



SESSION 4 of 4

Zacchaeus

MEETING AIM

To explore the idea that Jesus' love and forgiveness is for everyone.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 19:1-10

BACKGROUND

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, and therefore he wasn't liked by the people. Tax collectors were often corrupt and were seen as collaborators with the occupying Roman troops. However, even this outsider and sinner was approached by Jesus. Tax collectors are not so badly thought of these days, but who else in the young people's lives might be considered hated outsiders?

5 GATHERING TIME

As the young people arrive, encourage them to share what has happened in the last week and any issues they may be facing. If appropriate, lead the discussion toward people who are not liked. They could be disliked for any reason at all, but be careful not to get too personal. Keep it general, using questions and phrases such as: "I don't like people who..." or "Why are...not liked?"

5 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: pictures of cityscapes
Before the session, search the internet for pictures of city skylines. Choose some that are easy to recognise and others that are more difficult.

Put the pictures up around the room where you meet and see if the young people can recognise the cities from their skyline views. Some will be easy because of their well-known buildings and landmarks, but others will be more difficult. It will also depend on which view you have selected. Some things look very different from an alternative perspective.

20 BIBLE EXPLORATION

You will need: Bible; paper; art materials; video retelling of Zacchaeus' story and the means to play it (optional)
Read Luke 19:1-10 to the group. If you have the facilities, and it is appropriate to the group to do so, search online for a video

retelling of Zacchaeus' story (there are plenty on YouTube) and show them the video you have found.

Get some immediate reactions from the group about what happens in the story. What surprises them? What does this tell them about Jesus? At the end of your short discussion, ask the group: "What do you think happened in Zacchaeus' house that made the tax collector completely change his life?"

Give out the sheets of paper and art materials, then challenge the young people to draw what they think happened at Zacchaeus' house. They could create a single picture or a cartoon strip of what happened. If there are any young people in your group who don't like art or drawing, challenge them to write a story about what happened.

When everyone has finished, gather the group together and share all your ideas about what happened.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Discuss the story further using these questions:

- What would you have thought if you had been in the crowd outside Zacchaeus' house?
- Can you think of any groups of people today who have a similar reputation to Zacchaeus? If Jesus visited them, what would you think? Would people accept that they had really changed?
- Who do you identify with most in the story: Zacchaeus or the crowd? Why?
- Do you sometimes feel outside of God's forgiveness and love?

15 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: art materials and paper from 'Bible exploration' (optional)

Invite the young people to think how they would feel if Jesus came to their house and hung out in their room for a while. If you have time and your group enjoyed the imaginative activity in 'Bible exploration', encourage them to draw what that might look like, or how the conversation might go. If not, just ask them to use their imaginations.

Once they have finished their pictures or imaginings, ask the young people to silently think about the following questions:

- How welcoming are we to Jesus in our lives?
- Is there anything we need to change?
- Do our friends see our relationship with Jesus from the way we live?

Explain that Zacchaeus was not liked because of what he did. His job often involved corruption and other deceitful actions. However, his response to meeting Jesus was to make changes to his life.

Remind the group that meeting Jesus can be a daily occurrence for us. By realising that Jesus is always with us we can reach our full potential.

5 PRAYER

You will need: card; felt-tip pens; scissors; laminator (optional)

Ask the young people to cut out credit-card-sized pieces of card (85mm x 55mm). Let them create and design a bank name that is relevant to them. For example, it could be based on the name of the youth group. They should also add their own name and any other 'spoof' embellishments.

As they do this, explain that Zacchaeus had most likely been cheating the people when they paid their taxes. However, he promised to change his ways after meeting with Jesus.

On the back of your credit cards you are going to write a prayer asking for help with something that you want to change in your lives.

If you have a laminator, laminate the cards and encourage the young people to keep them in their wallets or Bibles to refer to and use as a prompt for prayer when they are on their own.

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tells stories at thecreativeminimalist.com.

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