

Aim of lesson

To consider the practical aspects of temptation and help the young people to be prepared to cope with it.

Bible background

Matthew 4:1-11 (Temptation of Jesus); Romans 7:15-24; Matthew 12:43-45

Preparation required

This is a discussion based session. Read through the notes and decide how you are going to present the material in the lesson outline and how to encourage discussion. It is more important that the young people talk and answer each other if they wish to than that you keep talking. They should also be able to trust that you will not go and tell the ecclesia what they say - without you having to tell them so.

If you do not have this relationship with them, or if the young people will not be willing to discuss these things with each other, it may be best for them to work individually for at least part of the lesson.

Suggested outline of lesson

There is a lot of prose in the students' notes, which will fill up the lesson if you ask them to read it all. But it's worth them reading through it at some point, maybe as homework. You may like to simply summarise what it says.

In the sections where they are asked to think of some relevant Bible passages which would be helpful in given situations, the tables are followed by some relevant passages. The young people are left to work out which passage applies in which situation, but here are the 'answers'.

Bible guidance

- What to do when you find money in the street: Exodus 22:7; Proverbs 6:30-31.
- What to do when you have an opportunity to cheat in an exam: Psalm 36:1-4; Ephesians 4:22.
- What to do when the conversation turns smutty: Ephesians 4:29, 5:3-4; Colossians 3:8.
- What to do when offered illegal drugs: Proverbs 31:6.
- What to do when Jesus is ridiculed: Luke 22:59-62.

How can you avoid temptation?

- The temptation to get drunk: Isaiah 5:11,22, 56:11-12.
- The temptation to neglect Bible reading: Hosea 4:6; Psalm 19:11; James 1:25.
- The temptation to misbehave sexually: Genesis 39:7-10; Proverbs 5:1-8, 6:23-29; 1 Corinthians 6:15-19.
- The temptation to be unkind to people: Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Proverbs 19:17; Isaiah 58:7:10.
- The temptation to be unhelpful at home: Exodus 20:12; 1 Timothy 5:1,2.

What activities and influences will be helpful?

Some possible answers:

- Read the Bible every day and pray about your problems.
- Make friends who have the same values as you.
- Mix with lots of people and make your life 'open', without secrets.
- Tell everybody what your values are so that they won't want to involve you in questionable activities.
- Meet people who have needs with which you can help - the elderly, perhaps.
- Keep a good relationship with your parents.

Relevance to our lives

- Try to anticipate tempting situations and work out a policy in advance.
- Do not place yourself in tempting situations.
- Avoid those 'friends' who bring out the worst in you. Choose friends who will be a good influence.
- Find wholesome activities to utilise leisure time - temptations are less likely to arise there, but don't be complacent.
- Do not despair when you yield to temptation. It happens to everyone. God, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, is always ready to receive us as soon and as often as we sincerely repent.

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, we hallow your name. Let your kingdom come, and your will be carried out on earth as it already is in heaven. Give us our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Keep us from temptation, and from evil. Amen.

Other suggestions for activities

Role playing is a very good way of anticipating situations and trying to find out what we would and should do. Get the young people to set up tempting situations for each other to cope with. For those that feel shy in these situations writing down what you would say is also a good exercise.