



STORY 76

Little Man, Big Faith

LUKE 19

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Luke 19.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

God is so generous! He gives his grace to people who don't deserve it—like us! We should always thank God for his generous grace. We should always wear our grace glasses. Remember them? Don't forget to wear them! And be sure to toss your glasses of grumbling into the garbage. We don't want to act like the first workers from the story we learned about last week. Remember how they grumbled when they learned the owner of the vineyard gave the same payment both to the workers who only worked one hour and to those who worked all day? They lost sight of the generous heart of the boss, just like we lose sight of God's generous heart. None of us deserve his grace, no matter if we are first or last. We are all sinners deserving to be punished for our sins. That's what is fair! We don't want God to be fair in that way. Instead of being fair like that

1
Read

2
Teach

and punishing everyone, our just and generous God sent Jesus to save us. In today's lesson we learn about one of those people. His name is Zacchaeus. No one in his town would have expected that Jesus would give him grace. But he did! Want to find out what happened?

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play The
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus gives
grace even
to big-time
sinners.

Two words can be used to tell Zacchaeus's salvation story: *seeking* and *receiving*. We are told that Zacchaeus "was *seeking* to see who Jesus was" (Luke 19:3). But we are also told two other important details about him: "He was a chief tax collector and was rich" (19:2). Those weren't good things. No one in town would have liked Zacchaeus. Why? Because he collected taxes from his fellow Jews for the Roman Empire. Paying taxes isn't bad. What is bad, though, is what tax collectors did: they would lie about how much people had to pay. Then, all the extra money they collected they'd keep for themselves. It made them filthy rich! The other important detail about this greedy man is that he was short. He was so short he couldn't see Jesus over the heads of the crowd when he came through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. So he had an idea. He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed up onto a sycamore tree. Now he could see Jesus. Short, bad Zacchaeus was seeking.

As Jesus walked, he came to the base of the sycamore tree. He looked up. What a strange sight—a man in a tree! "Zacchaeus," he called out his name. "Hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today" (19:5). The little man climbed down. He took Jesus to his house and "*received* him joyfully" (19:6). *Receiving!* He received Jesus with his emotions ("joyfully") and with his actions: "Lord,

half of what I have, I give to the poor. And all the people I have cheated I will give them back four times as much” (see 19:8). He received Jesus by giving his riches away in one day. Amazing!

What is more amazing is what Jesus said next: “Today salvation has come to this house” (19:9) because Zacchaeus believed in Jesus. The people grumbled that Jesus had “gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (19:7). But Zacchaeus, the big-time sinner, knew that Jesus came for that very purpose: “To seek and to save the lost” (19:10).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Seeking. Receiving. Those two important words help us understand how Zacchaeus approached Jesus. He needed a Savior, a Snake Crusher, to crush all his sins. Lots of sins! He was a *chief* tax collector, after all. So he sought Jesus. Then he received Jesus.

There is another important word that helps us understand what was happening. *Pulling.* The last line in the story, which is the most important, comes from Jesus. He says, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (19:10). Another way to say that is Jesus came to save sinners. But what about *pulling*? Do you remember that Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” (18:25)? Zacchaeus is rich! So how did he get through the eye of the tiny sewing needle? Easy. Jesus pulled him through. He came to seek and save the lost—both rich and poor, short and tall. The next time you think about Zacchaeus, picture Jesus pulling a camel through the eye of a needle. Impossible? Not with God—all things are possible for him.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- QUESTION:** What did Zacchaeus do to seek out Jesus? What did Jesus do to seek out Zacchaeus? Why did Jesus say he came?

TAKEAWAY: Zacchaeus was seeking Jesus, and Jesus was seeking him.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
The Son of Man
came to seek and
to save the lost.

LUKE 19:10

2. **QUESTION:** When Jesus told Zacchaeus he was coming to his house, how did he respond? What were his emotions? What were his actions? What did Jesus say had come to his house?

TAKEAWAY: When Zacchaeus received Jesus, he was saved and his heart was changed.

3. **QUESTION:** How easy did Jesus say it would be for a rich man (like Zacchaeus) to enter the kingdom of God? How was Zacchaeus able to enter the kingdom of God?

TAKEAWAY: It is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God—but with God, all things are possible.

4. **QUESTION:** What did Zacchaeus deserve for cheating poor people out of their money? What did God give him instead? How did that change Zacchaeus?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus gives grace even to big-time sinners.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Heads, Shoulders, Knees, Zacchaeus

Supply List: bean bags (one for every two children)

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Divide children into pairs. Have each pair face one another, and place a bean bag on the floor between them. If the leader calls “head,” “shoulders,” or “knees,” everyone must touch that body part. If the leader calls “Zacchaeus,” everyone tries to grab the bean bag before his or her partner does. Whoever gets the bean bag first earns a point. Continue randomly calling “head,” “shoulders,” “knees,” or “Zacchaeus.” After a set amount of time, the person in each pair with the most points wins. Remind children that Jesus called Zacchaeus by name.

Option 2: Capture the Balloon

Supply List: balloons, permanent marker, music

Before Class: Gather supplies. Inflate balloons (one per child).

Write each child's name on a balloon with permanent marker. Distribute balloons around the room. Have children hit the balloons around while music plays. When the music stops, have each child find the balloon with his or her name on it. The last person to find the balloon is out. Continue play until one child remains. Alternatively, have a leader record how long it takes for all the children to find their balloons and see if the group can beat their time in subsequent rounds. Remind children that Jesus knew Zacchaeus by name, and he knows our names too.

3rd–5th

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Option 2: Zacchaeus in Action

Supply List: tape, paper, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make three evenly spaced parallel lines across the playing area with tape. Label the furthest line "Zacchaeus climbed a tree," the middle line "Zacchaeus came down," and the bottom line "Zacchaeus was changed."

When the leader calls out one of the phrases, have children run to that line as quickly as possible. The last child to the line is out. Continue calling out phrases until one child remains.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Zacchaeus, Come Down!

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, hole punches, yarn, small paper plates, glue, craft sticks, green tissue paper, pencils

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock make copies of Zacchaeus (one per child). Cut out each Zacchaeus, and punch a hole at the top. Tie and knot one end of a 12-inch piece of yarn through each hole. Cut tissue paper into 1-inch squares. Make a sample craft.

Set Zacchaeus figures, tissue squares, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children glue a plate to a craft stick to make a “tree.” Have children decorate the tree by wrapping tissue squares around a pencil eraser and gluing them to the plate. Next, have children punch a hole at the top of the plate. They can then thread the yarn attached to Zacchaeus through the hole and tie a large knot at the end of the yarn so that it cannot pass back through the hole. Demonstrate how Zacchaeus goes up and down the tree by pulling the string.

Option 2: My Name

Supply List: cardstock, glue, cotton swabs, paper plates, empty boxes, spoons, glitter

Before Class: Gather supplies. On the top of cardstock print “Jesus knows my name and loves me!” (one per child). Put glue on paper plates and set on tables. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a cotton swab and printed paper. Have children dip the swab in glue and use it to write their name in the center of the paper. While holding the paper over an empty box, gently shake a spoonful of glitter over the glue to make the letters appear. Remind children that just as Jesus knew Zacchaeus’s name, he knows each of their names and loves them!

Option 1: String Tree Art

Supply List: paper, brown yarn, scissors, cotton swabs, green paint, paper plates, colored pencils

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print the Big Truth at the top of a piece of paper (one per child). Print pictures of Zacchaeus (one per child). Cut various lengths of brown yarn. Put green paint on paper plates. Make a sample craft.

Set Big Truth papers, Zacchaeus pictures, yarn, paint, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children make a tree by gluing brown yarn onto the Big Truth paper. Have them dip their cotton swab into the green paint and dab around the branches to make “leaves.” Have them color and cut out Zacchaeus and then glue him onto the tree.

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