

LESSON PLAN

ZACCHAEUS CLIMBS A TREE

Luke 19:1-27

Lesson Memory Verse: Luke 19:10 - "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Lesson Aim: To show how Jesus Christ loves us and wants to save us from our sin and Hell.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Have you ever climbed a tree? (Let the class have a brief discussion on their experiences of tree-climbing.) Why did you climb trees? (To see farther and to hide are possible answers.) Do you still like to climb trees? Be sure to be careful when you climb trees because it can be dangerous.

In today's lesson we are going to learn about a man who climbed up a tree and while he was in the tree a wonderful thing happened to him. But first, let us look at our memory verse. It tells us what Jesus did for this man who climbed up a tree.

HE (for Authority): Hold up a large card with Luke 19:10 on it and ask the whole class to recite it several times saying "Luke 19:10" before and after the verse is recited. Then turn the card over with only a few of the important words of this verse printed on that side. Have the class repeat the verse several times.

Now turn the card back to the full verse and explain what it means by asking the following questions (be ready to give the answer if no one knows it): Who is the Son of man? (Jesus Christ) Who are the lost? (Those who are not saved by Jesus Christ) What did He do for the lost people on earth? (Died on the cross to pay the penalty for their sins) From what did He save these lost people? (From Hell and the power of sin in their lives) Now recite the verse and reference aloud in unison using the card with the whole verse written out and then the other side with just the important words. Then recite the verse once or twice without the card. Finally have the children find the verse in their Bibles and tell them to underline it.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Our story today takes place in the city of Jericho and our memory verse tells us one reason why Jesus went to that city.

I. Sinner - Luke 19:2-4

A. Zacchaeus was a leader of publicans – 19:2 – He was the chief publican (chief tax collector). Tax collectors usually were great sinners (cf. v. 7), because most of them cheated the people out of their money and Zacchaeus was the chief of these sinful men.

B. Zacchaeus was rich – 19:2. Probably got rich by overtaxing the people – he would take more money from the people than he was supposed to take – cf. v. 8.

C. Zacchaeus was little in height – 19:3. No doubt it was tough to be little and still be the chief publican.

D. Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus – 19:3-4. We do not know why he wanted to see Jesus, but it is always good when a sinner wants to see Jesus. There is always hope that he will get saved when he sees Jesus.

WE: We are sinners (Rom 3:23). In fact, in God's eyes we are no better than Zacchaeus because one sin makes us guilty of all sins (James 2:10). The greatest sin of all is not accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior (John 3:18-19, 36). We should want to see Jesus who can save us from our sins. I hope He is your Savior so you can rejoice when you see Him!

II. Savior - Luke 19:1, 5

A. Jesus came to Jericho – 19:1. This was the city where Zacchaeus lived.

WE: We cannot see Jesus like Zacchaeus did, but He has come to our town, too.

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B. Jesus saw Zacchaeus – 19:5. Nothing can be hidden from Jesus. He even saw what was in Zacchaeus' mind and heart. He knew Zacchaeus very well. He knew what he needed.

WE: We must be careful what we allow in our minds and hearts, because Jesus sees it (Prov 15:3).

C. Jesus called Zacchaeus by name – 19:5. He can call anyone by name.

WE: We are being called by Jesus to open the door of our hearts to Him (Rev 3:20). He knows who we are, our names, and even the number of hairs on our heads (Mt 10:30). Isn't that amazing?

D. Jesus asked to go home with Zacchaeus –19:5. He wanted to talk to him about his soul.

WE: We should be happy to let Jesus talk to us. I hope that is why you come to church and Sunday school. Jesus can talk to us in our homes, too, but sometimes we cannot hear what He is saying because the TV has our attention, or there is so much playing or fighting with brothers or sisters that we cannot hear what Jesus is saying to us.

III. Decision - Luke 19:6

A. Zacchaeus came down from the tree quickly. He acted immediately and did not wait for Jesus to ask a second time.

WE: We need to make up our minds today and let Jesus talk to us from the Bible. We may not have another day to do it (Prov 27:1; 2 Cor 6:2).

B. Zacchaeus “received” Jesus joyfully. It was a great privilege to have God's Son talk to him.

WE: We are privileged to have Jesus talk to us from the Bible. Many people do not have a Bible and know little or nothing about Him. Jesus wants you to joyfully receive Him as your Savior. When you receive Him, you will become one of God's children (John 1:12).

IV. Results - Luke 19:7-9

A. The people of Jericho murmured – 19:7. The people could not see what Jesus saw in this tax collector. Jesus saw a sinner that wanted help. The people saw a sinner that needed to be avoided.

WE: We may have people that can see all the bad in our lives, but Jesus knows if you want His help and He will come and change your life when He saves you (2 Cor 5:17).

B. Zacchaeus showed a changed life – 19:8. He publicly confessed to give half of his money to the poor and offered to restore four times what he wrongly took from anyone.

WE: We will have changed lives if we really receive Jesus Christ as our Savior (Mt 12:33). Then we need to tell others how Jesus changed our lives (Mk 5:19-20; Mt 10:32-33).

C. Jesus encouraged Zacchaeus – 19:9. He told Zacchaeus that he was saved that very day. Jesus stood up for Zacchaeus against the murmurers.

WE: When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we can be encouraged by the word of God that we are truly saved when we turn from our sin and receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior (Jn 5:24; Act 3:19; 26:20; Rom 10:13; 1 Jn 5:11-13). Jesus will never leave us (Heb 13:5-6).

BE (for Action): Two rich men came to Jesus; the young ruler (Luke 18:18-25) and Zacchaeus, but only one received Him. Why? The young ruler loved his money and possessions, but Zacchaeus was willing to give it away. The ruler did not listen to Jesus, but the tax collector did listen to Him.

When you come to Jesus you must listen to what He says to you as you read, memorize and study the Bible, as you hear it taught in Sunday school and as you hear it preached in church. The Holy Spirit will help you to understand what Jesus is saying to you from the Bible. God told three of Jesus' disciples, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him (Mt 17:5). He is calling for you to let Him come into your life (Rev 3:20). Will you invite Him into your life to be your Savior? (Give an invitation for the children to be saved. Offer to help them make this decision after class is dismissed.)