

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 26**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Luke 19:1-10**

In the final 6 weeks of this Lectionary Year C, a firm and hopeful tone soars in Jesus' teachings in a rich symphony of themes. The background music of the Hebrew Scriptures holds the notes of the new covenant — a law written in our hearts rather than codified in legal structures — The Spirit poured out, a vision for the appointed time, God with us, a new heaven and a new earth, and a branch from the tree of David — the remnant gathered. We can believe that Jesus heard this cosmic music as he distilled his huge message to the disciples.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

"I must stay at your house tonight." Would we climb down out of our safe trees if we heard Jesus call up to us, "Hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house tonight?"

**Theme: Jesus seeks to Find and Save the Lost**

**Before:** Look around for something to serve as a tree a child can climb. Perhaps it will be a sturdy step stool or a secure table. Either during class (if it is feasible), or before class, find some little sticks that can be a tree on a collage the children will make later. You will also need paper, white glue, crayons, and, if available, pieces of green tissue paper to tear into leaves for the tree.

**Beginning:** Ask the children to pretend there is going to be a parade in our town. Has anyone been to a parade? If there are lots of people standing on the sidewalk, how do we see what is going on? Have you ever been held on someone's shoulders so you could see? What if there was a tree there you could climb to see? Our story today is about a man who did get to see Jesus by climbing up in a tree.

**Praying:** Thank you, Jesus, for being with us and for calling to us when we need you. Be with us today as we explore your story. Amen.

**Story:** Jesus was coming to town. Everyone had heard that was coming. People were crowding to the street Jesus would take to get into town. A man named Zacchaeus also wanted to see who Jesus was. Zacchaeus was a very rich man who had gotten very rich by taking money from people. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but Zacchaeus was not very tall, and he could not see anything because there were so many people. "Ah ha!" said Zacchaeus. "I will climb up in that tree and I will be able to see Jesus. I will be able to see Jesus, and he will not be able to see me." Jesus came walking along until he got to the tree. Jesus stopped. Jesus looked up in the tree. "Zacchaeus!" called Jesus. "Come on down out of that tree. I need to come to your house today." "Oh, Wow" said Zacchaeus. "Come to my house and I will be a good man now. I will give half of everything I have to poor people, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay them back and give them even more." Zacchaeus now wanted to follow with Jesus.

**Activity:** Ask the children to help act out this story. Who should be Zacchaeus? Who wants to be

Jesus? What will be our tree? Let the children help you figure out how to tell the story. Continue acting out the story until each child who wants to play a part has the opportunity.

**Activity:** Using the sticks you either found with the children or brought in yourself, let each child create this story on paper. They can make a tree with the stick, tear green tissue paper to make leaves, or just color leaves, and then draw Zacchaeus up in the tree with Jesus inviting Zacchaeus down. Then, together your group can make another tree with Zacchaeus in it to put on your class' cross.

**Getting Closure:** Standing in a circle, let's all pretend to be climbing up a tree. Let's climb higher and higher until we can see way down to the street. Hey! Jesus is right in the middle of our circle. Let's scramble on down from our imaginary trees, then come and sit in a circle with Jesus right in the middle. Then we can say our closing prayer.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, Jesus, for being in the middle of our circle and for calling us to be with you. Amen.

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