



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 back 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

- Curiosity Activity: Leaves and Trees
- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Always With Me, Your Love for Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

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 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).

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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Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Curiosity Activity: Leaves and Trees

SUPPLIES: a variety of leaves (or pictures of leaves), scissors (prep only), small toy person

Leader Tip: Instead of paper trees, use real leaves from outside, if there are any available. Just make sure the Zacchaeus fits underneath the leaves. If you have a fenced-in area with leaves or trees, you could also hide the paper Zacchaeus and let the kids look for it.

Ahead of time, gather several kinds of leaves from trees in your area. If leaves are not available, you can print pictures of leaves. Gather the kids together and spread the leaves out on the table.

In our story today, we're going to learn about a man who was in a tree. Have you ever climbed a tree? Allow the kids to respond. **He wanted to see Jesus so badly and that was the only way he could see Him. We'll learn about how Jesus came to seek us. Seek means to look for. We're going to seek the person in today's story. He's hidden under a leaf.**

Invite the kids to close their eyes while you hide a toy person or Zacchaeus picture under one of the leaves. Have the kids open their eyes and take turns guessing which leaf they think the person is hiding under.

The kids can also take turns hiding the Zacchaeus under the tree.

In our story today, we'll hear about a man named Zacchaeus (Zack-EE-us) who climbed up a tree to see Jesus and how Jesus looked for him just like we looked for the Zacchaeus hidden under a tree. We'll learn how Jesus seeks and saves us!

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

RESOURCES: Tac the Cat puppet

For this section, you can use the cat picture provided, or a stuffed animal cat, or a cat hand puppet.

Leader: You may remember our friend Tac, the curious cat. He's always asking questions. He has a question for you. Are you ready?

Tac the Cat: Hi, kids! I'm always curious about everything. Do you know what it means to be curious? It means to think about things and ask questions. It's good to ask questions! I have something I've been curious about ... do you want to guess what it is? It's a game.

Leader: Oh, I love games! Is it Simon Says? I love to play Simon Says! Simon says jump, Simon says sit, Simon says ...

Tac the Cat: [Interrupting]—No, no, it's not Simon Says. This is a game that you play where one person closes their eyes.

Leader: Oh—Doggy, Doggy, Where's Your Bone?

Tac the Cat: Nope, this is a game where you look for other people.

Leader: Oh, I know—Hide and Seek!

Tac the Cat: Yes, that's what I'm curious about! I love to play Hide and Seek with my friends, but I was thinking about the name of the game the other day and I was curious. I know what it means to hide, but what does the word "seek" mean?

Leader: Seek means to look for or find. So, when we play Hide and Seek, some of the players hide and then one of the players tries to find them. When that player tries to find them, they are seeking them. That's why it's called Hide and Seek! In God's big story today, we're going to learn about how Jesus looked for a man who was hiding in a tree!

Tac the Cat: What was he doing in a tree? I'm curious!

Leader: We'll find out when we hear about God's big story today!

Tac the Cat: That sounds great! Well, I've got more exploring and thinking to do! I'm going to go play Hide and Seek with my friends. I'll see you later!

Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Have you ever lost something and tried to find it? Allow the kids to respond. **Have you ever been lost and had someone find you?** Allow the kids to respond.

Today's Wonder Truth is JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US. Today we'll discover that Jesus seeks and saves!

Leader Tip: Be sensitive to kids who may have been lost or separated from their families. Remind them that although it can be scary to be lost, Jesus is with us!

Declaring God's Wonder

Show the [Early Childhood Declaration Slide](#) and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.) Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.) Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

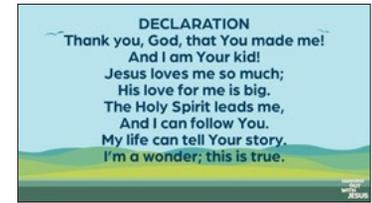
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words: **God, thank You for always being with us. 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 how Jesus loves everyone and seeks them out to be saved. Let's sing and thank Him for saving us.

Play worship videos [Always With Me, Your Love for Me](#)

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

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.

[VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY VIDEO](#)

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

You're going to act out different parts of the story today. When Jesus was on earth, He did many amazing things. Jesus performed miracles that helped and healed many people. Miracles are amazing signs that God is at work. Jesus taught people that God is fixing all the parts of the world that were broken by sin. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that is not what God wants. Everywhere Jesus went, He showed people what God's kingdom is like.

Lots of people heard about Jesus and what He said and did. People traveled a long way so they could be with Jesus. Pretend to walk a long way (walk in place). Pause to allow the kids to do the action. Some people wanted to be healed. Other people wanted to listen to Jesus teach.

Jesus came to a town called Jericho. A man named Zacchaeus lived there. He was rich. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. People did not like tax collectors. Most tax collectors cheated, lied, and stole money from people. Pretend to grab something. Pause to allow the kids to do the action.

A lot of people did not like Zacchaeus. Give a thumbs down. Pause to allow the kids to do the action. Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming, and he really wanted to see Jesus. But Zacchaeus was short. Get down low to the ground. Pause to allow the kids to do the action. There were lots of people around, and it was hard for him to see over the people. Pretend to jump up to see over a crowd of people. Pause to allow the kids to do the action. Zacchaeus wanted to find some way to see Jesus. He decided to climb a big tree to get a better view. Pretend to climb a tree. Pause to allow the kids to do the action.

His plan worked! He got to see Jesus. And Jesus saw him! Jesus called out to him, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5). Zacchaeus came right down and took Jesus to his home. Pretend to climb down a tree and then walk to your home. Pause to allow the kids to do the action.

The other people did not like this at all. The people could not believe that Jesus went to the house of someone who did so many wrong things! Cross your arms and make a mad face. Pause to allow the kids to do the action.

But Zacchaeus admitted that he did lots of wrong things. 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. Put your hands out like you are giving something back. Pause to allow the kids to do the action. Zacchaeus was changed!

Jesus told Zacchaeus that today he was saved and was a part of God's family. Put your hands together in a "praying" motion. Pause to allow the kids to do the action. Jesus said that He came to look for the lost and save them. People who are lost are people who need Jesus to forgive their sins—the wrong things they do. We all do wrong things and need Jesus to forgive us.

Jesus knew that people did not like Zacchaeus, and Jesus looked for him anyway. Jesus wanted to bring him back into God's family. Jesus wanted Zacchaeus to know that God loved him.

Jesus chose to seek out Zacchaeus and forgive him. The good news is that Jesus can forgive and save anyone! Clap your hands and cheer. Pause to allow the kids to do the action. What an amazing truth—Jesus seeks and saves us!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES US. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen 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're 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 stories about lost things (Luke 15).

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for knowing our names.

Jesus called Zacchaeus by name. He knows your name too. When I say the word, "name," say your name as we pray. Let's pray and talk to God. God, thank You for knowing our name (pause for kids to respond). Thank You for coming to find us and save us. Thank You for loving us. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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!