

# Vacation Church School

Life of Christ #3

## Zacchaeus

“For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10

**Scripture Reference:** Luke 19:1-10

**Goals:** By the end of the lesson the student will:

1. Know the story is found in the Bible
2. Remember the name Zacchaeus
3. Relate the events of the story
4. Understand that Jesus came to save those who were lost in sin and help them change their lives so they might find salvation.

**Introduction:**

**Materials Needed:**

- Table

1. Tell the children you are going to be doing a demonstration and you will need everyone’s help. Have the entire class stand in front of the table in a group. Then choose one to kneel down on the floor with the group of children between him or her and the table.
2. Now have the child on their knees try and see over the children who are standing to the other side of the table without standing up. After they have tried for a few seconds have everyone go back to their seats. You may want to give other students a chance to be the one on their knees trying to look over the crowd before getting everyone seated again.
3. Ask everyone why it was hard for the person on their knees. Their answers may include things like: he was too short; everyone else was in the way, etc. Guide the discussion to the fact that someone who is smaller than the rest of the group may have trouble seeing or getting through a crowd.
4. Ask the children what they might do if they were in a crowd of adults who were all taller than them and they couldn’t see what everyone was looking at. Allow time for their answers.
5. Tell the children the children when Jesus was here on earth large crowds followed him everywhere he went. They wanted to see his miracles and hear his teachings. Today they will learn about a man who really wanted to see Jesus, but he was having a hard time. So he climbed a tree so he could see over the crowd to find Jesus.

**Lesson:**

**Materials Needed:**

- Copy of the story. Or read it directly from the Bible and have class follow along. Then explain events in your own words.
- Optional materials: pictures to show while reading the story (crowds of people, man in a tree, Jesus, people eating dinner in a nice house, etc.)

## Zacchaeus

Everyone in Jericho was excited. Jesus had just arrived in their city and the crowds were already gathering. Everyone wanted to get a glimpse of this man who had done so many wonderful things as he traveled among the people. There was one man though, who was very concerned because he couldn't see Jesus. He had tried, without any luck, to move through the crowds of people and get close enough to see Jesus as he entered the city. He had heard of this man Jesus and his teachings. He knew it was important he get near Jesus, but he didn't know how to make it happen.

The problem was this man, named Zacchaeus, was shorter than most of the people there that day. He couldn't see over the large group that had formed around the place Jesus was walking. He didn't have much chance of the people in the crowd wanting to offer any help either. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Now everyone owed a certain amount of their income for taxes and it was paid to the tax collector in their town. So many people knew Zacchaeus and had given him their taxes for years. That wasn't the reason they didn't like him though. The reason they didn't like him is he charged them much more than their taxes should have been and then kept all the extra money himself. He had cheated and stolen from the people and made himself very rich doing it. As you can imagine no one was in a hurry to help such a man and make room for him to get to the front of the crowd so he could see Jesus.

Jesus was walking through the city and Zacchaeus could see the path he was taking. He quickly ran ahead to a sycamore tree and climbed up to the top. He was going to see Jesus that day no matter what. Since he was too short to see over the crowd he made sure he found a way to become taller than those around him. The tree was the perfect place. He could see Jesus as he walked toward him and hoped Jesus could see him. Zacchaeus knew he had been living his life the wrong way. He knew cheating and stealing from the people was wrong and he knew Jesus could help him change. He just had to see him!

As Jesus came to the tree he looked up and saw a man sitting in it above the crowd. He called out, "Zacchaeus hurry and come down from that tree because today I am coming to your house!" Zacchaeus couldn't get down from the tree fast enough. He was so happy Jesus had called him by name and wanted to come to his house! No one ever wanted to go to his house. In fact as the others in the crowd heard Jesus say he was going to eat with Zacchaeus they were upset. "Why is he going to that man's house?" one whispered. "Doesn't he know Zacchaeus is sinner?" another questioned. Everyone was shocked that Jesus would spend time with such a terrible man. What the people didn't understand is that Jesus knew exactly who he was speaking to. He knew all the things Zacchaeus had done and that Zacchaeus wanted to change. Jesus knew, and knew he could help him.

Later, when they arrived at Zacchaeus' home, the man stood before Jesus and confessed his sins. He told Jesus, "I am going to give half of my goods to the poor. Everything I have taken from people through lying and deceit I will return to them four times as much as I took!" Zacchaeus' heart had changed and he sought forgiveness from Jesus, as well as those he had hurt. Jesus smiled at the man who had changed so much and said, "This day salvation is come to this house. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus was saying that Zacchaeus had once been lost to sin, but now he had found his way to Christ and was no longer lost. He had changed his heart and changed his life. He would no longer lie and steal, but would treat everyone fairly. He would also make up for what he had done by returning everything, and more, to those he had taken advantage of.

Jesus is still here for each one of us. He still seeks those living in sin to help them find their way to him. He lived his life to give us an example of what we must do in our lives to find salvation and live with him eternally. Jesus expects us to keep his commandments, if not we are lost. Even when we make mistakes He is still there waiting for us with open arms. Waiting for us to ask forgiveness and change those things in our lives that have taken us away from the path. Remember the story of Zacchaeus when you are struggling. Remember that he went to great lengths to find Jesus. Remember that when his heart changed Jesus was there for him and offered him salvation.

### **Story Craft: Zacchaeus in a Tree**

#### **Materials needed:**

- Brown construction paper cut into large tree trunk shapes with the top separating into two branches (If you choose have the children cut them out on their own) 1 per child +1 to use as an example
- Green construction paper cut into a round tree shape for the background of the tree (If you choose have the children cut out their own) 1 per child +1 to use as an example
- Scissors, 1 per child if they're cutting their own
- Construction paper, any color to use as background 1 per child +1 to use as an example
- Small pieces of brown construction paper folded into a wedge, for Zacchaeus figure to sit in on the tree
- Pipe cleaners, any color 1 per child +1 to use as an example
- Glue, 1 per child
- Pencil, 1 per child
- Optional materials: green (or other leaf colors) tissue paper cut into small squares to use as leaves; cra

1. If you are having the children cut out their construction paper trunks and tree backgrounds give them a piece of brown and green construction paper and a pair of scissors. If not give them each a piece of construction paper, the precut pieces, and glue.

2. Have the children glue in the round tree background to the construction paper first. Then glue the trunk on top so the branches will show.

Example:



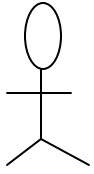
3. Give each child the small piece of construction paper to form a wedge for Zacchaeus to sit in. Glue that piece in between the two branches.

Example:



4. Give each child a pipe cleaner and have them form it into a stick figure shape. Demonstrate by making one while they make theirs. This can now be taken in and out of the tree.

Example:



5. Give each child a pencil. Have them write “Zacchaeus climbed a tree so he could see Jesus.” You may want to write it on a board or post it somewhere in the room for them to copy.

6. If you choose children may decorate the background.

### Lesson Review Activities:

#### Materials Needed:

- Large sheet of butcher paper, poster board, or a wall to place the questions,
- 3x5 note cards, enough for the number of categories and questions you choose to do
- Large dark colored marker
- Optional materials: Dice or a coin, prizes (stickers etc.) for the winning team

### Jeopardy

1. Prepare ahead of class by making a large game board using the butcher paper, poster board, or wall. On the 3x5 note cards write categories for the questions. As many as you think you want to use. Examples: Story Characters, Zacchaeus, Events, Miscellaneous.

2. Next choose the number of questions you want for each category. They all need to have an equal number of questions. Assign each question a point value; harder questions are worth more points. Prepare ahead by using 3x5 cards write the point values on each and place them below each category. You can write the question on the back of each point value card, or write it on a list and read the question aloud when the game is played.

Example of completed board:

Jeopardy!				
Story Characters	Zacchaeus	Story Characters	Events	Miscellaneous
10	10	10	10	10
20	20	20	20	20
30	30	30	30	30
40	40	40	40	40

4. To play the game, divide the class into two teams. If there are only 2-3 students each can play individually. Choose a team randomly to go first. The players on each team will take turns choosing the question. The team chooses a question and you will flip card over to show the question, or take it away to show that point value is already taken. Read the question aloud. The team has 30 seconds to discuss the question and choose the answer. The person who chose the question is the only one who is allowed to say the answer. If they get it correct record the points on a large sheet of paper or a board for that team. If they get it wrong the other team has a chance to answer. If there are 3 teams then have each roll a die and the largest number gets to answer the question first. Or flip a coin to determine who gets to answer the question. If the other team gets the answer right then award the points to them. Continue until all questions are answered.