

SMALL GROUP

TODAY'S WONDER TRUTH: JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US



WORD OF WONDER:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

—John 3:16–17 (NIV)

GOD'S BIG STORY:

Jesus and
Zacchaeus
(Luke 19)

POST-LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

- What did Zacchaeus do so he could see Jesus? (climbed a sycamore-fig tree)
- What did Jesus say when He saw Zacchaeus up in the tree?
("Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay at your house today" [Luke 19:5].)
- How did the people in the crowd feel when Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house? Why do you think they may have felt this way?
(Possible answers: They were unhappy, upset, angry because as a tax collector, Zacchaeus worked for the Romans who mistreated the Jews and may have made extra money dishonestly.)
- What big things did Zacchaeus do after welcoming Jesus to his house? *(He gave half of what he owned to people who were poor and paid back four times anything he had gotten by cheating.)*
- Before he met Jesus, Zacchaeus was spiritually lost. What do you think it means to be spiritually lost? *(Possible answers: to be living without Jesus; to not realize that Jesus loves you, died for you, offers you forgiveness and life forever with Him)*
- Jesus seeks and saves us like He did for Zacchaeus. What does this show you about Jesus? What does it show about how He feels about you?

Welcome Question

- When did someone make you feel extra special? What did they do to make you feel this way?
- It feels so good when other people make us feel special, doesn't it?! Today we'll hear about a time when Jesus made someone feel extra special!

Curiosity Questions

- Have you ever done something to make someone else's day better? Tell us about it.
- Do you think Jesus can change someone's life? Can you think of an example of a time He did?

Curiosity Activity: Seek Out!

- To seek out something is to search for it even when it's challenging. Let's practice our seeking skills with an activity called Seek Out! I have seven photos that I will show one at a time. For each photo, your job will be to seek out something specific. As soon as you find whatever it is you're seeking, you'll put both hands on your head. Demonstrate by putting both hands on your head.
- Display the first Seek Out! Slide. Read the "seek out" prompt and invite kids to look for a girl eating an ice cream cone. Once everyone has found her, point to the ice-cream-eating girl (or have a kid come up and point her out). Then advance to the next slide and read the prompt on it.
- Continue through all seven images and prompts.
- If you'd like to turn the activity into a competition, have kids form two teams. Whichever team finds what they are looking for in the photo first earns a point, and whoever has the most points at the end wins!
- Seeking out what you were looking for was easier in some of the photos than in others, but you all did a great job! We'll learn in God's big story today about a man named Zacchaeus who wanted to see Jesus but was too short to see Him over the crowd, so he climbed up in a tree! Even though Zacchaeus went to great heights to see Jesus, it was actually Jesus who was seeking out Zacchaeus.
- Because as today's Wonder Truth says, **JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US.**

Word of Wonder Activity

- In God's big story today, we saw Jesus seeking and saving Zacchaeus. The people in the crowd didn't like Zacchaeus because he was a tax collector, but Jesus is different from the crowd. Jesus loved Zacchaeus, and He loves us too! Let's say our Word of Wonder together as we remember God's amazing love for us!
- Open your Bible to John 3:16–17. Read John 3:16–17 several times together.
- Gather the kids in a circle and set up a chair for every kid but one. Alternatively, place floor dots on the floor.
- Let's play musical chairs to practice our verse!
- Play "John 3:16" from the Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist or other upbeat worship music as kids play musical chairs. Each time you stop the music, invite the kid without a chair to recite as much of the Word of Wonder as she can and encourage the rest of the group to help her as needed.
- To keep kids engaged, let everyone stay in the game the whole time. At the end of the game, invite the kids to say the verse one more time all together.

Responding in Worship: Seek and Save Prayer Wall

- Gather the kids in front of the designated prayer wall.
- **We're going to reflect on Jesus' love for us by writing and drawing our prayers and putting them on a prayer wall, but before we begin, let's do a little activity.**
- Scatter the prepared note cards all around the room.
- **When I say, "Go," your job is to find three note cards with your name on them. Once you find all three, you can return to your seat.**
- **Great job seeking out the cards with your name on them! Some of you had to look for a long time to find all three, but you didn't give up. You kept seeking until you found what you were looking for!**
- **Today in God's big story, Jesus could have given up on Zacchaeus. After all, Zacchaeus was a tax collector who probably cheated other people out of their money. But Jesus loved Zacchaeus and kept seeking Him until Zacchaeus turned away from his old way of doing things and toward Jesus. Jesus loves us too, and He doesn't give up on us!**
- **Let's spend some time talking with Jesus now by writing or drawing prayers to Him.**
- Give each kid a writing utensil and set coloring utensils out as well.
- **Jesus loves you always and no matter what! No matter what you've done in the past, Jesus loves you and invites you to come to Him. On the back of one of your cards, thank Jesus for His love.** Give kids time to write or draw on a note card.
- **Jesus seeks and saves you! On the back of a different card, tell Jesus what that means to you.** Give kids time to write or draw their thoughts to Jesus on a note card.
- **If Jesus was sitting next to you right now, what would you say to Him? Would you ask Him to help you with a certain situation? Would you praise Him for something He has done in your life? On the back of your third card, write or draw whatever you want to tell Jesus.** Give kids time to write or draw on a note card.
- When kids finish writing and drawing on their cards, invite them to come up and tape their cards to the prayer wall. They can tape them with their writings/drawings facing out, or if they prefer to keep their prayers between them and Jesus, they can tape their cards with their writings/drawing facing the wall.

SMALL GROUP PRAYER

Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Because of Him, everyone is able to be a part of God's family! Let's thank God in prayer for sending His Son to change our hearts and give us a place we'll always belong.

Invite kids to share any prayer requests or praises. Give kids a few moments to pray over each of the requests silently. Ask whether any of the kids want to pray for the group out loud, but if not, that's OK! You can close in prayer and encourage kids that God always hears their prayers no matter how or when they pray.