

LESSON 29

Jesus & Zacchaeus

LUKE 18:35–19:10



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Luke 18:35—19:10 from the Scriptures or read story 107, “Jesus & Zacchaeus” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Irresistible

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a coconut
- ✓ a chocolate bar
- ✓ an orange
- ✓ a salty snack like pretzels

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

What If You Gave Away Half?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Compare the Stories

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils for the class
- ✓ Bibles for the class

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Jesus called for Bartimaeus—Word of the raising of Lazarus spread. As Jesus neared Jericho, a large crowd gathered to see him. As Jesus walked by, blind Bartimaeus, sitting by the side of the road, cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mark 10:47). The crowd tried to silence Bartimaeus, but he only called louder. This blind man knew who Jesus was, at least in part. Jesus was the promised descendant of David who would reign on the throne. There would be no other reason to call out his name like this. Why not say “son of Joseph” or “Jesus of Nazareth”? This man had faith that Jesus was no ordinary man and had the power to heal. Jesus heard the man’s cries, stopped, and called for him (Mark 10:49). Within minutes, Bartimaeus could see Jesus with his own eyes, and Jesus’ fame spread all the more.

Jesus called to Zacchaeus—The crowds gathered around Jesus made it difficult for Zacchaeus, a rich yet diminutive tax collector, to glimpse the man who could heal the blind and raise the dead. Eager to see Jesus over the crowd, Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree. Unlike Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus was quiet as he sat up in the tree. Though Zacchaeus didn’t call to Jesus, Jesus knew he was there, walked up to the tree, and called Zacchaeus by name! The call of Jesus transformed Zacchaeus’ life. He immediately repented of his sin and announced that he would pay back all those he had cheated.

Jesus came to save—After Zacchaeus came down from the tree and repented, the people were amazed. Not only did Jesus do physical miracles, but he was also able to change the hearts of men. Now even tax collectors were giving back to those they had defrauded. It was the icing on the cake. Tax collectors collaborated with the Romans and were often considered traitors. Here the people saw a tax collector turn from his Roman collaboration back to the people of Israel. Jesus, identifying himself with the Messianic title the Son of Man, announced that Zacchaeus was saved because he was a “son of Abraham.” The people thought, for sure, the kingdom of God was going to appear at once (Luke 19:11). What they didn’t realize was that Jesus had come to save his people from their sin, not their Roman domination.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The Kingdom Appearing at Once

The people in this story (Luke 19:11) were not thinking of a kingdom like the one Jesus brought. They were thinking that the Messiah was going to appear in all his power and glory to finally defeat their enemy Rome and restore the kingdom of Israel, as in the days of David. They had no clue that Jesus was bringing a kingdom that was “not of this world” (John 18:36).

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Jesus makes the connection to the gospel in this story. Jesus announces, "Today salvation has come to this house." (Luke 19:9). Though it seems that Zacchaeus was trying to draw near to Jesus, it was in fact Jesus who came to save Zacchaeus. The mission of Christ to "seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10) remains his mission today. Zacchaeus met Jesus along the road, we meet Jesus by reading his Word. But either way, we don't come to Jesus as much as he seeks us. For nobody comes to Jesus unless the Father draws him (John 6:44).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Luke 8:22–39 from the Scriptures or read story 98, "Jesus Calms the Storm," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Irresistible

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a coconut
- ✓ a chocolate bar
- ✓ an orange
- ✓ a salty snack like pretzels

Help your class identify the items. Then tell them you are going to teach them a complicated word. Say the word "irresistible" and ask them what it means. (Something that you just can't

resist.) Then ask them which of the four objects they think is irresistible by a show of hands. They will likely pick the chocolate bar.

Explain that Zacchaeus once thought money was the most irresistible thing in the world. As a tax collector, he cheated people out of their money. But, once he met Jesus and understood the gospel, Zacchaeus thought Jesus was irresistible. When God calls us, his call is effective and just like Zacchaeus, we are irresistibly drawn to God.

Remind them that they thought the chocolate bar was irresistible. Now tell them the following three illustrations:

1. Imagine being stranded on an island surrounded by saltwater with nothing to drink. The trees are filled with coconuts (hold up the coconut). You know that the coconut is filled with coconut milk you can drink to keep you alive. What would you find irresistible, the coconut or the chocolate bar? If you understand what's inside the coconut, you will find the coconut irresistible.
2. Pretend you are a sailor on a long ocean voyage. You have nothing to eat but bacon or jerky or oatmeal. You start to feel sick and tired and depressed. On your trip there is no fresh fruit and you become sick with scurvy from a lack of vitamin C. What do you think would be more irresistible, the orange or the chocolate bar? (Hold them both up.) Explain to the children that once you understand that vitamin C could heal you, you would find the orange irresistible.
3. What if you were lost in a deep dark jungle? You have water to drink but because of the heat you have sweated a lot and your body has lost a lot of salt. If you don't get enough salt you could have a heart attack and die. What would you find more irresistible, the chocolate bar or the salty snack. Explain that once you understand that the salt will keep you alive, you will find the salty snack more irresistible than the chocolate bar.

We might think that the things of the world are irresistible, but once we understand that we are dead in our sins and only by trusting Jesus we can be saved, Jesus becomes irresistible.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN**What If You Gave Away Half?****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Use this to help illustrate the significance of Zacchaeus' repentance.

Tell the class you are going to pretend Zacchaeus was an average fifth grader. Tell them you are going to make a list of what the average kid that age owns and try to figure out the value of what they would be giving away if they did what Zacchaeus did.

Have the class offer suggestions of what the average fifth grader owns. If someone says something outrageous like a car, simply poll the class to see how many of them own their own car. If more than half the class has one, put the item on the list. Make a list of what they own, item by item. Here are a few categories:

- money in the bank
- other money
- shoes, clothing, and accessories (Our clothing represents great riches. Many people in the world own but one item of clothing.)
- other possessions, e.g., electronic gadgets, musical instruments, sports equipment, collections such as baseball cards, dolls, books

Put a monetary value on all the items. Then divide it in half. The class will be amazed at just how much money they would have given away if they had been Zacchaeus.

Read James 2:14–17 and talk about how our good works are a demonstration of the faith we have. Discuss the following questions:

- Why is it amazing that Zacchaeus gave away half of what he owned?
(*Zacchaeus was a greedy man who loved money.*)

- Does God require that everyone give away half of what they own?
(No. God did not require it of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus did it to demonstrate his repentance and his love for God. We should be willing to do something just as significant should the Spirit of God lead us.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Have the children draw one of two scenes from today’s story. Tell the class you are particularly interested in the expression on Zacchaeus’ face. The first scene is when he is intently looking for Jesus from up in a tree. The second is Zacchaeus telling everyone he is going to give half his money to the poor. During the last two minutes ask for a few volunteers to share their drawings with the class and explain what they were trying to capture in Zacchaeus’ expression.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Compare the Stories

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils for the class
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Pass out the paper and have the children examine the three accounts of Jesus healing the blind man (Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43; Matthew 20:29–34.) Ask them to compare the stories and write down the things that are unique to each account—the things that can be found in only one of the stories.

Luke tells us the interaction occurred on the way to Jericho. He tells us how the blind man found out it was Jesus.

Mark gives us the blind man's name and family. He says the interaction occurred as they were leaving Jericho. (Commentators point out that there were in fact two Jerichos—one older, largely abandoned city and a newer, rebuilt one. Others suggest that there were multiple blind men healed both in and out of the city.)

Matthew mentions two men. With the raising of Lazarus from the dead, many would have come hoping to be healed.

We need not be concerned with these type of apparent contradictions. To help your class understand the differences that occur when people write about the same event, have three of your children write a paragraph describing one of your earlier object lessons. Then compare their stories to help demonstrate that while they described the same events, they didn't write the exact same thing.