

## Jesus Seeks and Saves

**Bible Passage: Luke 19:1–10**

(Zacchaeus)

### REMEMBER VERSE

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:23–24

### SCHEDULE

#### EXPLORE

10 min.

#### RESPOND

15 min.

#### DISCOVER

30 min.

#### BLESS

5 min.

## Leader Prep

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

### Further Resources

A [Small Group Enhancement](#) is available for this lesson.

A [Storytelling video](#) is available for this lesson.

### Download the following resources to help you plan and lead Tru Fire Story lessons:

[2020–21 Scope and Sequence](#)

[Tru Fire Story How It Works](#) document

[At Home Weekly: Lesson 3](#) is provided for this lesson.

[Explaining God's Salvation Plan to Kids](#) document

[Helping a Child Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit](#) document

If you have questions about Tru Fire curriculum or are looking for great training, blogs, and other support resources, visit [myhealthychurch.com/trufire](http://myhealthychurch.com/trufire).

## Inspire

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

When I was two years old, my dad became very ill and was told he didn't have long to live. My mom hadn't thought much about God, and my dad was a Buddhist. Now, facing this horrible news, my mom came to know God through a powerful encounter with Him.

Soon my mom wanted nothing more than for her husband and family to experience the freedom she had in Christ. Everyone in my mom's faith community lifted up prayer after prayer for my dad's life, both physically and spiritually. And, miraculously, over time, he was healed! The doctors couldn't explain it.

From that day on, my mom took our family to church every week. However, it wasn't until years later that my father would come to know Jesus. Each week he went, sat in the back, and talked to no one. Each week our pastor gave him a hug and said, "How's my Japanese Buddhist friend doing today?"

Even though it took my dad six years to come into a relationship with Jesus, I know Jesus never stopped pursuing him until he was saved.

### Equip

*Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

A prime example of Jesus seeking and saving the lost is found in the account of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Because tax collectors were well-known for shady dealings, they were thought of as scoundrels—the lowest of the low. And for Jewish people, Zacchaeus was especially worthless. He was a Jewish man working for the Gentile, Roman government that Jewish people greatly resented.

In the Roman Empire, chief tax collecting jobs were offered up for bid with the understanding that the winning bidders were responsible for collecting their own salaries along with the taxes. Of course, this left room for abuse and extortion. Because Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, he had other tax collectors under him. He most likely would have been entitled to a cut from all of the tax collectors below him.

But Zacchaeus' heart was changed when he encountered Jesus. Zacchaeus declared he would do all that God's Law required. Leviticus 6:2–5 says that if someone cheats a neighbor out of something, he must return it and add one fifth (twenty percent) of the value as a trespass offering. But Exodus 22:1 states that if a man steals something and is unable to return what he stole, he must pay back four or even five times what he stole.

Zacchaeus declared, “[I’ll] give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (Luke 19:8). With this declaration Zacchaeus announced that he had repented and turned from his sinful life. Jesus responded by saying, “Today salvation has come to this house . . . For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (vv. 9–10).

### Support

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

In Matthew 11:19, Jesus mentioned how people had accused Him: “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’” Even if we don’t fit into the categories of gluttons, drunkards, or tax collectors, we all fit into the last category: sinners saved by grace.

Spend some time thinking about your part in God’s story. How did God seek after you? How did He arrange the events in your life to bring you to salvation? Take a moment to reflect on this, and thank God for seeking you out, saving you, and bringing you into relationship with Him. Next, prayerfully consider how your changed life might be a living testimony to others. How will your story be told to those who are still being sought after by God? Read and ponder the beautiful words of the classic song “Amazing Grace,” and marvel that, “I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see.”

### New Life; New Behaviors

Zacchaeus is a great example of sanctification. As soon as he accepted Jesus as Savior, he began to change his behavior. So what is sanctification? It is both instant at salvation and progressive until the day we reach heaven.

*Instant (Positional) Sanctification:* When we accept salvation, we receive new life in Christ. At the moment of salvation, we instantly receive the righteousness Jesus provided with His death. We are perfectly righteous in God’s sight through Jesus’ work.

*Progressive Sanctification:* But we do not automatically begin to live perfect, sinless lives as soon as we accept salvation. Instead as we grow in our relationship with God, we continually turn from sin and turn toward God with our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. This process of growing toward God and away from sin requires:

- Learning what God wants through His Word (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26)
- Purposeful choices of our will (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 John 3:2–3)
- The strengthening power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 1:2).

### Further Resources

You may wish to download the following overview resources to help you plan and lead Tru Fire Story lessons:

- Tru Fire Story [How It Works](#) document
- [Scope and Sequence](#)
- [Explaining God's Salvation Plan to Kids](#)
- [Helping a Child Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit](#)

If you have questions about Tru Fire curriculum or are looking for great training, blogs, and other support resources, visit <https://trufirecurriculum.com/>.

## SMALL GROUP SECTION

# 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.*

Just as Zacchaeus' sin separated Him from God, our sin separates us from God. Because of Jesus, we are no longer separated from Him. Today the children will create mazes as they explore seeking and finding their way.

## Option 1: Mini Mazes (for younger kids)

### SUPPLIES

- Flat toothpicks (about 75 for every group of 2–3 children)
- Scissors (1 pair for every 2–3 children)
- Optional: masking tape

### SET UP

Optional: Use tape to create squares (about two feet by two feet) on the floor or on the tables for the children to build mazes inside. Space out the squares so kids have room to work around their squares.

### RELATE

Invite the children to work together in groups of two to three to create mazes using the toothpicks. They can work on the tables or on the floor (and in the optional tape squares). Let them know they can cut the toothpicks to size where needed. Encourage them to build several dead-ends in their mazes to make them trickier to get through. If time allows, let the children try one another's mazes.

## Option 2: Lost Objects (for older kids)

Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." In this chapter of the Bible, Jesus sought and saved Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and a sinner.

### SUPPLIES

- [Blank Checklist template](#) (see Resources)
- Small objects (at least 1 dozen, more if you are using teams; examples: table tennis ball, tweezers, baseball, egg timer, piece of chalk)
- Pencils or pens
- Tape
- Stopwatch or timer

### PREPARE

Print the Blank Checklist template and write the names of the small objects on it. (Optional: Print two more copies of the checklist.)

### SET UP

Tape the checklist to a wall or on a small group table and set the writing utensils nearby. Hide the small objects around the room.

### RELATE

Invite the children to seek and find the lost objects you've hidden around the room. Show them the checklist, and time them to see how quickly they can find all of the objects.

For more fun, have the kids form two teams. Give each team a copy of the checklist, and challenge the teams to see which team can find the most objects in one minute. You may wish to hide more than a dozen items if you are using teams.

## LARGE GROUP

SECTION

# DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

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

## Traditions and Remember Verse

### SUPPLIES

- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)
- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)
- [Remember Verse animation](#) (see Resources)

### RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

**Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious**

thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23–24

## Connect

Encourage the members of your community to get to know one another through engaging questions, energizing games, and creative activities.

### Question

**When was a time you looked really hard for something?**

### Activity: Next Word

#### SUPPLIES

- [Connect Question image](#) (see Resources)
- [Connect Activity image](#) (see Resources)
- Paper (1 sheet for every 5 children)
- Scissors
- Pencils or pens
- Bag, bowl, or bucket

#### PREPARE

Cut each sheet of paper into five strips. You'll need one strip for each child.

#### RELATE

Encourage each child to take a strip of paper, write her name in large letters, tear the strip in half, and place one of the halves in the bag, bowl, or bucket (while keeping the other half). Now invite each child to take a different piece of paper and go around the room trying to find the matching piece. When a child finds the other half of their paper, they will take the half before they exchange answers to the Connect question. Play until everyone has both halves of their name strip.

## The Big God Story

**Bible Passage:** Luke 19:1–10

**Ponder Point:** Jesus Seeks and Saves

**Storytelling Technique:** Actions, Props, Visuals, and Audio

#### SUPPLIES

- [Ponder Point image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline animation](#) (see Resources)
- [Sycamore Tree image](#) (see Resources)
- [Coins sound effect](#) (see Resources)
- [Storytelling video](#) (optional; see Resources)
- Bibles
- Step stool
- Paper lunch bags (4)
- Fake coins (18)
- Marker

**PREPARE AHEAD**

On the front of one bag, write “TAX.” Place three fake coins in each of the three remaining bags.

**SET UP**

As children arrive, ask three volunteers to hold the three bags with the coins. Tell them to count the coins in their bags. Ask four tall volunteers (kids or leaders) to come to the front before storytelling begins. When you’re ready to start, have the volunteers stand in a row, shoulder to shoulder, at the front of the stage.

**RELATE**

Storyteller stands behind four tall volunteers or leaders and crouches low so volunteers block the children’s view of the storyteller. **Good morning, everyone!** Pretend to strain to see audience. **Good!** Jump up between each word, popping head over top of volunteers. **Morning!** Jump. **Everyone!** Jump. **How am I supposed to tell my story like this?** Get step stool, place behind “crowd,” and climb up. **There you are! Now I can see you. You’re a good-looking crowd! I’m glad to see you, even though I had to work hard.** Thank and dismiss volunteers. Climb down off step stool.

**I’m so excited to tell you today about a person who had to work hard to meet Jesus. Before we go any further, let’s ask the Holy Spirit to speak truth to us today.** Lead kids in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

**As you read The Big God Story, you might notice that Jesus often spent time with people who were not powerful and popular. But He also spent time with people who were powerful and popular. Jesus loved all kinds of people.**  
*Tech: Cue Ponder Point image. Jesus came to seek and save all people!*

**Let’s get our Bibles and turn to Luke 19.** Read vv. 1–2 as kids follow along. **I need your help today. Whenever you hear me say the name Zacchaeus, put your hand above your eyes as if you’re looking for someone far away and sit as tall as you can and pretend to be trying to see over a tall crowd.** Practice this seeking action together a few times. **Okay, listen carefully, and be sure to be quiet after each action so you don’t miss anything.**

**The man we will hear about today, Zacchaeus (seeking action), was a man in need of a Savior. Zacchaeus (seeking action) was disliked by his community because he was a Jewish tax collector. And not just any regular tax collector—a chief tax collector.** *Tech: Cue Coins sound effect.* **No one liked tax collectors. Who knows what taxes are?** Invite responses. **Taxes are money the government takes from its citizens to pay for things like roads, schools, and parks. Though taxes help the government and public places run smoothly, they’re not fun to pay!**

**The Roman government hired men like Zacchaeus (seeking action) to collect the money they needed. But tax collectors back then didn’t just collect the money the government needed; they also collected extra money to keep for themselves.** Walk around room and request money from the kids holding paper lunch bags. Tell them they owe two coins; put one coin in your paper bag and one in your pocket.

Address the kids with the paper bags. **How many coins did you start with?** Allow responses. **How many coins do you have now that I’ve collected the tax and collected my pay too?** Allow responses. **And that is why people didn’t like tax collectors. They had the right to take money—money most people needed and wanted.**

**One day, Jesus was passing through Zacchaeus’ (seeking action) hometown of Jericho. As usual, crowds of people followed Jesus everywhere He went and gathered around Him. There were so many people that some couldn’t see Jesus through the crowd. Zacchaeus (seeking action) really wanted to see Jesus too. Let’s read what he did.** Ask a volunteer to read vv. 3–4 while everyone follows along. *Tech: Cue Sycamore Tree image.*

**Jesus saw Zacchaeus (seeking action) up in the tree.** Read vv. 5–6 or ask a volunteer to read. **Although Zacchaeus (seeking action) was happy to have Jesus over to his house, how did the crowd react?** Read v. 7. **Everyone else was upset. “He’s going to a sinner’s house!” they muttered to each other. Those people didn’t understand that**

Jesus came to show God's love and grace to everyone, both people who loved God and people who didn't. Jesus wanted sinners to turn from their sin and follow Him. Eating at the house of this unpopular tax collector was exactly what Jesus wanted to do.

Because of Jesus, Zacchaeus (seeking action) decided to change. How do you think he changed? Invite answers. Let's see what he did. Read v. 8 or ask a volunteer to read. **Wow! He chose to turn from his old life right away and to stop unfairly taking money from people.** Walk around room and give five coins to each child holding a paper bag. **Zacchaeus (seeking action) showed his faith in Jesus by obeying God's laws about cheating. Because of Zacchaeus' (seeking action) faith, Jesus could tell that the tax collector had chosen to follow God.** Read vv. 9–10. Direct kids to stop making actions so they can listen closely.

Zacchaeus' community didn't like him, but Jesus saw Zacchaeus as a sinner in need of a Savior. So Jesus called Zacchaeus by name and spent time with him. Because of Jesus, Zacchaeus chose to change. He turned from his old life of sin—and turned toward Jesus.

While Jesus was still with Zacchaeus, He declared that He came to earth "to seek and to save the lost" (v. 10). *Tech: Cue Ponder Point image.* We all have something in common with Zacchaeus. Because of our sins, we are all in need of the Savior. Jesus calls us each by name, seeks to spend time with us, wants a relationship with us, and invites each one of us to be a part of The Big God Story. Share the story of how Jesus sought you, found you, saved you, and changed your life.

This Bible story provides an excellent opportunity for a salvation invitation. See the Salvation Invitation information below.

## Worship as Response

This time allows kids to respond to God through worship. Make plans for your worship time, but prepare yourself and your team to hold them loosely if the Holy Spirit leads the group in a different direction.

### SUPPLIES

- Ribbon (3'–4' per child, at least 1" wide, any color or pattern)
- Scissors
- Large plastic toy hoop
- Bucket, bowl, or box (big enough to hold ribbon)
- Worship music (suggestion: "Chasing After Me," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)
- Optional: fabric strips (3'–4' per child, at least 2" wide, any color or pattern)
- *Explaining God's Salvation Plan to Kids* (see Resources; 1 copy for every adult helping with the salvation invitation)
- *The Plan of Salvation* (see Resources; 1 copy for each child who responds to the salvation invitation)

### PREPARE

Cut the ribbon into pieces about three or four feet long—one piece for each child. (Optional: Use fabric strips instead of ribbon.) Put the ribbon pieces in the box. If you wish to include a salvation invitation, choose and coach adult volunteers to pray with children who wish to receive salvation. Encourage these volunteers to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide and empower them as they talk to children.

### SET UP

Place the box at the front of the room and lay the hoop on the floor nearby.

### RELATE

Jesus seeks and saves all people who choose to put their faith in Him. Today we're going to take some time to

**think about what we heard in The Big God Story and respond to God. When you are ready, you can come forward and take a ribbon from the box, find a quiet place in the room, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you how He has been seeking after you because He cares for you and wants a relationship with you.**

If you have already started your relationship with Jesus, you can loop your ribbon onto the hoop and thank God that you're no longer separated from Him; instead, you're saved from sin and tied into His forever family!

If you haven't started a relationship with Jesus, and today you want to be found by Him, go talk to one of the leaders in the room. They would love to pray with you and answer any questions you may have.

Before you release the children to respond, show them how to loop a ribbon onto the hoop. You might also station a leader at the hoop to help the kids. To loop the ribbon, fold it in half, place the folded end under the hoop, and open it near the fold. Then pull the ends of the ribbon through the opening and pull tightly to secure.

## SMALL GROUP SECTION

# RESPOND// 15 min.

### Small Group Leaders

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

## Reflect: Jesus Seeks and Saves

Encourage kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

### Questions for Younger Kids

- **Why did Jesus hang out with “tax collectors and sinners”?** Matthew 9:10–12
- **Why do you think Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus so badly?**
- **How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus?** Luke 19:8
- **Why did Zacchaeus climb the tree?** Luke 19:3–4
- **Why do you think Jesus told Zacchaeus that He wanted to come to his house?**
- **What does it mean to be lost?** Isaiah 59:2
- **What did Jesus do to find us?** Romans 5:8

### Questions for Older Kids

- **What types of people did Jesus hang out with?** Matthew 9:10
- **Why did Jesus hang out with “tax collectors and sinners”?** Matthew 9:10–13
- **Why do you think Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus so badly?**
- **How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus?** Luke 19:8
- **What does it mean to be lost?** Isaiah 59:2
- **Why do you think Jesus told Zacchaeus that He wanted to come to his house?**
- **How did Zacchaeus play a part in The Big God Story?** Luke 19:8–10
- **How do you think Zacchaeus' salvation might have affected his community and the other tax collectors?**

## Shadow Stories

In this time, kids choose scenes from today's passage and act them out together.



### SUPPLIES

- Bibles (1 for every 5–6 children)
- Flashlights (1 for every 5–6 children)
- Optional: white bedsheets (1 for every 5–6 children), step stools (2 for every 5–6 children)

### SET-UP

If your room has windows, cover them and darken the room as best as possible. Create blank wall space for each small group. Alternatively, hang white bedsheets on the wall or have members of the group hold up the bedsheet while standing on step stools.

### RELATE

Have the children form groups of five or six. **Zacchaeus’ story shows us how a single encounter with Jesus can change someone from a life of sin to living for God. Let’s retell this beautiful story today in our groups through shadow pictures.**

**Choose two scenes from the passage we read today and create a still image of each scene by using your bodies to create shadows on the wall. Include everyone in your group in creating the image. Then, for your third scene, show yourself sharing God’s love with someone.**

Encourage each group to hold the flashlight about six to eight feet from the wall. Have children experiment with moving toward and away from the light to see how it changes the size of their shadows. If space is an issue, consider making shadows with only hands and not full bodies. If time allows, have groups share their favorite shadow pictures with one another.

## Small Group Enhancement: “Twenty Questions”

### SUPPLIES

- [Small Group Enhancement](#) (see Resources)
- Other supplies as listed on the *Small Group Enhancement* page

### RELATE

Use this additional activity as it best suits your small groups.

## 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.*

### SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse cards](#) (see Resources)
- [At Home Weekly: Lesson 3](#) (see Resources)

### RELATE

Stand in a circle. Open a Bible and read Luke 19:10:

**“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”**

Encourage the children to link up arms, and then read the verse again over the group. Finish by speaking this blessing over the kids:

**May you know that Jesus seeks after you. May you accept His salvation and walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit so you can bring other lost people to Jesus.**

### Note

Send home *Remember Verse cards* and the *At Home Weekly* with your kids.