



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 that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. —John 3:16–17

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- PRE-SERVICE
 - OPTION 1: Multisensory Activity: Zoom Out!
 - OPTION 2: Multisensory Activity: Seek Out!
- Welcome Question: When did someone make you feel extra special? What did they do to make you feel this way?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Goodbye Yesterday, You Are
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Gratitude
- Blessing Your Kids



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: John 3:16–17

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 wherever 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).

Large 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: John 3:16–17

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

OPTION 1: Multisensory Activity: Zoom Out!

Display the first Zoom Out! Slide and gather the kids. **Let's do an activity called Zoom Out! I have four photos that are somehow related to today's Bible story and Wonder Truth. I'll show you the first image, but you might not be able to tell what it is because it will be super zoomed in. Your job will be to guess what the image is! After a few seconds, I'll show you another image of the same photograph that is zoomed out a little more. We'll do this several times, and each time you get to guess what the object is. Got it?**

Display the second Zoom Out! Slide. Give kids an opportunity to guess what the image is. Then advance through slides 3–5, allowing kids to guess each time. Remind kids that it's OK if they change their answer as the slides progress. Continue through all the slides, inviting the kids to guess the identity of each photograph as you go. For your reference, the photographs on the slides are of the following: money pouch (slides 2–5), sycamore-fig tree (slides 6–9), ancient city of Jericho (slides 10–13), table set for a feast (slides 14–17).

If you'd like to turn the activity into a competition, have kids form two teams. Whichever team correctly identifies the photo first earns a point, and whoever has the most points at the end wins!



**ZOOM
OUT!**



Leader Tip: See if kids can guess what Bible story they are exploring today based on the images in the activity!

Make It Inclusive: If kids in your group have impaired vision, either invite them to sit near the screen or print copies of slides for them to hold.

In this activity, you had to look really hard at each photo to figure out what it was, and 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 looking for Zacchaeus. Display the Zacchaeus Wonder Truth Slide. Because as today's Wonder Truth says, **JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US.**



OPTION 2 Multisensory Activity: Seek Out!

Display the first Seek Out! Slide and gather the kids. **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 on the screen. 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 second Seek Out! Slide. Read the "seek out" prompt on the screen 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 on the screen (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.



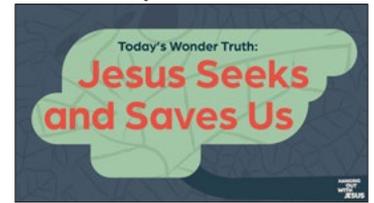
If you'd like to turn the activity into a competition, have kids form two teams. Whichever team finds what they are looking for in the photo first earns a point, and whoever has the most points at the end wins!



Leader Tip: Add more movement to the activity by having the kids do a larger action each time they find what they're seeking. For example, they might run to the opposite side of the room or stand and do three jumping jacks.

Make It Inclusive: If kids in your group have impaired vision, either invite them to sit near the screen or print copies of slides for them to hold.

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. Display the Zacchaeus Wonder Truth Slide. Because as today's Wonder Truth says, **JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US.**



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

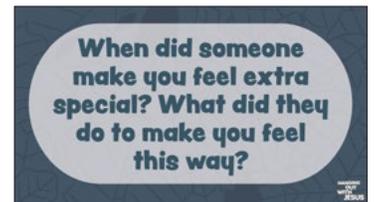
SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

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! But first, it's time for small group!



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the **Zacchaeus Declaration Slide**. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

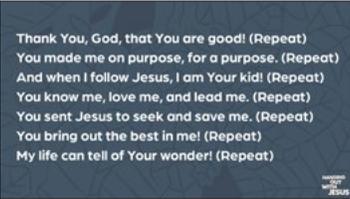
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You sent Jesus to seek and save me. (Kids repeat.)

You bring out the best in me! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You sent Jesus to seek and save me. (Repeat)
You bring out the best in me! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)

Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story. Use your own words: **God, thank You for always being present. Thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit to be our teacher. Please help us to understand how big Your love is. Help us to always remember that no matter what, Jesus seeks and saves us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about how Jesus called out to a man who most people considered a terrible sinner. But Jesus loves every person, and He seeks and saves us! Let's praise Him now through singing.

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Goodbye Yesterday, You Are

God's Big Story

Display the **Zacchaeus Title Slide**. Let your kids know that the story they're about to hear comes straight from the Bible—God's Word. Explain that it's in Luke, the third book in the New Testament. Have them open to Luke 19:1.

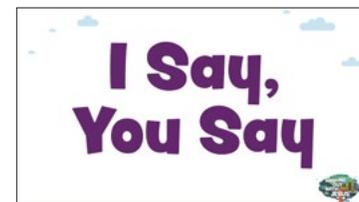
Today we are learning about a surprising moment when Jesus stopped for one man in a tree and changed his life forever. Watch how Jesus sees Zacchaeus, calls him by name, and shows him grace. As you watch, think about what it means that Jesus came to seek and save people who are lost.



LESSON 4 JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

Display the first I Say, You Say Slide. Today's telling of God's big story is going to be a lot of fun! Here's what you'll do. Throughout the story, there are certain words you'll listen for. When I say them, you'll say something specific in response. Those words are *Jesus*, *Zacchaeus*, *tax collector*, and *crowds*.



Advance to the next I Say, You Say Slide as you explain how kids will respond to each word. Then keep the slide up throughout the story. **When you hear the word *Jesus*, you'll shout "J-e-s-u-s. Yes!" Let's try that now!** Kids spell *Jesus* and say, "yes!" **Good job!**

When you hear the name *Zacchaeus*, you'll say, "Hey! I'm down here." Let's try that. Kids respond, "Hey! I'm down here." **Great!**

When you hear the words *tax collector*, you'll groan and say, "Ugh!" Let's try that. Kids respond by groaning and saying, "Ugh!" **Perfect!**

And finally, when you hear the word *crowd*, you'll say, "Mutter, mutter, mutter." Kids respond, "Mutter, mutter, mutter." OK, let's get started!

Jesus (kids respond) had a way of finding people who needed Him most. Sometimes it would be people who weren't expecting anything. For example, there was a man with a withered hand who Jesus (kids respond) healed at the synagogue, the Jews' place of worship, on the day of rest called the Sabbath. The man was not expecting to meet Jesus (kids respond) and be healed, yet he walked away that day with a restored hand. Another time, Jesus (kids respond) raised a widow's son from the dead! No one was looking for Him to save this woman's son; He was simply approaching the town when the young man's body was being carried out. But because of Jesus (kids respond), the woman returned home that day with her son alive and well. Everywhere Jesus (kids respond) went, He showed people what God's kingdom is like—He showed them that God is in charge and that all the broken parts of the world are being fixed.

As Jesus (kids respond) became more well-known, more and more people started to seek Him out. People came from all over to be healed and to listen to His teaching. Yet even in all of the chaos, Jesus (kids respond) still found a way to seek out people who were lost, sinful, or rejected and needed Him to step in. This is where we find Zacchaeus (kids respond).

Jesus (kids respond) once passed through Jericho, where a wealthy tax collector (kids respond) named Zacchaeus (kids respond) lived. Tax collectors (kids respond) were hated by the Jewish people. Often, they were Jews themselves who had decided to serve the Romans—the people who were mistreating the Jews. Not only did tax collectors (kids respond) help the Romans, but they often made money dishonestly by collecting extra taxes from the Jewish people.

Although Zacchaeus (kids respond) was surely not very popular in Jericho, he desperately wanted to see Jesus (kids respond). Zacchaeus (kids respond) was a short man, so it was difficult for him to see over the crowd (kids respond) of people who had come to see Jesus (kids respond).

He wanted to find some way to see past everyone, so he decided to climb a sycamore-fig tree to get a better view. His plan worked! Not only did he see Jesus (kids respond), but Jesus (kids respond) saw Zacchaeus (kids respond) as He passed by and called out to him, “Zacchaeus, (kids respond) come down at once. I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5). Immediately, Zacchaeus (kids respond) came down and welcomed Jesus (kids respond) to his home.

The crowd (kids respond) that was watching did not like this at all. People began to mutter, “I can’t believe Jesus (kids respond) has gone to be the guest of a sinner like Zacchaeus (kids respond).”

But Zacchaeus (kids respond) stood up and said to Jesus (kids respond), “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of what I own to those who are poor. And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay it back. I will pay back four times the amount I took” (Luke 19:8).

Jesus (kids respond) replied to Zacchaeus (kids respond), “Today salvation has come to your house. You are a member of Abraham’s family line. The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them” (Luke 19:9–10).

Jesus (kids respond) sought out Zacchaeus (kids respond) knowing that he was an outcast. Jesus (kids respond) wanted to bring him back into the family—God’s family. Jesus (kids respond) saw the way Zacchaeus (kids respond) was rejected by the Jews because of what he had done, and He and wanted Zacchaeus (kids respond) to know that God had not rejected him.

Jesus (kids respond) sought out Zacchaeus (kids respond) because that’s who Jesus (kids respond) is and what He came to do. The good news that Jesus (kids respond) brought to us is that everyone can be forgiven and know Him. What an amazing truth—Jesus (kids respond) seeks and saves us!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Zacchaeus Wonder Truth Slide.

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



When He sought out Zacchaeus, Jesus showed that no one is beyond being welcomed into God’s kingdom if they are willing to turn away from the wrong way of living and toward Jesus. We see Jesus seeking and saving lost people throughout His ministry. He called Matthew the tax collector to follow Him (Matthew 9:13), talked with a Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), and told teaching stories about lost things (Luke 15).

In Awe of God’s Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God’s story.

Is there anything you were curious about during the story? Allow kids to wonder freely. You don’t need to answer all their questions; just leave them space to be curious.

What would you have said if you had been the person in the tree and Jesus called you by name? Allow kids to answer freely. Give kids time to reflect and ask their questions.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: GRATITUDE

Blessing Your Kids

Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

Blessing: Jesus knows you by name. He loves you, and He hears your prayers. You matter to God! May you always remember that Jesus seeks and saves you!