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# JESUS SEEKS AND SAVES

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## SERIES: A NEW LIFE

Join us throughout the month of March as we learn stories about the NEW LIFE Jesus Christ offers in Himself when we accept Him into our hearts! We will be reading through the books of Luke and John.

## REMEMBER VERSE

PSALM 139:23-24—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.

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## SCHEDULE

### *All Services*

0:00—0:35	Small Group (Respond Activity/Lesson)
0:35—0:40	Transition to Large Group
0:40—1:00	Large Group (B100)
1:00—1:05	Transition to Small Group
1:05—1:15	Bless and Dismiss

## NOTES

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# LEADER RESOURCES

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## SERIES OVERVIEW

WEEK 1: God's Plan Is Best

*Peter*

WEEK 2: God Knows Everything

*Woman at the Well*

CURRENT WEEK: Jesus Seeks and Saves

*Zacchaeus*

WEEK 4: Remember & Celebrate

*Feast: Trumpets*

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## EQUIP

An example of Jesus seeking and saving the lost is found in the account of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Because tax collectors were known for shady dealings, they were thought of as scoundrels—the lowest of the low. For Jews, Zacchaeus was especially worthless. He was a Jew working for the Roman government that Jews greatly resented.

The Roman Empire hired men to collect taxes for their empire. They did not give their tax collectors a salary for this work—probably because they expected the tax collectors to collect more than the required tax and keep the extra for themselves. Because Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, he would have been entitled to a cut from all of the tax collectors below him. But Zacchaeus had been changed by his encounter with Jesus. Zacchaeus declared he would do all that the law required—in the Mosaic law (the laws of God given to Moses). Leviticus 6:2-5 says that if someone cheats a neighbor out of something, he must return it and add one fifth 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 times what he stole.

Zacchaeus declared he would "give half of [his] possessions to the poor, and if [he had] cheated anybody out of anything, [he would] pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). After Zacchaeus made this declaration to Jesus, he 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" (v. 9-10).

## ENCOURAGE

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 any of these categories, 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 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 testament" 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."

## WELCOME

*Some fun ideas to welcome kids as they check-in to your room at the beginning of service.*

Invite the kids to color on the provided coloring page or work on the provided activity page.

As kids arrive, feel free to ask them this week's Connect Question. Feel free to write the question on the board and encourage some fun dialogue before you start your lesson.

QUESTION: When was a time you looked really hard for something?

## RESPOND

*A chance for kids to respond to what God is putting on their hearts through creative expression.*

Zacchaeus, like all of us, was in need of a Savior—the Savior, Jesus. Jesus sought after Zacchaeus to bring him into relationship. Jesus seeks and saves all people who choose to put their faith in Him.

INSTRUCTIONS: Hand each child a Room Sign Template. Have them write their name in the middle in big letters and decorate the whole page. Encourage them to hang or tape it on the outside of the door to their room. Remind them that Jesus knew Zacchaeus and called him by name. In the same way, Jesus seeks us, knows us, and calls us by name.

SUPPLIES:

- Room Sign Template
- Coloring supplies

## REFLECT

*A chance to reflect on what kids have just learned about The Big God Story.*

Zacchaeus was a tax collector and a sinner. People in his community didn't like him. But Jesus called Zacchaeus out of sin and into relationship with Him. Zacchaeus' story shows us how a simple encounter with Jesus can save someone from a life of sin.

- What types of people did Jesus hang out with? *Matthew 9:10*
- Why did Jesus hang out with these types of people? *Matthew 9:11-13*
- 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?
- What do you think our communities, our world, and our relationships might look like if we lived out our parts in The Big God Story to the fullest?

## BLESS

*A powerful way to bless the kids and parents by sending them off with a benediction.*

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite the parents into your room at the end of the service to say one last prayer together with the whole family. Instruct them to find their child and sit/stand by their side. Explain what their child learned today and read the verse below. Pray together and then dismiss.

PSALM 34:18 – The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

BLESSING: May you know the God who seeks after you. May you be found in the One who provides the way back to your Heavenly Father.

## NOTES

This script serves as an outline of what your storytelling might sound like. Items written in italics are cues for the storyteller and are not meant to be read out loud. You are fully encouraged to make it your own and add a personal touch.

The script serves as an example, however if you would like to teach based on the script and are in need of any supplies mentioned, we would be happy to supply those for you! Storytelling images mentioned will always be provided in your basket each week, but if you need any other supplies for your lesson, contact a Grove KIDS Staff member beforehand so we can supply it for you! You are also welcome to bring in your own props if you would like!

## RESOURCES PROVIDED

- None

## STORYTELLING

I'm so excited to tell you today about a person whom Jesus chose to seek out and spend time with. But 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 disliked, ignored, and even rejected. 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 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. And like the woman at the well, Zacchaeus (*seeking action*) was disliked by his community ... but in a different way. He was a Jewish tax collector. And not just any regular tax collector—the chief tax collector. 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 very easy to pay!

The Roman government hired men like Zacchaeus (*seeking action*) to collect the money they needed to run the empire. But tax collectors back then didn't just collect the money the government needed; they also collected extra money to keep for themselves. Most people struggled to have enough money for the tax collector. And when people didn't have enough money to pay the tax collector, the tax collector would take things they owned instead! *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.*

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.*

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, everyone else was upset. Everyone wanted to see and talk to Jesus, and now He was going to stay at the tax collector's house! How did the crowd react? *Read v. 7.* The people didn't understand that Jesus came to show everyone God's love and grace so they might turn from their sin and follow Him. Eating at the house of this unpopular man was exactly where Jesus wanted to be.

After that, 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.* Because of Zacchaeus' (*seeking action*) faith, Jesus announced that he was saved. *Read vv. 9-10.* *Direct kids to stop 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. By receiving this love and attention from Jesus, Zacchaeus wanted 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). We all have something in common with Zacchaeus. Because of our sins, we are all in need of the Savior. Jesus calls us 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.