

## JESUS VISITS ZACCHAEUS

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

HEART TRANSFORM DECIDE FOLLOW OLD NEW

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 19:1-10

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children understand that people's hearts change when they decide to follow Jesus.

### MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

The story of Zacchaeus illustrates very well the memory verse of this unit. It shows clearly that when Jesus comes into a person's life, he transforms it and makes it a new creation. Through this story, your children will learn that Jesus makes a difference in people's lives.

All children like to feel loved. In today's story, when Jesus stops to talk with Zacchaeus, we see the love of God in action. He seeks us, no matter what situation we find ourselves in. Through this story, your children will experience Jesus' love and acceptance. When they understand and accept Him, their attitudes and behavior will change, as happened with Zacchaeus, and begin to reflect the love of God in their lives.

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus was a Jew who lived in Jericho. That city was a large commercial center where tax collectors could prosper. These men earned their living by collecting taxes for the Roman Empire, to which they added their commissions because they were free to collect a certain percentage as payment for their work.

The amount of business that took place in that important city represented a source of temptation; that is why they charged large commissions and cheated people.

Zacchaeus had accumulated wealth by deceiving his clients. Apparently, this ambitious man heard something about Jesus that caused him to urgently want to meet him.

God's Holy Spirit was working in Zacchaeus' life, and although he was a rich citizen of Jericho, seeing Jesus was more important than keeping up appearances. This short man tried to make his way through the crowd, but since he could not, he decided to climb a tree to see Jesus when he passed by.

Knowing that Zacchaeus had a deep spiritual need, Jesus stopped under the sycamore tree and looked up. Then he called Zacchaeus and announced that he would go to his house.

Zacchaeus' encounter with the Master changed his life completely. He stopped being a swindler, and became a compassionate and giving person. The story of Zacchaeus helps us understand that Jesus makes a difference in people's lives because he not only forgives the past, but also changes the present, and blesses us with a future full of hope.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Geometric figures

In advance, draw and cut out geometric shapes (diamonds, squares, circles, ovals, etc.) of different colors. Keep in mind that each child will need at least eight.

You will also need white paper or small pieces of construction paper, glue, scissors and colored pencils.

Give the materials to the children, and ask them to use the shapes to make a tree and a human figure. Allow them to identify the geometric shapes that would best serve to make the figures. Then, ask them to decorate the paper using the colored pencils.

Tell them that in today's story they will talk about a man who climbed a tree to see a very important person.

## TEACH THE LESSON

We suggest that you invite a young man from your congregation to represent Zacchaeus. Ask him to read the parts that correspond to the character, while you tell the rest of the story.

### Zacchaeus meets Jesus

"One, two, three ... how much money have I earned today!" Zacchaeus said. He was counting the tax money that the townspeople had paid him.

"I think I did a good job. I like to collect taxes because I can ask for the amount of money that I want. I give the Romans their part and the rest is for me. When people complain, I just tell them that taxes have gone up. I love this job!"

The people of the town knew that Zacchaeus deceived them, charging them more than they should. That is why nobody wanted him around.

While Zacchaeus kept his money in a safe place, he heard a great uproar in the streets of Jericho. "Almost certainly someone important is going through here," he thought as he tried to listen to what they were saying.

"Hurry up! Jesus is coming through the town. Let's see him!" someone said.

When Zacchaeus heard that news, he ran and joined the crowd that followed Jesus. He so wanted to meet him!

However, there were so many people that Zacchaeus could not get close, and since he was short, he could not see anything. He tried to jump to see better, but still he did not succeed.

"I have to find a way to see Jesus," he thought. "I know! I will climb up that tree, and from there I will be able to observe everything."

Zacchaeus ran down the street to climb a large sycamore tree that was where Jesus would pass.

Although there were many people around him, Jesus knew that Zacchaeus was watching him from the tree. So, when he got to that place, he stopped.

"Why did Jesus stop?" the people asked each other.

“Zacchaeus, come down from there because I want to visit your house and your family,” Jesus said.

Zacchaeus, happy that Jesus wanted to go to his house, came down from the tree as fast as he could.

“Is not that man the cheater who charges taxes?” asked a man.

“Yes, it is Zacchaeus, the traitor who works for the Romans. Everyone here knows that he tricks us to get extra money for himself,” they replied.

“So, why does Jesus want to go to his house?” they asked.

Jesus knew what Zacchaeus was like. He was aware that he cheated his neighbors to get money. However, Jesus loved him and wanted him to be different. He did not accuse him or tell him he was a terrible person. Instead, he treated him with love and kindness.

For the first time in a long time, Zacchaeus was ashamed of what he had done. He was sorry for deceiving people and treating them badly.

He decided to follow Jesus and he wanted to do everything right. So he stood up and said, “Jesus, I want to follow you. I regret everything bad that I have done. I will give half of what I have to the poor, and those I cheated I will give them four times more than I stole from them.”

Jesus was very happy and said, “Salvation has come to this house and your family. For that I came to the world, to seek and save what was lost.”

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Zacchaeus meets Jesus

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #201-A and #201-B with the strips and the Zacchaeus figure. Explain that they must join the two strips, gluing them on the spaces marked with the letters A and B. Then, glue the figure of Zacchaeus on the strip vertically, so that his belt covers the letters. Help them cut the openings in the black lines on the tree, and insert the two ends of the strip into them. Tell them to move the figure of Zacchaeus up and down to pretend to climb up and down the tree.

### I can change!

Ask your children to look at Student Activity Sheet #201-C and look at the illustrations. Ask them: “What do you think Zacchaeus is doing?” (Returning the money to people). Explain that Zacchaeus tried to repair the damage he had done by deceiving the people.

Then, focus their attention on the second illustration. Ask them to say what they think is happening in that scene. (The child took something from the store and realized that he had acted badly, asked God for forgiveness, and went to return it.)

Allow your children to color the figures and talk about what happens in people’s lives when they meet Jesus.

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Prepare an exhibition with the work your children did during the week. Ask everyone to say the memory verse as special participation. They can also sing a song or dramatize the story.

For parents it will be very interesting to see what their children do in the group, and will motivate them to continue talking with them.

## WRAP-UP

### Pray

Pray with the children before they depart, interceding for their needs.

**Encourage**

Challenge the children to find ways this week to show family and friends that Jesus has changed their lives.

**Invite**

Thank the children for their attendance during these sessions. Tell them that in the next meeting they will start studying a new unit. Ask them to encourage their friends to join the group.