



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 into God's family.

WORD OF WONDER: God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. —from John 3:16

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: When did someone make you feel extra special? What did they do to make you feel this way?
- Curiosity Questions
- God's Big Story
- Word of Wonder: From John 3:16
- Discussion Questions
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Seek and Save Prayer Wall
- Game: Hide and Seek



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Seeks and Saves Us

SCRIPTURE: Luke 19

WORD OF WONDER: From John 3:16

As you prepare for this lesson, I invite you to pause for a moment to prepare your heart. Then read Luke 19:1–10.

Jesus came to seek and save us. Why? Because He loves us. I can only imagine what the people in the crowd near Zacchaeus were thinking, but I'm quite certain we've all been there. Maybe there's been a time when you felt like you were missing out or wondered why someone else got to do something you so badly wanted to be a part of ... a time when you wanted to be seen.

Read the passage again but imagine the story from Zacchaeus' perspective this time. You were determined to see Jesus and wouldn't let the towering crowd stop you. So, you scurried up a tree, its branches scratching your legs, and cautiously climbed onto a limb. Then you saw Him. And He saw you. Stopping, He looked up and spoke to you. Of all the people in the crowd that day, Jesus sought you out. Jesus sought you and saved you from the sin you were powerless to save yourself from.

That's the type of love Jesus has. This story is about more than a short man in the tree—it's about Jesus finding us where ever we are.

You're worth finding. Never forget that.

—**Andrae Jones**

Nextgen Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

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).

Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Seeks and Saves Us

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WORD OF WONDER: From John 3:16

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "**I'm curious..**" before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the 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?**

(Note that kids might share about a story from their lives or from the Bible.)

When did someone make you feel extra special? What did they do to make you feel this way?

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only), blue construction paper (1–2 sheets), red construction paper (1–2 sheets)

WORD OF WONDER

God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son.

—from John 3:16

Let's practice our Word of Wonder! Our Word of Wonder for the Hanging Out with Jesus series is from John 3:16: God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. Practice saying the verse with the kids several times.

Ahead of time, cut out several circles from blue construction paper and several hearts from red construction paper. You'll need equal numbers of hearts and circles. Hide them around the room.

Our Word of Wonder tells us God loves the world. To help us remember that God loves us so much that He sent His son to the world to seek and save all of us, we'll "seek" and match the paper hearts to the paper worlds. There are blue circles (the world) and red hearts hidden around the room. When I tell you to, you'll all go around the room and seek—or search for—the worlds and bring them to the middle of the room. Then you'll seek the hearts and put them on top of the worlds. Every time you put a heart on the world, say the verse.

Encourage the kids to seek the blue circles and bring them to the middle, then the red hearts and put them on the circles. When they do, invite the kids to say the verse.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **GOD**—Point up to God.
- **SO LOVED**—Hands on heart.
- **THE WORLD.**—Hands in a big circle over your head.
- **HE GAVE HIS ONE**—Point up with one finger.
- **AND ONLY SON.**—Hold your hands out on either side (like a cross).
- **FROM JOHN 3:16**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- What is something you love a lot?
- How much do you think God loves everyone in the world?

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: My First Hands On Bible; Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Luke in the Bible.

[Read pages 306-309 in the My First Hands On Bible](#)

Discussion Questions

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: [Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet \(5/ EE SG\)](#)

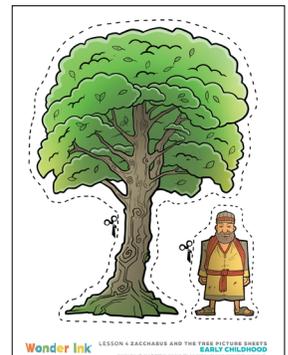
Ahead of time, print several copies of the Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet. Cut out the Zacchaeus from one sheet and the trees from the other sheets.

Gather the kids in a circle. Put the trees down on the ground in the middle of the circle and hide the Zacchaeus under one of the trees while the kids have their eyes closed. **In our story today, we learned about a man who was a wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus. Did people like him at the beginning of the story?** Allow the kids to respond. **No—people didn't like him because he cheated and stole money from them. But Jesus loved him. He climbed a tree to look for Jesus. Jesus chose to seek him—look for him—and come to his house. And Zacchaeus was changed! Jesus loves us and seeks us too! Let's play a game where we seek—or look for—Zacchaeus under a tree. We'll go around the circle and you can lift up a tree. If you find Zacchaeus under the tree, you'll answer a question. After each time we find him, you can all close your eyes, and I'll hide him again.**

Go around the circle and invite each kid to pick up a tree. If Zacchaeus is under the tree, ask that kid a question from the list below. If not, keep moving. Each time someone finds Zacchaeus, invite the kids to close their eyes while you hide him again under a different tree.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever met anyone famous or important?**
- **How did the famous or important person treat you? If you haven't met anyone, how do you think a famous or important person would treat you?**
- **Why was Zacchaeus in a tree?** (So he could see Jesus over the crowd; he was too short to see over everyone; he was looking for Jesus.)
- **Have you ever climbed a tree?**



- **Why do you think people didn't like Zacchaeus?** (He was a rich tax collector; he cheated and lied and stole their money.)
- **How do you think Zacchaeus felt about Jesus going to his house?**
- **What did Zacchaeus promise Jesus?** (He told Jesus that he would give back half of all his things to people who are poor. Zacchaeus said that he would pay back all the money he stole. He would even give people more money than he took from them.)
- **Who did Jesus come to seek and save?** (all of us)
- **How did Zacchaeus change after meeting Jesus?** (He gave back what he stole—and more! He was saved and was a part of God's family.)
- **What does it mean that Jesus seeks us? How does that make you feel?**

No matter who we are or what we've done, Jesus loves all people. He loves you when you make a mistake or when you disobey. He always loves you and wants us all to be a part of His family. Jesus seeks us just like He did Zacchaeus, and He wants to save us too! We can be a part of His family, just like Zacchaeus. Let's talk to God now in prayer!

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for loving and forgiving us. God hears all our prayers!

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Responding in Worship: Seek and Save Prayer Wall

SUPPLIES: butcher paper or large, empty wall space; tape; note cards (3 per kid); writing utensils; coloring utensils; paper (optional); marker (optional)

RESOURCES: [Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, prepare space to be a prayer wall by taping butcher paper to the wall or clearing a large, empty space on the wall within kids' reach. Kids will be writing on note cards and taping them on the prayer wall. Consider writing the Wonder Truth ("Jesus Seeks and Saves Us") across the top of the butcher paper or on a sheet of paper that you tape to the designated prayer wall. Before the activity begins, write each kid's name on three note cards and mix up the note cards. This is a great task for a volunteer to do as kids arrive.

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.**

Leader Tip: If your group is large, give each kid three note cards and have them write their own names on them. Then collect the cards, shuffle them, and scatter them around the room.

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. Consider softly playing music from the [Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) throughout this response time.

Game: Hide and Seek

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only, optional)

RESOURCES: [Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet](#) (from discussion time)

If you haven't already, print the Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet and cut out the Zacchaeus. **We learned today that Jesus chose to seek out Zacchaeus and forgive him. The good news is that Jesus can forgive and save anyone! What an amazing truth—Jesus seeks and saves us! Let's play a game of Hide and Seek to help us remember that Jesus seeks and saves us.**

Play a game of Hide and Seek. Choose a few kids to be the seekers while the other kids hide. If you don't have a lot of hiding spaces in your room, the kids can hide the paper Zacchaeus.

Have the seekers close their eyes until you say it's time to open them, while the other kids hide. Once all the kids have found hiding spots, invite the seekers to open their eyes and search for them.

Once the seeker finds a kid, the seeker can say "Jesus seeks and saves us." Play several rounds, with different seekers each time.

Remember, Jesus seeks us and saves us and knows us by name! Jesus loves you.

