



3rd – 5th

January 31-February 1: SUPER BOWL WEEKEND

DATE

Luke 19:1-10; I John 4:19
Adventure Bible (pp. 1152, 1374)

WHERE TO FIND IT

Jesus and Zacchaeus

LESSON TITLE

Jesus wants to be our friend!

MAIN POINT

schedule

****Connect Time (15 minutes):** Five minutes after the service begins, split kids into groups and begin their activity.

Large Group (40 minutes): Begin 20 minutes after the service starts. Model what it looks like to be engaged in large group.

Small Group (20 minutes): Keep kids in small groups until parents arrive. If you *all* have extra time at the end, you can review the video and songs together.

tips

Today we're learning the story of Zacchaeus and Jesus' transforming love. Read Luke 19:1-10 ahead of time to make sure you're ready to dig deeper into it during small group.

***During Connect Time, you'll make trees. You need them for both Large Group and Small Group.**

****Remember, today's service is 80 minutes. (See the updated schedule!)**

check-in/out

As kids leave, remind them they can find all the props online—and reenact the story at their house with their family and friends.

large group heads up

Zacchaeus' story shows us not only that Jesus wants to be our friend but also that Jesus' friendship transforms us. The fact that Jesus, God's Son, wants a relationship with us is pretty remarkable!



connect time

GOAL: *Connect Time is all about engaging kids in an activity that allows them to connect with each other right away while simultaneously piquing their curiosity for Large Group and preparing their minds for what they're going to hear.*

WHAT'S A FRIEND?

***Break kids into small groups and give each group a tree template.**

- Give each kid a **marker** and **three leaves**
- Have kids imagine a *really good* friend
- **Write ONE characteristic** of a great friend on ONE leaf (save the other two).
- Using glue sticks, place leaves on the tree and share what's written on it.
- Without repeating what someone else wrote, **write down a second characteristic** of a good friend on a second leaf.
- Hang leaves as each kid shares.
- **Do a third round.** If kids are running out of ideas, give them hints like: What would the ideal friend do? How would he/she act? What would they do for you? What would you be willing to do for them? Etc. How do we treat friends? How do they treat us?
- Hang leaves and share.
- **Debrief:**
 - Does anybody have a friend who fits all of these?
 - Does anyone have a *perfect* friend? Explain.
 - Has anyone ever been a perfect friend? Explain.
- **Then ask kids to share their names and the best/worst parts of their weeks.**

**Choose one kid per group to bring the group's tree to Large Group.*

Before you head into Large Group, remind them of your expectations for behavior: (1) be kind, (2) listen when somebody speaks, and (3) follow the leader's instructions.



instructions

Goal: Kids will (1) retell the story of Zacchaeus, (2) recognize that Jesus wants a relationship with them and (3) understand that when a person meets Jesus, his/her life changes

Why? We want kids to be best friends with Jesus and love him more than anyone or anything.

Tip: Today's service is longer than normal. You've got a couple options for ways to do the last discussion question.

small group

REVIEW THE STORY: REENACTMENTS!

To review today, we're going to have some fun!

- **Split** each small group into two groups if you have a large group.
- **Give** each group **a set of cardstock props** (there are 10 in each set, and includes the following):
 - Jesus
 - Zacchaeus
 - Tree
 - Table
 - Door to house
 - Money
 - Man from crowd
 - Woman from crowd
 - Heart
 - Angry man
 - **Bible** (with Luke 19:1-10 bookmarked on page 1152)
- Each kid should get **at least one prop page** (more if there are more props than kids).
- Use the **stopwatch** to give kids **5 minutes to distribute props and come up with a plan** to reenact the story.
- **Reenact** for the whole small group!

*****Kids should take their prop home. Tell them that they can go to the website printed on their prop. There, they can download and print all props. If they want, they can create a reenactment with their families or friends.***

(Continue on the following page)

DIG DEEPER AND REMEMBER

1. Do you have any questions about today's story? If so, what?
2. Why did Jesus want to be friends with Zacchaeus?
3. Why do you think Jesus' friendship changed Zacchaeus?
4. Why does Jesus want a friendship with *us*?
5. **DISCUSS: How could a friendship with Jesus change *your* life?**
 - a. **If you have 5 minutes or less**, look at specific leaves from the tree you made during Connect Time. Read a few aloud and talk about how those traits of friendship (in Jesus) would affect you!
 - b. **If you have more than 5 minutes**, have kids turn over their props and draw a line down the middle vertically and horizontally (creating 4 squares). Then call out one of the perfect friendship traits and have them draw a picture in one of the corners, showing how our lives would change if we had a friend like that (e.g. if we knew we had a friend who thought we were the best all the time, we wouldn't have to get embarrassed or feel bad about ourselves). Repeat 3 more times!

Together, thank God that we can have a relationship with Jesus.

Still have time? Groups could act out their skits for each other. Or you could watch the videos from Large Group again!

LARGE group

special notes

Have each small group bring their tree to you and set them in the presentation area. You will read from them during the script. Then make sure they bring it back to Small Group with them!

****Also, remember that today's service is extra long. So the script SHOULD take longer than usual!***

presenter tips

During the week, read Luke 19:1-10. Spend some time asking the Holy Spirit how he wants you to communicate Jesus' love to kids through the story of Zacchaeus.

script

****Click to play intro music.***

Hi, everybody! Welcome to Kids' Club. It's great to see you here. Today is a big weekend, isn't it? Why is this weekend a big deal? (Let kids respond.) That's right, it's SUPER BOWL WEEKEND here at Crossroads. This is a time for us to have a lot of fun while we hear part of God's story and find out how we can be part of it.

WHAT'S A FRIEND?

And to start today, let's talk about friends. In fact, last weekend, we made invitations to invite our friends to Super Bowl. So some of you did that and are sitting with those friends right now! That's pretty cool. And if it's your first time here because you were invited by another friend or just came on your own, we're happy you're here. High five somebody and say, "I'm glad you're here!" (Let kids high five each other.)

Now let's think about our friends. I bet we're friends with lots of different types of people. To think about this, let's play a game! Everybody stand up. (Let kids stand.) For fun, I'm going to show you some pictures on screen. If you would WANT to be friends with this person, go to this side of the room (point to one side). If you would NOT want to be friends with this person, go to that side of the room (point to side). Then I'll ask you why. Ready?

(Show the following pictures. Remind kids where to go if they do or do not want to be friends with the person. After each one, ask kids on each side why they WOULD and would NOT want to be friends with this person/group. Hopefully the reaction to each image will be mixed.)

- **Elsa**
- **Selena Gomez**
- **Big Hero 6**



script continued

- **The Penguins of Madagascar**
- **Peyton Manning**
- **One Direction**

OK, have a seat. (Let kids sit.) So some of these people/animals have good traits—raise your hand if you wanted to be friends with at least one of them (let kids respond). But even people who seem really cool or even our best friends in real life aren't PERFECT friends, are they? The truth is, sometimes our friends get mad at us. Sometimes they're rude to us. Sometimes *we're* rude to them.

But there was one person who was (and is) a perfect friend...can you guess who? (Let kids say: Jesus!)

Let's take a minute and imagine what being friends with Jesus would be like, because it would be better than any friend we can think of! During Connect Time, you came up with some things that would make a great friend. So if a person had all the things you guys said they'd basically be a perfect friend, right?

So what did you guys say makes a good friend? Raise your hand if you want to share what you or a member of your group wrote. (**Let kids share—call on kids quickly and try to get them to name a lot of different traits.** Read others from the trees kids made during Connect Time, if you want.)

Great! And Jesus was always there for his friends, always listened, always wanted to be with them, never hurt them, never got rude or snippy and always forgave them when they messed up. The crazy thing is, Jesus wants to be friends with US, even though we aren't perfect friends back. Today, we're going to hear about one guy Jesus wanted to be friends with, named Zacchaeus. Everybody was REALLY surprised when Jesus chose to be friends with him.

ZACCHAEUS WAS UNLOVED

(**Click to show picture of Zacchaeus.**) So let me tell you about Zacchaeus. He's not the guy you'd expect Jesus to like. *Nobody* liked Zacchaeus. People actually *hated* him. He wasn't invited to birthday parties. He wasn't invited to come over. Nobody wanted to talk to him. People cringed when he came around. They probably whispered about him behind his back.

People were being mean when they did that, but the truth is, Zacchaeus was NOT a nice guy. He had been a bad friend. In fact, we might not be able to call him a "friend" at all. His job was collecting people's taxes and, back then, people could demand tons of extra money. So he did. He basically stole money from people.

ZACCHAEUS MET JESUS

So one day, Zacchaeus heard Jesus was coming to his hometown, Jericho. He had probably heard all about Jesus and how he was doing miracles and changing people's lives. He really wanted to see Him! But the problem was, everybody else wanted to see Jesus too. So when Zacchaeus went to see Jesus, he was stuck in the back of a big crowd, and he was really short—way too small to see Jesus from far away or over everybody's head.



script continued

Raise your hand if you've ever sat behind someone really tall at a movie, or had to stand on your tip-toes to see at a parade or a concert or a football game (let kids respond). Now, what would you guys do if you couldn't see and you really wanted to? (Let a couple kids share. Or have them turn and share with a friend.) Awesome ideas! Well, Zacchaeus did something that would have looked really silly. He climbed a tree (pick up one of the Connect Time trees and hold it up).

Now, the tree Zacchaeus climbed wasn't a "perfect friend" tree, like this. (Hold up the Connect Time tree). But Zacchaeus was about to get a perfect friend! We're going to watch a video about what happened. As you watch, see if you can figure out what Zacchaeus did when he realized Jesus wanted to be his friend!

Video: God's Story / Zacchaeus

Wow, so Zacchaeus was sitting up in the tree and Jesus invited himself over to his house. Imagine how shocked Zacchaeus was when JESUS walked right up to *HIM!* Then what did Zacchaeus do when he realized Jesus wanted to be *his* friend? (Let kids respond.) That's right, he came down and accepted Jesus' friendship.

KNOWING JESUS CHANGED ZACCHAEUS

When Zacchaeus became friends with Jesus, he changed! Not because Jesus asked him to. Jesus wanted to be his friend even when nobody else liked him. But Zacchaeus couldn't help but change when he experienced Jesus' love. How did he change? Did anybody notice? (Let kids respond.) Yep, he decided he wanted to treat other people well. He wanted to BE a good friend. He had stolen money; now he was going to give it away.

In the Bible, 1 John 4:19 explains why we act differently when we meet Jesus. It says this:

SLIDE: 1 John 4:19 We love because he loved us first.

See, Jesus is a better friend than we can ever imagine. He's a friend we can trust with our whole heart. When we realize *he* wants to be with *US*—and that he loves us just as we are—nothing else seems as important. When we truly see how much he loves us, we can't help but share it.

We've got quite a fun music video about Zacchaeus. Let's take a look. As you watch, I want you to put yourself in the place of Zacchaeus. Imagine Jesus wants to be friends with YOU (because he does!)

Music Video: The Ballad of Zacchaeus

So how does it make you feel to know that Jesus wants to be *friends* with you? Think of ONE word to describe the way it feels. (Give kids a moment to think.) **Now turn and tell one friend how it makes you feel.** (Let kids share!) Let's hear what you thought (let kids share words popcorn-style).



script continued

Feels pretty incredible, doesn't it?! Knowing Jesus wants to be my friend makes me feel _____ (*share a personal example*).

PRAY

Now, let's pray. That's just talking to Jesus, like we're talking to a friend. Because we are! We can sit quietly and listen to him, too. He sometimes puts thoughts in our heads or shows us pictures or maybe just calms us down. Let's take a minute and talk and listen to Jesus. (*Begin by modeling talking to Jesus; then sit quietly and give the kids about 30 seconds to listen.*)

WORSHIP

When we tell Jesus thank you for wanting to be close to us or for what a great friend and rescuer he is, we're worshipping him! There are lots of ways to worship—and one way is by singing. Let's sing this song and tell him that we want to be just like him, just like our best and perfect friend.

Music Video: More Like You Are (dance moves on screen)

Our second song reminds us that he's all we need. Sometimes, we get worried about what people think of us or how people treat us or maybe afraid of something else, like dogs or the dark. His perfect love drives out any fear of being alone and this video talks about how His perfect love is all the matters (it's also pretty fun to watch)!

Music Video: Love Beats Fear

**Then dismiss kids to small groups. Send their trees back with them!*

PREP needs



connect time supplies

Per kid

3 leaves: OT: IN-57/2540

Per small group

Tree template
Glue sticks
markers

small group supplies

Per group

Markers

2 Adventure Bibles (mark p. 1152)

1 stopwatch

1 stack of ten props on cardstock, if you have more than 10 kids, take 2 stacks of props

large group supplies

Adventure Bible (pp. 1152, 1374)

a/v needs

1. Song slide: for when kids enter the room (All that You Need instrumental; mp3 only; can be downloaded on website)
2. The following images, each on separate slides:
 - a. Elsa
 - b. Selena Gomez
 - c. Big Hero 6
 - d. The Penguins of Madagascar
 - e. Peyton Manning
 - f. One Direction
3. Image: Zacchaeus
4. Video: God's Story / Zacchaeus (<https://vimeo.com/57088533>)
5. SLIDE: I John 4:19 We love because he loved us first.
6. Music Video: The Ballad of Zacchaeus (<https://vimeo.com/66762341>)
7. Music Video: More Like You Are (with lyrics) (<https://vimeo.com/108496622>)
8. Music Video: Love Beats (Mae will have file)

connect questions

Tell me about Zacchaeus.

Why did Zacchaeus and Jesus become friends?

parent page

Daily Talk Starts – separate doc.