

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).

Activity: Leaves and Trees

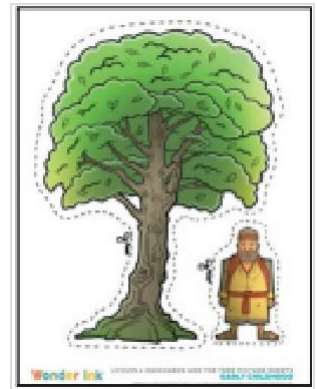
Ahead of time, print a copy of [Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet](#). Gather some leaves (fake or real) and twigs, then set them out.

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Welcome! I'm so glad you're at church today. Come see what we have today.

Let the kids look at and feel the leaves. Let them smell the leaves. Ask them what they see and what they smell. Ask them what colors they see. Let the kids play with the leaves and twigs.

We have leaves and branches from a tree. In our God's big story for today, we're going to learn about a man who climbed a tree. Would you want to climb a tree? Allow the kids to respond. Look at the pictures of the tree.



Activity: Seek and Find

In God's big story today, we'll see how Jesus came to seek and save the lost. That means He came to find us so we can be saved. Let's play a game where we try to find different things around the room.

Describe different things in the room and see if the kids can find the object you are talking about. For example, if you have a slide in the room you could say, "Kids like to climb up the ladder on this so they can go down the other side." If you have a very young group, you could just ask them to find the objects. For example, "Can you find a slide in this room?" You can also let the kids take turns hiding while you seek them.

Good job finding things! To seek means to look for or search for. You searched for and found things. We'll learn today that Jesus seeks us.

Did you know that Jesus came to seek and save us? Our Wonder Truth today is: JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US.

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

JESUS—*Point up.*

SEEKS—*Make pretend binoculars with your hands around your eyes.*

AND SAVES—*Hug yourself.*

US—*Point to yourself.*

Prayer and Blessing

Let's talk to God. Put your hands around your eyes like binoculars to thank God that He seeks and saves us. Invite the kids to make binoculars around their eyes.

God, thank You for coming to find us, seek us, forgive us, and save us. Thank You for always loving us no matter what we do or what others think. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands 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!

Activity: Hide and Seek

We're learning that Jesus came to seek and save us. He looked for Zacchaeus in a tree and came to Zacchaeus' house. Zacchaeus was changed! Jesus loves us and seeks us too. Let's play a game where we seek.

Play a simple game of Hide and Seek with the kids. Invite the kids to hide while you count to 10. Then try to find them. Make sure you have another trusted adult in the room who is watching the kids while you shut your eyes and they hide. Then play again, but this time, hide a doll or paper person. Tell the kids to pretend it's Zacchaeus.

Today we learned about a time when Jesus found Zacchaeus in a tree and how He saved him. Remember, Jesus seeks and saves us, too!