

UNIT VERSE

Love one another as I
have loved you.
John 13:34

JESUS LOVED ZACCHAEUS



LEADER BIBLE STUDY

CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION

(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)

LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

God helps me to be
kind to my friends.

LIFE POINT

We can love all
people.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Luke 19:1–10

WEEKLY VERSE

Love one another as I
have loved you. John
13:34

If someone had to describe you, what identifiers would they use? Would they use your occupation or your financial status? Would they describe your physical attributes? Would they talk about your character?

Luke identifies Zacchaeus with three specific descriptions: tax collector, rich, and short. Being known as a rich tax collector most likely created significant friction in Zacchaeus' life. In those days, Jewish people did not trust tax collectors because they would treat the Jewish people unfairly and take more money than they were supposed to. Since Zacchaeus was known as a rich man, he would most likely have become wealthy by taking money from the Jewish people. It's fair to say that Zacchaeus was unpopular.

Knowing this, consider Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus. Jesus saw Zacchaeus in a tree, called him by name, and requested to stay at his house. Jesus recognized that Zacchaeus wanted to know Him. Being fully God and fully man, Jesus surely knew that Zacchaeus was a tax collector. But Jesus also knew that Zacchaeus needed a Savior. Zacchaeus quickly came down from the tree, repented, and promised to repay, four times over, any money he had extorted.

Why would Jesus choose to stay in the home of a "sinful man?" Because Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He looked beyond the descriptors that defined Zacchaeus and offered him a chance for a new identity.

What is your response to the lost world around you? Be honest. Do you ever respond the way the crowd did to Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus?

What would it look like if we followed Jesus' example to love others? Every day we have the opportunity to point those around us to a loving Father who sees beyond their failures and offers a chance for redemption.

As you pray this week, ask the Lord to open your eyes to see the lost and hurting people around you. Ask Him to give you a heart for those who need to hear the truth of the gospel and the boldness to share the good news.



TEACH THE SCRIPTURE

Intro

In a small bag, place a branch with a few leaves and a small people figure inside. Ask kids to guess what might be inside your bag. Finally, pull out the branch and the people figure and say, "In today's Bible lesson, we're learning about the day Jesus saw Zacchaeus!"

Sing "Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man" together, adding hand motions for several rounds. Try singing while standing up, sitting down, or turned around, etc.

JESUS LOVED ZACCHAEUS

—Based on Luke 19:1–10

Jesus was traveling through the town of Jericho. A crowd of people gathered around Jesus.

Everyone wanted to see Jesus, including Zacchaeus (*za KEE uhs*). Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He collected money that the people owed to the town. People did not like Zacchaeus because he was a tax collector.

Zacchaeus was not very tall. He could not see over the crowd of people. He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree so he could see Jesus.

Jesus stopped under the tree. He said, "Come down, Zacchaeus. I want to go to your house today." Zacchaeus quickly climbed down the tree. He was happy that Jesus was going to his house.

Jesus taught Zacchaeus many things. Zacchaeus was sorry for the wrong things he had done. He said, "I will help the poor people. If I have taken too much money from people, I will give them back all of their money and more."

Wrap Up

At the end of the session, remind the children that Jesus showed love to Zacchaeus - and that He loves each of us, too! Pass a mirror around the circle and ask, "Who does Jesus love?" Have everyone say, "Jesus loves (child's name)!" Finish by saying together, "Thank you, Jesus, for loving me!"

Sing the weekly Verse to the tune of: "If You're Happy and You Know It" (with motions).

Love one another as I have loved you!

(clap clap)

Love one another as I have loved you!

(clap clap)

Jesus wants us all to love,

Just like He has shown His love.

Love one another as I have loved you!

(clap clap)



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ART

Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house for dinner! Set out vegetables cut in half and paper plates with paint. Let preschoolers dip the veggies in the paint and stamp them onto the paper. Say, "Jesus showed love to Zacchaeus! He went to his house for dinner! Who can you invite to your house for a snack or dinner?"

BLOCKS

Place a town mat in the block center along with a little house or farm with people figures. Allow children to build a town and act out the Bible story! Have a Bible in the center and tell the Bible story!

HOMELIVING

Provide Bible clothes and allow kids to dress up and cook a meal for Jesus and Zacchaeus! Say, "Other people did not want to eat with Zacchaeus! Jesus went to his house and showed Zacchaeus that He loved him! We can be like Jesus and love others too!"

NATURE

In a sand tub, arrange people figures and use sticks and leaves to make a tree! Allow preschoolers to have Zacchaeus climb the tree and have Jesus find him! Keep the teaching picture nearby and explain that Jesus sees, knows, and cares for them, just as He did for Zacchaeus.

PUZZLES & MANIPULATIVES

Children will roll a snake of playdough. After rolling out the playdough, show children how to cut the snake with playdough scissors or plastic knife. Place the pieces on a plate or in a bowl, then count them together. Say, "Many people were in the crowd, but Jesus saw Zacchaeus. Jesus sees YOU too! Thank You, Jesus, for caring for me!"

Challenge: Two children take turns rolling the dice, cutting the matching number of pieces, and see who finishes first.