



# Rotation Model Sunday School Lesson Plans

## “Jesus and Zaccheus”

**Memory Verse:** “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and save the lost.” (Luke 19:9-10)

### Learning Center Overview:

**Holy Word Cinema:** View the Nest DVD “Treasures in Heaven” and answer the onscreen review questions.

**Creation Station (Art):** Students create a “hidden Good News” drawing that can only be seen with a special “decoder.” They are encouraged to share this surprising message of Jesus’ acceptance that gets “above the crowd’s opinion.” Included are detailed instructions and options for different types of “decoder lenses” and drawing tools, along with an innovative “decoder nametag” activity.

**Computer Bible Lab:** Using the free interactive story of Zaccheus found in Awesome Bible Stories software (a free download for our Supporting Members), students will learn the story, explore its meaning, play a memory game, and see how they “measure up” to the life and loving acceptance Jesus calls us to.

**Bible Games:** Students will play two games to learn about and reflect on the unconditional love of Jesus that Zaccheus’ story illustrates and consider ways to display that love to others. Game 1: The “Seeking Jesus” Challenge | Game 2: “Sharing the Surprising News” | The outline of this lesson uses a unique “3-D” learning progression: Discover the love of Jesus, Develop a passion for the Word, and Display His love to others.

## Bible Background

### Who was Zaccheus?

Luke 19 tells us that Zaccheus was a tax-collector (a “Publican”) which meant he had won a bid to collect taxes in a Roman province, pay them in advance to the Roman government, and either keep any excess in a good year or absorb any losses in a bad year. Needless to say, booing “the taxman” is a time-honored tradition, but the percentage of taxes collected by the Romans and their publicans was far less than what we’re used to today (roughly about 3%, source).

Zaccheus was a wealthy Jew living in Jericho, that famous and important city that sits at the crossroads of the region between the Jordan River and Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, and the international trade routes that converged into the main artery known as the Jericho Road leading to Jerusalem. Jericho was a wealthy oasis on the edge of the desert and the winter home of Israel's ruling family.

Jesus called Zaccheus a "son of Abraham" which is a unique phrase meaning "he's part of God's family too!" (Matthew 1:1 gives Jesus the same title.) Throughout his ministry, Jesus confronted crowds and religious authorities over the issue of "who's in and who's out" and "whose side is God on." By accepting Zaccheus and going home with him, Jesus was once again turning the world and its hypocritical opinions upsidedown.

How did he become wealthy? We don't know for sure, but as the "chief" tax collector he was likely from a wealthy family that was well-connected. The effect of saving/converting a well-healed and well-positioned chief tax collector like Zaccheus was a strategic lesson and victory for Jesus that would have reverberated through Jericho long after.

We are told that Zaccheus was "short," which explains why he had to climb a tree to look for Jesus, But "short" can also be Luke's way of telling us that Zaccheus was looked down upon in the community and/or was someone you wouldn't expect Jesus to notice.

A person's name in the Bible often tells us something about the person's background, character, or adds a note of humor or poignancy. Zaccheus' name does all of these. "Zaccheus" is the Greek version of the Hebrew name "Zakai" which many scholars believe comes from the Hebrew word zakak meaning "pure, clean, sinless"—terms usually applied to offerings made in the Temple. When Jesus sees him in the tree, Jesus literally says, "ACCEPTABLE! Hurry down." "CLEAN! I must stay at your house today."

Was Zaccheus one of the tax-collectors who came to be baptized by John in Luke 3? "Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him (John), "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." (Luke 3:12-13) Did Zaccheus know them? Was he one of them? Jericho is about 6 miles from one of the traditional locations where John was said to have baptized people.

Was Zaccheus an acquaintance of Matthew the tax collector who became a disciple of Jesus (Luke 5:27-32)? Or one of the tax collectors Jesus was often accused of consorting with (Matthew 9:9-13)?

According to Luke, Jesus called Zaccheus by name when he saw him up in the tree. Had they met before? Did Zaccheus already know or believe who Jesus was? Or did he experience a flash of divine inspiration to climb the tree?

We will never know for sure what prompted Zaccheus to climb that tree and then come down out of it, but the possibilities remind us that some of us come to Christ in a moment of unexpected conversion, or after a season of preparation, or through the invitation of friends and strangers. Whenever it comes, the first feelings of faith and sensation of being in God's presence often feels like a surprise, followed by acceptance and relief. No matter who you are, what you do or have done, or what others think of you, or what you think of yourself—what really matters is what Jesus thinks of you.

## About the Tree

Figs in a Sycamore-Fig tree In Luke 19:4, the tree Zaccheus climbed is called a "Sykomorea" tree ("soo-ka-mah-ray-ah") which is the name of a common fig tree found throughout the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Spelled "Sycamore" in English and not to be confused with the figless American Sycamore tree,

Zaccheus' sycamore grew large, produced figs several times a year, and were often planted along roads to provide shade and fruit to all.

The prophet Amos tended the figs of the Sykomorea tree. On several occasions, Jesus spoke about fig trees that didn't produce fruit. The fossil record shows that dinosaurs ate sycamore-figs! Learn more about fig trees and their fascinating ancient history, varieties, and importance. There are sycamores still growing today in Jericho. The ripening of the figs of a tended Sykomorea would be hastened by cutting a gash in the fruit with a special tool that also deterred fig wasps from entering the fruit. You might say that Zaccheus' faith was ripe for pickin! Is yours?

Figs, especially dried ones, are a great metaphor for something or someone that's dried up and perhaps not very good looking, but is actually very sweet and full of seeds that can produce even more "good fruit." Zaccheus probably felt like his faith was beyond picking; that someone like him would never be chosen or acceptable to God. But with God, all things are possible.

## Holy Word Cinema

**Memory Verse:** “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and save the lost.” (Luke 19:)

### Preparation

1. Review Bible Background notes and read scripture passages mentioned to familiarize yourself with this month’s Bible story.
2. Pray for the children and for your teaching of the lesson.

### Materials List:

- DVD Player
- Projector
- DVD: “Treasures in Heaven”
- Bonus Features Review Questions for “Treasures in Heaven”

Show the movie “Treasures in Heaven.” After the movie, use the Bonus Features Adventure Quiz review questions to test the kids’ comprehension of the story. When there is any doubt in the answer, show the Scripture verse onscreen to connect the video to the Bible. It may be a good thing to do that whether kids know the answers or not to strengthen their Bible knowledge.

Once review questions have been answered, close the session with prayer.

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 / [Writing Team Lesson Set: Jesus and Zaccheus](#) / [\(WT\) Jesus and Zaccheus Art Workshop Lesson](#)

### Welcome to the Jesus and Zaccheus Lesson Set!

Everyone can read the [Luke 19:1-10 Bible Background](#) and the [Lesson Summaries](#). The lesson plans themselves are open to our amazing Supporting Members who make this site possible. Join today 🙌😊

The lessons in this set have been written for both **at-home and in-class** use. They are broadly-graded and have age and class size adaptations.



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Open to Supporting Members

## (WT) Jesus and Zaccheus Art Workshop Lesson 🔔



**The Writing Team** ○ 👤 Fortifying our Supporting Members

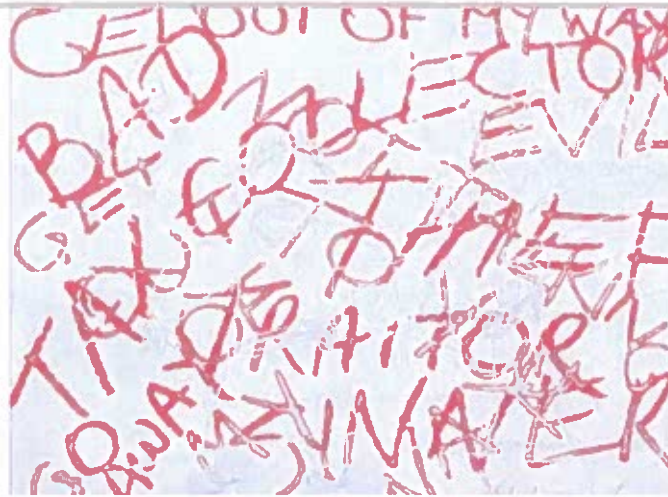
Rotation.org Writing Team

**Jesus and Zaccheus**

**“Seeing as Jesus Sees” Art Workshop**

### Summary of Activities

Students will use a special "secret" message decoder in several activities, including "decoding" the scripture, to discover and share the important message in the story of Zaccheus of how Jesus sees us and accepts us into the family of God.



Pictured: A child's Good News drawing of Jesus accepting Zaccheus (done in blue) that is obscured by the crowd's opinion of Zaccheus (done in red) and is revealed when a red filter "decoder" is used.

## How it Works

The red filter makes any red message or red drawings disappear and makes readable those things written or drawn with light blue. This effect is used three times in the lesson plan: with student nametags, the scripture reading, and an encoded Good News Drawing.



You may need to experiment with the shades of red and light blue pencils or crayons to determine which shades work best with the red filter material(s) you have available. Ideally, you want the reds to match. Several "red filter" options are found at the end of this lesson plan. Depending on the shade of red plastic you are using, you may find that lighter or darker shades of red and blue pencil or crayon work best. Experimenting is part of the fun. **See the lesson plan below and notes at the end of the lesson for tips!**

## Scripture for the Lesson

**Luke 19:1-10** ~ The story of Zaccheus

**Key/Memory Verses:** *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."* (Luke 19:9-10, NRSV)

*Students will use their "decoder" to read a special "blue" version of the Luke 19:1-10 story attached as a PDF to this lesson. The handout gives you the choice of NRSV or NIV. To use another translation for that activity you will need to create your own scripture handout by typing the text in blue and printing it.*

## Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at rotation.org for this set's complete list of objectives.

## Preparation and Materials

- Read the Bible Background and scripture.
- Print the ["Jesus Sees and Loves Me" nametag sheets](#) (there are 4 nametags per page). Cut them into nametag squares. You must print these with your color printing turned on so that the words are in blue. Alternately, you can have your students write their nametag with a "sky" or "light" blue crayon or pencil using the same phrasing found in the printable version. Have at least one extra nametag that will get used in your lesson.
- Print one copy per student of the ["Blue" Luke 19:1-10 scripture handout](#)—either the NRSV version (pg 1 of the PDF) or the NIV version (pg 2 of the PDF). You must print these with your color printer/copier setting turned on, and the blue should be "light" so that it will be made more readable when students use their red filter.
- Print one copy of the ["Word List"](#) to help when you discuss creating their blue "Good News" drawings.
- Red filter material—enough for a 4"x4" piece (approx.) for each student using red cellophane, red glasses, or red plastic (See filter notes at the end of this lesson.)
- Red and "sky" or "light" blue crayons or pencils. Test your colors with your filter material to determine the optimal shade. Purchase or have on-hand enough crayons or pencils that work best with your red filter material.
- Masking tape
- Sheets of copy paper for students to create their "Encoded Good News Drawing"
- Whiteboard or easel with marker

## Lesson Plan

### Opening ~ Nametag Activity

**As each student arrives, have them create their own nametag using a pre-printed ["Jesus Sees and Loves Me" nametag](#).** Students add their name in BLUE, and then draw RED hash marks across the entire nametag—not a solid section, just enough lines to obscure the blue writing. Have them use their red filter decoder to test how many hash marks are enough to obscure their name and message without over-doing it. When done, fix the nametag on their clothing with masking tape—leaving the red filter separate.

**Following the nametag activity, welcome everyone** and explain what you hope they will learn today—that Jesus sees us with loving eyes and accepts us into his family, and that Jesus also wants us to look on others with his eyes. We will be using our red "decoders" to see the Good News of Jesus.

Once they have made their nametag, go around the room and **have everyone introduce themselves** by putting their red filter decoder over their nametag and reading it out loud. (The words are: My name is \_\_\_ and Jesus sees and loves me.)

**Ask** them if they've ever heard the story of Zaccheus and invite them to tell as much of it as they can. **Make sure** to include the part of the story where the crowd "grumbles"—accusing Zaccheus of being a sinner whom Jesus should not be spending time with.

**Ask and Do:** What kinds of grumbly things do people say to other people to make them feel bad, unworthy, unloved, unwanted, or like an outsider? (*You're a jerk, you're ugly, you are stupid, you are no good, you're too little, nobody likes you, you're a bad person, etc.*)

As they answer this question, draw their words **IN RED** over the top of an extra blank "blue" nametag. (This step visually connects the Bible story to the nametag activity.) Add the word, "SINNER" in red.

**Now make this important point:** We live in a world full of things that try to block our view of God and block us from doing what God wants. Just like the crowd blocked Zaccheus' view and put him down, we live in a world full of distractions and people trying to tell us Jesus isn't worthy of looking for, or that we are not worthy of Jesus' attention because we are sinners; that we are "unacceptable" to God or not worthy of being part of his family. It gets worse when we start to believe that about ourselves; when we start to believe we are unworthy and unloved. But as we will learn today in Zaccheus' story when we get **ABOVE** the crowd—the distractions and wrong ideas about God—we realize that Jesus sees us as beloved children of God and that Jesus wants us to treat other people with that same love and acceptance.

Let your students use their red filter decoders to see the blue "Jesus Sees Me" message hidden behind all the "red" negative comments you wrote on the nametag.

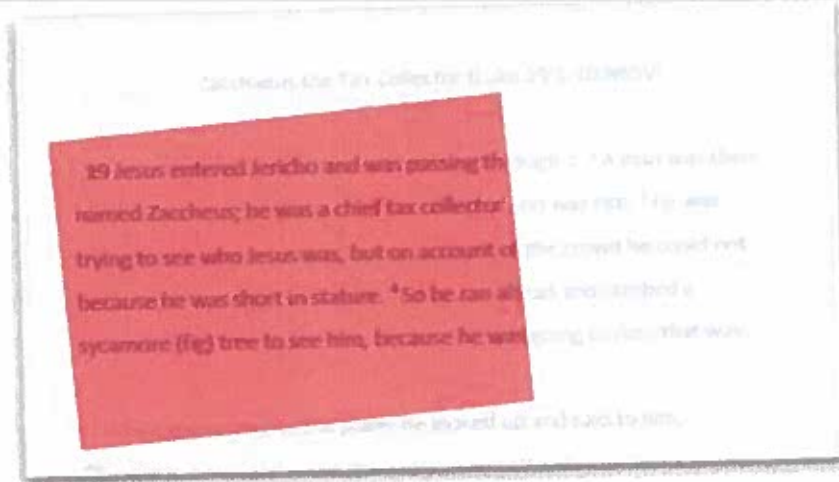


## Decoding and Reading "Blue" Luke 19:1-10

**Give each student a copy of the "Blue" Luke 19:1-10 scripture handout.**

Ask your students to share some excuses why people don't read the Bible or why they don't follow Jesus. (These can include "not enough time," "don't own one," "don't think he's important.") As answers are offered, write them **IN RED** over the top of a "Blue Luke" handout. Show how using a red filter decoder cancels out these excuses. ***Jesus can help us "see," read, and obey God's word, telling us to "love others," and "go to Sunday School to learn more about Jesus!"*** 🙏





The Luke 19 Blue Handout

Have students use their red filter to "decode"/read the scripture passage together, then ask the following questions.

1. **How do you think Zaccheus felt not being able to see through the crowd?** (Do you think the crowd was trying to exclude him? Why? and has that ever happened to you?) Note that "the crowd" was "obscuring" Zaccheus' attempt to meet Jesus—just like our red crayon/pencil obscures the story on our paper.
2. **What was Zaccheus hoping to "see" when he climbed the tree to look for Jesus?** (An answer to prayer? Someone who could save him from his sins? Maybe he didn't know, but something inside of him was pulling him toward God? Have you ever felt the "pull of God" ...the desire to know more about him, to have more faith, to be a better person? What are some ways you can respond to this desire to know Jesus? What "trees" can you climb!)
3. **What did the CROWD and Zaccheus learn that day about Jesus, his mission, and his heart?** (verses 9-10)

### Main Activity:

#### Drawing the "Blue" Good News obscured by the "Red" Crowd Message

Students will first create a blue drawing expressing with words and images the good news of acceptance found in Zaccheus' story. Then using red, they will draw over and around the blue message to obscure/block the good news just like the crowd did and said that day in Jericho. Once everyone is done with their drawing, they'll let other students "decode" it with their red filters and describe the message they drew, and learn how to share the message at home with their family and friends. The "nametag" activity at the beginning of this lesson previewed some of the concepts that you can use in creating the blue and red messages. Below are more suggestions for words and images. We have also attached a printable [Word List](#) which can serve as suggestions and talking points.

To begin, draw a blue message on the board for all to see—discussing what "blue" good news words and images might be used.

Discuss ways to draw ideas like "love" and "sins" (hearts, frowny/angry faces, etc.) See the suggestions below. As they begin to create, invite students to see what other students are doing. Encourage them to share and borrow ideas. Make sure that they know that "starting over" is perfectly acceptable in God's Kingdom!

Have students work on their blue "good news" messages first and hopefully finish at the same time. If some are not done with their blue messages when the group is ready to move on to the red message, have them pause their blue drawing and return to it after they hear about the red message they will also need to draw.

Begin discussing and drawing the red "obscuring" messages, connected them to the Zaccheus story, and suggesting various words and images that could be included (see below).

### BLUE Good News Message/Image Suggestions:

- Words from the story that express the "good news" Jesus had come to share.
- Jesus and Zaccheus happy at home together.
- Jesus welcoming Zaccheus and others into the family of God.
- Hallelujahs and thanksgivings Zaccheus might have said to Jesus about being welcomed into God's family.
- Jesus "crossing out" all the judgmental and bad things people say about others and God.
- *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."*
- A picture of Zaccheus' face when Jesus accepted him. A picture of your face when you learn that Jesus accepts you!
- An image or word about how you feel about being included in God's family.
- A blue tree with you up in it and Jesus welcoming you into his family.

Create this message in blue on your paper by writing words and drawing images. You can draw images and characters from the story (such as Jesus, Zaccheus, and the tree) and symbols (such as hearts). You can caption your drawing or add "talk bubbles" to express ideas or dialog from the story.

### RED "Bad News" Message/Image Suggestions:

- Words people say that make you feel small, unworthy, unloved, unappreciated, left out, sad.
- Faces: Angry faces yelling at sad faces. Angry Jesus. Lightning Bolt God punishing sinners. Upset Zaccheus.
- A locked lock. A broken heart.
- How "small" you feel when people put you down and make you feel lonely or unwanted.
- The things people say about God (or that you used to believe) that made you want to NOT look for him or talk to him.
- Words that people say, making others afraid of God or not believing in God.
- The things people say to put down going to church, going to Sunday School.
- Sin like a huge weight squishing you.

**Reminder:** There's a [printable Word list](#) of good news and bad news words and phrases attached to this lesson. You can share this with your students. 🙏

## Closing

**Close** by having each student share their blue/red message by passing it around so others can "decode" it.

Ask students to explain in two or three simple sentences how the blue and red messages describe the messages found in the Zaccheus story.

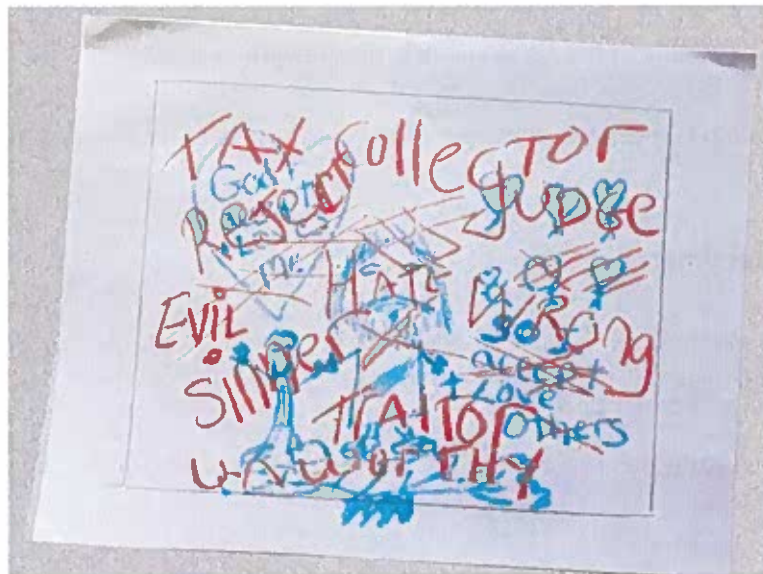
Have students do a **"laying on of hands" prayer** over the Messages, with each student expressing gratitude for Jesus and his good news.

Remind them to take their drawing and red filter home. If possible, let them take red and blue drawing supplies home with them.

### Blue/Red Drawing Tips:

Use "light blue" or "sky blue" crayons or pencils, not regular or dark blue.

Do not densely color over the top of your blue drawing with too much red. Rather, draw some words or images "around" the blue drawing and lightly over the top of the blue so as to "visually obscure" the blue without covering it with too much red. Add lines and shapes to fill in. The goal is to create "just enough" red visual confusion over and around the blue so that the blue words and images are not easily seen until you use the red filter.



Do not use markers because your blue and red colors will "mix" to purple and the red filter will then show the purple as black instead of hiding it, thus ruining your drawing's clarity and message.

Experiment on scrap paper with different shades of red and blue crayons/pencils, and how much color to apply or overlap. The "shade" of your red filter needs to closely match the red pencil or crayon you are using. Experiment!

## Adaptations

### For younger students or students new to English:

Use the [Zaccheus Story Card Illustrations](#), pages 2-10, along with your reading. (These story cards were created for other lessons in this set.) Or use a storybook version.

Teach them how to read the important basic message found on the nametags: "Jesus Sees and Love Me."

Come up with more visuals rather than words, to express the suggested blue and red messages they are to draw on their Good News Drawing.

### For older students:

Have them discuss deeper the various words and phrases on the printable [Word List](#) for the Good News drawing.

### For At-Home Use or Shorter Lesson Plan:

Skip the nametag activity and use the explanation of its meaning in the "Encoded Good News Drawing" activity.

Skip the marking up of a copy of the "Blue" Luke scripture with excuses.

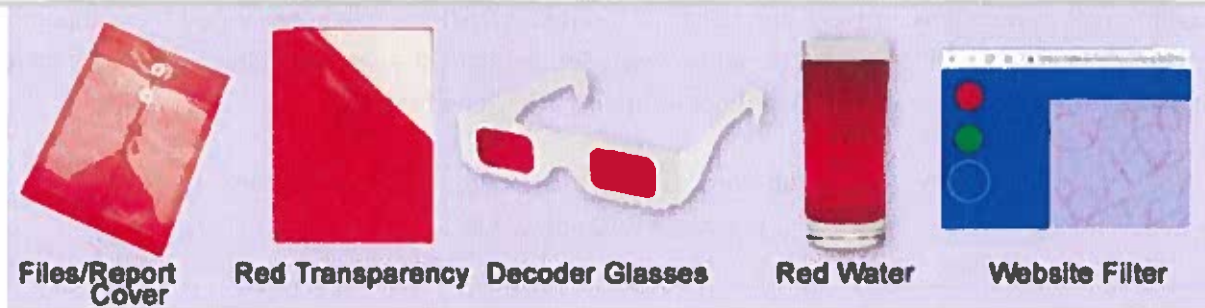
To create their "Encoded Good News Drawing" offer more suggestions of words and phrases by using the ["Word List."](#)

### For those with more class time:

Have the students make their own Jesus Eyeglasses using various printable "eyeglass" templates found online or of their own creation, or decorate purchased "red decoder glasses."

Take more time to have the kids brainstorm lists of words and images for the "Encoded Good News Drawing."

Make more than one drawing to decode, using different ideas about "what blocks or keeps people from faith in Christ."



## Red Filter Options

### Make your own "Jesus Decoder Eyeglasses"

Here are instructions for making a paper frame set of eyeglasses into which you can glue or tape your red filter material: <https://www.firstpalette.com/c...aper-eyeglasses.html> Alternately, you can replace the lenses of old eyeglasses or sunglasses with red plastic. For glasses, only use actual red transparent filter "film"—the kind you buy online or in a hobby store. Plastic cellophane and report covers typically aren't clear enough for eyeglasses. Making your own eyeglasses will take a lot of extra time.

### Red Transparent Film/Filters

Hobby sheets of "red plastic filter" material are inexpensively available on Amazon and hobby stores. These can be cut and used "as is" or glued/taped to a cardboard frame of your own making. You'll need approximately 4" squares for each student. The frame can be labeled with the Luke 19:9-10 memory verse.

### Red Decoder Glasses

Search online or Amazon for "decoder glasses red lenses." Not too expensive. An easy solution for those who want to save time and those with larger groups. Consider labeling them with a slogan, such as "Seeing As Jesus Sees" and adding the memory verse.

### Red Cellophane

Sold in stores in the gift wrap section. It can be an inexpensive source of red filter if the plastic is true red and relatively transparent. Because it easily tears, you will want to tape or glue a simple cardboard frame around it. Some "light red" cellophane shades don't do a good job of hiding darker reds so you may need to double layer the cellophane.

### Clear Red Plastic Report Covers

Sold at Walmart, office supply stores. Sturdy, strong color hides reds, doesn't need a frame, can be cut into shapes. Don't use plastic that's not clear or is off-red.

### Jar of Water with Red Food Coloring.

Make your own decoder using a clear wide glass or jar that you fill with water and red food coloring until the water matches the red in your message. Looking down through a glass or a jar with clear bottom works best. This is a cheap and easy solution if you have the right kind of glass. It's also easy to adjust the amount of red coloring to match your drawing shades.

### Laptop or Cellphone Solution

The following website can apply a red or blue filter to whatever you hold up to your computer or

cellphone's camera lens: <https://cdpn.io/danwilson/debug/zpZPJm>. Test in advance if the webpage's code works on your cellphone's internet browser. For example, the webpage filter code works on an iPhone running Safari, but not on an iPhone running a Chrome browser.

Written by Sharon Hamilton and the Rotation.org Writing Team  
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After you have used this lesson, **come back and post a reply** telling everyone how it went, or what you changed. Share photos!  
Prefer to comment privately? [Email us](#).

 Attachments

Hide 

Images (7)



Files (3)

[JesusSeesMe-Nametags.pdf](#)

[LUKE-SCRIPTURE-IN-BLUE.pdf](#)

[Word-List-Encoded-Good-News-Drawing.pdf](#)

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## (WT) Jesus and Zaccheus Software Workshop Lesson 🔔



**The Writing Team** ○ 👤 Fortifying our Supporting Members

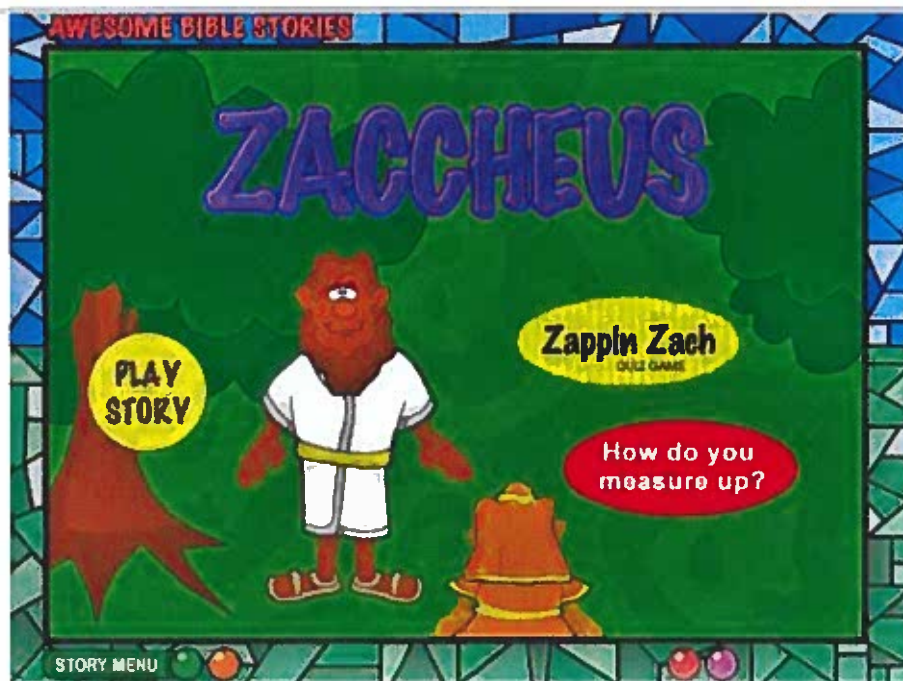
Rotation.org Writing Team

### Jesus and Zaccheus Software Workshop Lesson

*for in-class or at-home use*

#### Summary of Activities

Students will play through the Story of Zaccheus as presented in Sunday Software's [Awesome Bible Stories software](#) – a [free download](#) for the Supporting Members of Rotation.org and the families in their congregations.



This lesson has been written for "at-home" use with a parent as a guide, or for a Sunday School classroom where the teacher leads students through the software on one or more PCs. Permission is granted to download and install the software on as many computers as needed either within the church or among the families of a Supporting Member's congregation.

## Scripture for the Lesson

**Luke 18:15-42** – Jesus blesses the children, Jesus sends a rich man away, Jesus restores sight to a blind man.

**Luke 19:1-10** – The story of Zaccheus – a rich man looking for Jesus who is restored to the family of God and invited into Jesus' Kingdom.

**Key/Memory Verses:** *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."* (Luke 19:9-10, NRSV)

★ *This software lesson is the only one in the Writing Team's Zaccheus lesson set that **begins the lesson with narration about the people Jesus encounters in Luke 18** when Jesus is on his way to Jericho. He encounters children to bless, a rich man who walks away, and a blind man whom he heals. **These short vignettes in Luke 18 are thematically related to the story of Zaccheus in Luke 19.** With the blessing of the children, Jesus is telling others the kind of spirit they need to enter God's Kingdom. He sends away the rich man who covets his wealth (a stark contrast to Zaccheus who offers his). He restores sight to the blind man, invites Zaccheus the one who climbed up to see him, and addresses the crowd's "blindness" to his mission, which is "to seek and save the lost."*

## Lesson Objectives

See the **Bible Background** at Rotation.org for insights and this set's complete list of objectives.

## Preparation and Materials

- Read the Bible Background and scripture.



- Print the attached "Butterfly Notes" PDF to give the teacher a heads-up about what's in the interactive notes and questions found in the program.
- If needed, print the Guide to Awesome Bible Stories. It includes a tech note about how to make the program fill more of your screen.
- Print and share the "Teaching with Software" pamphlet.
- Preview the software and its functions. See the Navigational and Tech Notes below.
- Have a whiteboard (or drawing paper) ready. Write "Jesus" at the top and draw a vertical arrow pointing to Jesus. (See picture below.)
- A cloth tape measure

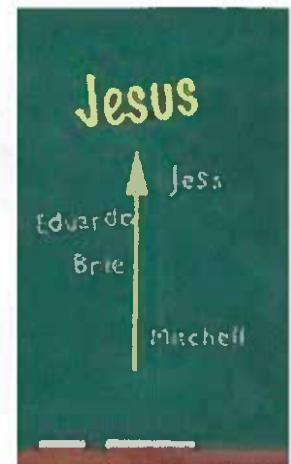
## Lesson Plan

### Opening

Welcome students and explain what they'll be doing and learning today.

Invite them to write their name somewhere along the vertical line that you've drawn on the whiteboard (or on a piece of paper). Have them choose a location on the line that's closer or farther away from Jesus depending on **"how well they think they are doing following Jesus."**

Tell them that they will return to this "line activity" at the end of the lesson, once they have learned some very important information.



### Play the Story

Start the Awesome Bible Stories software, then navigate to the Zaccheus option. Click "Play the Story" and advance through the story.

At the end of the story on screen, click the butterflies to open up a discussion question panels. Read and respond. Copies of what's in each of the five butterfly panels can be found in the [printable Butterfly Notes PDF](#).

*The interactive story is your scripture reading for this lesson.*

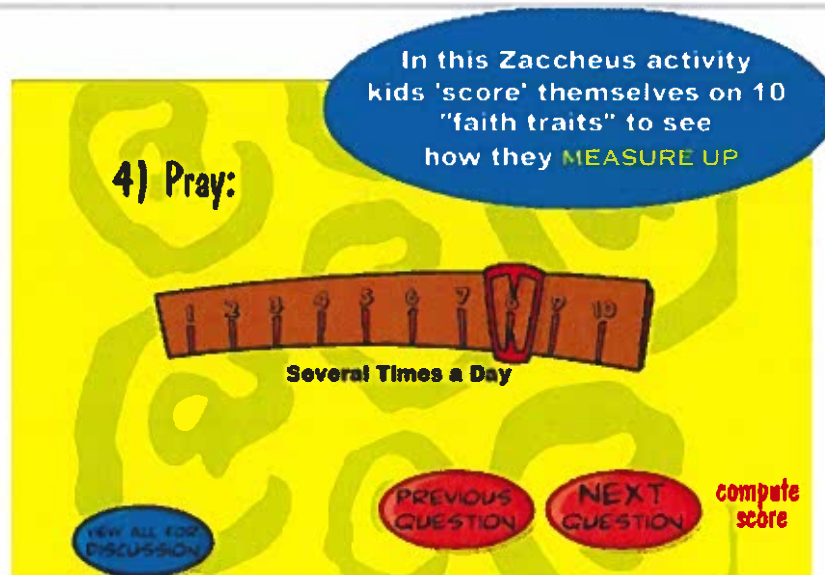
### Play the Zappin Zach story memory game

In this game, a question is asked, and then students "zap" the two *wrong* answers that float down out of the tree, letting the correct answer land safely. There are 14 questions. Take turns playing.

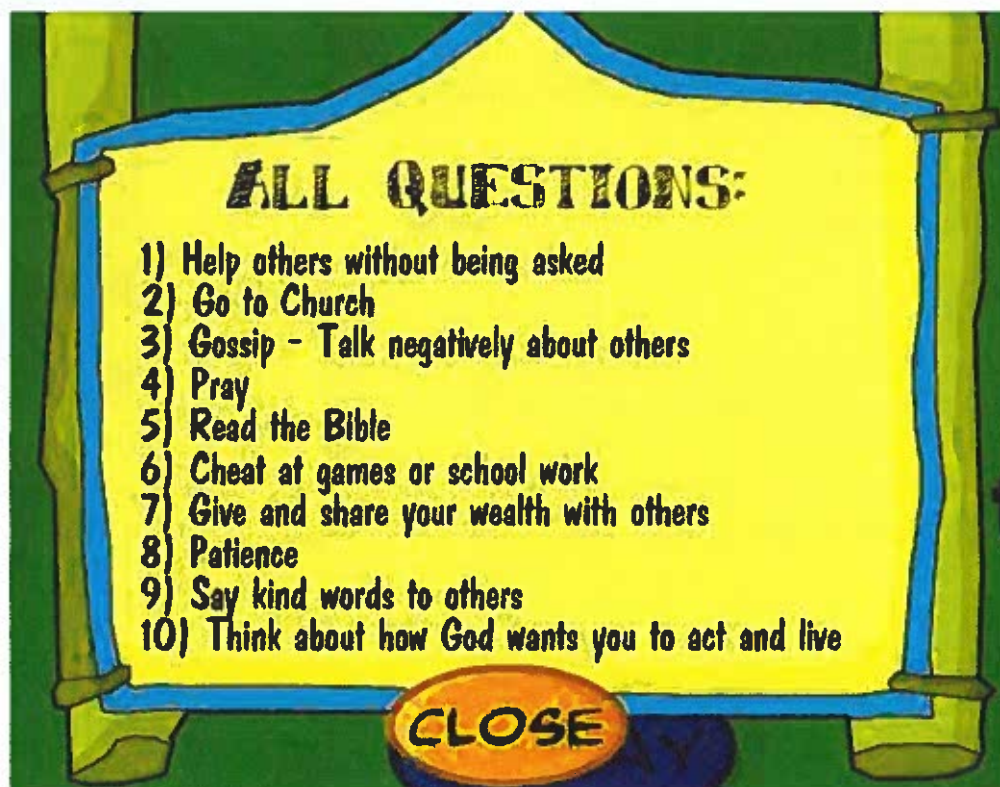
### Play the "How Do You Measure Up?" life application activity

**Click the green Story Options button to play the "How Do You Measure Up?" game.**

This section presents a series of good things Jesus wants you to do, against which you measure yourself by selecting how well/often you do those things. The questions are presented together on the last screen when you get your "score."



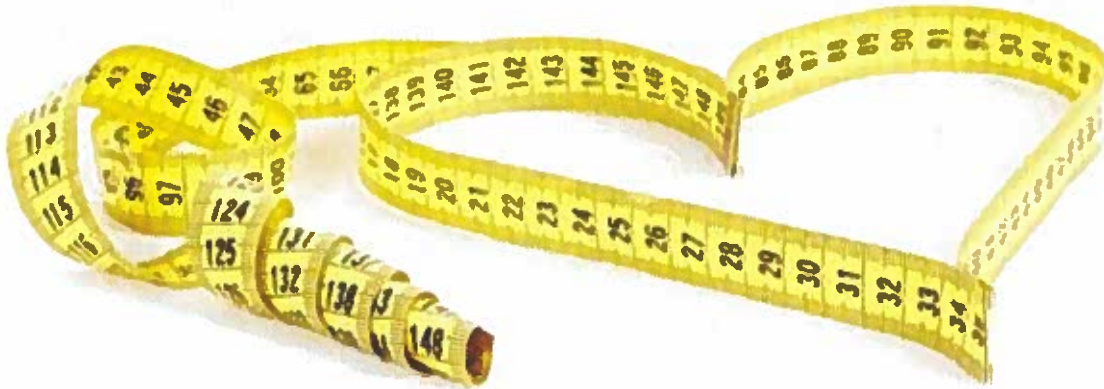
Note: We don't know how Zaccheus's life changed after meeting Christ and welcoming him into his home, but it's a great discussion to be had! The "Measure Up" activity suggests a number of things that a disciple would want to do and/or improve in their life.



### Return to the "line activity done at the start of class

Write "Jesus" NEXT TO every student's name, pointing out that while it's good to see how well you are following Jesus or "being like Jesus," that Jesus doesn't choose or reject you based on how good YOU are, or how "close" you think you are to him, or what other people think about you! Rather, Jesus chooses us to be in his family based on his LOVE for us. Jesus came to find us and save us knowing that none of us is perfect or "good enough" to deserve to be part of his kingdom (his family). Jesus includes us anyway, as an act of love. Therefore, we too should treat others as part of God's family.

**Close with a prayer** thanking Jesus for seeking us and making us part of his family. Ask Jesus to help you do a better job of "measuring up" to being the kind of person he wants you to be—knowing we have already been "measured" by his love for us. (Tip: To emphasize this point, form a tape measure in the shape of a heart.)



## Adaptations

### For Non-Readers:

*Help them click the flying Butterflies during the story. Using the [Butterfly Notes PDF](#), pick those butterfly notes you want to follow up on or skip.*

*Zappin Zach Game - let non-readers click the spacebar to select the two wrong answers that you are pointing to using the keyboard arrow keys.*

### For those with more class time and for Older Students:

Ask: What kinds of spiritual and moral behaviors are not included on the "How Do You Measure Up?" list?

Note that the "behaviors" do not exactly equate to a person's strength of "faith" or "belief." Think about Zaccheus that day and how little he knew about Jesus, and yet he "measured up" to Jesus as one deserving of acceptance and salvation. What does that say about "measuring faith" versus "measuring your worthiness in God's eyes for salvation"?

### For At-Home Use or Shorter/Simpler lesson plan:

Consider skipping the opening "line activity." Pick which "Butterfly" question panels you want to talk about at the end of the story.

See the follow-up post for a link to Jericho in Google Earth and discussion suggestions.

## Technical and Navigational Notes:

To make the program's window fill more of your screen, adjust your Windows "scaling" display option. Read the AdjustingDisplaySizes.PDF which is part of the download.

Clicking the "Butterfly Notes" during the story isn't easy. Anticipate and aim for the center of a butterfly! To exit the Butterfly Further Study screen, click the green Story Menu button.

**When you first enter the program**, after the Intro click the NEXT button until you reach the Zaccheus story, then click Play Story. This will open the Story Menu. Click the PLAY STORY option first and work through the story. When you reach the end of the story, click the green Story Menu button to go to the Zappin Zach game menu. After playing the Zappin Zach Game, return to the green Story Menu button and click the "Measure Up" game option.

Written by Neil Macqueen, Luanne Payne, and the Rotation.org Writing Team

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 Attachments

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Files (1)

[Zaccheus Butterfly Notes.pdf](#)

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**The Writing Team**  Fortifying our Supporting Members

**Especially for At-Home Follow-up**

## A Google Earth Tour of Ancient and Modern Jericho

<https://earth.google.com/web/search/ancient+Jericho>

Attached to this post are several reference maps we've created using Google Earth.

Modern Jericho is much bigger than it was in Zaccheus' day, in part due to modern agricultural methods and the presence of Palestinian refugee camps on its borders. As you can see by the linked Google map and images below, Jericho in the time of Zaccheus and Jesus was also much bigger than it was in the Old Testament time of Joshua (circa 1400 B.C.). That means "ancient" Jericho was already in ruins when Jesus and Zaccheus would have seen it. Read more about Jericho in our [Zaccheus Bible Background](#).

### Things to look for on the Google Earth map:

**Look for "Tel Jericho"** the brown hills at the southern tip of the Ein Al Sutan refugee camp marked on Google Earth. "Tel" is the Hebrew word for "mound or hill." (In Arabic it is spelled "Tal.") For reference, look at the map marker for the cable car tourist attraction which goes over the ruins. Click the "street view" icon and click the road that goes by the ruins to see what the ruins of Jericho look like today (also pictured below). **Question:** What "lesson" or meaning do you think Jesus and Zaccheus would have taken away from a visit to these ruins?

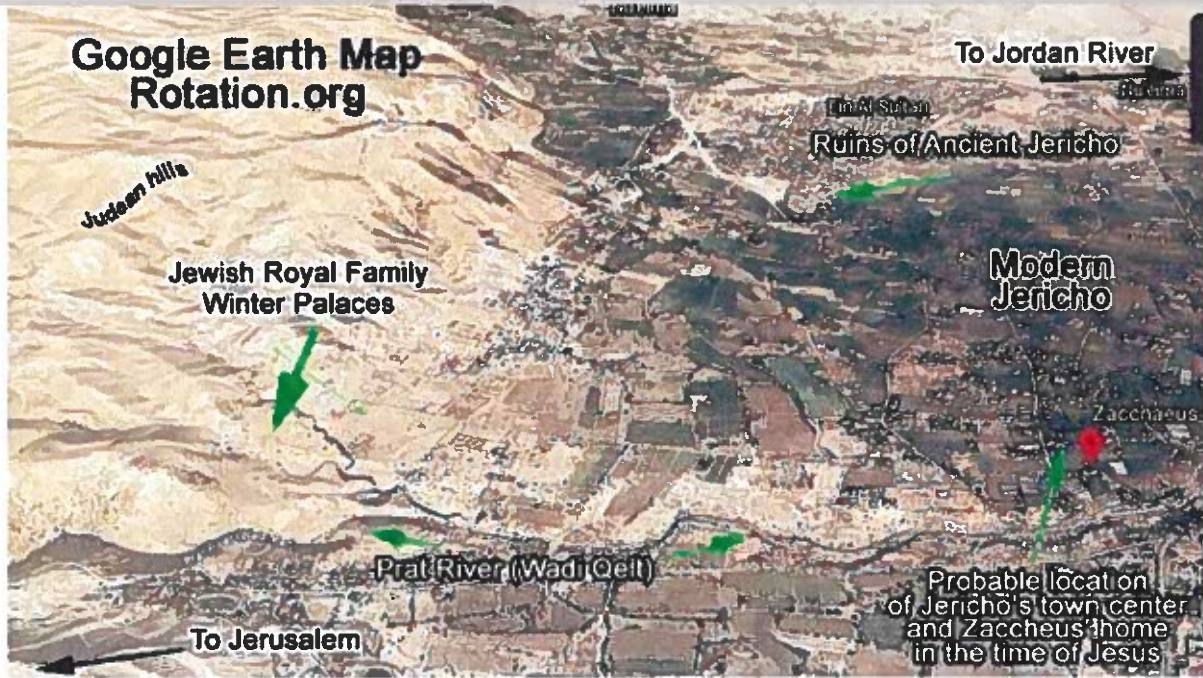
**Look for the "Wadi Kelt"** (also spelled "Qelt") and otherwise known as the River Prat which comes out of the Judean highlands and crosses Jericho. This area of Jericho is the historic agricultural part of Jericho and the town center. Many springs dot the area. It is very likely that wealthy Zaccheus lived in this "green" area. The Jewish royal family had winter palaces up in the hills above the Wadi. By the time of Jesus, the Romans had appointed a governor to rule the region around Jerusalem. One of them was named Pilate, and it is very likely Zaccheus—who also worked for the Romans—had met him.

**Question:** How do you think Zaccheus reacted to news of Jesus' death at the hands of his boss, Pontius Pilate?

**Look for the site of Jesus Baptism on the Jordan River.** Notice how close it is to Jericho. Read [Luke 3:1-22](#) which describes John baptizing people there, including tax collectors and Jesus! **Question:** Zaccheus had no doubt heard about John baptizing Jews (including tax collectors) in the Jordan River. Do you think Zaccheus was one of them? Why or why not?

**Zoom out and look at various points along the Road to Jericho/Jerusalem.** Click the "person walking" icon to highlight the road, then click points on the road to go to the "Road View" for close-up views of what the journey looks like today. This was the road Jesus walked after visting with Zaccheus, and the dangerous road on which the parable of the "Good Samaritan" is set. **Question:** How many people do you think Jesus encountered along this road and what do you think he might have said to them? What road in your area would you be most likely to encounter Jesus walking today?

Click to enlarge:



Above: Tel Jericho, the ruins of "ancient" Jericho from Joshua's time.



The arrow above points to the "street view" icon.



The road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Attachments

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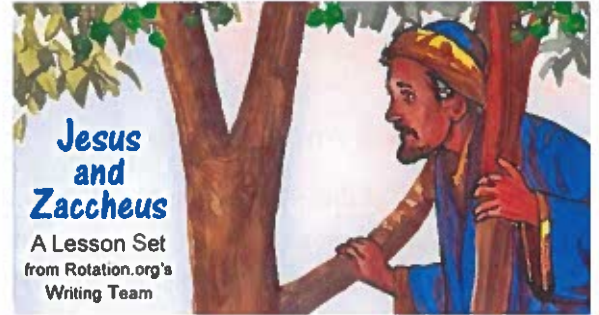


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 / Writing Team Lesson Set: Jesus and Zaccheus  
 / (WT) Jesus and Zaccheus Bible Skills and Games Workshop Lesson

### Welcome to the Jesus and Zaccheus Lesson Set!

Everyone can read the Luke 19:1-10 [Bible Background](#) and the [Lesson Summaries](#). The lesson plans themselves are open to our amazing Supporting Members who make this site possible. Join today 🙌😊

The lessons in this set have been written for both **at-home** and **in-class** use. They are broadly-graded and have age and class size adaptations.



Open to Supporting Members

## (WT) Jesus and Zaccheus Bible Skills and Games Workshop Lesson 🔔



**The Writing Team** ○ 👤 Fortifying our Supporting Members

Rotation.org Writing Team

### Jesus and Zaccheus

### "Challenge to Change" Bible Games Workshop

#### Summary of Activities

Students will play two games to learn about and reflect on the unconditional love of Jesus that Zaccheus' story illustrates and consider ways to display that love to others.

**Game 1: The "Seeking Jesus" Challenge** – a story-themed race with obstacles.

**Game 2: "Sharing the Surprising News"** – pass messages about the story and be more like Jesus.

The outline of this lesson uses a unique learning progression: **Discover** the love of Jesus, **Develop** a passion for the Word, and **Display** his love to others. Learn more about the "3D's" in the endnotes.

#### Scripture for the Lesson

**Luke 19:1-10**

**Key/Memory Verses:** *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."* (Luke 19:9-10, NRSV)

## Lesson Objectives

See the **Bible Background** at Rotation.org for insights and this set's complete list of objectives.

Students should understand that Jesus loved and accepted Zaccheus when no one else would. Zaccheus had a change of heart when he experienced that love. Jesus did not love him because he changed. Zaccheus changed because he realized Jesus loved him.

## Preparation and Materials

- Read the Bible Background and scripture.
- **Print at least two copies of the Zaccheus story cards**, pages 2-10 (attached to this lesson at rotation.org). See the lesson note below about how many copies of the story illustration cards you should print; it is dependent on the number of students you'll have.
- Print pages 1 and 12 of the **Zaccheus story cards** for the teacher's use.
- Gather a variety of shapeable materials for the name-building activity such as pipe cleaners, Play-Doh, or aluminum foil.
- Sheets of paper to lay their name-creations on
- Items for "Seeking Jesus" challenge games:
  - Clothes for Explorer game—vest or backpack, Bible, jacket, hat, binoculars, boots, etc.
  - Bean bags or similar items to toss (such as small pillows, plush animals, rolled socks)
  - 6-foot play tunnel (or tunnel made out of blankets or cardboard)
  - A "tree" made using a 6-foot step ladder or similar construction
  - A bucket to attach to the "tree"
  - Tape to mark a "toss from here" line on the floor
  - Timer (such as one found on your cellphone)
  - Whiteboard or easel, and markers (optional)

## Lesson Plan

### Opening ~ Discover the Love

**Welcome** each child as they enter and direct them to "write" their name by shaping it with the materials you've collected (pipe cleaners, Play-Doh, etc.). Invite those who finish early to help late-arrivers catch up. Create a shaped name for yourself.



**Once everyone has shaped their names**, begin the lesson by having everyone share their name and creation, then move their name-creations out of reach while you **read the Bible story** using the following "game" approach.

**Distribute the Zaccheus story cards among your students.** If you have only a few students, print a packet of cards for each student. If you have more than four or five students, divide up two or three packets of story cards among them. Explain that they are **to lift up the story illustration**

**that they think represents what they're hearing as you slowly read the scripture.** Point out the correct illustration after they have raised theirs and continue reading.



## Reshape Your Name

Present your own name-creation and slowly begin to smooch and then reform your name (invite others to as well) as you share the following thoughts:

**Share this statement:** When a person sins—when you are mean or lie or hurt others, when you are dishonest and things you do don't honor God, your sins begin to ruin what other people think of you—they ruin your reputation. And eventually, your sins begin to ruin your OWN opinion of yourself! They make you feel bad about yourself and your life, and you start to believe you are not worthy of God's love.

That's what happened in our Bible story today. People in the town of Jericho thought Zaccheus was a terrible sinner and unworthy of God's love. *(Your Play-Doh should be smooched by now. INVITE your students to lightly deform their names as well.)*

And then one day Jesus comes to town, sees Zaccheus up in a tree, and says "Come down Zaccheus, I want to go to your house! Salvation has come to you today!" *(Begin to reform your name and have them do the same with their name. If someone needs help, that too is a teaching point!)*



**Continue Sharing:** That's what Jesus does for all of us. Jesus accepts and saves us even though we are sinners. No matter what we have done, or what other people think about us, OR what we think of ourselves—to Jesus we are all God's beloved children.

And that love not only **RESTORES** us to God's family and RESTORES our feeling of self-worth—when you believe in Jesus, his love begins to **RESHAPE** who you are, making you more loving and more accepting of others just like he has loved and accepted you.

**Ask:** What do you think SOME people in the crowd that day started to think about Zaccheus when they heard Jesus call him a "saved son of Abraham?" (Yes, Zaccheus probably wasn't the only person whose outlook on life began to change that day!)

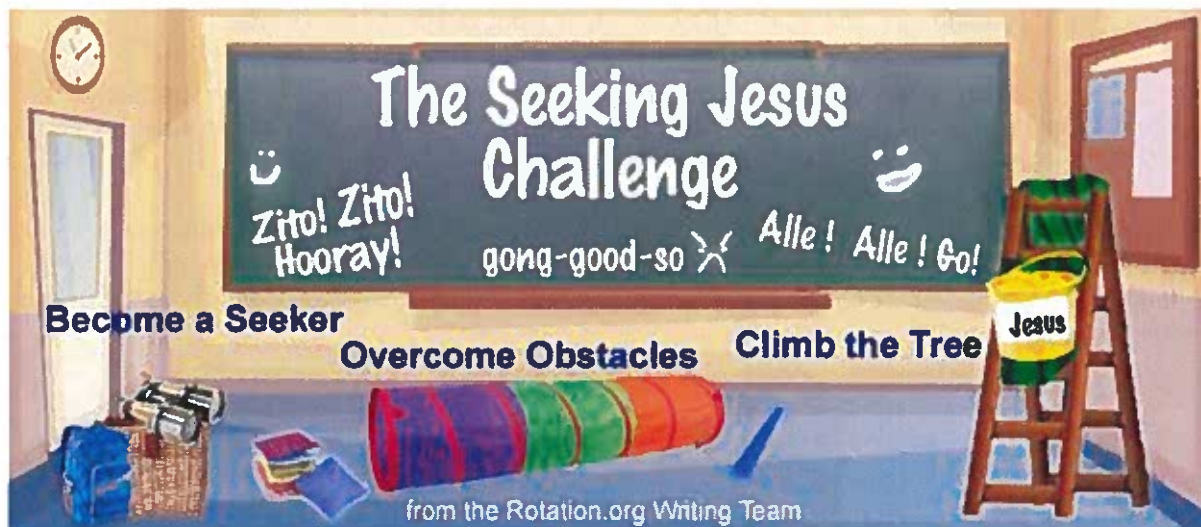
**Say:** Let's play some games to remember this terrific story and its good news.

## Game 1: The "Seeking Jesus" Challenge ~ Develop the Passion

**Intro to the Seeking Jesus Game:** In this game, each player will become Zaccheus preparing to go see Jesus, struggling around obstacles, and "climbing" to see Jesus. Players will run the challenge and be timed. Bonus points are to be awarded for enthusiasm and bravery!

**Note to teacher:** *Form into teams of at least two players to take the pressure off individual student performance. Keep "time" but also award random bonuses for "valiant attempts," "precision," and "attitude" as needed to keep it fun and relatively non-competitive. Adjust the level of difficulty and "rules" as needed. Demonstrate each station ahead of time.*

*See game options and "adaptations" at the end of this lesson.*



### How to Play the Seeking Jesus Challenge:

On "GO!" one student races to put on the "explorer" clothes and objects found in a basket at the first station. There they must also gather up beanbags (or other small soft objects), then race through a "tunnel" of obstacles blocking their path and arrive at Zaccheus' TREE. When you arrive at the tree, you have to get your beanbags "up" into the tree (the bucket) by standing behind a line on the floor and tossing the beanbags into the bucket. When all your beanbags are in the bucket, time stops, and the player puts their explorer clothing back in the basket for the next player or team's turn.

- While putting on the explorer clothes we will be cheering you on using a word that Zaccheus and Jesus would have understood: **Alle !!** (pronounced: "all-lay") which is the Old Testament Hebrew word for "praise." At sporting events, it is chanted meaning "Go! Go!"
- When you are crawling through the tunnel and getting around the obstacles, we will be grumbling at you using the funny word Luke wrote in the story: "**Gong-good-so**" which means "grumble, grumble."
- When you get all your beanbags in the bucket, we'll cheer you with the Greek word for "hooray" which is **Zito !!** (pronounced: "zee-tow") Jesus and Zaccheus would have known this word too!

**After everyone has played the Seeking Jesus Challenge, ask these 3 questions:**

1. What's your biggest obstacle or challenge to:

- reading your Bible?
- climbing the "tree" of Sunday School more regularly to see Jesus?
- accepting and being nicer to other people?

2. What sorts of things can help a person "climb up" (or "do") to see and hear Jesus in their life?

3. How helpful was it to hear everyone cheering? How are Sunday School and church like a "family cheering section" for your faith?

## Game 2: The "Sharing the Surprising News" ~ Display/Share the Love

**How to Play:** Arrange students in a row for a game like the "telephone" gossip game where a statement is passed down the line by whispering it into the ear of the person next to you. You'll need at least four people in a row to make it work. Create two or more "teams" if needed adding helpers to balance things out. If children have a hard time whispering softly, have the team members stand 5 feet apart so they don't overhear the whispered message until it's their turn to receive it. Have the last person repeat the message out loud. If they received a garbled message, decide if you want to restart the message with the first person. The repetition in the game is the learning device!



**Say:** Sometimes we hear things that are surprising or even hard to believe. In our story, there were several things that the crowd and Zaccheus heard that probably surprised them. I'm going to speak some of these surprises to the first person in your row/team, and they in-turn will whisper it to the next. See if you can accurately pass on what you hear.

### 1. Here comes the first surprise!

Pass the whisper: "Jesus wanted to go to the sinner's home."

When all the teams are done, have the last person to receive it speak it out loud.

**Ask:** Why was it a surprise to the people that Jesus would care about sinners?

How do you treat your friends and family members when THEY sin and make mistakes?

### 2. Here comes the second surprise!

Pass the whisper: "Jesus knew Zaccheus' name and told him that he was part of God's family."

When all the teams are done, have the last person to receive it speak it out loud.

**Ask:** Do you think Jesus knows your name? Did you know that you too are part of God's family just like Zaccheus was? How does it feel? How do we show others that they too are part of God's family, even if they didn't know it?

### 3. Here comes the third surprise!

Pass the whisper: "Zaccheus was willing to give up a lot of his money."

When all the teams are done have the last person to receive it speak it out loud.

**Ask:** When Zaccheus said he "gives half" of all his money to help others, and was willing to repay anyone he may have cheated, was he being grateful to Jesus? Or was he trying to "bribe" or make Jesus accept him? Or did he want to show that he wanted to change his life? (When we come to worship and learn about Jesus, it shows our heart too.)

### 4. Final Message Lightning Round!

*If you have two teams/rows, make this a competition to see which team/row can most completely transmit the following sayings. Award a point for each "most" correct transmission (doing so will help team members stay focused on doing it right). Add a teaching comment after each "final message" before moving on to the next.*

**Say:** I'm now going to whisper to you several things that this story teaches us. Do your best to transmit each message correctly.

#### ***Here we go!***

1. We are all sinners in need of Jesus' acceptance and love.
2. We need to stop "Gong-good-so-ing" about other people's problems and mistakes.
3. Kindness and acceptance are rich gifts everyone can afford to give.
4. Jesus wants to go home to your house today and change your life.

**Closing Prayer:** Jesus, thank you for loving us no matter what. Please guide us as we try to be more like you in all that we say and do. And never let us forget that we are part of your beloved family forever. Amen

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## Adaptations

### Seeking Jesus Challenge Game Options and Adaptations

If you don't have a play tunnel you can substitute cardboard boxes or a "blanket fort" to crawl through. For added "obstacles" or difficulty, have a teacher with a pillow try to block the students from getting from the tunnel to the beanbag line, or make the students crawl through the tunnel on their back.

If you have a small group that needs more of a challenge, place three beanbags at the entrance to the tunnel but only allow them to carry one bean bag at a time through the tunnel to toss it into the tree-bucket. Then they have to scramble back to get the next bean bag and so on.

If you have a safe manner in which to climb up something that represents the "tree," such as an outdoor climbing gym, go ahead and substitute a literal "climbing" activity or apparatus. (In our "indoor" version of the game, tossing the bean bags into a bucket on top of a ladder is your "tree.")

Students can carry the beanbags in their backpacks and toss them from the "tree" into a bucket on the ground that's marked "Jesus."

### For Younger Students:

- For the name activity: If needed, write the student's name in big letters on a piece of paper and have them shape Play-Doh following the lines of their name.
- Use a big bucket in the Seeking Jesus Game.
- Shorten the phrases in the "Sharing the Message" Game.
- If you have time, close with a reading of the book: [Ordinary Mary's Positively Extraordinary Day](#), about a young girl who inspires others with positivity and kindness through a variety of ordinary deeds!

### For Older Students:

Make them crawl through the tunnel on their backs. Make the bucket smaller or farther away.

### For those with more class time:

Ask the students what "surprises" are in the story. List them on the whiteboard and then use their surprises in game 2.

Share some of the additional questions on pages 1 and 12 of the Zacchaeus Story Cards.

### For those with less class time or in need of a simpler lesson plan:

Eliminate the "name" activity or simply demonstrate it using your name shaped in Play-Doh. Cut back on the Game 2 surprise messages.

## Notes and Sources

This sequence of games in this lesson is inspired by a concept of teaching known as "the 3D's."

**D**iscover (Jesus' love for you), **D**evelop (a passion for His Word), and **D**isplay (His love to others), used at Athens First United Methodist Church, Athens, GA.

Written by Robin Stewart and the Rotation.org Writing Team  
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# Story Cards for “Jesus and Zaccheus”

A Rotation.org Writing Team Lesson Set Resource



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These pages can be printed and used in a variety of ways to tell Luke 19's Story of Zaccheus.

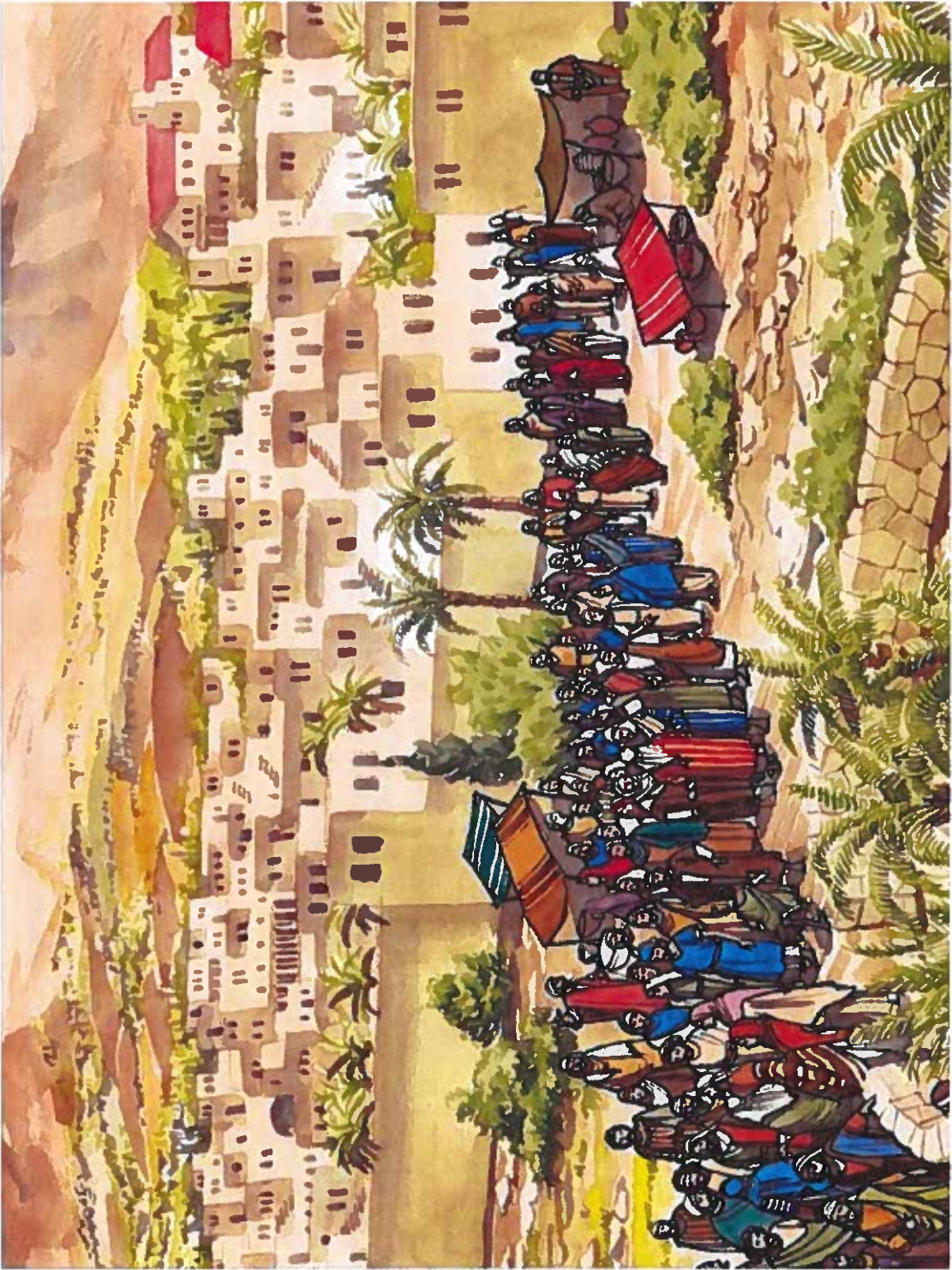
- You can distribute the images and ask students to hold them up when they hear the part of the story they think their image represents.
- You can assign verses and their corresponding images to students for reading and sharing.
- You can mix up the images and ask students to put them in the correct story order after hearing the story.
- You can ask questions about some of the images. For example, “What do you think Zaccheus is thinking in this picture?”
- You can print multiple copies of this packet and turn them into a booklet making project with student-added verses and notes.

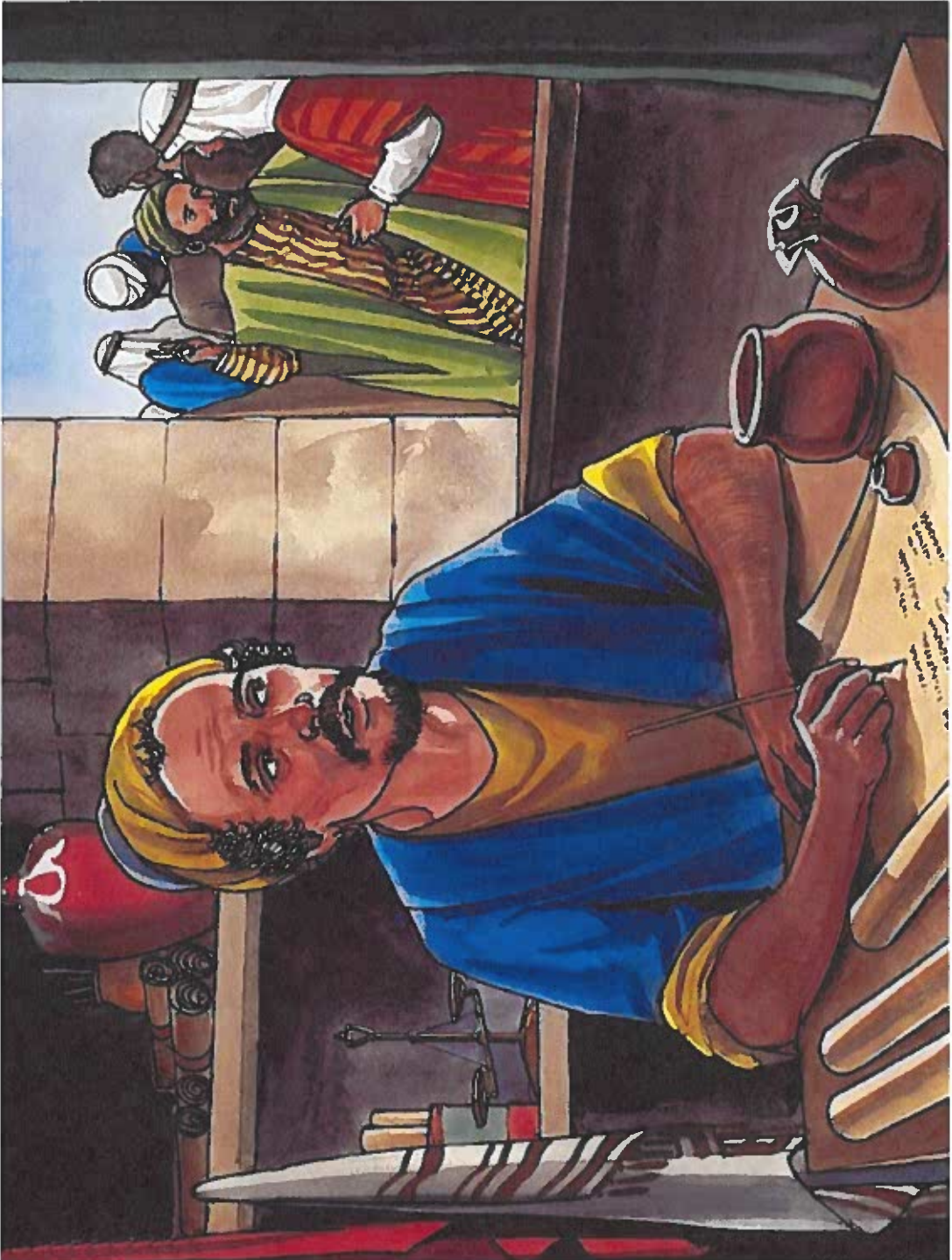
**Notes on the final image: *Jesus reclining at Zaccheus' house.*** Luke 19:1-10 does not include a scene of Jesus at Zaccheus' home, but it's an important scene to imagine as you teach the life application of the story. The “couch” Jesus is reclining on is historically accurate as both the style of furnishing and place of honor typical in that day. When Jesus says in verse 9 that “*today salvation has come to this house,*” he is not stating that he is already at Zaccheus' house. “House” is a biblical way of saying “family,” or more broadly, your life and legacy. It may also be something of a humorous double-meaning spoken by Jesus since HE (Salvation in the flesh) is the one who has invited himself and is coming to Zaccheus' house!

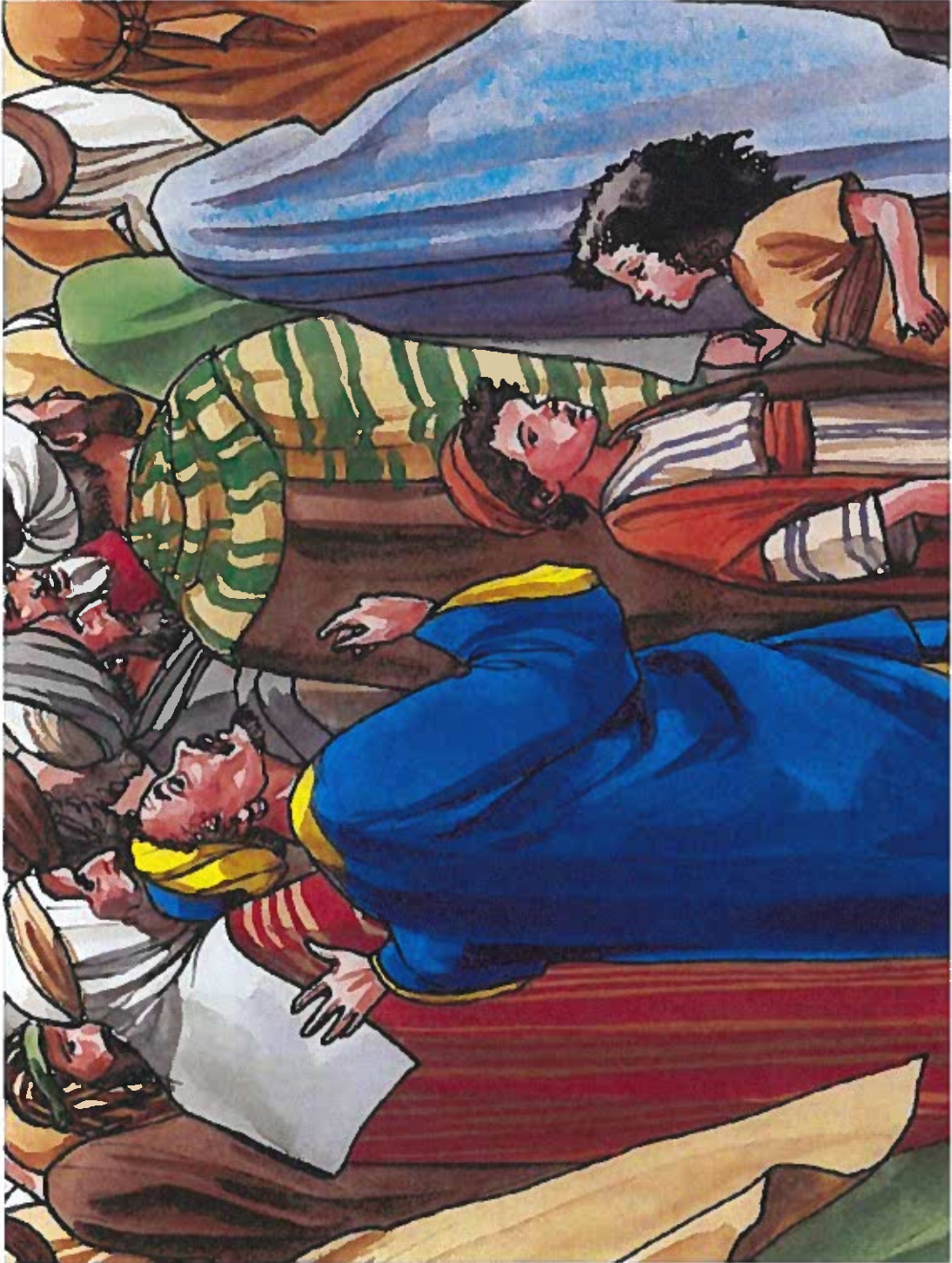
- What do you think Jesus had to say to Zaccheus at his home over dinner?
- What would Jesus say to your family if he came to dinner tonight? What questions would you ask him?
- What do you think changed in Zaccheus' life after Jesus had visited his home? With his family? Friends? Town's people? Business?
- How does believing in Jesus change how you act with family, friends, at school?

Consult the Writing Team's Bible Background for some fascinating insights and surprises about the story.

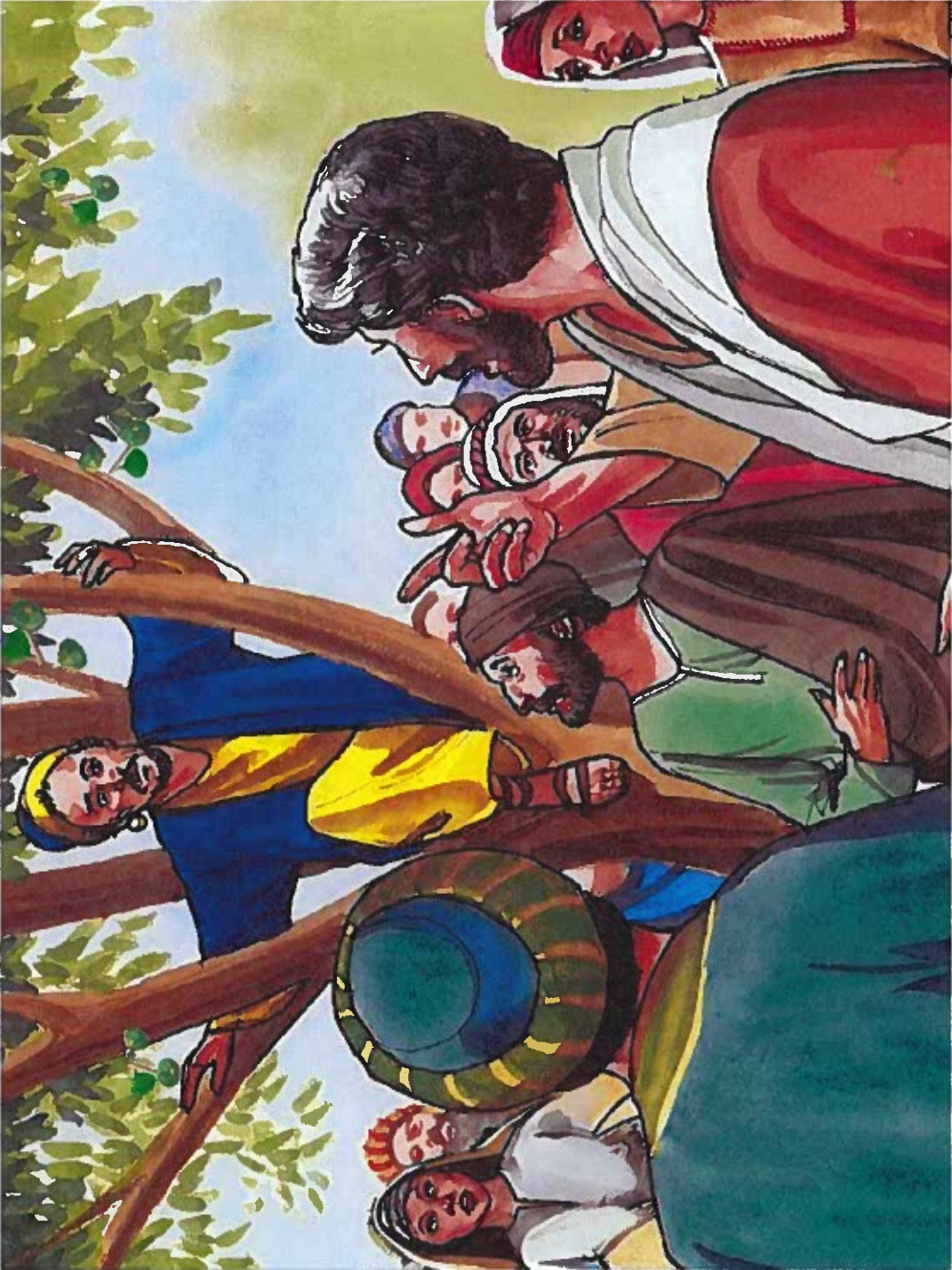
<https://www.rotation.org/topic/wt-zaccheus-and-jesus-bible-background-and-lesson-objectives>

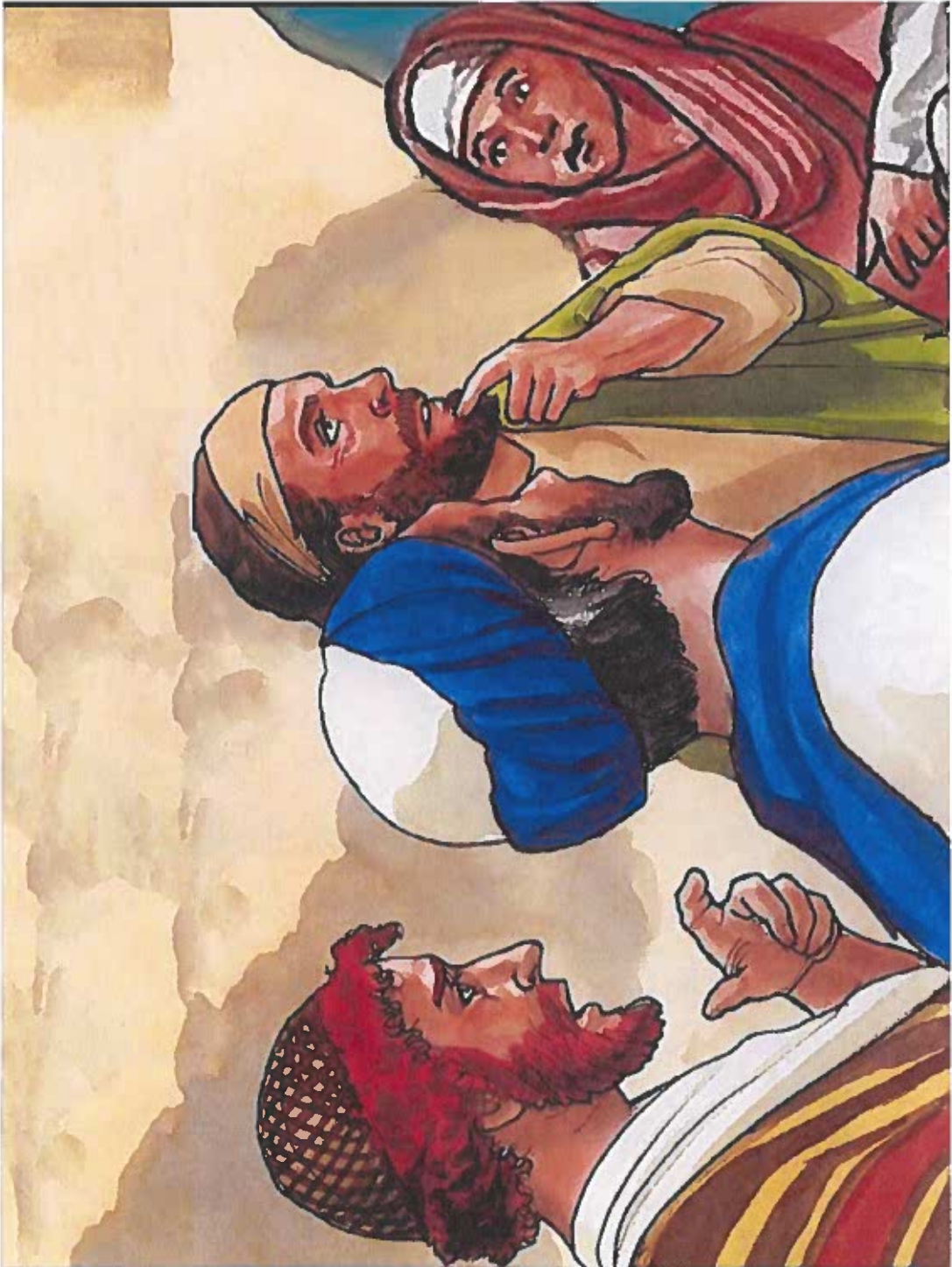


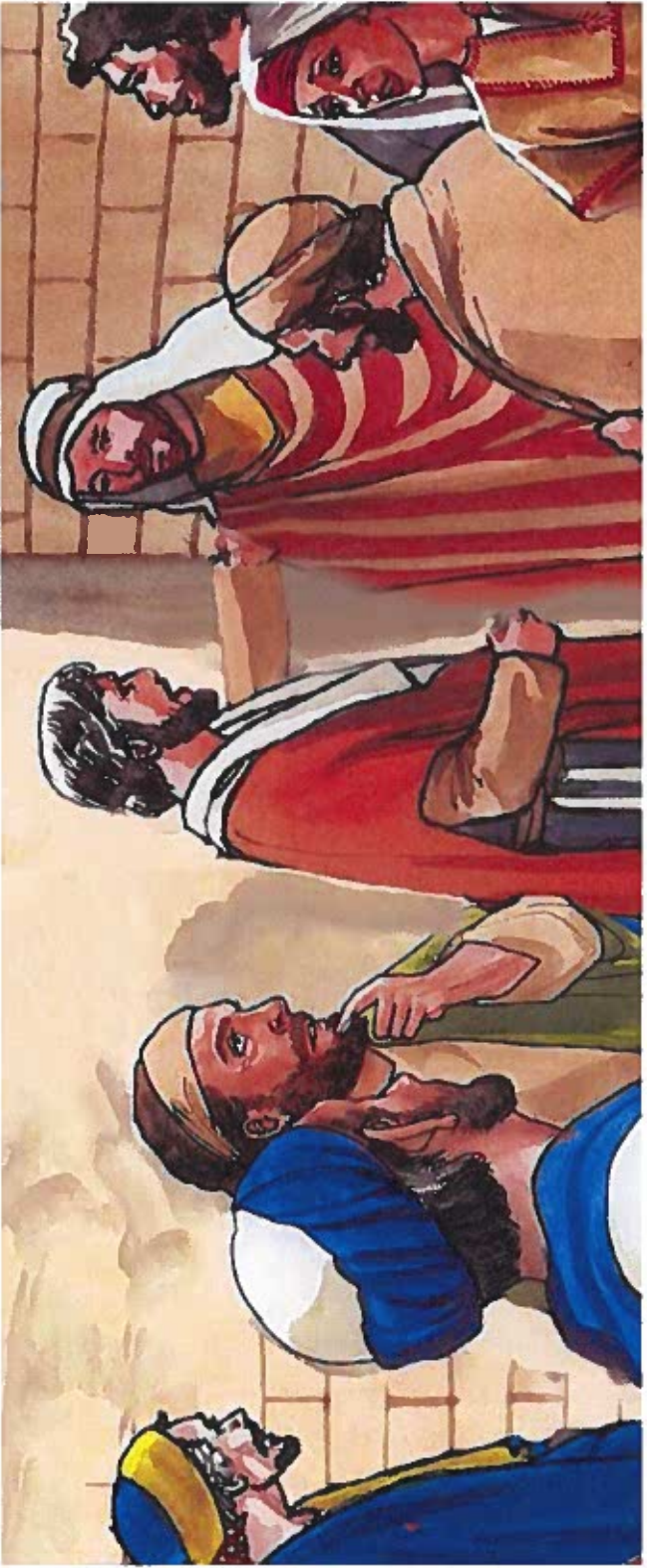






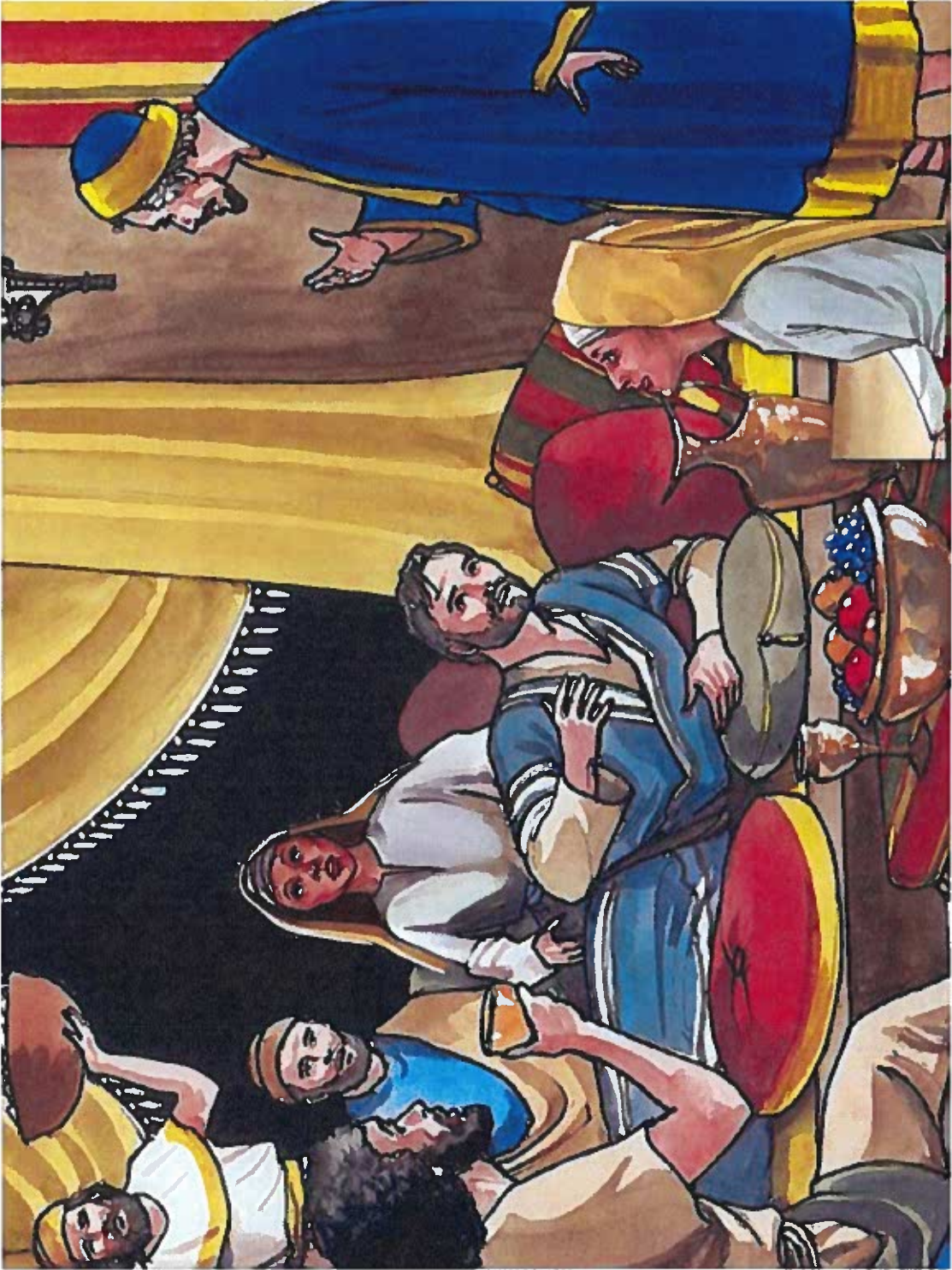














**A Sycamore Fig Tree in Jericho**

The “Sycamore Tree” that Zaccheus climbed in Luke 19 is the common “fig tree” (*Ficus sycamorus*) referenced throughout the Bible. It is not to be confused with the Sycamore tree (*Platanus occidentalis*) native to North America. Fig trees are common throughout the Middle East and Africa in many varieties and are major food source for animals and humans. Ripe figs can be eaten raw, cooked with, or dried. In our part of the world, they are commonly found in cookies (Fig Newtons) and jams. They are a major source of sugar and vitamins. Fig trees typical have two and sometimes three harvests a year. One fig can contain over 700 tiny seeds! The fig tree is known as “The Queen of Trees” in Africa and “The Tree of Love” in Egypt. One of the most ancient types of trees, petrified figs have even been found with the remains of dinosaurs!

In biblical times fig trees were planted for shade as well as food, and their leaves and excess fruit were fed to animals. Their wood was also prized. Fig trees are farmed like fruit trees. The prophet Amos (7:14) was a “dresser” of fig trees—pruning the branches and using a tall stick with a hook to cut the fruit to promote ripening and later collect it. Now cultivated widely around the world, it is estimated that there are over 500 varieties of fig (*Ficus*) trees, with only a few varieties, such as the popular “mission fig” being farmed for their fruit.

Jericho, where the story of Zaccheus takes place, is a well-watered oasis on the edge of the Judean wilderness and Dead Sea. Known as “the city of palms” in the Old Testament, and known as the “oldest continuously occupied city in the world,” Jericho has been an important farming region known for its dates, figs, fruits, barley and wheat dating back nearly 9000 years.

★ Jesus referred to fig trees several times as a metaphor for faith (or Israel) that bears or *doesn't* bear fruit. (See Luke 13). When Zaccheus climbed down to answer Jesus’ call, you might say his faith began to ripen then and there.

## Story Card Comments:

**Jesus enters Jericho:** It is estimated that Jesus walked over 3000 miles during his ministry—teaching and healing in the towns and countryside. Jericho was an important and ancient hub city on the road that connected the Dead Sea region to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea to the Jordan River.

**Zaccheus the Tax Collector:** Wealthy and assumed to be dishonest, nonetheless Zaccheus seemed to be longing for something greater to enter his life. Like many in Jesus' stories, he was an outcast among his own people.

**Zaccheus was Short:** Luke 19 says he couldn't see past the crowd so he climbed a tree. Perhaps he was also purposely blocked by those who didn't think he was worthy of seeing a man of God coming to town.

**Zaccheus in the Tree:** What do you think Zaccheus was hoping to see? It was a fig-bearing Sycamore Fig tree that he climbed. What do you "climb" to seek Jesus? It must have been kind of a silly sight—a rich man in a tree. How does believing in Jesus make you look stupid to some people?

**Jesus calls Zaccheus:** What about Zaccheus might have attracted Jesus' attention? Why would Jesus want to pick someone whom the crowd would object to?

**The Crowd Grumbles:** The word Luke wrote for "grumbling" sounds like "Gong-Good-Zo." Have a group of people say that fast five or six times to hear the grumbling. What was their problem with Jesus spending time with sinners?

**Zaccheus Defends Jesus:** When the crowd complains about Jesus, Zaccheus is the one who speaks up and offers to right any wrongs he may have done. How do YOUR actions and words affect how other people view Jesus?

**Zaccheus at Home with Jesus:** This scene is not in the Bible, but it's an important scene to think about. How does your time with Jesus change you? How can you "introduce" and welcome Jesus to your family?

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