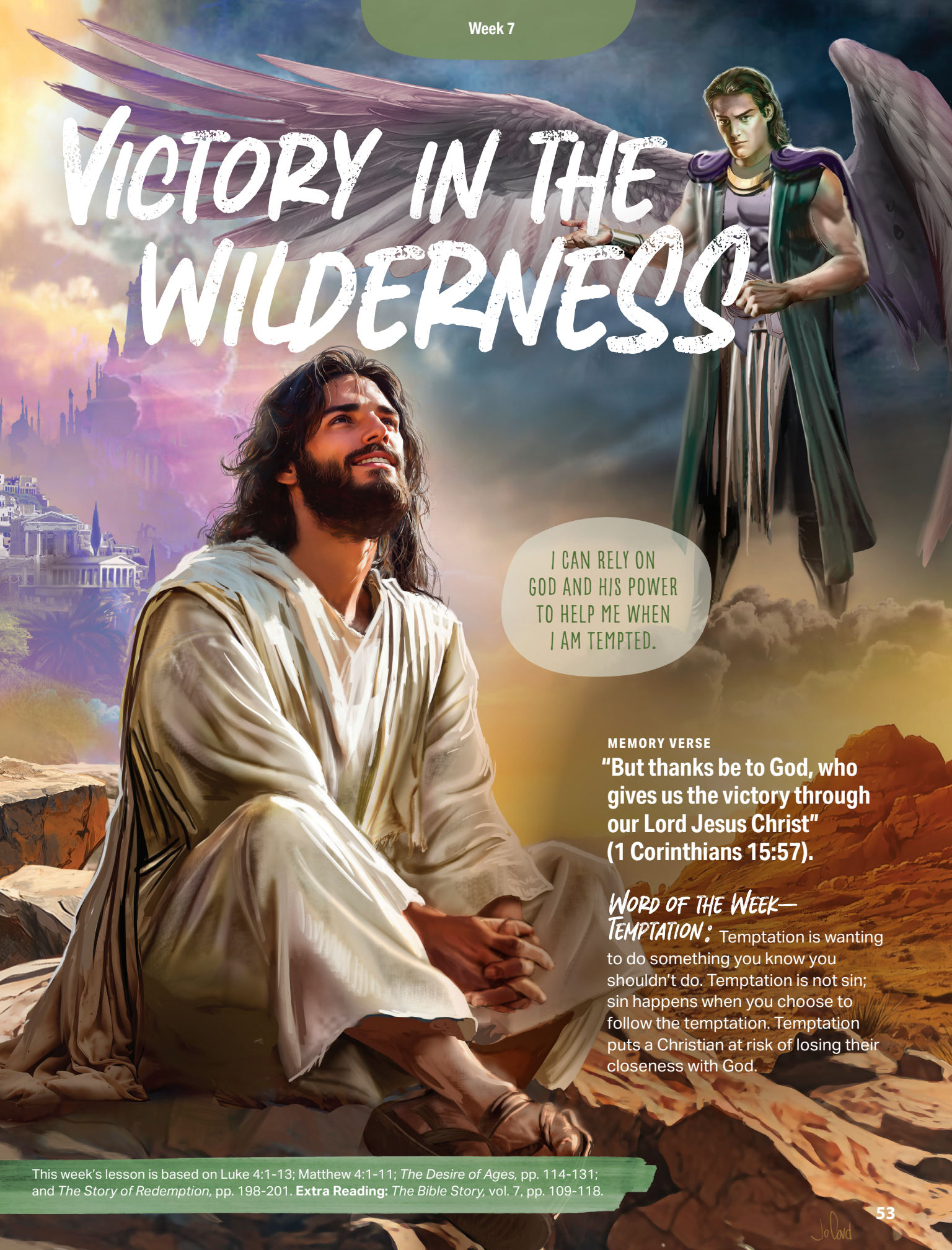
Victory in the Wilderness



MEMORY VERSE

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Word of the Week—Temptation: Temptation is wanting to do something you know you shouldn't do. Temptation is not sin; sin happens when you choose to follow the temptation. Temptation puts a Christian at risk of losing their closeness with God.

This week's lesson is based on Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11; *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 114-131; and *The Story of Redemption,* pp. 198-201. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story,* vol. 7, pp. 109-118.

☐ SUNDAY

INTO THE WILDERNESS

Jesus smiled as He walked away from the Jordan River. God's precious words echoed in His mind. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). He had just been baptized as a human, but He was still God's "beloved Son."

Leaving the river behind, Jesus walked up the rocky path and out into the barren wilderness. Why did Jesus go there? **Read Luke 4:1.**

Away from the crowds, Jesus spent time alone with His Father-God. Their deep love for each other made Jesus think about how He could help people understand God's wonderful love for them too. During this time Jesus didn't eat. "Angels came and took care of Jesus" (Mark 1:13, ICB). It was a special time for Him. Nothing much grew in the wilderness, but His faith did. It grew and grew, strengthening Him for the work He had come to earth to do.

The Holy Spirit may not lead us into the wilderness, but He still prompts us to spend time with God. He helps us to think quietly about Jesus' life, to pray, to notice God in nature, and to learn from Bible stories. The Holy Spirit can fix the lessons we have learned from the Bible in our minds. Jesus later told His disciples, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit also prompts us to be kind and loving to others, and to tell them about God's love. The Holy Spirit will help us keep God's law and follow His way of love. **Read Ezekiel 36:27.** With our hearts changed by the Holy Spirit, we will want to worship God at church on Sabbath, and every day.

All these things grow our faith so we can become stronger Christians who trust God more and more.

Mission Challenge: Share God's love with others this Sabbath by contributing to your Sabbath School class's gratitude gifts for those who serve others in the community. Remember to bring the items you've made this coming Sabbath so the gifts can be put together and delivered and talk to your family about other things you could gather or give.

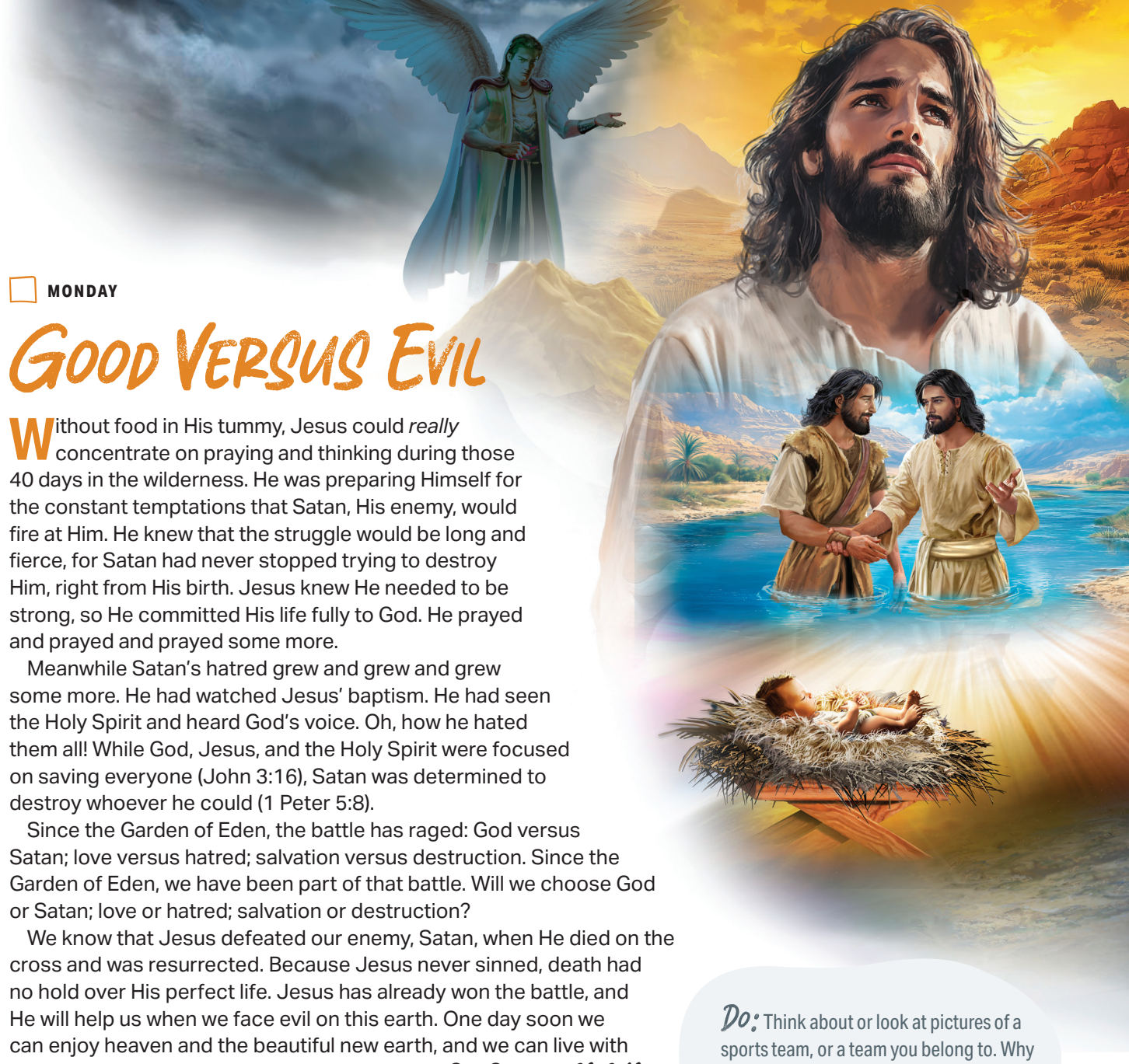
Do: Go for a walk and compare your environment with what a wilderness looks like. If possible, collect 16 small stones (to use on Tuesday).

Pray: Thank God for the Holy Spirit, and ask Him to grow your faith so you can become a stronger Christian.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What can you learn from Jesus' time with God in the wilderness?*





MONDAY

Good Versus Evil

Without food in His tummy, Jesus could *really* concentrate on praying and thinking during those 40 days in the wilderness. He was preparing Himself for the constant temptations that Satan, His enemy, would fire at Him. He knew that the struggle would be long and fierce, for Satan had never stopped trying to destroy Him, right from His birth. Jesus knew He needed to be strong, so He committed His life fully to God. He prayed and prayed and prayed some more.

Meanwhile Satan's hatred grew and grew and grew some more. He had watched Jesus' baptism. He had seen the Holy Spirit and heard God's voice. Oh, how he hated them all! While God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit were focused on saving everyone (John 3:16), Satan was determined to destroy whoever he could (1 Peter 5:8).

Since the Garden of Eden, the battle has raged: God versus Satan; love versus hatred; salvation versus destruction. Since the Garden of Eden, we have been part of that battle. Will we choose God or Satan; love or hatred; salvation or destruction?

We know that Jesus defeated our enemy, Satan, when He died on the cross and was resurrected. Because Jesus never sinned, death had no hold over His perfect life. Jesus has already won the battle, and He will help us when we face evil on this earth. One day soon we can enjoy heaven and the beautiful new earth, and we can live with Jesus forever. What will happen to the enemy? **Read Revelation 20:2, 10.**

Until then, the battle for our hearts continues. God wants to fill our hearts with love, while Satan wants to make them hard and full of hatred.

Therefore, it is good to be able to identify the enemy, "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). While it is not good to focus on Satan, it is helpful to know a little about his sneaky, lying ways so we can recognize our big need of God. Then we can rely on God and His power when Satan tempts us.

Do: Think about or look at pictures of a sports team, or a team you belong to. Why do teams wear a uniform when they play serious sports games? How much more likely is a team to win if they can easily see those they are playing against? How does this remind you of today's lesson?

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Why do you think Satan's hatred toward Jesus grew so much while Jesus was in the wilderness?*
- *What do you think God uses to fight the battle?*
- *What do you think Satan uses?*

Pray: Ask God to live in your heart and keep you safe from Satan.

Do: Line up the 16 stones you collected on Sunday. Push one stone forward for every word of your memory verse, including the reference as you say it. Repeat, getting quicker and quicker.



☐ TUESDAY

Tired and Hungry

After 40 days Jesus' special time with God was over. He was tired, weak, and hungry. Satan had been watching Jesus, trying to find the right moment to tempt Him, and now he saw his chance.

God had said about Jesus, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). Satan decided to use God's words against Jesus. He thought that if he could tempt Jesus to doubt God's words, he would win forever! And God's Son would lose.

Satan suddenly appeared beside Jesus, pretending to be an angel from heaven. It was as if the shining angel had come to answer Jesus' prayers, but his words told a different story. What did Satan say? **Read Matthew 4:3.**

Jesus thought about that little word *"if."* Of course He was God's Son! An angel from heaven would *never* say *"If* you are God's Son . . ." How dare Satan tempt Him to doubt that God was His Father! Jesus struggled against the temptation to explain who He was, but He didn't let Satan trick Him into working a miracle to prove He was God's Son. He would *never* use His power to work a miracle for Himself—it was meant only to help others. And besides, God could give Him food anytime.

Jesus looked Satan straight in the eye and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' " (Matthew 4:4).

Jesus had won!

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What might Jesus have prayed when Satan tempted Him?*
- *Has Satan ever tried to tempt you into doubting that you are God's child? Remember you are God's child; He loves, helps, and forgives you.*

Satan sometimes tempts us when we are tired and hungry because he knows we might not be so strong to resist. When this happens, our loving God wants us to rely on Him and His power. We can pray "right away" and claim a Bible promise, as Jesus did. **Read Psalm 119:11.**

Pray: Thank Jesus that He has the power to help you when you are tempted.

WEDNESDAY

JUMP!



Nasty Satan's first temptation hadn't worked, so he tried another one. Still pretending to be a beautiful angel, He took Jesus to the very top of the temple in Jerusalem and challenged Him with another "if." "If you are the Son of God, jump off" (Matthew 4:6, ICB). Then Satan boldly recited a Bible verse from Psalm 91:11, 12: "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." Satan knew the Bible and was using God's Word to try to trap Jesus!

But Jesus wasn't fooled. He knew He could claim God's promise of protection while doing God's work—that would be *faith*. But to claim God's promise while purposely jumping off the temple? Never! Promises aren't for claiming when you're about to do something silly! So instead of jumping, Jesus wisely answered Satan's temptation with the words "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God' " (Luke 4:12).

Satan had tempted Jesus to prove He was God's Son. Failed. He'd challenged Jesus to do something silly and dangerous. Failed. And he'd tempted Jesus to misuse a Bible promise. Failed again!

Jesus had won another victory. And all of heaven smiled.

On the top of the temple, our friend Jesus showed us that "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:9). Jesus knows that we may be tempted, as He was, to do dangerous things, respond to silly dares, or go to unsafe places. Satan wants us to make these risky choices and will try to convince us that everything will turn out OK in the end. But Jesus showed us it is much wiser to think before we act. And even wiser to claim a Bible promise when we are tempted.

DO: Recite your memory verse as you jump rope or hop from foot to foot—one word for every jump.

PARENT FAITH TALK: Share several scriptures that are especially meaningful to you when you are tempted.

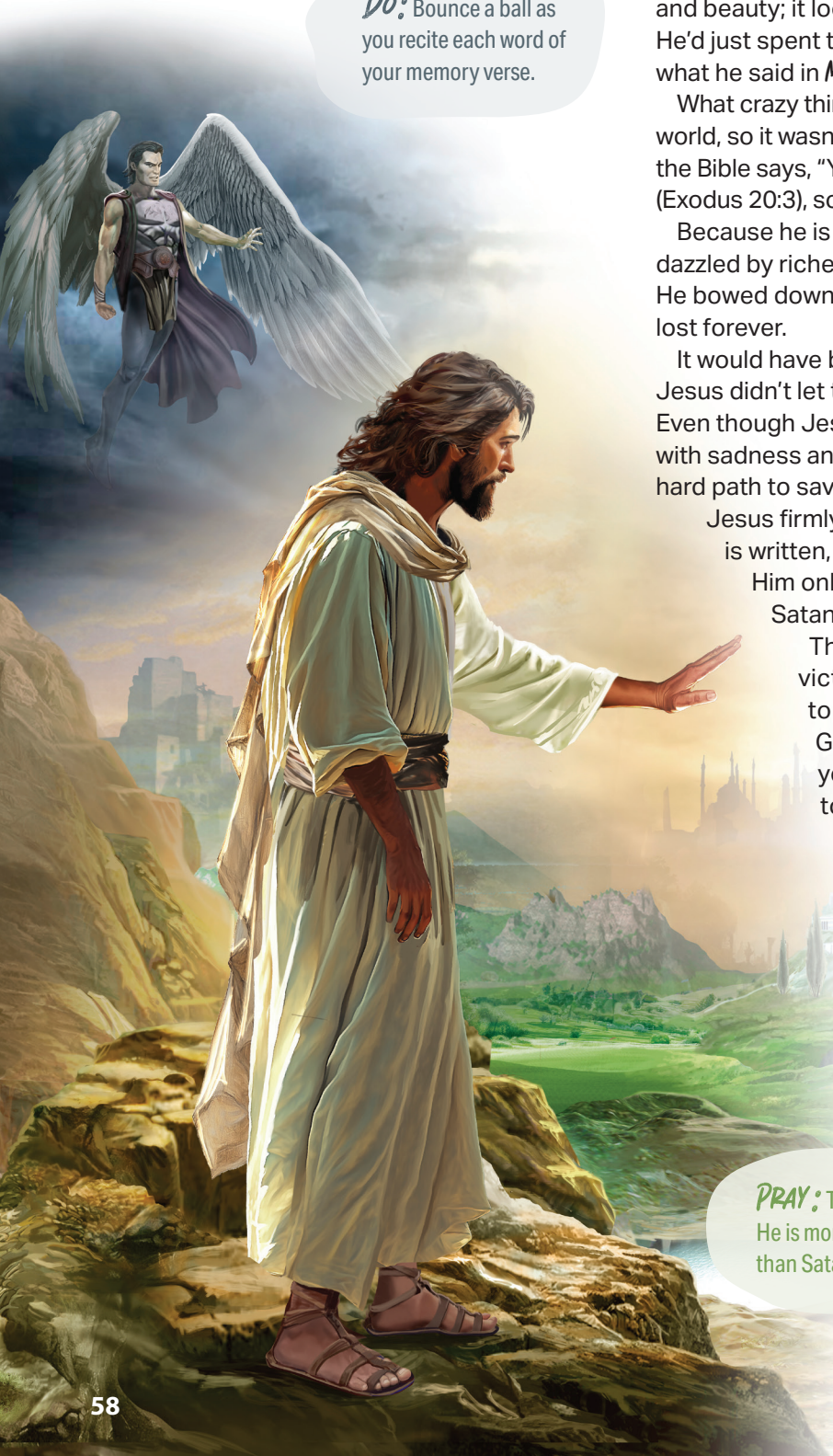
THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT

- *Read **Psalm 91:11, 12** (above) again. When would be a good time for you to claim this promise?*
- *Think of three words that best describe Jesus' character in this story. How well do these words describe you?*

PRAY: Jesus won the victory over Satan at the temple. Pray your memory verse to thank God for giving you victories.

Do: It's a blessing to have toys and clothes, but these things shouldn't shift our attention from loving God and others. Why not bag up some things you don't use or wear anymore and give to others in need?

Do: Bounce a ball as you recite each word of your memory verse.



☐ **THURSDAY**

Power and Wealth

You might think that Satan would give up tempting Jesus after two failed attempts, but no.

He carried Jesus to a mountaintop where He could see beautiful cities, sparkling palaces, green fields, and fruit-filled orchards below. Jesus gazed in wonder at the wealth and beauty; it looked so much better than the barren desert He'd just spent time in. Then the devil spoke smoothly. Read what he said in **Matthew 4:9.**

What crazy things to say! First, Jesus had created the world, so it wasn't Satan's to give. And second, Satan knew the Bible says, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3), so why did Satan ask Jesus to worship him?

Because he is an evil liar. Satan knew that if Jesus became dazzled by riches and power, He could not save the world. If He bowed down and worshipped Satan, everyone would be lost forever.

It would have been easy to accept what Satan offered, but Jesus didn't let temptation sidetrack Him from His mission. Even though Jesus knew His life on earth would be filled with sadness and suffering, His great big heart chose the hard path to save the sinners He loved so much.

Jesus firmly told the devil, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve' " (Matthew 4:10). And so Satan was forced to leave, angry and defeated.

Three big temptations, and three big victories! Jesus is a wonderful example of how to live by God's words: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:7, 8).

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Satan often tempts us to want cool new things we don't need. What does he tempt you with?*
- *What can you do when he tempts you?*

Our loving Jesus understands and keeps watch over us when Satan tempts us to believe that owning the latest cool thing, having lots of money, entertainment, and being popular will make us happy. These are some of Satan's favorite lies.

Pray: Thank God that He is more powerful than Satan.

☐ FRIDAY

God's Love

Jesus slumped to the ground, totally exhausted from the battle with Satan. Seeing Him there, God did the most beautiful thing. He sent angels with food to remind Jesus of His Father's great love. The rest of the angels filled heaven with their celebrations. Jesus had won!

All of heaven celebrates when we rely on God and His power to resist temptations too. Ephesians 6:10 tells us to "be strong in the Lord and in [His] power." We can't be strong all by ourselves, but we can rely on the Holy Spirit's power.

The Holy Spirit helps us stay close to God in all the ways we learned about on Sunday. He helps us to be on guard before temptation comes: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38). Then if we are tempted to do something we're not supposed to do, the Holy Spirit helps us to pray and run away. After that, He helps us find something good to do instead: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). We could find a sibling or friend to hang out with, or do something fun we are allowed to do.

God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are there to help you, always. The victory Jesus achieved in the wilderness, and then at the cross, is yours. Just ask Him! Then thank Him—it's yours. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Imagine all of heaven celebrating when you resist the devil's temptations. What do you think that would look like?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Before worship, write the following Bible references on small slips of paper and hide them in the room where you have family worship. Invite family members to hunt for a verse and look it up. Share together: 1 Peter 5:8; Deuteronomy 31:6; James 1:12; Hebrews 4:15, 16; Philippians 4:5.
- Find places from the story on the Bible map: Jerusalem and Jericho (likely the wilderness where Jesus was tempted).
- Listen to or sing the hymn "Wonderful Words of Life" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 286). Talk about how powerful the words in the Bible are in your life.

Family Journal

- This story has reminded me to thank God for . . .
- What has this story taught you about temptation?

Pray

As a family, walk around your home. Think about the different activities you all do in your home, together and separately. Say a special prayer that God will give you victory over the temptations that you face.



SABBATH

What Should Andrew Do?

"Sure, I'll stay with you, Grandma," Andrew said.

Grandma smiled. "Thank you, Andrew. I'm glad. With my back giving me so much trouble, I won't be able to move around very much. If you could help with the meals and wash the dishes, you would be a big help to me."

Grandma always let Andrew come over to her house after school, and she always did special things with him. He loved her very much. He would stay overnight on Friday and Saturday nights.

Friday after school Dad dropped Andrew off at Grandma's house. On Sabbath morning he came by and picked him up for church.

During Sabbath School Andrew's friend Carl said, "Do you want to come over to my house tonight?"

"Sure," Andrew replied quickly. "I'll ask my dad."

When Sabbath School was over, Andrew found his dad in the hallway. "Can I spend the night with Carl?" he asked.

Dad gave Andrew a serious look. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I'm sure. Why not?"

"Didn't you promise to stay with Grandma tonight?"

He nodded.

"Andrew," Dad continued, "I can't really tell you what to do. You are old enough to make this kind of decision on your own. You have to decide what is more important and what you feel right about doing. I hope you give the matter some serious thought."

What would you have chosen to do?

There are always choices to be made—big and small. Sometimes, like Andrew, we can be tempted to turn away from the right thing, to do something that seems more appealing in the moment. Andrew had some great advice from his dad to *stop* and *think* about his choice, and the right thing to do.

You may be happy to know that Andrew *did* spend the night with his grandmother, just as he had promised—and he had a great night knowing he'd made the right choice! It's not always easy, but we can depend on God, good advice from the Bible, and caring adults to help guide us with all our decisions. God will always help us win! "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

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For You, Parents: Your precious children will experience the power of God's Word as they are exposed to it. "The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul of the child with a spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the receptive mind a familiarity with divine things which will be as a barricade against the temptations of the enemy" (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance,* p. 496).

