

Get Ready!

Jesus is a Friend

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Text

Luke 19:1-10

Key Quest Verse

“A friend loves at all times” (Proverbs 17:17a).

Bible Background

Jesus is a wonderful friend. Indeed, He is a friend who “loves at all time” and one who “sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 17:17;18:24). Everywhere Jesus went, He radiated compassion, friendship, and love for all mankind. No matter who they were, what their lives had been like, or what position they held in society, all persons in all places were included in the circle of His acceptance and love. He reached out and drew all persons to Himself.

Three major incidents recorded in the Gospels illustrate His friendship and love: Little children in Galilee (Mark 10:13-16), Zacchaeus, the wealthy tax collector in Jericho (Luke 19:1-10) and our Lord’s very close friend, Lazarus, with his sisters, Mary and Martha, in the village of Bethany near Jerusalem (John 11:1-45).

Get Ready!**Lesson Quest**

What I want my students to:

- Know:** Jesus is our friend.
- Feel:** That Jesus is real and will always be their friend.
- Do:** Choose good friends.

Leader's Devotion

Is there anything more precious than the comfort of a good friend? I think back to difficult times in my life and sometimes wonder how I could have made it without the support of my Christian friends. Jesus has been my best friend since childhood, but the full impact of His faithful companionship became real when I found myself in the storms of life. His steadfast hand held mine. He cradled my head against His strong bosom. He held me in His loving arms as I cried. How do I know? Because those things were done through His people. As messengers of His love, His presence and friendship became real. Is there someone who needs to feel Christ's love in his life today? Extend your hand of friendship in His name.

Get Set!**Option A****MY BEST FRIEND**

Materials: A picture of your best friend, or perhaps several pictures of best friends through the years

Procedure: I brought a picture of someone today who is very special to me. Show the picture. This person is my very best friend. Tell about your friendship, how long you've been friends, etc. Do you have a best friend? Let children briefly tell about their best friends.

Story Tie-In: Even though the person in this picture is very special to me, there's someone who is even more special. Can you guess who it is? Let children guess. It's Jesus. Jesus is the most special person and best friend anyone could ever have. Let's hear about a man in our Bibles named Zacchaeus, who became a friend of Jesus.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B**I CAN'T SEE**

Materials: A picture of Jesus

Procedure: I brought a picture of my best friend today and put it up on the wall. If you'll stand behind me, I'll show it to you. Stand up and have children stand behind you. Can you see it over there? Point in direction of the picture of Jesus. Don't let the children come out from behind you. You can't see it? Why not? I'm in your way? You're not tall enough to see past me? Let children come in front of you. Now can you see the picture of my best friend? Who is it?

Story Tie-In: In our Bible there was a man who had the same problem you just had. His name was Zacchaeus, and he wasn't tall enough to see over the people in front of him. Let's listen to what he did.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!

Bible Story

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

Once there was a man named Zacchaeus and he had two problems (hold up two fingers). **One problem was that people didn't like him very much, because he was a tax collector. That means he had to take money from people, and often, he took more than he should have. That made people mad (make a mad face). His second problem was that he wasn't very tall. People may have teased him about that.**

Zacchaeus had heard that Jesus was going to be coming to his town, and **he wanted to see Hhim very much. But there was a crowd waiting to see Jesus and Zacchaeus couldn't see over them. What do you think he did? Zacchaeus ran ahead of the crowd and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see above the people (make motions like you are climbing up a tree). He could see (hold hand above eyes as if looking) Jesus coming down the street and the crowd pressing all around Him.**

When Jesus got to the tree where Zacchaeus was, He looked up and saw **him (look up) and said, "Zacchaeus, come down here. I want to go to your house today."**

Zacchaeus was so happy that someone liked him enough to want to come to **his house that he came down right away. How do you think Zacchaeus' face looked when he came down?** (Give a big smile and encourage the children to show you their happy faces.) He showed Jesus where he lived and welcomed **Him in his home. Jesus was a friend to Zacchaeus, and He's a friend to us, too!**

Go!**Friendship Bracelets****ARTS/CRAFTS****Materials:** Pipe cleaners, beads**Quest Connection**

Jesus was a friend to Zacchaeus even when other people didn't like him. We can be friends to each other. Let's make friendship bracelets to remind us that Jesus is our friend.

Procedure: Give each child a pipe cleaner and a small container of beads. Bend one end of the pipe cleaner into a v-shape so beads won't fall off. Have them string the beads onto the pipe cleaner leaving enough room at the end to twist the two ends together. Cut off excess pipe cleaner so bracelets will fit tiny wrists. Children may keep their bracelets to remind them of their friendship with Jesus, or give the bracelet to a friend.

Close

These bracelets can remind us of our best friend, Jesus and the friends He brings into our lives. Let's thank God for our friends.

Go!**Mystery Friend****GAME****Materials:** None**Quest Connection**

Zacchaeus didn't know what a wonderful friend Jesus would be to him. We have wonderful friends right here in our class. See if you can guess which friend I'm talking about.

Procedure: Give clues about one of the children including positive character traits, physical description, things that make him a good friend, etc. After each clue, let children guess who they think you're talking about until they guess the right child. Repeat the process until all children have been identified as the friend you were describing. Allow children to be the clue-givers if time allows.

Close

I have one more friend to have you guess. This friend is better than any other friend. He always listens, is never too busy for me, loves me more than anyone and lives in heaven. Who is it? Let children guess. That's right! It's Jesus!

Go!**Pasta Friends****ARTS/CRAFTS**

Materials: Resource page “Pasta Friends,” variety of pasta, construction paper (any color), glue, crayons

Quest Connection

Can you remember from some of our lessons who made us? (God.) Isn't it amazing how God made each of us different? I want you to think about a friend of yours and what he or she looks like. I want to show you something that is the same but different, just like people! Show the variety of pasta. Who knows what this is? That is right, pasta! When we put it in boiling water and we put sauce on it makes a yummy lunch! We are going to make pasta friends!

Procedure: Glue resource page to construction paper. Have students glue different shapes of pasta on the people figures to make their pasta friends. Have them write their names under one pasta friend and the name of a friend under the other!

Close

God wants us to have many friends! It is important to treat our friends exactly the way that we want our friends to treat us. We need to remember that just like all the different shapes of pasta, God has made us all to look different, but He loves us all just the very same! Let us be nice to our friends. Let us also thank God for our very good friend, His son, Jesus!

Go!**Friendship Ups & Downs****GAME****Materials:** None**Quest Connection**

Our Bible verse says, “A friend loves at all times.” Let’s see what that means.

Procedure: Have children all sit down. I’m going to say a word or two. If the words I say all sound like something a good friend would do, stand up. If not, sit down.

Hitting
Sharing
Telling lies
Disobeying (not doing what mom or dad says)
Helping clean up toys
Keeping your secrets
Saying bad words
Being kind

Close

It’s important that we choose friends that help us be our best. Does playing with friends that lie, disobey or say bad words help us be our best? Probably not. But we can still care about them and pray that God will help them be better. Jesus is our best friend. We want to be like Him.

Go!

Sharing & Kindness**DISCOVERY TABLE**

Materials: Toys to be shared by children, puzzles, books, blocks

Quest Connection

Being a friend like Jesus means sharing and being kind.

Procedure: Provide an area where children can play together and practice their friendship skills. Praise their positive actions such as kind words, patient waiting, sharing, etc.

Close

You all are such good friends. I think Jesus is smiling at how kind you are.



Go!**Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man****MUSIC**

Materials: None, optional: rhythm instruments

Quest Connection

Let's sing a song about Zacchaeus in our Bible Story. Even if you don't know it, you can help me do the motions!

Procedure: Sing the following song. Optional: Let children play rhythm instruments or dance to the song.

Zacchaeus was a wee little man (Show with hands how tall he was)
And a wee little man was he.
He climbed up in a sycamore tree (Climbing motion)
For the Lord he wanted to see. (Hand above eyes)
And as the Savior passed that way (Move hands as if they were walking)
He looked up in the tree. (Hand above eyes)
(Spoken) And he said, "Zacchaeus, you come down. (Shake index finger up at tree)
For I'm going to your house today. (Hands walking)
For I'm going to your house today." (Hands walking)

Close

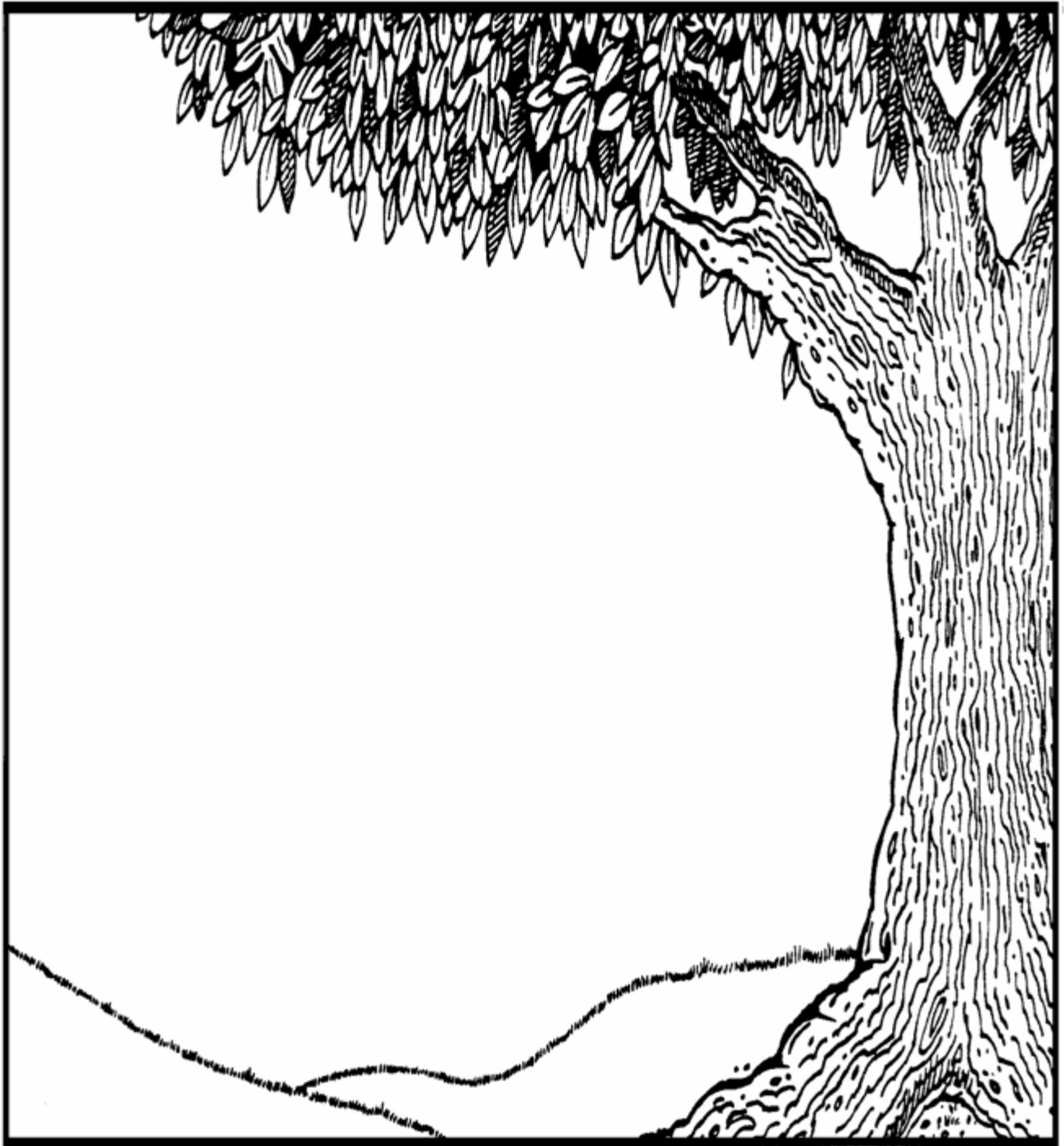
Zacchaeus and Jesus were friends from then on. Jesus is always our friend, too. He's always with us and will always love us.

This child has picked a beautiful bunch of flowers for her friend. Draw her friend beside her.



"A friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).

Draw Zacchaeus in the tree and Jesus walking by. Then color the picture.



"A friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).

Journal Page

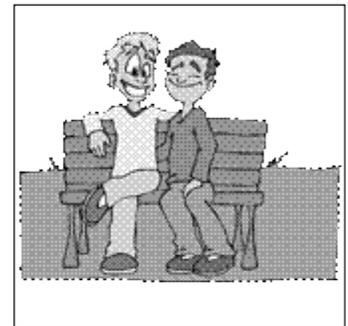
Draw a picture of something you'd like to do with your friend, Jesus.



“A friend loves at all times” (Proverbs 17:17).

Matching Game

Cut out each card and glue onto construction paper. Mix the cards up and have the children play a matching game. Have them take the cards home and practice with their families.



Resource Page: Pasta
Friends

