

Zacchaeus

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: Jesus knows my name, and He loves me.

Bible passage: Luke 19. Read Luke 19:1–10 yourself before class.

Memory verse: "to seek and to save" *Luke 19:10 (KJV)*. The old word **seek** means look for.

You need: a Bible, a sturdy chair or step stool (the "tree"), crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child. If you have them: a green blanket or some paper leaves to make the chair look like a tree.

Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Luke 19. Learn every child's name, so you can call each one by name in the game.

1. Opening game: Peekaboo, I See You! (5 minutes)

Kids crouch down low and cover their eyes. Walk around, stop by one child and say, "I see you, (child's name)!" That child pops up tall and waves. Keep going until every child has heard their name. Say: "Today we will hear a true story about a man Jesus saw, and Jesus called him by his name."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Luke 19. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Jesus walked into a city called Jericho (Luke 19:1). *(Walk in place.)*

A man named Zacchaeus lived there. He had lots of money (19:2). *(Pretend to count coins.)*

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. But lots of people were in the way (19:3). *(Stand on tiptoes and look around.)*

Zacchaeus was short. He could not see! (19:3). *(Crouch down low.)*

So he ran ahead and climbed up a tree (19:4). *(Run in place, then climb with your hands.)*

Say it with me: "Up, up, up the tree!"

Jesus came to the tree. He looked up. He saw Zacchaeus (19:5). *(Look up and point.)*

Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down! I am coming to your house today" (19:5). *(Wave "come down.")*

Say it with me: "Jesus knows my name!"

Zacchaeus hurried down. He was so happy (19:6). *(Climb down fast and smile big.)*

Zacchaeus gave half of his things to poor people (19:8). *(Hold out both hands to give.)*

Jesus came to look for people and save them (19:10). *(Hand over eyes, then hug yourself.)*

Say it with me: "Jesus loves me!"



3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Who climbed the tree? (*Zacchaeus, Luke 19:4*)
2. Who looked up and called his name? (*Jesus, 19:5*)
3. Did Zacchaeus come down? (*Yes! He hurried down, and he was happy, 19:6*)

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Jesus came 'to seek and to save.' **Seek** means look for." Teach the motions: on "to seek," put your hand over your eyes and look around. On "and to save," hug yourself. Say it with the motions three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Luke 19:10" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Zacchaeus in the Tree (5–10 minutes)

Let each child take a turn as Zacchaeus: they stand on the sturdy chair (the "tree") while you hold their hand. The class says, "Zacchaeus, come down!" with their name: "(Child's name), come down!" Help them step down, and everyone cheers. Then give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw a big tree and Zacchaeus up in it.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:

"Thank You, Jesus, for knowing my name.

Thank You for loving me. Amen."

Tips for little ones: always hold a child's hand on the chair, and never let two children on it at once. If they get wiggly, do the climbing and "come down" motions again. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

If a child asks why the people grumbled: answer simply and gently. Some people did not think Jesus should go to Zacchaeus' house (Luke 19:7). But Jesus loves everyone, and He came to look for people and save them (19:10).

