



Bible Character Study



from Godly Pearls

Making Jesus Christ known, one story at a time.



A NOTE TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS:

Thank you for downloading this Bible Character Study.

This first page contains different sections to help you when planning for your class, for example, Home-school, Sunday School, Bible Study, Bible Club, Mission class, etc.

We suggest that you print pages 2 - 5 and distribute them to your students.



Topic:

Zacchaeus – saying sorry for our wrong actions



Read the Bible References: The Bible references can be read by different children if possible. Or the teacher can read them.



Goals of Lesson:

- To explain the need to say sorry for the hurt caused to others because of our wrong choices.



Lesson Takeaway:

When you say sorry to those you have hurt because of your wrong choices, you show that the love of God is in your heart.



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Date:



Topic:

Zacchaeus – saying sorry for our wrong actions



Bible References:

Luke 19:1–10



Who was Zacchaeus?

Zacchaeus lived in Jericho. He was a chief tax collector. As a result of collecting taxes from people, he became very rich. In Luke 19:7, people referred to him as a sinner. Many people did not like him because he cheated them a lot and collected more money than was required for them to pay as tax.



What did Zacchaeus do?

Jesus was very popular, and many people have heard about all the miracles he did in various towns and villages, and they were always eager to see Jesus for themselves. Now, he was passing through Jericho, and before long, a crowd of people gathered around Jesus wanting to see him. Among the crowd was Zacchaeus. He tried to see Jesus but could not because he was a short man. So, he ran along the way that Jesus was going to pass through and went ahead of Jesus and the crowd. Beside the road was a sycamore tree and Zacchaeus climbed the tree. He figured out that by the time Jesus got to the tree, he will be able to clearly see him as he would be tall enough.

Jesus eventually got to the place where the sycamore tree was and there was Zacchaeus on the tree. As Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus! Jesus said, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house” (Luke 19:5).



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What did Zacchaeus do? - Continued

Wow! Zacchaeus was very excited! Jesus called his name? Jesus knew how much he wanted to see him, and he gave him more than the opportunity to see him. Jesus gave Zacchaeus the opportunity to be with him and spend time with him. What was Zacchaeus' response? He quickly got down from the tree and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But when people saw all of this, they were very unhappy and complained. "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner", (Luke 19:7). They could not understand why Jesus would choose to go to the house of a terrible sinner.

But was Jesus not really aware that Zacchaeus was a sinner? Of course, Jesus knew! But Jesus looks beyond what people say or think about us. He looks beyond our faults and wrong choices. He is always looking for how to make us right with God. This is why he came to the world to die for our sins. In Luke 19:10b, Jesus said, "...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost". Because of our sin, we are lost but Jesus wants to find us and bring us back into sweet fellowship with God.

Zacchaeus knew he was a sinner and people did not like him because of the hurt he has caused them. He had cheated so many people and collected more money than was required for their taxes. Worse, he forcefully collected money from whoever refused to give him.

Zacchaeus was truly sorry for all the hurt he had caused people. He wanted to make things right. He said to Jesus, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8). You see? When he gave back what he forcefully collected and returned money to those he cheated, people will truly see that he had changed. They will see the love of Jesus in his heart.

Jesus was definitely happy with Zacchaeus' decision to make things right, he said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9-10).



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What can we learn from Zacchaeus?

We can learn a lot from the life of Zacchaeus. First, just like Jesus knew Zacchaeus and called his name, Jesus knows your name and He knows everything about you. He loves you very much.

Jesus gave Zacchaeus the opportunity to spend time with Him. Jesus wants to be with you, He wants to spend time with you. You can spend time with Jesus when you pray, read the bible, sing songs to worship Him and think about His words to you as written in the bible.

Jesus did not care about what people said about Zacchaeus. Jesus looks beyond your faults and wrong choices. He doesn't condemn or judge you like people do. He knows how much you want to do what is right but sometimes you fail. He wants to help you make right choices.

Zacchaeus knew how much hurt he has caused people and wanted to make things right by returning money he had either collected by force or collected too much. You can say sorry for the hurt you have caused people. You can return things you have stolen or collected by force from people. When you do, people will see that you have truly changed. You are also showing them the love of Jesus in your heart.

Jesus forgave Zacchaeus for all the wrong things he did. Jesus will forgive all the wrong things you have done if you ask for His forgiveness. He died on the cross so that you can be free from sin. He wants to save you like he saved Zacchaeus. What will you do today? Will you accept the opportunity to be forgiven of your sins today?



Memorize:

Psalm 51:2 - "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin".



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Scenario review:

Zara used to be your close friend. But when Paula, a new student came to your school, you became friends with Paula too. Paula encouraged you to do a lot of bad things like bullying other students, forcing the younger students to give you their lunch, laughing at your teacher during classes, and making fun of other students. Zara warned you but you wouldn't listen, so, she stopped being friends with you.

Sometime later, Paula was suspended from school but somehow, you escaped suspension. During that time, you began to think about all the wrong choices you have made and how many people you have hurt in school. You felt really sorry and asked God to forgive you of all your wrong choices. Now, what will you do? What will you say to Zara and all the other students you have hurt? Why did you make that choice?



Remember: When you say sorry to those you have hurt because of your wrong choices, you show that the love of God is in your heart.



Let us pray: Dear God, thank You because even though I make wrong choices, You are always ready to forgive me when I ask You. Help me to say sorry to those I have hurt because of my wrong choices and that people might see that your love is in my heart. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen!



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