

Get Ready!

Zacchaeus

By: Terri Tschaenn



Text

Luke 19:1-10

Key Quest Verse

Luke 19:10 (NIV) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Bible Background

In Romans 12:2 NIV, the apostle Paul urges us, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

That's what happened to Zacchaeus. He was transformed. It wasn't enough for him to stop swindling the Jewish people—he wanted to restore four times all he had taken as well as give half his money to the poor. This must have been a huge sacrifice for a man who sat comfortably in the lap of luxury. This showed that Zacchaeus was a changed man.

There were others whom Jesus called, yet they were unwilling to love Him above their possessions. Zacchaeus, however, was more than willing to surrender it all to the Lord. He had spent many lonely nights counting his money, and now he wanted his life to count. For all his shortcomings, Zacchaeus realized that following the Savior was the only way to true meaning and purpose.

When we have an encounter with the Savior, it shouldn't leave us as simply excited people. Instead, we should experience transformed hearts, reformed minds, and renewed spirits.

*Get Ready!***Lesson Quest**

What I want my students to:

Know: That Jesus came to be a savior for everyone.

Feel: A desire to see Jesus—even if they have to climb a tree!

Do: Accept Jesus as their savior.

Leader's Devotion

In the weeks that I have been working on this lesson, summer is ending and I can feel just a hint of autumn as cooler weather is creeping into our days. The trees are just beginning to change to their brilliant shades of orange, yellow, and red. My favorite time of year!

The campus where I currently attend college is kept beautifully landscaped--full of a wide variety of flowers, plants, and trees. Almost everyday I park along a street that is lined with sycamore trees. And almost everyday I pick up a leaf to “inspire” me as I think about what to write for the lessons. I love the huge leaves that a sycamore produces and the white bark that is exposed as outer layers peel away, which makes this tree so easy to recognize from a distance.

In my research for this lesson on Zacchaeus, I discovered that the Palestinian sycamore tree mentioned by Luke was a large, fruit-bearing tree and very abundant in biblical times but rare today. Yet even though I know the sycamore I'm looking at is different than that of Zacchaeus' time, I can still relate to the desire and ambition—or even raw curiosity—that prompted Zacchaeus to climb up high to see Jesus. Just as Zacchaeus knew that there was something missing in his life, I feel that same emptiness when I've let “other things” crowd Jesus out of my life. The busyness of life and desires of the world seem to take hold and pull me out of the “tree” that gives me the right perspective of my Savior. I have to stop and readjust my view.

Hopefully, as you prepare for this lesson, you will also take some time out to prepare yourself for a view of the savior. Look for Him to be in your students, your church family, your own family, friends, co-workers, or even strangers. If we seek Jesus, He will find us—just as He found Zacchaeus, waiting in his sycamore tree.

Get Set!



Option A

GAME

Materials: A coin

Procedure: Play a game like Who’s Got the Button? Students sit in a circle (either on the floor or around a table) with their hands closed in front of them. Choose a volunteer to be the Searcher, who will close their eyes. Give the coin to one student. Searcher opens eyes and may move around the circle. Instruct all students to pretend to pass the coin around the circle, keeping hands closed, so the Searcher can’t see it. Students continue motion around the circle. When you ask, “Where is the coin?” students stop passing motion and the Searcher tells who he or she thinks is holding the coin. The student who is holding it reveals the coin and the Searcher chooses another student to be the new Searcher. Repeat game as time allows.

Today’s story is about a man who spent his life gathering coins and was very rich, but his life was changed dramatically when he searched for something else. Let’s go to the story...

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Materials: Construction paper, scissors, rulers, markers



Procedure: Have students cut a strip of paper 1 inch wide and 8 inches long. Cut another strip 1 inch wide and 5 inches long. Glue the two strips together to make a cross. Carefully print the letters J E S U S across the 5-inch strip. Write M Y S A V I O R down the longer strip, so that the “S” in the middle of “Jesus” becomes the “S” in “Savior.”

“In our lesson today, a man named Zacchaeus discovers that Jesus is his Savior. Use this as a bookmark for your lesson today and as a reminder that Jesus is a Savior for all.”

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!**Bible Story**

Teacher Tip: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles

Our Bible lesson today is from the book of Luke, chapter 19 verses 1-10. Help students locate these verses in their Bibles. Have students read this passage out loud, either as a group reading or by individual volunteers.

“What was Zacchaeus’ occupation? Verse 2 says that he was a chief tax collector and points out that he was wealthy. Unfortunately, Zacchaeus’ wealth probably came from being dishonest because most tax collectors at that time were free to collect any amount they wanted from the people and they could keep as much as they wanted, so long as the Roman government got their share. Under this situation, Zacchaeus would not have been a very popular person in his community.” Discuss what your students think his life would have been like under these circumstances.

“Verse 3 tells us that Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus very much. He must have heard about the miracles that Jesus had performed and Zacchaeus no doubt wanted to meet this important man.

Zacchaeus stood with the crowd gathered beside the road, but he could see nothing. He was too short to see over the heads of the people. So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed into a sycamore tree. From there he was sure he could see Jesus.” Would you have gone out of your way to do something like climbing up in a tree to see Jesus. Did it matter to Zacchaeus what the people around him thought? Would it matter to you?

“Soon Jesus and the crowd following Him came to the sycamore tree. For some reason Jesus and his disciples stopped. Jesus looked up and saw Zacchaeus. Even though Jesus had never met this man before, He knew that something was wrong in Zacchaeus’ life and that Jesus could make a difference by helping him change the way he lived.”

“‘Zacchaeus,’ called Jesus, ‘come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ Can you imagine how surprised Zacchaeus was? Now he could take Jesus home and talk with him. Joyfully Zacchaeus led the way. As they went, others followed. Some found fault because Jesus was stopping in the home of a tax collector whom they called a sinful man. The Pharisees would not enter such a house. They hated sinners. But Jesus didn’t follow the Pharisees’ laws; he followed God’s laws. Jesus knew that if Zacchaeus understood why God had sent Him; then he would worship God also.”

Get Set!

Bible Story

“And, of course, Jesus was right! Zacchaeus' heart was changed when he spent time with Jesus. He said, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’ Zacchaeus discovered that all the money in the world was not worth as much as having a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus was glad to hear Zacchaeus say that and He answered, ‘Today salvation is come to your house, for the Son of man is come to save those who are lost.’”

“Zacchaeus was thrilled to know the savior! When everyone else thought he was such a terrible man, Jesus did not abandon him. He walked with him, talked with him, and stayed in his house. Jesus came into Zacchaeus' life and he was never the same again. Just like Zacchaeus, we can have that relationship with Jesus today.”

Go!

tree

lost

climbed



Review

WORKSHEET

Materials: Copies of the Word Search Resource Page.

Quest Connection

“Review memory verse: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10.”

Procedure: Do this worksheet searching for words from the story.

Your students probably worked together on this word search or other activities you did in class today. Encourage them to be a team and support each other. Just as Zacchaeus sought out Jesus and gained support from Him, ask them to make a point of seeking each other out during the week—maybe at school, or at another church service, or give each other a call, or e-mail—whatever way they can stay connected to form a support and encouragement for each other. You as the teacher can be included in this support circle, too! It’s a shame that all too often we leave our Sunday or Wednesday classes and don’t have contact with our church family until the next week. If your class or church seems to be that way, make a commitment to change it. **WE ALL NEED EACH OTHER!**

SOLUTION: (Over, Down, Direction like W = west, etc.)

CLIMBED (10, 2,W)

COLLECTOR (10, 9, NW)

CROWD (10, 14,N)

HOUSE (9, 14, W)

JERICHO (1, 11,E)

JESUS (5, 12,E)

LOST (1, 14,E)

SAVE (9, 10,NW)

SALVATION (4, 5,S)

SEEK (1,1,S)

SHORT (6, 3,SE)

SINNER (5, 3,SE)

SYCAMORE (1,1,SE)

TAX (1, 5,S)

TREE (9,13,W)

WEALTHY (8, 10,W)

ZACCHAEUS (9, 9,W)

The leftover letters will spell out (in order) the memory verse, Luke 19:10.

Close

Close the class with prayer!

Go!



DRAMA

Materials: None

Quest Connection

Zacchaeus was a changed man after he met Jesus, but we don't know much about what happened next in his life. Do you think Zacchaeus kept his word about giving half of what he owned to the poor? Did he pay back four times what he stole? Did he keep his job as tax collector? Did he continue to worship Jesus? Did he tell all of his friends about Jesus or did he keep his experience to himself? What changes can you imagine might have happened in his life?

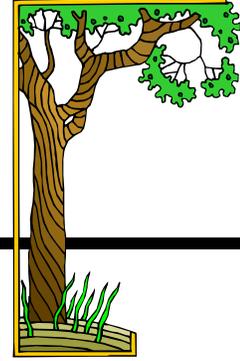
Procedure: Give students a few minutes to brainstorm what might have happened next in Zacchaeus' life. Think about the next week, a month later, or even a year or more down the road. Then have them act it out. Encourage them to have fun with this and please join in with them!

Close

What do you think would have happened to Zacchaeus if he hadn't taken the initiative to climb up in the tree to see Jesus—and for Jesus to see him. What steps can you take to see Jesus more clearly?"

Go!**Visualize****ARTS AND CRAFTS**

Materials: Copies of the Resource Page, colored pencils, markers, or crayons

**Quest Connection**

This is an opportunity to visualize the lesson.

Procedure: Have the students draw pictures of the major scenes from the story. Then number the squares to put them in the correct order of events.

Close

Share the pictures. Discuss how things were different in Bible times and how wonderful it would have been to be Zacchaeus having a chance to meet with Jesus in person.

Go!**What's Wrong?****WORKSHEET**

Materials: Copies of the Resource Page.

Quest Connection

It might be easy to see what is wrong with these statements, but what would you say was wrong with how the people acted toward Zacchaeus? (if needed review Luke 19:7)

Why do you think Jesus refused to see Zacchaeus the way others did? In what ways are you like Zacchaeus? In what ways are you like the people who called Zacchaeus a sinner?

Procedure: Have students write the corrected version of Zacchaeus' story. (There are MANY changes, but this will follow word for word the account from a NIV Bible.)

Close

What can we learn from the story of Zacchaeus to help us be more like Jesus this week? Pray that God will give us the ability to accept people as they are. That we can be friends to people that may seem to be a little different or even “unlikable”. Ask God to help us remember the way Jesus changed Zacchaeus' life and ask Him to show us how we can tell others about Jesus so they can be changed also.

Go!**Sycamore Leaf****ARTS AND CRAFTS**

Materials: Card stock or construction paper copies of the Sycamore leaf pattern from Resource Pages; markers, crayons, or paints; hole punch; ribbon or magnets.

Quest Connection

Luke tells us that Zacchaeus climbed up in a Sycamore tree to see Jesus. What he called a Sycamore tree may be different than what we call a Sycamore today, but this craft will still be a good reminder of our lesson.

Procedure: Have students cut out their leaves. Print the memory verse on the center of the leaf and then decorate colorfully with markers, crayons, or paints. Make a hole punch at the top and string with ribbon to hang OR glue a magnet to the back to hang on the refrigerator.

Close

Have you ever climbed a really high tree to discover how far you could see? Zacchaeus didn't need to see far away, he just needed to see Jesus. He was willing to do whatever he had to, to see Jesus. What are some ways that we can see Jesus today? What effort can you make to get to have a relationship with the Savior?" Pray with your students about accepting Jesus as their Savior, if they haven't already. For those that have, pray with them to have a closer relationship with Him.

Go!

Nobody's Perfect!

SCIENCE

Materials: Small, glass jar; rubbing alcohol; water; eyedropper; cooking oil



Quest Connection

The people in Jericho didn't think too highly of Zacchaeus before he met Jesus.. Perhaps they looked down on him because of his size, surely they were angry at him for collecting too much in taxes, maybe they were jealous of his position and his wealth, or it could be that he was just not a very nice man. Whatever it was, we know that Zacchaeus was far from perfect. But he is not alone! All of us have times that we mess up and do things that we know we shouldn't." Together look up and read Romans 3:23. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. "

Is there anyone who is perfect? The Bible tells us that God is perfect. Look up and read Psalm 18:30 together. As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. "Also Jesus," read Hebrew 5:8-9 "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."

Did you know that Jesus calls us to be perfect? Read Matthew 5:48. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect". Does this sound impossible? Well guess what, there is a way. In Matthew 19 Jesus is talking to another rich man and tells him how to become perfect. Read Matthew 19:21-26. Emphasize verse 26, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Go!

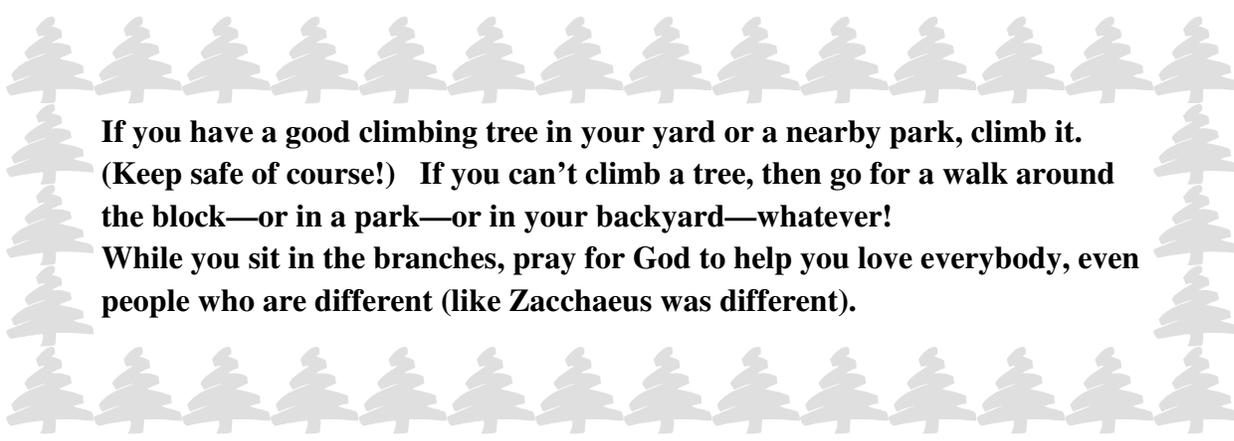


Procedure:

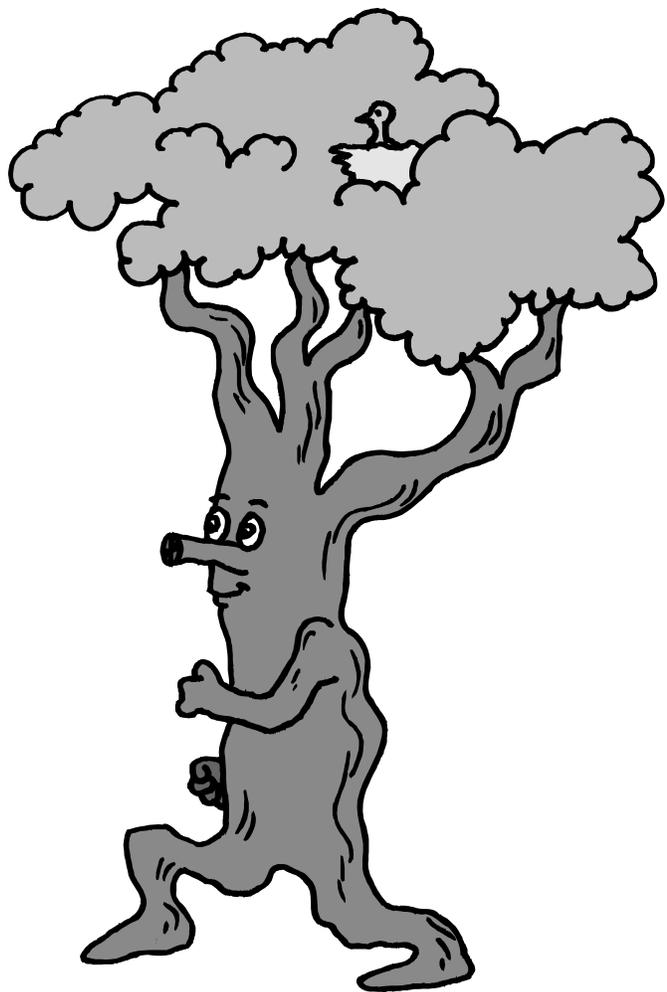
1. Fill the bottle about 2/3 full with rubbing alcohol. Mentally divide the remaining volume in half and add water to this level (about 1/6 of jar).
2. With an eyedropper, draw up some cooking oil. Place the tip of the dropper beneath the surface of the alcohol/water mixture and gently squeeze out the oil. The drop should float, but if it does not, then slowly add more alcohol until the drop rises to the middle.
3. If the drop is floating near the top as predicted, add water, a little at a time, until the drop is suspended in the center. Stand back. You will see a perfect sphere mysteriously hanging in mid-solution.
4. Explain that the water/alcohol solution has a greater density than alcohol alone, but less dense than pure water. You have created a mixture that is approximately the same as the oil; therefore the drop of oil has no forces pulling it one way or another and it remains in suspension. That is also why the drop kept its perfectly round shape. The forces of nature are not usually balanced like this. For example, a raindrop is rarely round. As it falls to the ground, it flattens out into a hamburger shape.

Close

There may not be many things around us that we can say are perfect, but remember that we can be in a perfect state of suspension (like the drop of oil) by asking for God’s help and seeking Jesus to be our Savior. Read Psalm 18:32 “It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.”



If you have a good climbing tree in your yard or a nearby park, climb it. (Keep safe of course!) If you can't climb a tree, then go for a walk around the block—or in a park—or in your backyard—whatever! While you sit in the branches, pray for God to help you love everybody, even people who are different (like Zacchaeus was different).



WHAT IF....

What if Jesus said to you, I must go to your house today, what would you do?

What if you were allowed to actually talk face-to-face with Jesus, what would you ask Him?



WORD SEARCH

S R F O R T H E S O
 E Y O D E B M I L C
 E N C T S S O F M A
 K N C A C I H A M E
 T T O S M E N O S E
 A E K A A O L N R N
 X D T L O E R L E T
 S A V V E W V E O R
 S U E A H C C A Z C
 H Y H T L A E W S D
 J E R I C H O A T W
 W A S O J E S U S O
 L O S N T E E R T R
 L O S T E S U O H C

Zacchaeus' Word Find

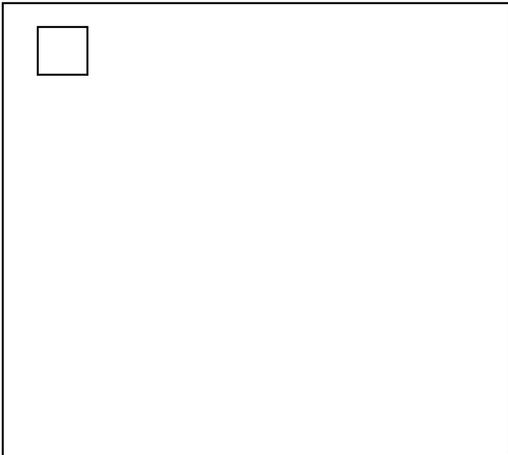
Find these words in the puzzle:

CLIMBED	COLLECTOR	CROWD	HOUSE	JERICHO
JESUS	LOST	SAVE	SALVATION	SEEK
SHORT	SINNER	TAX	TREE	SYCAMORE
	WEALTHY	ZACCHAEUS		

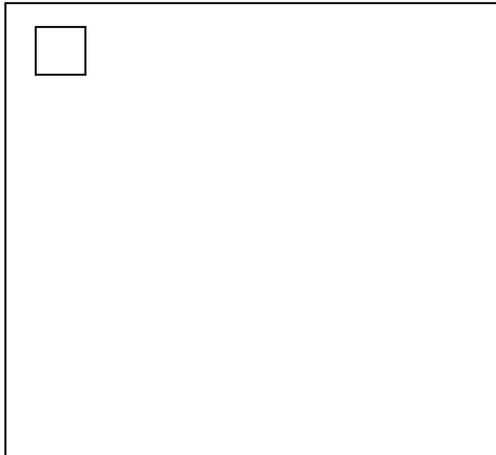
Extra Challenge!! Fill in the leftover letters to spell out a familiar verse for this lesson.

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 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

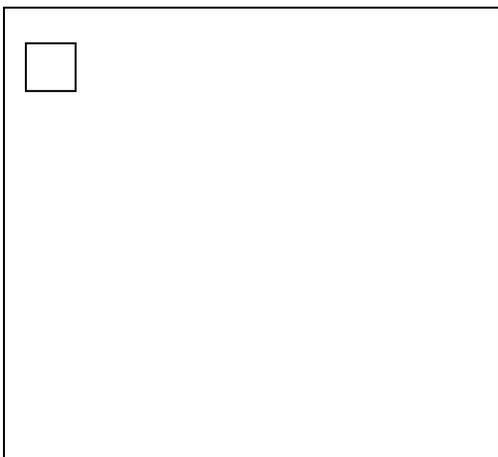
Illustrate the story of Zacchaeus by drawing your version of what you see happening in each story frame. Then put the story in order by placing a number in the box on each page.



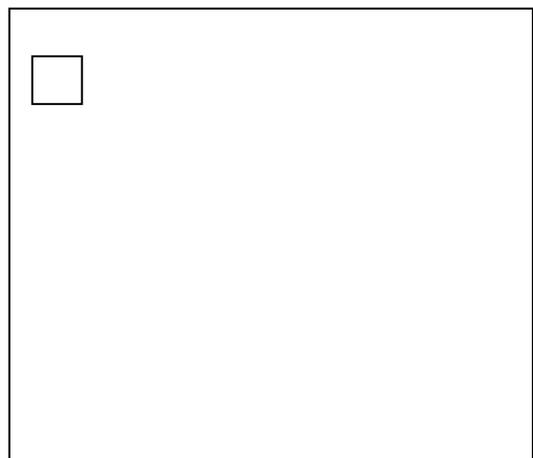
Zacchaeus climbed in a tree to see Jesus.



Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house.



Zacchaeus was sorry and wanted to give money to the poor.



Jesus walked with the disciples to Jericho.

What's Wrong?

This story doesn't make any sense. Correct the following statements about Zacchaeus' meeting with Jesus. Refer to Luke 19: 1-10 (NIV) if necessary. Cross out each incorrect word and write the correct word above each one.

Peter entered Bethlehem and was passing through. A woman was there by the name of Mary; she was a cloth weaver and was very poor. She wanted to see who Peter was, but being an old woman she could not, because of the animals. So she walked ahead and jumped in a pond to see him, since Peter was coming that way.

When Zacchaeus reached the pond, he looked down and yelled to her, "Mary, come up later. I must leave from your village tomorrow." So she came up some time and waved at him sadly.

None of the animals saw this and began to sing, "She has gone to be the cook of the dinner." But Elizabeth sat down and yelled to the farmer, "Look, farmer! Sooner or later I take all of my animals to the circus, and if I have lost anybody out of forgetfulness, I will buy back ten times the clowns."

Peter said to her, "Yesterday frustration has left from this village, because this woman, too, is a daughter of Isaiah. For the leader of the pack came to sing and to keep what was found.

Sycamore Leaf

