

Zacchaeus

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Jesus knows my name, and He came to seek and to save the lost.

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

Memory verse: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." *Luke 19:10 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible, 5 index cards, a marker, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child. If you have them: a sturdy chair or step stool and 10 play coins.

Before class: write the memory verse on the 5 cards (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Luke 19:5.

1. Opening game: Tall, Short, Climb! (5 minutes)

Call out actions, and kids do them as fast as they can: "Tall!" (stretch up on tiptoes), "Short!" (crouch down low), "Climb!" (climb an invisible tree, hand over hand), "Look!" (hand over eyes, peek all around). Speed up, and try to trick them by saying the same one twice. Then ask: *Have you ever been too short to see something you really wanted to see?* Say: "Today we will meet a short man who wanted to see Jesus so much that he climbed a tree."

2. Bible story: Jesus Calls Zacchaeus (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Luke 19, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Jesus was walking through the city of **Jericho** (Luke 19:1). A man named **Zacchaeus** lived there. He was the boss of the tax collectors. The Bible calls him "the chief among the **publicans**." A publican collected tax money from the people. Zacchaeus was **rich**. He had lots of money (19:2).

Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. But there was a big crowd around Jesus, and Zacchaeus was short. The Bible says he was "little of stature." He couldn't see over all those people (19:3)!

So Zacchaeus had an idea. He **ran ahead** of the crowd and **climbed up into a sycamore tree**, because Jesus was going to walk that way (19:4). Now he could see!

When Jesus came to that tree, He stopped. He **looked up**, and He saw Zacchaeus. And Jesus called him by name! **Read Luke 19:5 from your Bible:** "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house." Say: "**Make haste** means hurry. **Abide at thy house** means stay at your house. Jesus wanted to go to Zacchaeus' house that very day!"



The story continues: Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree, and he was so glad to have Jesus come. The Bible says he received Jesus **joyfully** (19:6).

But the people in the crowd did not like it. They **murmured**, which means they grumbled. They said, "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!" (19:7).

Then Zacchaeus stood up and said to Jesus, "Lord, I give **half** of my goods to the **poor**. And if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I will pay it back fourfold." (19:8). **False accusation** means lying about someone. **Fourfold** means four times as much. *(Optional: show 10 play coins. Give away half, 5 coins. Then show that one coin paid back fourfold is 4 coins.)*

Jesus said, "This day is **salvation** come to this house" (19:9). Salvation means being saved from sin. Then Jesus told everyone why He came: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10). Jesus came looking for Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus' life was changed.

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What city was Jesus walking through? (*Jericho, Luke 19:1*)
2. Why couldn't Zacchaeus see Jesus? (*The crowd was big and he was short, 19:3*)
3. What did Zacchaeus climb? (*A sycamore tree, 19:4*)
4. What did Jesus say to him? (*"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down," 19:5*)
5. How much of his goods did Zacchaeus give to the poor? (*Half, 19:8*)

4. Memory verse: Seek and Save Echo (5 minutes)

Write the verse on 5 cards: *For the Son of man / is come / to seek / and to save / that which was lost. Luke 19:10.* Explain the old words: **Son of man** is a name Jesus called Himself, **is come** means has come, **seek** means look for, and **lost** means far away from God. Say each card and have kids say it back with a motion: point up, walk in place, hand over eyes, hug yourself, arms open wide. Turn one card over each time you say it, until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus came looking for Zacchaeus, and He came looking for us too. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (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.

This week: like Zacchaeus, make something right. Say sorry, give back something that isn't yours, or share something with someone who needs it.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Zacchaeus word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/zacchaeus-word-search), the Zacchaeus coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/zacchaeus), or **Make Haste and Come Down**: kids stand on one side of the room as the "tree." The leader walks by, stops, looks up and calls one child by name: "Make haste and come down!" That child hurries over and joins the leader's line. Keep going until everyone has been called by name.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus knows each of us by name and came to seek and to save the lost. Help us make things right when we do wrong, and help us share like Zacchaeus did. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks, "Why would Jesus go to a sinner's house?": answer simply and gently. Jesus said He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Everyone has sinned (Romans 3:23), so Jesus came for all of us. Being with Jesus changed Zacchaeus, and Jesus still changes people today.