

Jesus and Zacchaeus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 19:1-10

MAIN POINT: Jesus loved Zacchaeus.

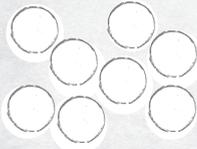
KEY PASSAGE: John 14:6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

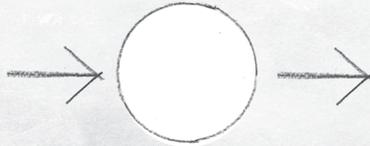
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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

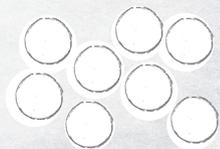
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Zacchaeus lived in the town of Jericho. He was a chief tax collector. Zacchaeus's job was to collect money from the Jews for the Roman government. Many people knew Zacchaeus, and many did not like him.

The Bible says that Zacchaeus was rich. Tax collectors often collected more money than necessary and kept the surplus for themselves. His greed and dishonesty led Zacchaeus to being looked down upon as a "sinner." But Zacchaeus treasured his wealth more than his reputation.

Zacchaeus probably never imagined that his entire life would change in a single day. When Jesus came through

Jericho, Zacchaeus wanted to see him. He couldn't see over the crowds, so he climbed a sycamore tree and watched Jesus from a distance.

Imagine the crowd's surprise when Jesus approached the tree and called out to Zacchaeus, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today I must stay at your house."

Of all the people in Jericho, Jesus chose to visit Zacchaeus! The other people complained. What was Jesus thinking, going to stay with a sinner like Zacchaeus?

The story reveals that Zacchaeus's encounter with Jesus changed him. He offered to give half of his possessions to the poor and to pay back four times what he had cheated from others. Zacchaeus no longer treasured his wealth. He realized that Jesus offered something so much better. Jesus confirmed this evidence of a changed heart: "Today salvation has come to this house."

People who encounter Jesus do not walk away unchanged. Pray that the preschoolers you teach would encounter the real Jesus, the One who came into the world because we needed Him. Jesus came to seek and save the lost—people like Zacchaeus and people like us. "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17). When we repent and trust in Jesus, He changes us.



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Act it out:** Encourage boys and girls to act out various scenes of the story as you tell it.
- Shield eyes and look around.
- Jump up and down, trying to see over something obstructing the view.
- Pretend to climb a tree.
- Shield eyes as Zacchaeus sees Jesus.
- Climb down the tree at Jesus' request.
- Walk, walk, walk with Jesus to Zacchaeus' house.
- Sit and visit with Jesus.
- **Go outside:** Invite a guest to dress in Bible times clothes, go outside, and climb up into a tree. Take preschoolers outside and discover the guest. The guest storyteller could tell story from the tree or climb down and address the group as Zacchaeus.

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus was traveling, and He came to a town called **Jericho**. A man named **Zacchaeus** lived in Jericho. **Zacchaeus was rich. He was a chief tax collector, so he was in charge of collecting money from the people in Jericho to give to the Roman government. The people in Jericho did not like tax collectors** because many of them were dishonest.

When Jesus was in Jericho, a large crowd of people came to see Him. Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus, and he wanted to see Him too! **But Zacchaeus was too short to see over the other people.** So he ran ahead of the crowd and **climbed into a sycamore tree.**

When Jesus walked by, He looked into the tree and saw Zacchaeus.

“Come down, Zacchaeus,” Jesus said. “I want to stay with you today.”

Zacchaeus was happy! He hurried down from the tree and welcomed Jesus into his house. But other people were not happy. They complained and said, **“Zacchaeus is a sinner, and Jesus is going to stay at his house!”**

Later that day, **Zacchaeus told Jesus that he wanted to do the right thing. “I will give half of everything I have to the poor,” Zacchaeus said. “And if I took anything from someone that I should not have taken, I will pay him back even more than I took.”**

Jesus told Zacchaeus, “Today, you have been saved. You have shown that you are one of God’s people.”

Jesus said, **“I have come to seek and save the lost.” Jesus had come to earth to find people like Zacchaeus—people**

who did not know God—and to rescue them from their sin.

Christ Connection: Jesus came to look for and rescue people who sin. He came to rescue people like you and me. Jesus died on the cross and rose again. He is happy when we are sorry for our sin, and He wants us to trust in Him.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that people were angry that Jesus showed His love to Zacchaeus, a crook! The Bible says everyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved. (Rom. 10:13) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus and Zacchaeus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 19:1-10

MAIN POINT: Jesus loved Zacchaeus.

KEY PASSAGE: John 14:6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.

Welcome time

- "That's What Jesus Did" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Where's Zacchaeus?" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to use the key to find Zacchaeus in the picture.

SAY • Did you find Zacchaeus? Zacchaeus is a man in today's Bible story. People did not like him. Zacchaeus was dishonest and greedy. Why do you suppose he is in that tree? Listen to our Bible story to find out.

Stand and sit

Invite boys and girls to gather together and sit near the timeline map or previous weeks' Bible story pictures. Ask questions to recall facts from past sessions. Suggest that boys and girls stand when they know the answer. Select a child to answer the question. Guide discussion. Continue sitting

LOW PREP

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Posters from previous sessions

and standing, taking opportunities to reinforce previous weeks' stories and the big picture question.

SAY • Can you think of some things that were the same in all of the stories we have talked about? (*Jesus loved people; He wanted to help them; He was kind.*) **Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.** In today's Bible story, we will hear about another person whom Jesus loved and helped named Zacchaeus. When Zacchaeus met Jesus, his life changed forever.

Sort coins

Place piles of assorted coins near a muffin tin. Demonstrate how to examine coins and identify differences. Guide preschoolers to sort different types of coins into muffin tin cups.

SAY • Today's Bible story is about a man named Zacchaeus and what happened when he met Jesus. Zacchaeus' job was to collect money from the people called taxes. He was a tax collector. He did not have many friends. Tax collectors like Zacchaeus sometimes took more money than they had to and kept some extra money for themselves.

- coins
- muffin tin

Tip: Make sure children do not put the coins in their mouths.

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Before the session, print several copies of the "Bible Times Coins" printable onto heavyweight paper and cut out. Give each child a paper coin, and ask the children to bring it with them to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)
- "Bible Times Coins" printable
- heavyweight paper

Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

- "Bible Times Coins" printable
- basket

Explain that you are going to do what a tax collector does. Pass a basket and lead preschoolers to surrender their coins.

SAY • Do you think the people liked it when the tax collector came to see them? I don't think so. Many tax collectors were dishonest and took more money than they should have. Zacchaeus was one of them. Listen to our Bible story to find out what happened when Zacchaeus met Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- bookmark
- Bible
- "Jesus and Zacchaeus" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Luke 19 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible tells us what God is like and what He has done for us. God's words are in the Bible, and God's words are true. Today's Bible story is in Luke.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • What a great story! When our story began,

Zacchaeus was a dishonest tax collector. People did not like him. But after he met Jesus, Zacchaeus changed. **Jesus loved Zacchaeus.** Jesus' love for him made Zacchaeus want to do the right thing.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What was Zacchaeus' job? (*tax collector*)
2. Why did the people not like tax collectors? (*Many of them were dishonest.*)
3. What did Zacchaeus do so he could see Jesus? (*He climbed into a sycamore tree.*)
4. Where did Jesus tell Zacchaeus He wanted to go with him? (*Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house with him.*)
5. What did Zacchaeus tell Jesus he would do? (*give half of what he had to the poor, pay back money he took*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • *Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's*

Son. God sent His Son to look for and rescue people who sin—people like you and me. Jesus died on the cross and rose again. He is happy when we are sorry for our sin, and Jesus wants us to trust in Him.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to John 14:6. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “John 14:6” song.

SAY • Jesus said He is the way, the truth, and the life in our key passage. Jesus is the only way sinful people like Zacchaeus and you and me can be rescued from sin.

• Key Passage Poster
• “John 14:6” song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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• mobile device
(optional)

Take a nature walk

Take a walk outdoors and observe the trees. Use a mobile device to show preschoolers what a sycamore tree looks like, and challenge them to find one. Discuss what it would be like to climb a tree to see Jesus.

SAY • Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but he was short. He ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore tree so he could see over the crowd. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and called him down. Jesus said He wanted to stay with Zacchaeus. **Jesus loved Zacchaeus.** Jesus had come to earth to find people like Zacchaeus—people who did not know God—and to rescue them from their sin.

Collage story items

Give each child a sheet of paper. Arrange materials nearby. Encourage a child to glue or tape leaves, twigs, and coins onto the paper. Mention how each item relates to the Bible story as a child works with it. Encourage creativity. Value the process over the final product.

SAY • **Jesus loved Zacchaeus.** Meeting Jesus changed Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was sorry for his sin and

- Allergy Alert download
- “Bible Times Coins” printable
- heavyweight paper
- scissors (adult use)
- leaves (real or precut from paper)
- twigs
- glue sticks or tape
- paper

wanted to do the right thing. Jesus is happy when we are sorry for our sin, and He wants us to trust in Him.

Build a tree snack

Instruct preschoolers to wash their hands. Demonstrate how to attach a marshmallow to the end of a pretzel stick and continue adding marshmallows and pretzel sticks. Pour a few pretzel sticks and miniature marshmallows onto a plate for each preschooler. Invite preschoolers to use the edible building materials to assemble a tree. Allow preschoolers to eat their tree snacks if they desire. Talk about different aspects of the Bible story as children work.

SAY • The only way Zacchaeus could see Jesus when He walked into town was to run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, He wanted to talk to him. **Jesus loved Zacchaeus.** Jesus came to look for and rescue people who sin. We are sinners like Zacchaeus, and Jesus came to rescue us too. Jesus died on the cross and rose again. He is happy when we are sorry for our sin, and He wants us to trust in Him.

- Allergy Alert download
- pretzel sticks
- miniature marshmallows
- paper plates

Prepare for a guest

Suggest boys and girls play out preparing food for a guest. Lead preschoolers to wipe surfaces, set a table, and prepare a meal for a guest. Play the unit theme song or key passage song as preschoolers work. Commend cooperation and recall portions of the story. Leave this area set up for snack time.

SAY • Some people were not happy that Jesus stayed with Zacchaeus. They complained and said, “Zacchaeus

- toy cleaning tools
- clean washcloths
- spray bottle with water
- small tablecloth
- toy dishes
- toy food
- “That’s What Jesus Did” song (optional)
- “John 14:6” song (optional)

is a sinner, and Jesus is going to stay at his house!” Zacchaeus was happy to welcome Jesus as his guest. Later that day, Zacchaeus told Jesus he wanted to do the right thing. He said he would give half of everything he had to the poor and promised to pay back even more than what he took from people. Jesus said Zacchaeus showed he was one of God’s people. **Jesus loved Zacchaeus.** Jesus is happy when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Him.

Weigh coins

- kitchen scale
- coins

Set out an assortment of coins and a kitchen scale. Encourage children to place different amounts of coins on the scale and notice the weights. Challenge preschoolers to predict if the weight will go up or down by adding more coins. Remind preschoolers that Zacchaeus said he would give half of everything he had to the poor. Count a batch of coins. Then weigh the coin batch. Remove coins from the batch until half of the weight is left. Invite preschoolers to count how many coins were half of the batch.

SAY • Zacchaeus had become a very rich man by taking from others, but after Zacchaeus spent time with Jesus, he told Jesus that he wanted to do the right thing. “I will give half of everything I have to the poor,” Zacchaeus said. “And if I took anything from someone that I should not have taken, I will pay him back even more than I took.” **Jesus loved Zacchaeus.** Jesus died on the cross and rose again to rescue people like Zacchaeus and us from sin. He is happy when people are sorry for our sin and trust in Him.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve snack in the area preschoolers prepared for a guest earlier. Invite children to imagine that Jesus is sitting with them at the table. Ask preschoolers what they would say to Jesus or what Jesus would say to them. Ask: ***Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.*** Help preschoolers understand what a wonderful thing it is that God's very own Son loves us and died on the cross and rose again so we could be with Him forever.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of themselves and then draw Jesus walking toward them. Remind preschoolers that like **Jesus loved Zacchaeus**, Jesus loves them. Pray for the children.

SAY • Thank You, God, that Jesus looked for Zacchaeus up in that sycamore tree. Thank You that You sent Your Son to come to earth to rescue people like Zacchaeus and people like us. Help us trust in You and to turn away from our sin. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*