

A TREE VIEW

Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1–10
AD 32

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus loves sinners.

BIBLE VERSE

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus came to save and love all sinners, including me.

LAW & GOSPEL

We ignore our own sin and point out the sinfulness of others.

Jesus came to seek and to save us and all who are lost in sin.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Zacchaeus, a wealthy tax collector, anxiously awaits the arrival of Jesus. Short of stature, Zacchaeus climbs a tree to see the Savior. Despite criticism, Jesus invites Himself to the tax collector's home. Motivated by Christ's compassion, Zacchaeus confesses his sin and promises to make restitution.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 19:1–10 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the account of Jesus' calling of Matthew in Matthew 9:9–13 with study notes in *TLSB* for a different instance of Jesus calling a tax collector.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Step stool
- Poster-size paper
- Balloon
- Strips of paper
- Green washable ink pads or green tissue paper
- Arch Book *Zacchaeus*
- Apple, orange, or banana slices
- Puppet
- Nesting toys

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- Has anyone ever told you, “You’re too little to do that?”** Let children tell. **Today, we’re going to hear about a little man who finds out that no one is too little for Jesus’ love.**
- Have you ever climbed a tree? Have you seen any grown-ups climb trees? What would make a grown-up climb a tree? What would be so exciting to see that you would climb a tree?**

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing us together to learn about Your Word today. Help us to be excited to hear the Good News that You have for us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God’s Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you’ve read it.

- FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS** This story lends itself perfectly for acting out. After you have read the story aloud to your students, help them to organize themselves to reenact the events of this true narrative by asking them the “who, what, where, and what next” of the story. Let them act it out more than once to give various students an opportunity to portray different characters. Use a step stool in place of a tree.
- FOR VISUAL LEARNERS** Instead of acting out the events of the story, have students draw the events on poster-size paper to make a storyboard-type of drawing of this narrative. If you have a larger group, divide the group into pairs and assign each group a portion of the story to draw on individual sheets of copy paper.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- What did Zacchaeus do so he could see Jesus?
- What did Jesus do when He saw Zacchaeus?
- How was Jesus a friend and Savior to Zacchaeus?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Zacchaeus might have been small in stature, but his sins were large. He was seen as a traitor to his people for collecting taxes for the Roman government. Even worse, he got rich by cheating his own people. He might have been one of the most hated men in Jericho.
- Jesus’ call to faith and forgiveness for Zacchaeus changed him dramatically. His heart was changed and Zacchaeus immediately made some big changes to his life.
- Sometimes, we may feel small or full of sin, like Zacchaeus, but like Zacchaeus, we can rejoice in knowing that we are never too small or too sinful for Jesus to love us.
- Sin separates us from God. Jesus brings us back together.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ came to find me and save me, a lost sinner. He died and rose again to save me from my sin.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: As you tell the story, hold your hand low for *little* and high for *big*. At the end of the story, ask children to suggest ways Jesus helps them to show love for others.

Zacchaeus was a **little** man who lived in a **big** city. Zacchaeus didn't have many friends because a lot of people didn't like him. He did bad things. One day, Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to his city. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus.

He hurried down the street where Jesus would walk. Many other people wanted to see Jesus too. They hurried out of their houses and lined up along the street. Soon there was a **big** crowd of people waiting to see Jesus! But Zacchaeus could not see! He was too **little**! What would Zacchaeus do?

Not far away, Zacchaeus saw a tree. It had strong branches. So Zacchaeus ran over and climbed the tree! Up, up, up he climbed. Soon Jesus walked along the road. Jesus came right up to that tree where Zacchaeus sat. Jesus looked up and smiled at Zacchaeus. He said, "Zacchaeus, you come down! I want to come to your house today!"

Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree. Some people wondered why Jesus would want to go to Zacchaeus's house. Jesus told them, "I have come to save the lost."

Jesus loved Zacchaeus and wanted him to be His child. Jesus came to be his friend and Savior.

Now Zacchaeus knew that Jesus loved him. He wanted Jesus to know that he loved Him too. He said, "Jesus, I'll give back everything that isn't mine. I'll give things to the poor people."

Jesus said, "Today, you belong to God." Zacchaeus was so glad. He knew that Jesus was his friend. Zacchaeus was **little**, but Jesus' love for him was **big**! Zacchaeus did bad things, but Jesus forgave him. Jesus loved Zacchaeus and changed his heart and life.

Jesus has a **big** love for you too! No one is too **little** for Jesus. No one is too bad for Jesus. Everyone sins. But Jesus came to save us all. Jesus died and rose again to take away our sins—the bad things we do. He forgives us and makes us His children. He gives us His Holy Spirit. He puts love in our hearts and helps us show love for others. What are some ways you can do that?

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He lived in Jericho, and he learned that Jesus was passing through town on His way to the Passover in Jerusalem. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector—in charge of all the tax collectors in the area. So the Jewish people hated him even more than they hated most tax collectors.

But Zacchaeus had heard things about Jesus. He heard Jesus talked to tax collectors and ate with them. Jesus even chose one named Matthew to be one of His twelve disciples. So when Zacchaeus heard Jesus was passing through town, he wanted to get a look at Him. But he was too short to see Jesus over the crowds. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a tree.

And sure enough, from the tree, Zacchaeus could see the big crowd of people coming through town. And in the middle of that crowd, he saw Jesus, coming closer and closer. Suddenly, Jesus came near his tree, stopped,

and looked right up at him. With a big smile, Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

Zacchaeus was so happy that he rushed down, led Jesus to his house, and made a big feast for Him. As he talked with Jesus, he thought about the way he had treated the people he collected taxes from. He felt bad because he took more money than he should have.

He turned to Jesus and made a promise: "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." That meant if he took more money than he should have, he would pay back four times that amount.

Jesus replied, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For I came to seek and to save the lost."

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

Balloon Toss

Zacchaeus didn't have many friends, but Jesus came to be his friend and Savior. That made Zacchaeus happy! Draw a happy face on a balloon. Say, **Friends like to play together. Let's play Balloon Toss with our friends. Every time a friend hits the balloon to keep it in the air, say, "Jesus loves you." If the balloon falls to the ground, say, "Jesus forgives you."**



Name Chain

Have strips of paper. Write "Jesus" on one. Say the rhyme for each child, writing the child's name on a strip of paper: **Someone loves [Max]; yes, it's true. Someone loves [Max]; do you know who? Jesus loves [Max]; yes, it's true. Jesus loves [Max]. Now we know who!** Start with Jesus link and link strips together to make a chain to put in worship area. Remind children Jesus loves them so much He died and rose for them.



Tree Craft

On brown construction paper, trace around each child's forearm and hand, with fingers spread to make a tree trunk and branches. Cut it out and glue it on white paper. Have children add leaves by gluing snippets of green tissue paper or making thumbprints using a green ink pad. Say, **Jesus called Zacchaeus by name to come down from the tree. Jesus knows your name too!**



Zacchaeus Arch Book

Read the Arch Book *Zacchaeus* with students, or read from a Bible story book. Older students could practice reading the story aloud with younger students.



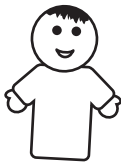
Fruit Snack

Serve slices of apples, oranges, or bananas. Say, **Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus. Trees are good for many things! They give us shade when it is hot. Some trees give us fruit to eat! What kind of food do you think Zacchaeus served Jesus? Do you think there was fruit?**



Puppet Talk

Puppet's puppy chewed a toy. His sister was mad. The puppy ran away when she yelled at him. Puppet went to look for him. He called his name, and his puppy came running. Puppet forgave him. Say, **People were mad at Zacchaeus. But Jesus loved and forgave him. That made Zacchaeus happy! Jesus loves us and forgives us too.**



Tall to Small

Set out nesting toys such as blocks, stacking dolls, or measuring cups. Have children put the nesting toys in order from smallest to biggest or make different sizes of towers with the blocks. Talk about small to big. Say, **Jesus loves each one of us, from the tallest to the smallest. Jesus loves you!**



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus loves sinners like Zacchaeus and like you and like me. Thankfully, we don't have to climb a tree to be with Jesus. Jesus is with us in His Word and has promised to be with us wherever we go.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for coming to save lost and sinful people like Zacchaeus and like us. Make us as excited as Zacchaeus to tell others about You. In Your name we pray. Amen.