

Open my eyes so I can examine the wonders of your Instruction!
(Psalm 119:18)

Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1-10

Prepare to Wonder

Zacchaeus—and before you start singing the song about a wee little man, let’s think about this story from the perspective of the crowd. There was a man, Zacchaeus, a tax collector. No one liked tax collectors, especially because Zacchaeus was known to steal and cheat people out of their money. Suddenly, this man was having dinner with Jesus and changing his ways. Was this possible?

It would be frustrating to be in this situation. Why did Jesus choose to have a meal with someone people called a sinner? Zacchaeus wanted to change his ways, and he asked to be forgiven. Zacchaeus had to have been pretty desperate. If you consider this story in today’s context, Zacchaeus was like a man on Wall Street. Imagine him wearing a suit and tie, climbing a tree, begging to be noticed. It seems like he really wanted to change.

How do we handle someone who has done wrong and is trying to make things right? How do we participate in forgiveness? Maybe the first step is accepting that people can change—and with the help and guidance of Jesus, we all can learn there is opportunity for second chances. We often get wrapped up in a story about a short man in a tree, but this story shares an important message of inclusion and forgiveness.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This week take time to focus on forgiveness. Is there someone in your life against whom you are holding a grudge or anger? Can this person be forgiven? If so, consider what is necessary for you to forgive. Even if you can’t do it right away, begin the process of healing yourself by trying to find forgiveness in your heart.

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: CEB Bible, Annual Music CD or song download, optional: Digital Class Pack

- Gather together near your Wonder Table.

SAY: Today's faith word is *guide*.

- Show the children the "Guide" poster (Digital Class Pack).

SAY: Guiding is showing the way, like the light of Christ.

WONDER: How does light help to guide us?

SING together

- Use your Annual Music CD or download the song, "Follow As You Go" (<https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Annual-Music>).
- Play the song, "Follow As You Go." Then sing and celebrate.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: CEB Bible, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, optional: Wonder Cube (Digital Class Pack)

READ the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story, Luke 19:1-10.
- Roll the Wonder Cube. Take time to answer a few of the questions.

WATCH the Bible Story

- Visit <https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Video> to download and watch today's Bible story, or watch on www.amplifymedia.com.

WONDER together

- Why did Zacchaeus climb a tree?
- How did Jesus respond?
- How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus called to him in the tree?

CONTINUE to Wonder

- How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus forgave him?
- Why do you think forgiveness is sometimes difficult?
- When have you offered forgiveness to someone, even when it was hard to do so?

PRAY together

- Dear God, please be our guide. Amen.

Experience Wonder—Zacchaeus in the Tree (Snack)

Supplies: ice cream sugar cones (one for each child), green frosting, individual containers for frosting, plastic knives, small paper plates, napkins, Gummi bears

Prepare Ahead: Place the frosting in individual containers, one for each child. Place a cone upside down on each plate.

- Have the children cover the cones with green frosting and place the Gummi bears “up the tree” (by pushing them into the icing on the cone).

SAY: Zacchaeus wasn’t liked in his community because he was a tax collector.

WONDER: I wonder if Zacchaeus felt left out because he was different from others. Do you ever feel left out?

Tip: Always check for allergies before serving food to the children.

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Guidance Through Study

- Gather the children in a circle.

SAY: Jesus was guiding us to forgive others through our Bible story today.

SAY: How do you think it feels to forgive someone? Does it feel like a smile?

- Turn to the child next to you and smile. Have that child turn to the next child and smile. Continue around the circle.
- Use additional suggestions by the children and go around the circle again. (Handshake, hug, and pat on the back are other good movements you can use.)
- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing, “May you always be guided by God.”
- Encourage families to use the Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and to read the *Winter 2020–21 Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* at home this week.