

Following Jesus

PARENT CONTEXT

In Jesus' time the Roman government would collect taxes from Israelites, often relying on other Israelites to collect the taxes for them. Many tax collectors would increase the amount owed so they could skim money from what was given, earning them a bad reputation. Zacchaeus was one of these tax collectors who stole from their neighbors, was labeled a sinner, and treated as such. Purity and godliness were essential in devote Jewish life, so spending time with sinners was believed to defile yourself and socially approve of their actions.



BIBLE READING

LUKE 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Craft

For this week's craft you can color, decorate, build, and play "Where is Zacchaeus?" using the attached outline.

ASK: Last week we talked about how Jesus came to serve His Heavenly Father and to forgive us. Was there a time it was hard for you to forgive someone? Why?

When people hurt us it can be very hard to forgive them. Jesus knew many people who hurt Him and others, but he came down from heaven to forgive everyone! Back when Jesus was alive there was a man named Zacchaeus and he was a tax collector. That means he was in charge of collecting money that the Israelites owed the Roman Empire. However, Zacchaeus often would lie and cheat and say people had to pay more than they needed to, and then he kept the extra money. He stole what wasn't his! Then one day Jesus comes to visit.

READ: Luke 19:1-10

ASK: Why was everyone so angry that Jesus wanted to go to Zacchaeus's house?

Some people thought Jesus shouldn't be spending time with people who did bad things. Some people disliked Zacchaeus because of how he treated others. So, when Jesus went to Zacchaeus's house some people were angry that He would spend time with someone who stole from them.

ASK: Why did Jesus spend time with Zacchaeus?

Jesus came to earth to die on the cross and rise again for all sinners! He came to save us even though we fail to follow Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He forgave Zacchaeus for lying and stealing, just like He forgives us of our sins.

ASK: What habit did Jesus show that we are supposed to follow?

Just like Jesus we are supposed to forgive people when they hurt us. Jesus forgives us, so we should also forgive other people! And just like Jesus, we can help them try and make new good habits. The Lord calls us to go forth and love and serve others just like Zacchaeus did.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for forgiving us for all of our sins. Help us to forgive each other just like You have forgiven us because of the death and resurrection of Your Son and our Savior Jesus. In His name we pray, Amen!