



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Discipleship Series Children - Opening Up (Including)

Aim

- To understand the importance of looking out for and including others.
- To know that we are important to God and so is everyone else.

Preparation

- A bag of M&Ms (check for allergies beforehand with parents/carers).
- Gather photographs of various subjects. The free image website <https://pixabay.com> may be helpful. Include people, things and places (you will need a few more pictures than children that will be in your group).
- Drama (as an alternative way to tell the story) - <https://ministry-to-children.com/zaccheus-repents-bible-skit/>
- Lots of dried spaghetti, mini marshmallows and a plastic Easter egg or sponge ball
- 6 clear cups, water, food colouring in red, yellow and blue, 6 sheets of absorbent kitchen roll
- A ball of string or wool
- A few different colours of paint and plastic or paper plates to put the paint on
- A place for the children to wash their hands (a bowl with soapy water and a towel)
- Appendix 1 and 2 - one copy per child
- Appendix 3 - one large copy (A3) or create your own tree

Background for leaders

Read Luke 19:1-10 (NLT).

In the previous chapter, we read the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) and in this we see Jesus taking more of an interest in what people can and will do (such as acknowledging their sin, as the tax collector does) than in who they are, and what their job or position suggests about them.

Throughout Luke's Gospel, we have consistently seen Jesus caring for those who were rejected by society or uncared for. In the story of Zacchaeus, we see these themes summarised. This story appears only in Luke's Gospel, as do the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the compassionate father. It is interesting that Luke always portrays tax collectors favourably for in his culture, Zacchaeus would have been regarded negatively as he 'extorted' his wealth from fellow Jews on behalf of the Romans. Therefore, it is easy to understand the crowd's reaction to Jesus' invitation later in the story.





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In verse 10, Jesus uses Zacchaeus as a model of redemption, and this is our example for how to open up and include others.

‘Nothing is clearer in the Gospel records than the tremendous concern God has for every individual. In an age when the individual seems increasingly redundant and insignificant, it is a vital part of the good news of Jesus Christ that every single person matters to God. He knows us and calls us by name. He has a personal love for each one of us. ‘Zacchaeus!’ said Jesus to the startled tax collector hiding up in his sycamore tree. It was this personal approach that so quickly captured the hearts of many who were lost and lonely. Here at last was someone who really cared for them as individual persons.’ (Watson, David, *Discipleship*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981).

Icebreakers

Colours of Life

Take a bag of M&M's and tell everyone to grab a handful.

Assign a different meaning to each colour: blue = family, green = school, yellow = friends, brown = sport/hobby, orange = food, red = animals etc. However many they have in their hands, that is how many facts they have to share about what they have/like, according to the themed colour. They may also eat them either after the game or directly after they say their fact.

Visual Spirituality

This is a great idea for groups that are ready to go deeper. When you are ready for the discussion to begin, lay photographs of various subjects you have gathered on a table or a surface big enough for everyone to get around. Ask people to walk around and take the picture that best describes/captures their experience of faith/spirituality. After everyone has selected a picture, go around the room and have each person share how that picture represents their relationship with God.

Lesson

You may want to read the story below, or you may prefer to use your own children's Bible, or the drama included in the preparation list. Then ask the children the questions below.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. He stood on tip-toes and jumped up and down. He tried to squeeze through to the front, but no-one would let him.

‘Why doesn't anybody like me?’ He wondered. But he knew the reason. Zacchaeus was a tax collector who had become rich by cheating the townspeople. Then Zacchaeus spied a tree. ‘Aha!’, he thought to himself. ‘I will climb that tree and have the best view of all.’





Then Jesus stopped under that very tree and looked up at him. ‘Zacchaeus,’ Jesus called out, ‘climb down, for I am coming to your house today.’ Zacchaeus could not believe his ears. He jumped down and ran home to get ready.

‘That man is a liar and a cheat,’ the townspeople said. ‘Why is Jesus going to his house?’ Zacchaeus realised they were right and he was ashamed. When Jesus entered his house he said, ‘Lord, I will give half of everything I own to the poor, and everyone I have cheated I will pay back four times the amount I stole.’

Jesus smiled. ‘Dear Zacchaeus,’ he said, ‘today you have become a new man. Now you can stand truly tall.’ (from the Children of God Storybook Bible by Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story was?
- I wonder why Zacchaeus gave away his wealth?

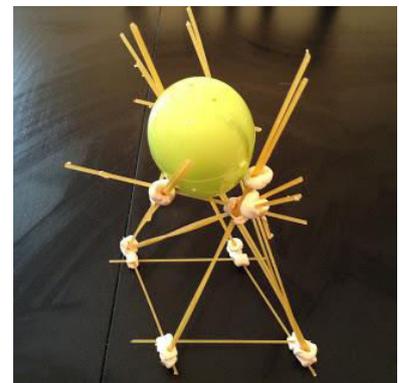
Activities

Marshmallow and Spaghetti Tree

Challenge the children to build a ‘tree’ with spaghetti and marshmallows that will support/hold a plastic egg or sponge ball.

At the end, encourage the children to think about the determination of Zacchaeus to see Jesus, just like the determination they needed to complete the task! Ask the children to share:

- How easy was it to build the tree?
- What difficulties did you encounter?
- What difficulties do you think Zacchaeus encountered in the story?
- What lengths would you go to see one of your heroes?
- When do you sometimes have to be determined?
- Do you ever have to use your determination in order to live as a Christian and to get to know Jesus better?





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Water Experiment

The rainbow is a great symbol for Christians of God's love and promise to us. It's also the symbol of new beginnings - a key message of Christianity. This activity helps children to think about their own ability to share God's love with others and to pray for those who don't yet know that love. Plus, it's amazing to watch over time!



Fill three plastic cups half full each with water. Add different food colouring to each cup (red, yellow and blue). Leave the remaining three cups empty. Arrange the cups in a circle so that empty and full cups are alternate. Fold some kitchen roll in half lengthways and then double it over again.

Place the end of each piece of kitchen roll in one of the cups of water and the other end in an empty cup. Now wait!

The water will start to climb up the paper and pass into the empty cup where it will mix with the water from the next cup but one, which will also be transferring over.

Take out the kitchen roll. Your empty cups will now be filled with coloured water - purple (from the blue and red cups), green (from the yellow and blue cups) and orange (from the yellow and red cups). You will have made a rainbow!

Talk to the children about how the paper helped the water travel from one cup to another. Explain that we can be a bit like the paper, by helping to spread the message about God's love and promise to other people, who might not have heard about it.

- How might we do that?
- How do people show love to you?
- How do you show love to others?
- How would you let others know about God's love?
- What might you do or say?

Crossword

Print appendix 1 for each child.

This is a good activity for slightly older children, although all the words for the crossword are given at the bottom of the page! To provide more of a challenge, just cut off the word box section and hand out if anyone is stuck.





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Worship

Sing or play tracks of the following songs (all available on YouTube).

- *Jesus In My Life* by Hillsong Kids
- *With God's Power Working In Us* by Doug Horley

Prayers

Ball of String

Gather the children in a circle and begin to pray by saying 'I pray for...' (saying someone's name in the group and then throwing the ball to them, while keeping hold of one end of the string). When everyone has been prayed for, a leader (or one of the children) can pray, thanking God for everyone in the circle, and asking that we can be people who include everyone.

I will pray for...

Print a copy of Appendix 2 for each child.

This sheet allows the children to think about different people that they would like to pray for. Children can write prayers, or draw the people they would like to pray for.

Response

Tree

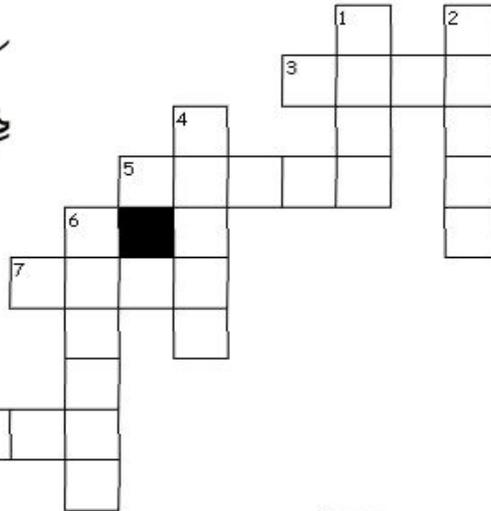
Print an A3 copy of Appendix 3. Remind the children how Zacchaeus was able to see Jesus (by climbing the sycamore tree). Invite the children to respond, and commit to including others at every opportunity by putting their paint fingerprint on the tree outline. You may like to write each child's name next to their fingerprint.





Appendix 1

ZACCHAEUS MEETS JESUS



ACROSS

- 3. To have little money
- 5. To win by breaking the rules
- 7. Someone who does not tell the truth
- 9. A building where people live
- 11. What you say when you regret what you have done
- 12. To search for someone or something
- 13. To move upward, especially using your hands and feet

DOWN

- 1. To be unable to find your way
- 2. The opposite of doing something right
- 4. Not tall
- 6. A person who disobeys God's laws
- 8. You can buy things using this
- 10. What did Zacchaeus go up?
- 11. To set free from sin; to rescue
- 12. To take something that does not belong to you

poor	short	sinner	save	house
lost	climb	tree	cheat	seek
wrong	liar	money	sorry	steal





Appendix 2

I will pray for . . .

Someone who lives near me:

Someone who lives far away:

Someone Smaller Than Me:

Someone Bigger Than Me:

Someone I've never met:

Myself!!

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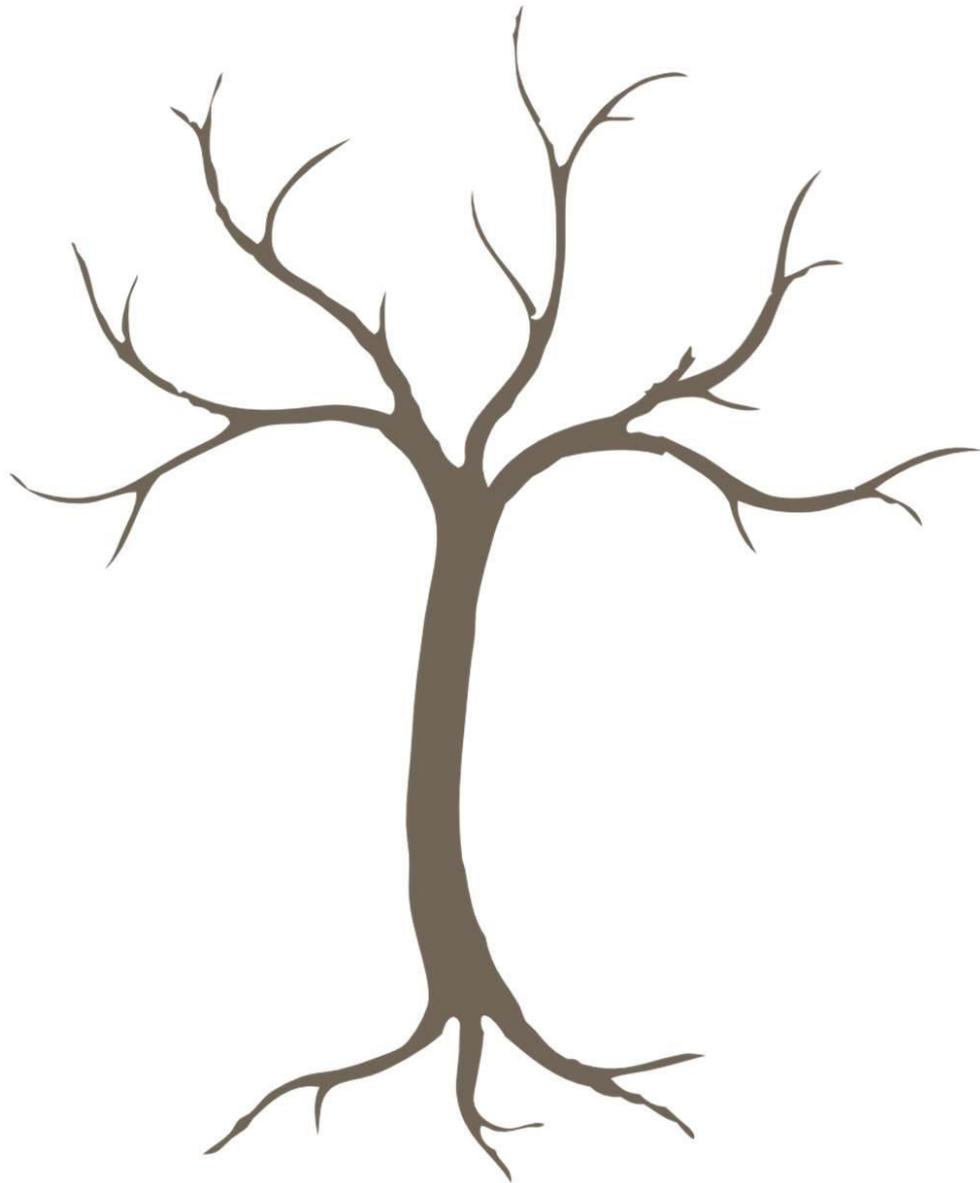




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Appendix 3



Dear God,
Help me to include others just like
Jesus included Zacchaeus.
Amen.

