



## 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

- Play Stations:
  - Money Play
  - Welcome to My House
  - Jesus and Zacchaeus Coloring Sheet
- Word of Wonder: From John 3:16
- God's Big Story/ Snack
- Circle Time: Where is Zacchaeus
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Action Prayers
- Game: Hide and Seek





## 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).



LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

**LESSON AT A GLANCE**

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Seeks and Saves Us  
**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 19  
**WORD OF WONDER:** From John 3:16

**Play Stations**

**SUPPLIES:** play money (bills and coins), chair or couch, small table, toy food, playhouse items, coloring utensils, toy cash register (optional), scissors (optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Jesus and Zacchaeus Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

**Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?**

**Play Station: Money Play**

**Set up:** Set out play money with bills and coins. If you have a toy cash register, set it out.

**Play:** Let the kids take turns playing with the money. Encourage the kids to count how many coins or bills they have. They can pretend to buy things in the room with the money.

**Play Station: Welcome to My House**

**Set up:** Set up an area to look like the inside of a house. You can include a chair or couch, a small table, toy food, and other playhouse items.

**Play:** Let the kids pretend to invite other kids to come inside their home and join them for dinner.

**Play Station: Jesus and Zacchaeus Coloring Sheet**

**Set up:** Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids could also turn the sheet over and trace their hand at the top of the sheet and then add a trunk to make it look like a tree.

## 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?

**Leader Tip:** If you have a younger group that has trouble remembering the words, you can have the entire group say the verse with you each time one of the kids finds a 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

## Circle Time: Where is Zacchaeus?

**SUPPLIES:** scissors (prep only)

**RESOURCES:** Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet (5/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.

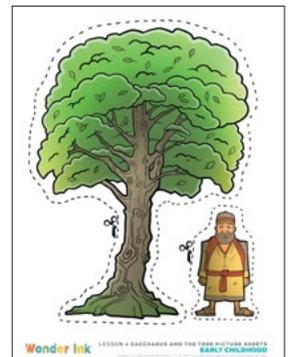
Gather the kids in a circle. Put the trees down on the ground in the middle of the circle and hide the Zacchaeus under one of the trees while the kids have their eyes closed.

**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: Action Prayers

**SUPPLIES:** note cards (1 per kid), writing utensils

**In God’s big story today, we learned that Jesus looked for Zacchaeus and came to his house. We don’t know exactly what Jesus did at Zacchaeus’ house or what all they talked about. But we know that afterward, Zacchaeus was a changed man! He was saved and forgiven, and he gave back what he stole. We learned that Jesus came to seek us and forgive us too. We’re going to do some actions to help us remember this story and pray to God.**

**The first thing Zacchaeus did when he came to town was climb a tree. If you’ve ever climbed a tree, think about what that was like. If you haven’t, imagine yourself climbing a tree. Act it out and as you pretend to climb, think about yourself looking for Jesus. Pray and thank Jesus for being with you.** Pause to allow the kids to pretend to climb and pray.

**Jesus knew Zacchaeus’ name even though He had never met him before. Did you know that Jesus knows your name, too?** Give every kid a note card and writing utensil. **Write your name on the card and as you do, thank Jesus for knowing your name and knowing everything about you.** Pause to allow the kids to write their names (be ready to help kids who can’t write their names yet) and pray.

**Jesus came to Zacchaeus’ house. Let’s pretend to walk** (walk in place) **and imagine Jesus is walking with us. He is always with us. As you walk in place, thank Jesus for caring about you and spending time with you.** Pause to allow the kids to walk in place and pray.

After spending time with Jesus, Zacchaeus was a changed person! He was forgiven for the wrong things he did. He gave back what he stole from people—and more! And He was a part of God’s family. Hold your hands out in front of you to show that you’re giving your heart to Jesus and asking Him to forgive you and change your heart. Pause to allow the kids to hold their hands out and pray.

Jesus came to seek and save Zacchaeus, and He also came to seek and save us! Put your hand over your eye or make binoculars with your hands to pretend to seek something far away, as you think about how Jesus knows us, seeks us, forgives us, and saves us. Pray and tell Him, “Thank You.” Pause to allow the kids to put their hands at their eyes and pray.

## Game: Hide and Seek

**SUPPLIES:** scissors (prep only, optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Zacchaeus and the Tree Picture Sheet](#) (from circle 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.**

