

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Bible Passage: Luke 19:1-10

Main Point: Meeting Jesus changed Zacchaeus forever.

Key Passage: John 14:6

Big Picture Question: Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is the Messiah.

Watch this week's [IDC Kids Online Video](#)

- Say • Incredible! Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector in Jericho. He was in charge of other tax collectors, and their job was to collect money from the Jews to give to the Roman government. The Bible says that Zacchaeus was rich. Tax collectors often collected more money than the government asked for, and they kept the extra for themselves. No wonder so many people did not like Zacchaeus! The other people were upset when Jesus said He was going to stay at Zacchaeus's house. Didn't Jesus know what kind of person Zacchaeus was? Why would Jesus want to visit with a man who was dishonest, greedy, and a helper to the Romans? It didn't make any sense! Did you notice what Zacchaeus said when he was with Jesus? Zacchaeus offered to give half of everything he had to the poor, and he wanted to pay back four times what he had cheated from others. Zacchaeus's money was no longer the most important thing to him. Jesus had something better.
- **Meeting Jesus changed Zacchaeus forever.** Jesus said that salvation had come to Zacchaeus's house. Zacchaeus was a sinner, but Jesus had come into the world for sinners. Jesus said, "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17). Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came after us—sinners who do not deserve Him—and He rescues us from sin. Jesus died on the cross for our sin, and He is glad when we repent and trust in Him.

Key passage

Read together John 14:6.

- Say • This verse tells us that we are saved only by trusting in Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life. We can't come to God by doing good things and trying to earn His favor. But when we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God the Father welcomes us into His family and changes us forever.

Pray

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

- Leader • God, thank You for sending Your Son to seek and save the lost. Apart from Jesus, we are just like Zacchaeus. We confess that we have treasured the things of this world above You. Forgive us and change our hearts to treasure Jesus. He alone is worthy of our praise and admiration. Amen.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Bible Story Review Questions

Zacchaeus lived in what city? (*Jericho, Luke 19:1-2*)

What was Zacchaeus's job? (*chief tax collector, Luke 19:2*)

What did Zacchaeus climb to see Jesus? (*a tree, Luke 19:4*)

Jesus told Zacchaeus He was going to stay at Zacchaeus's what? (*house, Luke 19:5*)

How much of his possessions did Zacchaeus offer to give to the poor? (*half, Luke 19:8*)

This word means "to turn away from sin and turn toward God." (*repent*)

Fill in the blank: **Meeting Jesus changed _____ forever. (Zacchaeus)**

Jesus came to seek and to save whom? (*the lost, Luke 19:10*)

Say • Good job! Are you surprised that people were angry about Jesus visiting Zacchaeus? They were upset that Jesus was spending time with a sinner. But the Bible says that we are all sinners.

Jesus said that He came to seek and save the lost—people who don't know Him. Jesus came to save sinners, and that is good news!

Activity Options

Option 1: The greatest treasure

Lead kids to sit in a circle. Invite them to imagine they are stranded on a desert island and could have only one object from home. What would they choose and why?

Ask each kid to briefly share about an object, why he chose it, and what he would do with it. After everyone has shared, prompt kids to decide which objects are most important to have. Which objects are most important in order to survive? Which objects bring comfort?

Say • You might have chosen an object that was most important to you. Think about our Bible story today. Before Zacchaeus met Jesus, what was most important to him? (*money*) Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. He probably got his wealth by cheating the Jewish people. He cared more about money than what others thought of him.

How did Zacchaeus change after he met Jesus? (*He wanted to give away his wealth and pay back anyone he cheated.*) **Meeting Jesus changed Zacchaeus forever.** Jesus became Zacchaeus's greatest treasure!

Option 2: Magazine scavenger hunt

Form groups of two to four kids. Give each group a magazine, a pair of scissors, a piece of paper, and a marker. Challenge kids to flip through their magazines and cut out pictures of items that begin with each letter of the alphabet. Kids should search for one item per letter. Encourage kids to list the names of the items on their paper to keep track of what letters they need to find.

Allow kids several minutes to search. Then instruct them to stop and count how many items they found. Applaud their search efforts and recognize creative or unusual findings. Invite kids to share which letters were hardest to find and which were easiest.

Say • You all searched hard for the items in your magazines. In today's Bible story, Jesus said that He came to seek and save whom? (*the lost*) A person is "lost" when he or she doesn't know Jesus. Jesus came for sinners—for people like Zacchaeus and us! He came after sinners who do not deserve Him, and He rescues us from sin. Jesus died on the cross for our sin, and He is glad when we repent and trust in Him. **Meeting Jesus changed Zacchaeus forever**, and when we trust in Jesus, we are forever changed too.

Option 3: Tax collector game

Give each kid a small paper bag containing 12 beans. Instruct each kid to find a partner. Explain that the first partner will hide two or more beans in his hand. The second player should guess if the first player is holding an odd number or even number of beans.

If the player guesses correctly, she collects those beans from the first player. If the guess is wrong, the second player must forfeit the same number of beans to the first player. The object of the game is to collect the most beans.

Then players switch roles; the second player will hide two or more beans in her hand, and the first player will guess if she is holding an odd or even number of beans.

After a round, kids should find new partners and play again. The winner is the player with the most beans when a set period of time expires.

Say • How did you feel when someone else won and took your beans? Today's Bible story is about a man who was disliked because he collected taxes, and he often took extra to keep for himself.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Encourage kids to write about or draw a picture of what they treasure the most. What is most important in their lives?

Say • What did Zacchaeus treasure most before he met Jesus? What did he treasure most after meeting Jesus? How do you know? Has Jesus changed you?

Allow kids to discuss, and then close in prayer. Thank God for sending His Son to save sinners. Confess that we would never be able to earn our way to heaven. Praise God for saving us when we were lost. Pray that kids would treasure Jesus more than anything else.