

LESSON 4
JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS**LESSON AT A GLANCE****WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Seeks and Saves Us**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 19**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Jesus seeks out a tax collector named Zacchaeus and asks to be a guest in his home where Zacchaeus changes his ways, and Jesus welcomes him back into God's family.**WORD OF WONDER:** God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. —from John 3:16**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS****WHO?**

In the classic Zacchaeus song, Zacchaeus is described as a “wee little man.” But he was the chief tax collector in the region, meaning he earned commission from what the tax collectors beneath him received from the Jewish people. He was very wealthy and powerful.

WHAT?

Zacchaeus, a Jewish man, was making money off his own people and identifying with the Romans, who oppressed the Jews. No wonder everyone grumbled when Jesus invited Himself to Zacchaeus’ house. Once again, Jesus was willing to associate with all people—righteous, sinners, wealthy, poor, powerful, and the outcast.

WHERE?

Jesus passes through Jericho as He heads west toward Jerusalem and the cross. Jericho was the first place the Israelites conquered when they entered the promised land ([Joshua 6](#)), and it’s the Jericho road where the story of the good Samaritan takes place ([Luke 10](#)).

WHEN?

In the previous chapter, Luke records Jesus’ conversation with a rich ruler who failed to follow Jesus’ advice and went away sad because he wanted to keep his wealth ([Luke 18](#)). Contrast this with Zacchaeus, who heard from Jesus and immediately realized his earthly wealth was unimportant compared to the kingdom of God.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

With Zacchaeus, Jesus showed that no one is beyond being welcomed into God’s kingdom if they are willing to repent. Throughout His ministry, Jesus sought and saved lost people. He called Matthew the tax collector to follow Him ([Matthew 9:13](#)), talked with a Samaritan woman (John 4), and told parables about lost things ([Luke 15](#)).

Curiosity

Play Stations

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Money Play

Set up: Set out play money with bills and coins. If you have a toy cash register, set it out. You can also print the [Money Sheet](#) and cut apart the play money.

Play: Let the kids take turns playing with the money. Encourage the kids to count how many coins or bills they have. They can pretend to buy things in the room with the money



Play Station: Welcome to My House

Set up: Set up an area to look like the inside of a house. You can include a chair or couch, a small table, toy food, and other playhouse items.

Play: Let the kids pretend to invite other kids to come inside their home and join them for dinner.

Play Station: Jesus and Zacchaeus Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids could also turn the sheet over and trace their hand at the top of the sheet and then add a trunk to make it look like a tree.

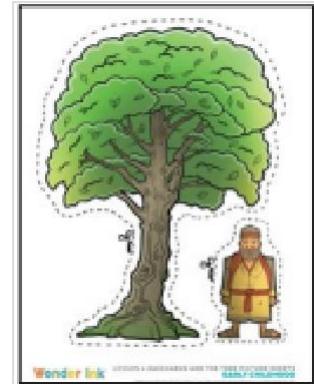
Craft: Craft Stick Puppet

Print a black and white version of the [Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet](#) for each kid and cut out the tree and Zacchaeus.

In the story we learned today, Zacchaeus needed Jesus to forgive him because he did wrong things. We do wrong things too. That's called sin. Jesus said that He came to look for the lost and save them. People who are lost are people who need Jesus to forgive their sins—the wrong things they do. Jesus knew that people did not like Zacchaeus, and Jesus looked for him anyway. Jesus wanted to bring him back into God's family. Jesus wanted Zacchaeus to know that God loved him. Jesus chose to seek out Zacchaeus and forgive him. Jesus can forgive and save anyone! What an amazing truth—Jesus seeks and saves us! You can make a Zacchaeus in a tree to take home to remind you that Jesus seeks and saves us.

Invite the kids to color the tree and Zacchaeus and glue or tape the Zacchaeus to a craft stick. They can use the craft stick to make a Zacchaeus puppet and pretend to make it go up or down the tree. They can take their tree and puppet home to retell the story.

As you take your paper puppet home, remember Jesus didn't just come to seek and save Zacchaeus! He seeks and saves us too! Use your puppet to share the story with someone else.



Leader Tip: Instead of Zacchaeus, kids can draw and cut out a picture of themselves and remember that Jesus seeks and saves us too!

Identity

Closing Game: Save the Balloon

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity.

Show the kids an inflated balloon. You can draw a face on it ahead of time if you want to.

Today we learned from God's big story how Jesus saw Zacchaeus and asked him to come down out of the tree so Jesus could go to Zacchaeus' house. But in our story, the people didn't like Zacchaeus and didn't understand why Jesus wanted to go to his house.

Let's play a game where we pretend this balloon is Zacchaeus. Bop it up and don't let it touch the ground. We're going to "save the balloon" from the ground. Let's pretend that when the balloon is in the air, it's like Zacchaeus is still up in the tree.

When the balloon does hit the ground, yell out, "Zacchaeus, Jesus says you're saved!"

Let the kids bop the balloon in the air and save it from hitting the ground. Play as many rounds as time allows.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for knowing our names.

Jesus called Zacchaeus by name. He knows your name too. When I say the word, "name," say your name as we pray. Let's pray and talk to God. God, thank You for knowing our name (pause for kids to respond). Thank You for coming to find us and save us. Thank You for loving us. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Jesus knows you by name. He loves you, and He hears your prayers. You matter to God! May you always remember that Jesus seeks and saves you!