



Zacchaeus

Seeks the Savior



Zacchaeus stood on his tiptoes and stretched his neck up as far as he could. “Oh, I just wish I could get one good look!” he said to himself.

But the mob of people before him seemed like giants. Zacchaeus was so short that even some of the children were taller than he was!

Maybe I can try to squeeze through them, thought Zacchaeus. So he inched and squished and pushed

his way forward. But he still couldn’t see a thing.

“I give up!” said Zacchaeus. He wriggled out of the crowd. “I’ve GOT to find another way to see Jesus.”

Then he had an idea. It was a funny idea. And he would look very funny doing it, but he had no choice.

Zacchaeus lifted up his robe, tucked it into his belt and started to run. In those days, men usually didn’t run.

Especially not rich men like Zacchaeus, who had important jobs with the government.



But Zacchaeus didn't care! He sprinted ahead of the crowd and all the way up the road.

Then he did something even more shocking. He climbed a tree! Usually only children climbed trees, and Zacchaeus was a grown man.

But Zacchaeus would do almost *anything* to see Jesus. So he steadied himself on a sturdy branch of a sycamore tree and waited for the Lord Jesus to pass by. From up in the tree, he had a better view than anybody.

In no time, Jesus arrived at the tree with a large crowd behind Him. He stopped and looked up.

"Zacchaeus!" He called.

Zacchaeus almost fell right out of the tree. *How did Jesus know his name? Why was He talking to him?*

"Quick! Come down," said Jesus. "For I must stay at your house today."

Stay at MY house? thought Zacchaeus.

Before he knew it, he was sliding down the tree. He had never met Jesus before, but now He wanted to know Him. He trusted Jesus as his Savior.

With a huge smile and a happy song in his heart, Zacchaeus led Jesus all the way to his house.

But behind them, the crowd started to grumble.

"I can't believe Jesus is staying at that man's house. He's one of the biggest sinners in town!" someone said.

“Yes, Zacchaeus is the boss of all the tax collectors!” said another. “He and his friends charge us more money than they should and keep the extra money for themselves. Zacchaeus is a greedy, lying thief!”

Zacchaeus turned around. He stood as tall as he could and said, “Lord, I know I have done wrong. But I am a new man now. I’ll give half of everything I own to the poor. And I’ll pay back all the money I stole – and four times as much as that!”

Then Jesus said to Zacchaeus and everyone else, “This man trusts in Me, and he has been saved today! For I have come to seek and to save sinners, just like him.”

Zacchaeus’ eyes opened wide! He thought *he* was the one looking for Jesus. But Jesus had been looking for him first. Jesus wanted to forgive him for his sin.

Zacchaeus hurried to get things ready for his guest. Yes, Jesus would only stay one night. But one day Zacchaeus would stay in Jesus’ house in heaven forever!

**Learn from Zacchaeus’ biography:**

- Jesus came to earth to seek and save sinners.
- Like Zacchaeus, we are all sinners. Trust Jesus to save you and make you into a new person.

Parent Ideas

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Scripture: Luke 19:1-10

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus came to earth to seek and save sinners.
- Like Zacchaeus, we are all sinners. Trust Jesus to save you and make you into a new person.

1. Read-together activity

Read this biography outdoors under a large, shady tree with many low branches. If you feel especially brave, climb the tree together and sit or lean on a branch while you read.

2. Read-together activity

Ask your son or daughter to pantomime the part of Zacchaeus. (*Pantomime* means “to act without speaking, using exaggerated gestures and body movements only.”) After you are done reading, switch places! Your child (or another family member) can read while you pantomime Zacchaeus. You could also play the biography on the CD and pantomime together. Enjoy the laughs that will inevitably follow.

3. Discussion activity

To prepare, draw a circle on a sheet of paper. Draw lines to divide the circle into six equal pie sections. Make a “biography clock” by writing six key biography events in the sections, in chronological order. The first event should be written in the top right section. Add events in a clockwise direction. Then cut out the sections, mix them up, and ask your child to arrange them in the correct order. (Help your child to read sections if necessary.) Here are six biography events:

- Zacchaeus can't see Jesus because of the crowd.
- Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree.
- Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house.

- The crowd grumbles.
- Zacchaeus promises to pay back more money than he owes.
- Jesus says He was seeking sinners, like Zacchaeus.

Follow this activity by asking a few questions related to the key learning points.

- What was Zacchaeus like before he met Jesus?
- How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus' invitation? (*He welcomed Him with joy, trusted Him as Savior, etc.*)
- By the end of the biography, how had Zacchaeus changed?
- Why might Zacchaeus have been surprised by Jesus' words at the end?

Help your child to understand that Jesus knows us long before we know Him. He comes to sinners like us and invites us to trust Him as Savior.

4. Application activity

Explain to your child that we are all born sinners (Romans 3:23; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12). However, when we trust Christ as Savior, God says we are born again by His Spirit (John 3:3-8). This doesn't mean we become babies again; instead, it means we start making new choices to love and obey God. We will still sin and be tempted to sin, but God's Spirit gives us the power to say no.

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Play a game to illustrate this point. Find an old, smelly shoe and a clean, new shoe. Tell your child that the old shoe stands for sin (the bad choices we used to make) and the new shoe stands for holiness (the right choices God helps us to make). Gather a few family members or friends to sit in a circle. Pass the shoes around the circle for less than a minute. (People will probably want to pass the old shoe quickly!) Then stop and present an everyday scenario to the group (e.g., your little brother breaks your favorite toy).

The person holding the old shoe will give an example of a sinful response to the scenario (e.g., fighting, yelling, etc.). The person holding the new shoe will say a “born again” response to the scenario (e.g., forgiveness, gentle words, etc.). Repeat the game several times with different scenarios.

End with prayer, thanking Christ for saving us and making us into new people who can say no to sin.