



SESSION 4 of 4

Zacchaeus

MEETING AIM

To explore the transformation Jesus brought for Zacchaeus and can also bring in our lives.

BIBLE

Luke 19:1-10

BACKGROUND

This is a story of wonderful surprise and incredible transformation. When Zacchaeus met Jesus his life was turned upside down and inside out. The man who was lost in his own world of selfishness and greed was found by Jesus, who noticed him and called him by name. This session explores what it means for us to encounter Jesus and be given the opportunity to let him transform us into the people he has made us to be.

5 CIRCLE TIME

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and share out your refreshments. Invite the children to talk about something that has happened that caused them to change. It could be something like the birth of a new sibling, or moving house or school. Or it could be a moment, as it was for the person we will meet in this session, when he realised he had to change something about himself and the way he was choosing to live.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: trees

If you have the opportunity, take the children somewhere you can safely climb trees together, or use a climbing frame if no trees are available. If you are not able to get outside, why not provide a selection of cardboard boxes and tubes, and challenge the children to make the best free-standing sculpture of a tree that they can? You could organise this as a contest, perhaps placing a teddy in it to represent the tree-climber as a test of strength. Risk-assess this activity before the session.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: a set of cards with the following words written on (words are in pairs, so write 'good' on one side and 'bad' on the other): good / bad; see / meet; horrified / delighted; keep / give; wrong / right; guilty / forgave; lost / found

Gather the children together and stand or sit in front of them, with the cards ready for you to access as you tell the story. As you say the relevant words, place the card in front of the children and turn it over to reveal the transformation that occurs.

Zacchaeus was not a **good** man. In fact, he was known to be a **bad** man. He would take more money than he should just to make himself rich.

Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was in town. As well as not being good, Zacchaeus was not very tall. He climbed a tree just so he could **see** Jesus walking past. Jesus didn't walk past. He looked up into the tree and called Zacchaeus to come down. He didn't just want to see Zacchaeus; he wanted to **meet** him.

Jesus told Zacchaeus that he wanted to go to his house for tea. The crowds were **horrified**, but Zacchaeus was **delighted**.

That day, everything changed for Zacchaeus. Until he met Jesus, Zacchaeus had wanted to **keep** all his money for himself, but after meeting Jesus he wanted to **give** it away! He no longer wanted to do **wrong**. He wanted to do what was **right**!

Zacchaeus realised that he was **guilty** of doing much wrong, but Jesus **forgave** him. Jesus told the crowd: "This man who was **lost** has now been **found**."

Jesus turned Zacchaeus' life upside down and inside out.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to contribute:

- What do you think the crowds thought about Jesus spending time with Zacchaeus?
- Why did Jesus choose to spend time with Zacchaeus?
- What surprises you most about this story?
- What does it mean for us to be found and forgiven by Jesus?

5 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: speech bubble shapes cut from card in two different colours; marker pens; BluTack; background music

Explain to the children that you want them to think about what they would say to Jesus if they had the opportunity to talk to him, as Zacchaeus did. On one coloured speech bubble write the things you would like to say to Jesus and on the other colour write the things you think Jesus wants to say to you or to others in the group.

Play some music softly in the background as the children complete their speech bubbles, then put them up on display for the whole group to see. When the group has had enough time to complete their speech bubbles, draw everyone together to talk through some of the comments that have been written down and take the opportunity to address any ideas and issues raised, as appropriate.

10 PRAYER

You will need: playdough

Give each child a small lump of playdough and ask them to form a shape from it that represents something they want God to change in their life, just as Jesus transformed Zacchaeus' life. Explain that there may be a behaviour they know they shouldn't do, but they can't seem to stop, or a friendship that isn't as good as they want it to be. Invite them to create a shape and hold it in their hands as you pray, asking Jesus to change each of these situations, just as he changed Zacchaeus and the way he was living.

Now invite the children to squish up their playdough before forming a new shape to represent the change they want to see. Remain in the quiet for as long as is appropriate and offer to talk with and pray for individuals after you have brought this time of prayer to a close.

BECKY MAY

is a writer who has worked with children and young people for many years in a variety of settings. She is the co-founder of The Treasure Box People.

For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together