesson throughout the week. Some activities require very little preparation or materials, while others require some preparation and/or materials you may not have on hand. We suggest reading through the activities ahead of time to determine what materials and preparation you might need.

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## how to use this curriculum

### sunday school

A sample flow for your Sunday School time might be to open with music, then tell the story using the story materials. Invite the children to add questions about the story to the Wonder Wall, then follow up with some discussion. Depending on time, use some of the suggested extension activities to continue the theme, then close in prayer.

### worship

For the children's moment, you might tell the story, follow up with some of the discussion prompts, then close in prayer. If children have already heard the story in Sunday School, you can ask them to retell the story. Alternatively, you could read the recommended story book under the Extension Activities for each week. We also recommend providing a felt storytelling kit for each child remaining in worship to reenact the Bible story as they hear it read. Instructions to create each week's kit are included separately with this resource. See [this blog post](#)<sup>1</sup> for further ideas for incorporating children in worship this Lent.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sanctifiedart.org/blog/engaging-children-in-worship-throughout-lent>

# suggested storytelling materials

- **people:** Clothespin people, Godly Play® people of God figures, wood peg dolls, dollhouse dolls, or felt figures (Note: if using clothespin people or wood peg dolls, you may wish to stain them, tea dye them, or paint them to have a variety of skin tones).
- **backdrops:** Felt, fabric, or paper for the wilderness (tan, perhaps a texture such as suede), night sky (dark blue, purple, or black, perhaps with sparkles for stars), city (gray or stone patterned), and garden (green or grass patterned).
- **stones:** Small pebbles, gravel, marbles, or glass stones.
- **buildings/town:** Boxes, wooden blocks, or milk carton houses.
- **mountain/tomb:** An Aquarium cave or Godly Play® tomb, or DIY using a toilet paper tube and papier-mâché.
- **well:** A small paper tube (e.g. a piece of construction paper rolled and taped together, a toilet paper roll cut down to size, etc.).
- **pool of siloam:** A small box without the lid, or a piece of blue felt, fabric, or paper.
- **road:** Wide brown ribbon or a strip of paper/felt.
- **donkey:** A donkey or horse figure.
- **coats:** Fashion doll clothes or felt shapes.
- **palm branches:** Green leaves, or leaf shapes cut from paper/felt (**Tip:** use a punch like [this one](#) for paper), or confetti.

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## storytelling kits for children

As part of the children's resources for Lent, we've included separate instructions and templates to create felt storytelling kits for children to use in Sunday School, at home, or in worship. Retelling the story helps children to remember and internalize the messages they hear in Sunday School and provides children a tactile way to engage in worship. Providing storytelling kits to children can be a meaningful addition to your ministry this season, but please note that this is an optional add-on. It is not a required component for using the children's curriculum.



# 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.

