



# WHO, ME?!

Young Preschool • #NT8 • January 21, 2024

## 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><b>Activity Station:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Playground-size ball</i></li></ul> <p><b>Lesson:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bible</li><li>• <i>Read Aloud Bible Stories Vol.1, Ella K. Lindvall</i></li></ul> <p><b>Learning Activity #2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laminated, magnetic-backed pictures of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <i>Zacchaeus</i></li><li>◦ <i>Jesus walking into the crowd</i></li><li>◦ <i>Zacchaeus looking through crowd</i></li><li>◦ <i>Zacchaeus climbing the tree</i></li><li>◦ <i>Jesus talking to Zacchaeus</i></li><li>◦ <i>Jesus eating with Zacchaeus</i></li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Learning Activity #1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Printed picture of Zacchaeus in tree and Jesus &amp; Zacchaeus eating together, 1/child</li><li>• Green construction paper for leaves</li><li>• Glue sticks</li></ul>

### \*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.

**Activity Stations:**

**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." Then, the teacher says to the child, "Roll the ball to someone you want to be your friend." When the child rolls the ball to another child, the teacher will say for that child, "<<name>> wants <<name>> to be his/her friend." Continue around the circle until each child has an opportunity to roll the ball and/or to have the ball rolled to him or her.

Do you ever make bad choices or do bad things? (Be prepared for many of the children to say NO and probe with questions such as, "Are you always nice to your mom and dad?" "Do you always share your toys with other kids?") We all make bad choices! We disobey our parents, get angry when we don't get our way and don't always share our toys with our friends.

It's easy to make bad choices, isn't it? Everyone makes bad choices except one person who was ALWAYS good and NEVER made any bad choices. Jesus never, ever did anything wrong. Even though Jesus never made bad choices and we make bad choices all the time, Jesus wants to be our friend because Jesus loves everyone.

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

**Read Aloud – "The Man Who Was Too Little"**

**Instructions:** Read the story from READ~ALOUD BIBLE STORIES VOL. 1, page 5.

Because Jesus loved him and was his friend, Zacchaeus didn't want to make bad choices anymore. Zacchaeus decided to give the people back all the money he had taken and even more!

Do you know that Jesus loves everyone? That means that Jesus loves you, too, even though you make bad choices. None of us is perfect, but He loves us anyway, just like He loved Zacchaeus. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus loves everyone just the way 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 believed that Jesus loved Him. You can tell Jesus that you want to be His friend, too. You can thank Him for loving you just as you are and for dying on the cross for you.

Let's pray together and thank Jesus that He loves everyone.

**Learning  
Activity#1  
Lg. Group**

**Transition**

**Learning  
Activity#2  
Lg. Group**

**Craft – Zacchaeus color page**

**Instructions:** Color the picture. Teachers can cover area with glue stick and let children add small pieces of green construction paper for leaves.

If you would like to play a game to remind you that Jesus wants to be everyone's friend, go with <<teacher's name>>. If you would like to tell the story of Zacchaeus using the figures go with <<teacher's name>>.

**A. Zacchaeus**

(Hold up picture #1.) This man's name is Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus made lots and lots of bad choices. His job was to collect money from all the people to give to the king. But Zacchaeus would take more money than he was supposed to and kept that extra money for himself! That was a BAD (say it dramatically) choice. Nobody liked Zacchaeus because he took their money. No one wanted to be his friend.

One day Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to his town (hold up picture #2). He wanted to see Him. When he got near to Jesus, the crowd was so big he could not see 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.

Then he got an idea. There was a tree up the road. 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. No one ever wanted to go to Zacchaeus' house. But Jesus loves everyone and He loved Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus quickly climbed down from the tree.

The other people were angry when they saw Jesus going to Zacchaeus' house. They said to each other, "Doesn't Jesus know that Zacchaeus takes our money and does lots of other bad things?" Jesus DID know that Zacchaeus made bad choices. But Jesus loves everyone and Zacchaeus was very happy (show picture #6).

**B. Game – "I Want You to be My Friend" from Activity Station**

**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!