

Bible Point ▶

Jesus wants us to be kind.

Bible Verse

“Never get tired of doing good” (2 Thessalonians 3:13b).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- learn that Jesus was kind to Zacchaeus,
 - practice being kind,
 - show kindness to Whiskers, and
 - sing a song about kindness.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Jesus calls Zacchaeus down from the tree.



Although we hear and tell the story of Zacchaeus often, we seldom realize its full significance. It occurred at the end of Jesus’ long journey to Jerusalem, near the end of his ministry. It is seen by some as the climax of Jesus’ ministry, a supreme example of salvation being offered to the less than desirable.

It was not mere chance that Jesus looked away from the throng of people who surrounded him and looked directly up into the tree to see this seeker who wanted to see Jesus for himself. Zacchaeus didn’t even have to say anything when Jesus spotted him; Jesus already had a plan for Zacchaeus.

Jesus’ invitation to Zacchaeus surprised everyone. The people were stunned that Jesus would invite himself to the home of someone like Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was stunned for the same reason! Everyone would have expected Jesus to keep himself pure from association with a sinner such as this tax collector. But Jesus wasn’t concerned about expectations. He was—and is—concerned about drawing sinful people to faith in him.

Jesus took decisive action in reaching out to Zacchaeus, which resulted in Zacchaeus’ joyful repentance. The story is a wonderful reminder that Jesus loves everyone and came to save everyone!

Prayer

- Read Romans 3:23. How would you rate yourself against Zacchaeus? How do you think Jesus would rate you?
- Pray: Lord, please help me remember that you love everyone. Help me convey your love to my class by...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

| | What Children Will Do | Classroom Supplies | Learning Lab Supplies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Welcome Time | Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher. | "Heart Name Tags" (p. 152), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape | |
| Let's Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives. | Option 1: Praise Parade —March in a procession like the one Jesus may have been in as he went through Jericho. | Dolls, stuffed animals, crepe paper, dress-up clothes | |
| | Option 2: Kindness Cutouts —Prepare a snack that will show kindness to Whiskers. | Cheese slices, cookie cutters, paper plates, plastic wrap | |
| | Option 3: Coin Collectors —Make coins from aluminum foil. | Aluminum-foil squares | |
| | Pick-up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time. | CD player |  |
| Bible Story Time | Setting the Stage —Play a game to express kindness to each other. | Colored paper, scissors | |
| | Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together. | Bible, CD player |  |
| | Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Act out a poem of Zacchaeus from Luke 19:1-10. | Bible, foil coins from Option 3 |  |
| | Do the Bible Story —Sing "I'm Coming to Your House," and act out ways to show kindness. | | |
| Closing  | Mouse Munchies —Hear how Whiskers' family treated him kindly, and then share a snack. | Cheese cutouts from Option 2, crackers, napkins |  |
| | A Good Chorus —Sing a song about doing good things for others. | CD player |  |

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Heart Name Tags” (p. 152), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape

- Kneel down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Today I Learned...” discussion. Use questions such as “What did you tell your family about Jesus and Zacchaeus?” and “How did your family show that you love Jesus?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► *Jesus wants us to be kind.***
- Hand out the heart name tags children made during Lesson 10, and help attach them to children’s clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopyable handout.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward the point of today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What’s it like to visit with someone you think is special?” or “How does it feel when someone is kind to you?”

■ Option 1: Praise Parade

SUPPLIES: dolls, stuffed animals, crepe paper, dress-up clothes

Set out dolls, stuffed animals, crepe paper streamers, and dress-up clothes. You also might want to play a CD of marching music. Tell children you’re going to have a parade. Create a “street” with two rows of chairs. Encourage children to line the street with the dolls and animals and then parade down the center as they wave their streamers. They can pretend that they’re Jesus and his followers walking into Jericho.

■ Option 2: Kindness Cutouts

SUPPLIES: cheese slices, cookie cutters, paper plates, plastic wrap

Set out cheese slices, cookie cutters, and paper plates. Help children use the cookie cutters to cut cheese slices into interesting shapes. You’ll need two for each child, plus Whiskers. Place the cheese cutouts on a tray, and cover the tray with plastic wrap. Children will put the cheese on crackers later in the lesson.

Remind children that Jesus went to Zacchaeus’ house for a meal. Tell children that ► *Jesus wants us to be kind*, just as he was kind to Zacchaeus. Explain that Whiskers might enjoy this snack a little later.



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.



■ Option 3: Coin Collectors

SUPPLIES: aluminum-foil squares

Set out 4-inch aluminum-foil squares. Have children mold the foil into small, flat circles to form pretend coins. Be sure children don't put the "coins" in their mouths. Remind children that Zacchaeus took money from lots of people, but then he gave all of it back—and more!

If children finish early, have them make extra coins to share. Later in the lesson, you'll need two coins for each child in your class.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Come Along With Me" (track 2) with the CD to the tune of "Come and Go With Me." Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



**Come along with me and pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things.
Come along with me and pick up all our things
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: colored paper, scissors

Before class, cut pairs of paper hearts. Make each pair different from the others.

Tell children that you'll clap three times to get their attention. Explain that when you clap three times, the children are to stop what they're doing and repeat the clap. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Ask: • **What did you make or do when you came to class today?** (Cut cheese slices; had a parade; made coins.)

Say: **Some of you had a lively parade, some of you made a snack for us to enjoy later, and some of you made coins. You were all learning important things about our Bible story. We're going to learn that ► Jesus wants us to be kind. To celebrate Valentine's Day, let's play a valentine game to help us show love and kindness to each other.**



Hand each child a paper heart. Say: **When I say “go,” walk around the room, shake hands with everyone you meet, and say, “If your heart matches mine, I will be your valentine.” When you find the person whose heart matches yours, hug each other, trade hearts, and sit down together.**

When everyone is seated, collect the hearts.

Ask: • **What was it like to give each other handshakes and hugs?** (Fun; nice; it made me happy.)

Say: **It’s fun to be kind and loving. ▶ *Jesus wants us to be kind.* Today we’ll hear how Jesus and Zacchaeus were kind. We’ll learn how we can be kind, too!**



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



tracks 3, 4

Say: **Now it’s time to choose a Bible helper to bring me the Bible marked with today’s Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we’ll pass around our special Bible. The person who’s holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible helper today. Remember that each week one of you will get a chance to be the Bible helper.**

Lead children in singing “I’m So Glad for the Bible” (track 3) with the *CD* to the tune of “Give Me Oil in My Lamp.” As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



SING

**I’m so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin’, learnin’, learnin’.
I’m so glad for God’s book today.
I’m so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin’, learnin’, learnin’—
Keep me learnin’ all about his way.**

**Let me hear ’bout God’s love—
Keep me learnin’, learnin’, learnin’.
Let me hear ’bout God’s love for me.
Let me hear ’bout God’s love—
Keep me learnin’, learnin’, learnin’.
Let’s shine the light for all to see.**

(Repeat first verse.)

When the music stops, invite the child who’s holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child’s hand with the *tree stamp*, and thank the child for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children’s hands. Return the *tree stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.

Say: **I’m thankful for [name of child who brought the Bible], and I’m thankful for everyone in our class today. Let’s thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing “I’m So Glad We’re Together” (track 4) with the *CD* to the tune of “Give Me Oil in My Lamp.”



I'm so glad we're together.
 Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.
 I'm so glad we're all here today.
 I'm so glad we're together.
 Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—
 Prayin' for each other every day.

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

Thank you, Lord, for each one.
 Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.
 Thank you for everyone who's here.
 Thank you, Lord, for each one.
 Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—
 Thankful for our friends both far and near.

This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible*. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, foil coins from Option 3



Have children gather around you. Open the Bible to **Luke 19**. Say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Luke in the Bible. Last week we read this story from our Bible Big Book, and we acted out the story about Zacchaeus. This week we'll act it out as a poem about Zacchaeus, and I need everyone to help!**

Give one child a Zacchaeus mask and one child a Jesus mask. Ask two children to be the tree. Have the tree volunteers stand on either side of a chair with their arms outstretched like tree branches. **The rest of you will be people in the town. I'll give you each two foil coins and these masks to use as you act out the story.** Distribute the coins and the rest of the *Bible masks*.

Read the following story slowly, and encourage children to act out their parts.

Zacchaeus was a tax man (*Zacchaeus bows*)

Who took lots of money.

When he took too much from people (*Zacchaeus collects coins*),

They didn't think it was funny! (*People shake their heads and grumble.*)

He didn't have a friend!

But he kept on taking money (*Zacchaeus collects more coins*),

For he loved to buy and spend! (*Zacchaeus holds up the money.*)

One day Jesus passed through town (*people make path for Jesus*),

And everyone wanted to see! (*People follow Jesus.*)

The crowd was tall. Zacchaeus was small (*Zacchaeus tries to see around everyone*),

So Zacchaeus climbed a tree. (*Zacchaeus climbs on "tree" chair.*)

But Jesus called Zacchaeus down (*Jesus beckons to Zacchaeus*)

And went to his house to stay. (*Zacchaeus and Jesus walk away.*)

For Jesus loved Zacchaeus (*Jesus hugs Zacchaeus*)—

He loves us all that way!

**Because of Jesus' kindness,
Zacchaeus changed that day!
He asked forgiveness for his sins** (*Zacchaeus kneels*)
And gave half his possessions away! (*Zacchaeus returns the coins.*)

Have children change roles, and then repeat the poem once or twice. Collect the coins and masks, and gather children in a circle.

Ask: • **Why was Jesus kind to Zacchaeus?** (Because he loved him; Jesus loves everyone; Jesus wanted him to change.)

- **What kind thing did Zacchaeus do?** (He gave back the money he'd taken.)
- **Why do you think Jesus wants us to be kind?** (Because it makes people feel good; because it's better than being mean.)

Say: **Because Jesus was kind, Zacchaeus learned to be kind, too.** ▶ Jesus wants us to be kind so others will learn from us. There are lots of ways to be kind to others! We'll get to practice one way in just a little while. But first, let's play a game to remind us that Jesus was kind to Zacchaeus.



■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: none

Form a circle. Ask one child to pretend to be Jesus and to stand in the center. Have the rest of the group hold hands and walk around in a circle as they sing "I'm Coming to Your House" to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell."



SING

**"I'm coming to your house,
I'm coming to your house."
Jesus told Zacchaeus,
"I'm coming to your house."**

Direct "Jesus" to select someone to be "Zacchaeus," and have that child come to the center. Help the children in the center act out one way to show kindness, such as giving a hug. Then send both children back to the circle, and choose a new Jesus.

Repeat the game until everyone has had a turn to be Jesus or Zacchaeus. Say: **When Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house, Zacchaeus learned to be kind.** ▶ Jesus wants us to be kind, too.



Say: **There are many ways that we can be kind to others. Our Bible verse from 2 Thessalonians 3:13 tells us to ▶ "never get tired of doing good." Let's think of things we can do to show kindness and goodness, and you'll each have a chance to share your idea with the rest of the class. I'll start: I'll never get tired of...**[offer ideas such as: teaching Sunday School; helping others; smiling at people]. Let each child have a turn to finish the verse with a kindness or goodness.

Pray: **Dear Jesus, thank you for being kind to Zacchaeus and to each of us. We'll try to be good and kind, just like you. We love you! Amen.**

BIBLE VERSE

Let's practice showing kindness to our friend Whiskers by sharing our snack with him. First, help me call him. Whiskers! Whiskers!

Closing



■ Mouse Munchies

SUPPLIES: cheese cutouts from Option 2, crackers, napkins

Bring out Whiskers the Mouse, and go through the following script. When you finish the script, take Whiskers with you to your snack area.

puppet



Whiskers: Hi, everyone! What's going on today?

Teacher: Well, Whiskers, we've been learning about how Jesus showed kindness to Zacchaeus, even when Zacchaeus had done bad things. Children, why don't you tell Whiskers what Jesus did when he met Zacchaeus?

(Help children tell how Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house and helped Zacchaeus learn about being kind.)

Whiskers: Wow! Something like that happened to me this week!

Teacher: Someone was kind to you? Who?

Whiskers: My family! Remember how I took some of their money? Well, when I gave the money back, they didn't get mad at me! In fact, my dad hugged me and told me he was proud that I'd returned the money! They all forgave me and said they loved me, even though I'd done something wrong!

Teacher: They were kind to you! Well, we've come to be kind, too. The children would like to share their snack with you!

Whiskers: With me? But why?

Teacher: Because ► Jesus wants us to be kind.

Whiskers: Oooh, I like it when people are kind to me. It makes me want to be kind right back!

Teacher: Are you ready for your snack?

Whiskers: You bet! *(Pausing)* Is it something with cheese?

Teacher: It sure is!

Whiskers: Yippee!

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Bring out the cheese cutouts from Option 2. Give each child a napkin, two cheese cutouts, and a few crackers. You may pretend to feed Whiskers while children enjoy their snack.

■ A Good Chorus

SUPPLIES: CD player



Say: **It was nice to see you all being so kind to Whiskers! I think he really enjoyed it! The book of Second Thessalonians in the Bible tells us to “never get tired of doing good.” Let’s sing a song to help us remember that.**

Form pairs, and have partners face each other. Show children how to clap their hands and then pat their partners’ hands as you lead them in singing “Doing Good” (track 18) with the *CD* to the tune of “Do Lord.” Play the song several times, pausing the *CD* after each time so that children find new partners.



**I’ll never, oh never,
Get tired of doing good.
I’ll never, oh never,
Get tired of doing good.**

**I’ll always, yes always,
Do what I know I should—
So I will be like Jesus!**

(Repeat.)



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week’s topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ **Lively Learning: Hurry to the House**

Before this activity, build a simple block house at one end of the room. Place foil “coins” in a paper lunch sack, and set it next to the house. Place an empty paper lunch sack at the opposite end of the room.

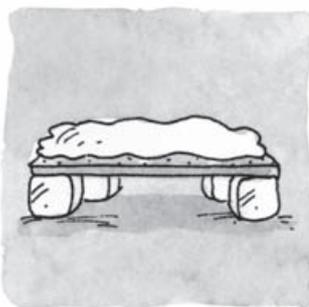
Form pairs, and have them line up by the empty sack. Tell children that when Jesus went to Zacchaeus’ house, Zacchaeus learned how to be kind; and then Zacchaeus gave back the money he’d taken. Have pairs line up and hold hands or link arms. Have them take giant steps to the block house, take a coin, take giant steps back, and drop the coin in the sack. Continue until all the money is in the sack. Be sure children don’t put the coins in their mouths.

■ **Make to Take: Kindness Necklace**



Cut out six small construction paper hearts for each child, and punch a hole near the top of each heart. Set out bowls of rigatoni pasta or 1-inch lengths of drinking straws. Cut an 18-inch length of yarn for each child. Wrap one end with tape to use as a “needle,” and tie a large knot in the other end. Demonstrate how to thread the paper hearts between the pieces of pasta. Encourage the children to wear their necklaces to remind them that ► *Jesus wants us to be kind.*

■ **Treat to Eat: Table for Two**



Set out graham crackers, cereal squares, plastic knives, and a bowl of frosting or marshmallow creme. Have each child spread frosting on a graham cracker and then place it on four cereal squares to make a table. Kids can use marshmallow creme to make the cereal “legs” stick. Before children enjoy their snack, point out that Jesus and Zacchaeus shared a special meal together. Remind children that Jesus helped Zacchaeus learn to be kind.



■ **Story Picture: Jesus Goes to Zacchaeus’ House**

Give each child a photocopy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Let children cut or tear construction paper into small scraps. Set out glue sticks, and show children how to glue the paper to Zacchaeus’ house, mosaic-style. Allow them to color in the rest of the picture. Tell children that Jesus showed kindness to Zacchaeus and that ► *Jesus wants us to be kind,* too.

Today I learned... @ Jesus wants us to be kind.

Help me learn this:

“Never get tired of doing good”
(2 Thessalonians 3:13b).

Ask me:

- How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus wanted to come home with him?
- Tell about a time someone was kind to you. How did you feel?
- Whom can our family be kind to?

Family Fun

- Go on a Kindness Hunt this week. When you catch family members being kind, return the kindness by giving them a hug.
- During a meal this week, encourage family members to show kindness by serving, affirming, and helping each other.

Lesson 11
Today your child learned that **JESUS WANTS US TO BE KIND.** Children discovered that when Jesus was kind to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus changed from a mean person to a nice person. They practiced showing kindness to others.

Jesus Goes to Zacchaeus' House (Luke 19:5-7)



