



WHO, ME?!

Preschool-K • #NT8 • January 18, 2026

Concept

Jesus loves everyone.

Goal

The children will learn that Jesus loved Zacchaeus even though he sinned. God loves them even though they sin. If they ask, He will accept them just as they are.

Passage

Luke 19:1-10

Key Verse: "Jesus came to seek and to save all who are lost." Luke 19:10

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Adam Raccoon and the King's Big Dinner, Glen Keane</i>• <i>Playground-size ball</i> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible• <i>Laminated, magnetic-backed pictures of:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Zacchaeus</i>◦ <i>Jesus walking into the crowd</i>◦ <i>Zacchaeus looking through crowd</i>◦ <i>Zacchaeus climbing the tree</i>◦ <i>Jesus talking to Zacchaeus</i>◦ <i>Jesus eating with Zacchaeus</i>	<p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed page of Zacchaeus in tree on one side and Jesus & Zacchaeus eating on the other side, 1/child• Stickers with Who? ME?!, 1/child• Stickers with key verse, 1/child• Green construction paper• Glue sticks <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Pennies, 10/child to be shared by all CTs</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the shaded areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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In Luke 19 we read about Jesus' encounter with a man named Zacchaeus. Little information is given about Zacchaeus other than that he was a rich man and a chief tax gatherer. Therefore his prosperity was certainly a result of his dishonest collecting (Luke 19:8). The Jews viewed the tax gatherers as social outcasts and referred to them as "sinners." They were outcasts not only because of their dishonest practices (Luke 3:12-13) but also because they were considered traitors who worked for the pagan government that was oppressing the Jewish nation. Jesus was often criticized for associating with sinners and tax gatherers, as is the case when Jesus stayed with Zacchaeus. Jesus' response was, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17). The story of Zacchaeus is an excellent example of God's unconditional acceptance, based not on what we do but what He did. We are counted righteous because He has forgiven us by His sacrifice on the cross for our sins.

We read in Luke 19:8 "Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.'" This is a beautiful picture of one who has genuinely repented and received forgiveness. Overwhelming gratitude compels one to give up all and to live for Christ rather than ourselves.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Lesson Lg. Group

The day of class – Cut sheets of green construction paper into quarters for children to tear into smaller pieces. Cut stickers apart.

Activity Stations:

- **Story – Adam Raccoon and the King's Big Dinner**
 - **Instructions:** Read the story to the children. Talk with them about Jesus' love. He loves everyone and wants everyone to come to be with Him in heaven, just as King Aren wanted everyone to come to his big dinner. He doesn't care how many bad choices we have made or how important we are or how good we are. We will learn about a man named Zacchaeus who made very bad choices, but Jesus wanted to be His friend.
- **Game – I Want You to be My Friend**
 - **Instructions:** Have children and a teacher sit in a circle on the floor. The teacher will start by rolling the ball to a child at the same time saying, "<<name>>, I want you to be my friend." Have the children continue in the same way.

Do you ever do bad things or make bad choices? (Be prepared for many of the children to say NO and probe with questions such as, "Are you always kind to your friends?" "Do you always share your toys?") What kind of bad choices do you make? (Disobey parents, get angry, don't share.) It's easy to make bad choices, isn't it? Do you think there is anyone who has never made even one bad choice? Yes, Jesus. Jesus was God's Son, and He never made any bad choices, not even ONE! He lived a perfect life. But do you know what? Even though we make bad choices, Jesus wants to be our friend because Jesus loves everyone.

The Bible tells us what happened when Jesus met a man who made lots of bad choices. Do you think Jesus wanted to be his friend? Let's listen to find out.

(Hold up picture #1.) This is Zacchaeus. He was not a nice person. He made lots of bad choices. His job was to collect money from everyone for the king. But each time he collected money, Zacchaeus would take more than the king wanted—and keep the extra money for himself. That was a BAD (say it dramatically) choice! Because Zacchaeus took money and things from people, nobody liked him. Nobody wanted to be his friend.

One day Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to his town (hold up picture #2). He had heard about Jesus, and he wanted to see Him. Zacchaeus walked to the road that Jesus was traveling on, but there was a huge crowd already there! You see, Zacchaeus was short, and he could not see Jesus over all the tall people in front of him (show picture #3). He didn't know what to do. He tried standing on his tiptoes, but he was just too short.

Lesson Continued

Then he got an idea. There was a tree up the road that Jesus would soon pass. Zacchaeus ran ahead of the crowd to the tree and climbed up into it (show picture #4). He waited in the tree, and soon he saw Jesus coming up the road.

When Jesus was right below the tree, He stopped and looked up at Zacchaeus and said, "Zacchaeus, you come down. I want to go to your house with you." (Show picture #5.) Zacchaeus was so excited that Jesus wanted to go to his house! Well, he quickly climbed down from the tree.

The other people in the crowd were angry when they saw Jesus going to Zacchaeus' house. They said to each other, "Doesn't Jesus know that Zacchaeus makes lots of bad choices and steals money from us?" Jesus did know that Zacchaeus made bad choices. But Jesus loves everyone, even Zacchaeus. He wanted to be his friend.

When Zacchaeus saw that Jesus loved him and wanted to be his friend, he was very happy (show picture #6). Because Jesus loved him and was his friend, he didn't want to make bad choices anymore. Zacchaeus decided to give all the money he had stolen, and more, back to the people.

Do you know that Jesus loves everyone? That means that Jesus loves you, too, even though you make bad choices. No one is perfect, but He loves us anyway, just like He loved Zacchaeus. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus loves everyone just as we are? He loves us so much that He died on the cross to pay for our bad choices.

Zacchaeus knew he needed Jesus' help and wanted Jesus to be his friend. He trusted Jesus and believed that Jesus loved Him. You can let Jesus know that you want to be His friend too by thanking Him for loving you just as you are and for dying for you.

Let's pray together.

Craft – Zacchaeus Card

Instructions: Color the pictures. Tear quartered green construction paper into smaller pieces for leaves. Cover area with glue stick and add the leaves. Fold the paper like a greeting card so the picture of Zacchaeus in the tree is on the front. Place Who? ME?! sticker as though Zacchaeus is speaking. Put key verse sticker on inside as though Jesus is speaking.

Let's pretend now that you all are people in a kingdom with tax gatherers and kings. Let's find out what you would think of Zacchaeus.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

Role Play/Object Lesson – Taxes to the Tax Gatherer

Instructions: One teacher will play the tax gatherer and one will play the king. Give each child 10 pennies. The tax gatherer will announce to the children that tax time has come and he/she will collect 8 pennies from each child for the king's tax. The children need to count out their pennies so they are ready to give them to her/him. After the tax gatherer collects the taxes, he/she will go to the king, announce the number of people taxed and give the king one penny for each person. Then he/she will turn to the children and show them all the money he/she gets for his/her own. Ask the children what they think of all the money the tax gatherer got. Put the pennies back in the sandwich bag for the next class.

Learning Activity#3 Sm. Groups

Jesus, God's son, never made any bad choices – not even one! He lived a perfect life.

- Who else is perfect? Do you ever make bad choices?
- How did Jesus treat Zacchaeus, who made bad choices? Jesus loved Zacchaeus and wanted to be his friend – why?
- How can we become God's friend?

Jesus Loves Us Even when We Sin
Bible Guy Skit -- #NT08

[Bible Guy and Mrs. Bible Guy are walking along, complaining about how much money they had to pay the tax collector, how dishonest he was, etc.]

Bible Guy: ...and we're spending the whole day in town and we can't even buy a loaf of bread for lunch. I gave my last penny to that Zacchaeus.

[To kids] We are talking about Zacchaeus the tax collector. Nobody likes him. He is dishonest and cheats us all the time.

Mrs. Bible Guy [to kids] We are on our way into town. We hear that a man named Jesus is coming through. We have heard so much about him and we want to see him for ourselves.

Bible Guy: I just hope we don't faint from hunger while we're waiting....

[They exit]

Narrator: Bible Guy and Mrs. Bible Guy got to see Jesus. They also learned a lot about love and forgiveness. They are coming back from town. Let's listen to what they learned.

[Enter, eating bread]

Bible Guy: I would not have believed it if I had not seen it with my own eyes!

Mrs. Bible Guy: Neither would I !!

[To kids] we just saw something amazing in town! Remember how we were so mad at Zacchaeus on the way there? Well, when we got to town to see Jesus, guess who else was there?

Bible Guy : Zacchaeus! He had come to see Jesus, too and, wouldn't you know, of all the people there, Jesus asks to stay at Zacchaeus' house!

Mrs. Bible Guy: Of course, we thought that was really crazy. I mean, nobody likes that guy! He has been so mean to all of us. But Jesus picked him anyway.

Bible Guy: What happened next is what really surprised us and it taught us a lot about love and forgiveness. Zacchaeus knows that no-one likes him and he knows why...because he cheats everyone and has gotten rich doing it! He has done a lot of wrong things. He was so surprised that Jesus loved him and wanted to be his friend that his heart changed.

Mrs. Bible Guy: When he saw how Jesus loved him and wanted to forgive him, he gave back all the money he had cheated people out of.

Bible Guy: Actually, he gave us four times the amount that he had cheated us out of. [holds up the bag of coins]

Mrs. Bible Guy: And he gave half of everything he owns to the poor. He's totally changed! He is a completely different person because of Jesus love and forgiveness.

Bible Guy: We learned tat Jesus loves everyone, even people who make bad choices like Zacchaeus. We also know that we make bad choices and I bet you do, too, sometimes. But Jesus loves us and we can be forgiven if we ask Jesus into our hearts. If you haven't asked Jesus into your heart, we hope you will.

Mrs. Bible Guy: Well, we have to get back home so we'll be seeing you!