

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 26
Lesson Plans for Older 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 Class: You will need copies of the scripture for today and possibly some props like costumes for acting out retelling of the story. If you are using journals, make sure they are in the classroom.

Beginning: Tell the children that we have a story about a man named Zacchaeus who changes his ways. Ask them to be noticing the steps in his changing.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, be with us as we study scripture today and help us see where this story affects our lives and behavior. Help us to remember we are never truly lost. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 19:1-10 Invite three readers to read the following sections: vs. 1-4, 5-7, and 8-10.

Questions:

- I wonder how you would describe Zacchaeus?
- Who is this Zacchaeus at the beginning of this story? (Verse 2: he was a tax collector and was very rich.)
- What happens to this comfortable rich man? (Verse 3: he was curious: who is this Jesus?)
- What does he do to see and (he thinks) not be seen? (Verse 4: he was clever: even though he was very short, he figured out how to see Jesus by climbing a tree)
- What happens to him when Jesus calls up to him? (Verse 6: he had his mind changed.)
- What does he promise to do? (Verse 8b-9: he was willing to change his ways and fix the bad stuff he had done.)

Activity: Acting it out

Ask the children to think about a place in our town where Jesus could show up (a football game, a sale at a big store, or the opening night of a new movie, for example). Then, decide who Zacchaeus is and what bad stuff he might have done (school bully? gang leader?). Decide who

will play the parts of Zacchaeus and of Jesus. Then act out the skit, producing it more than once if other children want to play the parts.

Option: If you are using journals, invite the children to write something, for their eyes only, of course, that they are sorry about.

Option: If you are not using journals, ask the children to sit quietly and comfortably (in chairs, on the floor, etc.). Tell them all of us are going to pretend we are Zacchaeus. We will think of something we have done that we are sorry about. We will not say it out loud, we will just think about it. We will wait a minute in silence until each of us has thought of something. Then we will picture Jesus coming to each of us and saying: "Come on with me. I want to stay at your house today."

Getting Closure: Tell the children they do not have to offer anything, but if they want to tell how they felt picturing Jesus, they may do so. (If you are comfortable with the idea, you, too, could offer something that came to you.)

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you are always ready for us to tell you we are sorry and for calling to us when we need you. Amen.

Luke 19:1-10

19 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.

⁵When 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.' ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.'

⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' ⁹Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

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