
“Changed Hearts and Second Chances”

Children’s Sermon on Zacchaeus from Luke 19:1-10



The story of Zacchaeus is a classic one when we consider the catchy song and the short man climbing a tree. But there’s a lot more to the message than those elements, and it’s important to help kids recognize that.

Main Objective: This lesson aims to communicate to students how Jesus demonstrated grace by showing love to the tax collector and giving him a second chance. In return, Zacchaeus truly had a change of heart, which is possible for anyone who meets Christ.

Law/Gospel Theme: Jesus welcomed all people, and He was and is ready to forgive anyone with a repentant heart. This was great news for Zacchaeus, but it’s also wonderful for us to remember! When we trust the work that Jesus has already done and continues to do, it lets our lives be changed, and should encourage us to tell others about Him.

Optional Materials: Paper cut into heart shapes: some torn or wrinkles, others clean and fresh-looking (another object or toy would work, as well).

Bible Passage: Luke 19:1-10

Bonus Ideas:

- Browse our [object lesson messages](#) and [video teaching example this sermon](#)
- Compare our [Zacchaeus Sunday School Lesson](#) on [Zacchaeus Craft Ideas](#)
- Download our free story of [Zacchaeus coloring pages](#)
- We have another [Luke 19:1-10 Bible lesson](#) that emphasizes our personal relationship with Jesus.



Children's Sermon on Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) Changed Hearts Object Lesson

Note: As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to your audience and student needs. These suggestions are merely one possible way to demonstrate the message.

Greet students Hello, children of God!

I have something I'd like to give you today. Would you like that? So here it is: I'm giving you each a special heart! Here you go... *(Bring out crumpled up paper hearts and pass them around. Alternatively, you could do this with a broken toy, or with a candy wrapper that has nothing inside of it, making the swap for a real candy or fixed toy.)* What beautiful hearts! Do you like them? *(Allow for disappointment or responses)*

I guess those hearts aren't really a great party favor, are they? Hmm...well, how about if I give you a new heart! I will trade you in that old crumpled heart for a nice clean brand new one! Would that be better? All you have to do is give me your heart, and I'll swap it for a better one.... *(Allow students to change out their hearts)*
Great!

So, that might have seemed a bit strange, but did you know that's what God does for our lives? He is in the heart changing business. This is not about a card, and it's not about your physical heart, like a transplant where you need to have your body cut open. A changed heart is about your attitude and motivation on the inside. It's about how you think and feel. When you know Jesus and what He's done for you, it really changes things for the better!

So in today's story, we talk about a man named Zacchaeus. Do you know anything about him? *(Allow students to share brief details, if they have heard of Zacchaeus).*



Well, we might remember him as being that really short guy who had to climb a tree just to spot Jesus in a crowd. Well, that is true, but it's not the most important part of the story. See, people knew Zacchaeus not only because he was short, but also because he was sort of a bad guy. He was called a tax collector, which basically meant he would steal from people and they couldn't even do anything about it.

When people get their money taken away, it usually doesn't make them too happy! So Zacchaeus didn't really have many friends, and he may have been a bit greedy. But he heard about Jesus and wanted to see what all of the fuss was about. Jesus could spy him up in that tree, and Jesus knew his heart and intentions. He called out to Zacchaeus by name, and invited himself over for dinner!

Some of the Jewish people thought Jesus should not be hanging out with someone like Zacchaeus, and criticized Him for it. Do you think Jesus was upset by that? Not at all! He wanted to hang out with sinners, which is good news for us since we have all sinned...He also knew that Zacchaeus could change. And in fact, he did.

After meeting Jesus, his life couldn't go back to the way it was. He promised that if he had cheated someone, he would pay them back with extra money included! He turned his act around, and I'll bet he had more friends as a result. He at least had one very good friend: Jesus! And we can have Jesus in our lives, too. We can know His love, change our hearts, and tell others about Him.

How great! Let's say a prayer about that, shall we?



Children's Prayer Moment

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,
Thank you for making us special
And for loving each and every one of us
Help us to share that love with one another
And to let you make our hearts new
Thank you for your love
We love you, God!
Thank you for Jesus
In His name, Amen!



Luke 19:1-10 NIV

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

He (Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. ⁴ So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷ And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸ And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." ⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." -[Luke 19:1-10](#)



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