

date: 7/2/17**Bible Passage: Luke 19:1–10**
(Zacchaeus)

God Wants Everyone to Be Part of His Family, Part 2

REMEMBER VERSE

Your Father knows what you need
before you ask him.

Matthew 6:8b

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I come from a religiously diverse family. For most of my life, I only had one model of a solid Christ-follower: my grandfather. When I became a Christian, I wanted so badly for my family to embrace the truth. I did my best to share the gospel. However, I began to accept that I might never see any members of my family fall in love with Jesus, and my heart ached.

My grandpa suddenly became ill and passed on. His death was a heartbreaking loss. However, God always turns mourning into dancing. He opened up conversations between my mother and myself as we grieved. One evening as we spoke, I had the sudden urge to share my thoughts on God, life, death, and what Grandpa might be experiencing in heaven. My mom and I are close, but we rarely talked about these things. My mind reeled as I wondered, “Why did I just share all that?” She began to weep. I sat completely stunned. My mom got up and gave me a hug. “All day at work,” she began, “I heard this voice in my mind repeating ‘Ask Erika for the answers.’ I couldn’t make it stop—but I don’t even know what the question is.”

I’ll admit, sharing the gospel with my mother felt a little awkward. However, it was encouraging to see how God equipped me with the boldness I needed, and how He used my willingness. Finally, God was allowing me to see His work. A few weeks later, on Easter morning, I was blessed with the opportunity to baptize my mom to celebrate her decision to join God’s family. Even after I lost hope and gave up, God was still holding strong. He pursues our love no matter how long it takes. God wants everyone to be part of His family.

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Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

In Luke 19, a tax collector and notorious sinner named Zacchaeus fought the crowds to see Jesus. He found something so compelling about Christ that he sprinted ahead of the crowd, climbed a tree, and watched as Jesus passed. Some scholars have surmised that first-century men found it improper to run. Such an activity was considered highly inappropriate and even scandalous, since it was viewed as childlike. One might conclude that climbing trees would also be socially unacceptable. Zacchaeus broke these social parameters to see Jesus. There was no guarantee Zacchaeus would have any interaction with Jesus or that he'd witness something miraculous. Yet he was willing to potentially humiliate himself to get a brief glimpse of Jesus. That sort of faith caught Jesus' eye.

Jesus turned to the crowd and said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). In Christianity, to be "saved" is usually used in reference to our salvation—a life where we are freed from the penalty of sin and given a new life with Christ now, as well as after death. However, it's interesting to note the depth behind this passage. The word "save" in verse 10 is the Greek word *sōzō*. This word can mean to rescue someone from danger, destruction, or even illness. Jesus came to find those who were broken inside and make them well.

Zacchaeus was on a path toward destruction, and the crowd was displeased that Jesus chose to stay with someone with such a miserable reputation. Tax collectors were known as notoriously greedy, corrupt thieves. They often collected fines above what the government required, pocketing the profits for themselves. Others viewed him as a traitor to his nation, which kept him from being in community with them. Therefore, Zacchaeus's love for material things probably consumed his life. Yet, when Jesus showed Zacchaeus God's true, unconditional love, his whole life was changed. The power of God's love healed his very soul.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

God loves you. You have been commissioned to go into the world and be a representative of His love. God wants everyone to be part of His family—regardless of gender, race, background, or history. We must always be aware of those around us: our brothers and sisters who have not yet joined His family.

This week, ask God to reveal to your heart someone whom He may be specifically pursuing. Maybe it's a coworker, relative, or classmate. Or perhaps you visit a particular restaurant or coffee shop frequently, and the waiter or barista knows you by name. Write down the name or names God puts on your heart. Pray that God would give you the courage and boldness needed to represent Him—despite how unusual or challenging it may feel. For many, talking to others about God is an uncomfortable and stretching endeavor. Pray that you would be able to move beyond your boundaries, relying fully on God's strength.

Throughout the week, also be aware of ways God may want to use you to bless or show His love to another person. Be open and available to God and see how He would use you to minister to that individual.

EXPLORE:: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about

the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Seek and Find

Today's passage continues the message that God wants everyone to be part of His family. Even the hard to find or relate to are found once they choose to follow God. Engage children in this fun treasure hunt for the familiar.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Camera

PREPARE AHEAD

Walk around your room beforehand and take pictures of various items. Either print them out and place them on a table, or project them onto screens around the room. If you don't have access to a camera, consider drawing the objects by hand or cutting out pictures to represent items instead.

RELATE

As children arrive, welcome them and show them the pictures of the classroom items. Let them know the pictures represent lost items around the room, and then send them on a scavenger hunt to find the "lost objects." Celebrate when children find each object. As they search, ask children questions to encourage them to identify with the concept of something being lost. **Have you ever lost something important to you? What was it? Did you ever find it again? How long was it missing? How did you feel while it was gone? What were your feelings when you found it again?** Encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings about things that are lost and things that are found.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

God Wants Everyone to Be Part of His Family

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I May Be Small" and "I Am Listening to You,"_TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the

way. This should be a high-energy entrance. Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- Envelope (large)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the “Seeker” close her eyes while the “Hider” finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out “hot” and “cold.”

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with children.

Lead children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**Your Father knows what you need
before you ask him.**

Matthew 6:8b

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Your Father: Bring thumb and index finger together, all other fingers straight and pointing upward.

knows what: Tap forehead.

you need: Open hands in front of you, palms up.

before you ask him: Bring both hands in front of chest in prayer posture.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES



- [What's It: Family Tree \(See optional image in Resources\)](#)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What's It: Family Tree

A family tree can give an at-a-glance view of just how much impact one family can have. Roots and branches can go deep and wide. This What's It will also help children understand what we mean when we say they're part of God's family and have a place in God's big story.

RELATE

Invite a child volunteer to "spy" on the What's It by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, *cue the Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What's It in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What's It. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What's It from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

This looks like a tree. But this isn't just any kind of tree. What's different about the picture of this tree? Children will respond. **There are spaces on the tree. What do you think might go in these spaces?** Pause for responses. **Yes—the names or pictures of people in a family would go in the spaces. Sometimes families will make a family tree to show how members of their family are related to one another. The older people are often at the top, and as you work your way down it shows their children.** (Volunteer's name), **why do you think this tree is in the Wardrobe of Wonder?** Allow volunteer to give you some suggestions. If he's having difficulty, invite all the kids to give suggestions. **I wonder if the What's It has something to do with what we're going to hear today from The Big God Story? Let's find out, because it's time for ...**

The Big God Story

Luke 19:1–10

God Wants Everyone to Be Part of His Family

Storytelling Technique: Active Participation

SUPPLIES

- [Family Tree template \(see Resources\)](#)
- Paper (11" x 17")
- Pen or marker

PREPARE AHEAD

Before the service, print the Family Tree template onto 11" x 17" paper and prepare it with the Storyteller's personal information for use during storytelling.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. **Hey, friends! You found something pretty cool in the wardrobe today. What was it?** Children answer. **A special tree—a family tree. Guess what? I brought something to share.** Show prepared family tree. **This is my family tree!** Briefly walk children through different parts of family tree. Share names of a few individuals, ages, and something you love about them. **And there's my name. I love being part of my**

family. You know what? This isn't the *only* family I'm part of. Actually, I'm part of another family too. Let's see if you can guess what family I'm talking about. I'll give you some hints. There are millions of people in this family, people in this room are part of this family, *and* we have brothers and sisters all around the world. What family am I talking about? That's right! I'm part of God's family—one of His very own children! Before we go any further, let's stop and ask God help us hear His voice as we learn from Him today. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

While Jesus was traveling, He came to a town where a man named Zacchaeus lived. Many people in this town thought Zacchaeus wasn't very honest and was kind of mean. When Zacchaeus heard Jesus was coming, he was so excited! He'd heard so much about Jesus and His teaching. He *just had* to see Jesus with his own eyes! But once he got to the place where Jesus was visiting, there was already a big crowd. He tried to see over them, but he was too short—even standing on his tippy toes. Can you stand up high on your tippy toes? Encourage children to stand up as tall as possible on toes. **Wow, great job. Okay, everyone sit back down. Well, as hard as he tried, Zacchaeus couldn't see over the crowd. So, he came up with a plan.**

Zacchaeus decided to run ahead of the crowd as fast as he could. He knew he wanted to see Jesus, no matter what anyone else thought. Okay everyone, on the count of three, let's stand up again and run in place as fast as we can. Here we go ... one, two, three. Allow children to run in place for a few seconds. **Well, Zacchaeus ran as fast as he could until he found a tree. Then he climbed it so when Jesus walked past him, he would have a good view! Now, when I count to three, we're all going to pretend to climb a tree. Here we go ... one, two, three.** Allow children to climb in place for a few seconds. Encourage their participation and cooperation, and then have them resume their seats. **Great climbing, friends!**

When Jesus came to the tree, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus. Jesus knew how much Zacchaeus wanted to see Him. He also knew everything in Zacchaeus's heart. So Jesus called Zacchaeus out of the tree and told him He wanted to spend time with him. Zacchaeus was so happy and full of joy! Can you imagine—what if Jesus asked to come and spend time at your house? How would you feel? Children respond. I know I would be so very excited! But the people of the town weren't very excited Jesus was spending time with Zacchaeus. If you remember, the people didn't like Zacchaeus. They couldn't understand why Jesus would spend time with someone like him. But that didn't bother Jesus—not one bit! Jesus knew Zacchaeus wanted to know Him and be part of His family.

Does God just want *some* people to know Him and be part of His family? Children answer. **No! He wants everyone to be part of His family! What if someone is mean, or unkind? Can they be part of God's family?** Children answer. **Yes, they can! What if I make a bad choice? Can I be part of God's family?** Pause for responses. Jesus forgives us for the times when we make bad choices, and for the times when we disobey Him. And that's what happened to Zacchaeus. He became part of God's family that day. Do you think his name is on God's family tree? Children respond. **It sure is!**

When Zacchaeus became part of God's family, his life was changed forever! God's love for Zacchaeus made him want to share God's love with others, including people he had cheated out of money. So Zacchaeus told Jesus he was going to give away half of everything he owned. Can you believe that? Giving our things away can be really hard, but now that Zacchaeus knew God's love, he was willing to give away his things no matter how hard it might have been. Having God in his life was much more exciting than the "things" he had!

I love knowing I'm part of God's family. Sometimes when I read the Bible, I think about a family tree. I remember this is one big story about God's family—which is now my family—and all the great things God has done. It's so exciting! God wants *everyone* in the world to know His love and to be part of His family!

RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Scissors
- Crayons

RELATE

Today we heard in The Big God Story about Zacchaeus and his great desire to see Jesus. Jesus saw into his heart and provided the way for him to be part of God's family.

I wonder ... How do I become part of God's family?

I wonder ... What do I think is the best part of being in God's family?

I wonder ... How does God feel when people finally know Him?

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

RELATE

Send your little ones out with a blessing by praying over them. Have all the leaders come together at the front of the room to corporately bless the children. Lead a prayer over the group:

God, thank You for inviting us to be part of Your family. I pray You would help us to know You as we grow in You. Lord, would You also help us to show love to the people around us who don't know You? I pray that each of us would show Your love each day, even when it's hard.

Now bless the children as a group. Each of the leaders can repeat the blessing below, one after another, to allow the words to sink in.

You are God's children. May you receive God's love and choose to be part of His wonderful family.