

INTRODUCTION

I need to see Jesus! Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the children we teach had this attitude? In today's Bible lesson we meet Zacchaeus, who was desperate to see Jesus. Much to Zacchaeus's surprise, Jesus not only stopped to talk to him but asked to go to his house. After his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus was truly turned around! He went from a life of greed and thievery to a life of generosity and faith—all because he met Jesus.

The children you teach have the same opportunity. If they believe on Jesus, they can be *turned around* just like Zacchaeus was.

Emphasize God's grace as you teach the memory verse, Luke 19:10. Jesus came to Earth to seek and save the lost. Remember the grace you have been given as you teach this Bible verse.

Pray for God's wisdom and guidance and be sensitive to His leading. Pray that the children you teach will, like Zacchaeus, be desperate to see Jesus!

Concepts covered in this lesson include:

- **Salvation:** Reverses effects of sin—When I believe in Jesus, He changes me from the inside out. I am a new creation.
- **God:** Love—God is always loving.
- **Bible:** The books of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament. All the books agree. The Old Testament looks forward to the coming Messiah. The New Testament talks about when Jesus was alive and the lives of the first believers after Jesus came back to life and went up to Heaven.
- **Bible:** I can find passages in the Bible using chapters and verses.
- **Prayer:** Prayer is talking to God. I can talk to God.

Demonstrations of the lessons and songs in this series are available at: cefonline.com/freedemos/5dc

Tell the children to listen for the words *turned around*. Every time you or another teacher says that phrase, the children must stand up, turn around and sit down. This will help keep the children engaged and help them get some of the wiggles out.

Teacher, don't mention Zacchaeus's name until Jesus calls to him when he is in the tree. This will add suspense.

Zacchaeus was also hated because he was a Jew working for the Roman government, which controlled Israel at this time.

Materials
Bible Map
(See 5-Day Club kit.)

Preschool Application

Use the sin application visuals in the back of the flashcard book to help preschoolers identify sin in their own lives. When talking about the punishment for sin say, "The punishment God gives you and me for sin is separation (being away) from God forever."

See Exodus 20:1-17.

Preschool Song

"I Believe the Bible," vv. 1-3



LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Has anything exciting ever happened in your town? (*Allow response.*) Maybe a circus or a fair or even the President came to your town! What do people usually do when something exciting is going to happen? (*Allow response.*) They might put posters up or show what is happening on TV. They could even post it on the Internet. But somehow people find out about the exciting event.

Something exciting was happening in Jericho and it seemed like the whole town knew about it!

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

Slide 1

Even this man (*point to Zacchaeus on flashcard*) heard what was going on. This man was a tax collector. He collected money from the people and gave it to the Roman government. At the time this man lived, tax collectors were often hated because they cheated the people by taking more money than they were supposed to and keeping some of it for themselves. That's how they became rich.

Slide 2 (Bible Map)

This tax collector lived in Jericho (*show on Bible Map*) about 2,000 years ago.

Slide 3

Day after day he would do his job. But he was also taking money from people and getting rich. He probably didn't have many friends. This tax collector ignored God in his life and put himself first. One way he showed he was putting himself first was by stealing from the people. This man was a sinner—but he wasn't the only one.



Maybe you put yourself first too. You don't care if other people need help. You are most concerned about what happens to you. That is selfishness. Maybe when you see something you want you just take it, thinking no one will ever know. God calls these things sin. Sin is anything you think, say or do that disobeys God's laws. In the Bible God says, "Do not steal" and "Do not lie." When you disobey these rules (laws) of God, you are sinning. You are born wanting to sin. The Bible says, (*read Romans 3:23a*). Everyone in the world has sinned—that means you. God is the only one who has not sinned—He is perfect (holy)! Because He is true to His own holiness, He must punish sin. Your sin separates you from God right now. God created you to be close to Him but your sin keeps you far away from Him. If your sin is not forgiven, you will be separated from God forever in a place of punishment. Being selfish and looking out for yourself first are sins.

Slide 4

You have sinned and so had this tax collector. He was stealing and looking out for himself. But that day he heard about something exciting! Jesus was coming to town! Who is Jesus? Have you heard of Him before? (*Allow responses.*) Jesus is God the Son. He came to Earth as a baby and after He grew up to be a man, He spent three years teaching people about the one true God and that God's way to live is the best way. Jesus also did miracles—things only God can do. Jesus made blind people see, crippled people walk and even brought dead people back to life! Some even said Jesus was the promised Savior who would rescue His people. Everyone was talking about Jesus and what He was doing. Now people were saying Jesus was coming to Jericho!

Like many people in town, the tax collector left his house to go see Jesus as He was passing by. There were so many people! He tried to get closer to the road. There were still too many people! He stood on his tiptoes to try and see. But he couldn't! He was *too short*! Stand up on your tiptoes like you're trying to see over the crowd. (*Do with children.*) Now what? He couldn't get to the front and he couldn't see above the crowd because he was just too short.

Slide 5

Suddenly he had an idea. He looked up and down the street. Then he saw it. It was perfect! He ran as quickly as he could to the sycamore tree and scrambled up the branches. This was the perfect spot to watch for Jesus. Jesus would walk right under the tree and the tax collector would get to see Him!

Here comes Jesus! He's walking down the road with His disciples (followers). Act like you're shading your eyes to see Jesus coming. (*Do with children.*) The tax collector was getting so excited! This was the miracle worker so many people had talked about! Jesus was getting closer and closer to the sycamore tree where the tax collector sat.

Slide 6

Now Jesus was right under the sycamore tree! Instead of continuing to walk down the road Jesus suddenly stopped. *I wonder what He's doing!* the tax collector may have thought. He didn't have to wonder long. Jesus stood under the tree, looked up with kind eyes and said, "Zacchaeus (*Zack-KEY-us*), come down!" Say that with me! (*Say with children.*) "Today I must stay at your house!"

Zacchaeus was shocked. *How did He know I was in this tree? And how does He know my name? I've never met Him before! And He wants to stay at my house? Nobody ever wants to come to my house!*

How did Jesus know Zacchaeus's name? (*Allow response.*) Jesus knew Zacchaeus's name because Jesus is God the Son—He knows everything! He knew all about Zacchaeus's selfishness and stealing. Yet He loved Zacchaeus and wanted Zacchaeus to know Him.

Your facial expressions, voice and a touch of drama will help you tell this part of the story with excitement and suspense!

Lesson 1

Preschool Song

"God Made the Mountains High"



Jesus, God the Son, loves you and wants you to know Him too. (*Read 1 John 4:10a.*) God is love! God knows everything about you and loves you anyway. He made you and loves you. God made everything in the whole world. What's your favorite thing that God made? (*Allow response.*) God is love and He is perfect. Everything He does is right and good. God wants you to know Him and how much He loves you!

Jesus loved Zacchaeus and wanted Zacchaeus to know Him. Jesus wanted to spend time with Zacchaeus—no one ever wanted to spend time with Zacchaeus! The Bible says Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree and happily invited Jesus to his house. Let's pretend to hurry down the tree like Zacchaeus did. (*Do with children.*) What a big day for Zacchaeus! Jesus, the one everyone was talking about, was coming to his house. Jesus knew him and cared about him!

Not everyone was happy though. There were many people who knew Zacchaeus had gotten rich by stealing money from them. The Bible says, (*read Luke 19:7*). The crowd was upset and grumbled because Jesus was showing love to someone they called a sinner. And he was a sinner but the people didn't realize they were sinners too. Jesus reached out in love to Zacchaeus, even though Jesus knew all about Zacchaeus's sins. He wanted to forgive Zacchaeus in spite of what Zacchaeus had done or what others thought.

Slide 7



Jesus wants to forgive you too. When God made the first people, He designed them to have a close relationship (friendship) with Him. And they did! But their relationship with God was broken when they sinned. Since that time everyone has been born with sin and is separated from God. But God promised to send someone to save the people in the world from sin so they could be forgiven. The Savior is Jesus! **The Lord Jesus Christ came to save sinners.** He came to Earth as a baby and grew up to be a man. He did something no one else could do—He lived a sinless life! He could do this because He is the Son of God. Not too long after Jesus met Zacchaeus, Jesus was arrested by men who didn't like His teaching. He suffered greatly then they nailed Him to a cross, where He died. The Bible says, (*read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4*). Jesus dying on the cross made it possible for your sin to be forgiven. He was buried but on the third day Jesus came alive again! Many people saw Him after He came alive. Then after 40 days Jesus went back to Heaven, where He is now with God, His Father, ruling over all. Because Jesus did all that for you, you can be forgiven of your sin and no longer be separated from God. Jesus wants to forgive your sins!

He also wanted to forgive Zacchaeus. Jesus knew everything about what he had done. But now, Jesus offered forgiveness to Zacchaeus!

Slide 8

Zacchaeus met Jesus and his life was *turned around*! How do we know this? He promised to give half of everything he owned to the poor. Wow! But Zacchaeus didn't stop there. He said, "If I have stolen anything from anyone, I will give back four times what I took." He was also making things right with the people he had stolen from. Jesus had made a huge difference in Zacchaeus's life and other people could see it!



If you've believed in Jesus as your Savior, **others should see the difference God makes in your life.** Maybe before you trusted Jesus you were mean to other kids. Or maybe you stole things. But when you believe in Jesus as your Savior, He begins to change your life! You begin to realize that some of the things you've been doing are sin. If you let Him, God changes your thoughts so you begin to think things that please God. He changes the way you act, so you act in a way that pleases God. You will start to want different things in your life because you are seeing life God's way instead of your own sinful way. Instead of responding in a mean way or stealing, God helps you change to live your life for Him and not yourself. God even changes the things you want for your future!

Slide 9

Say with me, "**God can change me!**" (*Say with children.*) Does this happen all at once? No. When you believe in Jesus, God the Holy Spirit comes into your life. He is the one who helps you think, act and want things differently. As you read your Bible and learn to follow God's instructions He will help you become more like Jesus. The Bible says, (*read 2 Corinthians 5:17*). When you believe in Jesus, you are no longer separated from God! You are made new on the inside because you are right with God! He will help you so **others will see the difference God makes in your life.**

Slide 10

Jesus made a huge difference in Zacchaeus's life. Other people were noticing the big change that happened to Zacchaeus. He was *turned around*!

CLIMAX

Jesus told the surprised people that salvation had come to Zacchaeus's house—Zacchaeus chose to believe in Jesus and follow His teachings!

CONCLUSION

Jesus also told the people why He had come to Earth. He said, (*read Luke 19:10*). He came to look for and save all those who are lost in sin.

Preschool Song

"God Makes Me Glad"

Show children what "four times" means with objects like coins. Show them that if Zacchaeus stole one coin, he would give back four. If he stole four coins, he would give back 16, etc. This will help visual learners get engaged in the lesson. You could also have children come up and help you count out the money. This would help tactile learners.

Materials

Word Up! Booklet
(See 5-Day Club kit.)

State the climax with enthusiasm and conviction to emphasize the point!

Important Reminder

Remember, it is not the prayer that saves the child. Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit convicting the child of his or her sinful condition and drawing him or her to trust completely in Christ and His work on the cross. The prayer is the child's expression of that belief to God. (See "Guiding a Child to the Savior" on the inside front cover.)

Preschool Invitation

When presenting the invitation to preschoolers, use John 3:15 and "believe in" terminology. Ask those who have questions to stay with you while the others move on to another activity.

INVITATION



Jesus also came to save you from your sin. Without Jesus you are lost—separated from God because of sin. But because Jesus died and came alive again, you can have your sins forgiven and be close to God! The Bible says, (*read Romans 10:13*). This verse is talking to you and me and everyone in the world. To call on Jesus is to believe that Jesus is the only one who can save you. It is putting all your trust in Him to save you from your sin instead of in yourself or in things in your life. It is being willing to turn to God and live His way, not yours. This verse says if you will trust Jesus, you will be saved. You will no longer be separated from God, but instead be close to God now and forever. He will begin to help you think and act His way all through your life. Then one day you will live with Him forever in Heaven, God's home. Will you believe on Jesus today to save you from your sins? Please bow your head and close your eyes. If you want to believe on Jesus today or you want to talk to me more about what that means, would you please show me by raising your hand? (*Acknowledge responses.*) If you raised your hand, please meet me (*designate time and location*) and I'll show you more from God's Word.