

Week 25

Jesus Forgives Zacchaeus

People always wanted to see and hear Jesus. A very small man named Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to his town. Zacchaeus had done many bad things. He had cheated and lied. Other people did not like him. But Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus.

A big crowd of people waited in the road. They waited to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was at the back of the crowd. He was too short to see over people's heads. He couldn't jump high enough. He couldn't wiggle his way through the crowd.

Then, Zacchaeus saw a tree. He ran to the tree and climbed it. (*) Now, Zacchaeus could see Jesus. Everyone was surprised to see Jesus walk toward the tree where Zacchaeus sat.

Jesus looked up at Zacchaeus and said, "Zacchaeus, come down. I'm going to your house today."

Zacchaeus was so happy. He knew Jesus had mercy on him and forgave him. Zacchaeus said, "Jesus, I will give back anything that does not belong to me. If I have taken more than I should have, I will give back four times as much."

Jesus said, "Today, a person in this house has been saved. I have come to help people who need forgiveness."

Fold the family letter back so your child can focus on the big picture as you tell the Bible story. At the point in the story indicated by an asterisk (), fold the picture strip forward, overlapping part of the big picture. Talk about what has changed in the picture as you continue the story.*

Think about It

Read Luke 19:1–10. The fact is that none of us deserves God's blessings, for we are all sinners. We all need God's mercy and forgiveness. God's love is unconditional, not based on who we are but on who Jesus is. Jesus is our perfect Savior, who saves us from sin and changes our hearts and lives!

Bible Words

Have mercy upon us,
O LORD.
Psalm 123:3





Dear Family,

The story of Zacchaeus teaches us about God's unconditional love. God does not tell us we have to be good enough or strong enough or brave enough before we can become His children. We are already His children through the mercy of Jesus. (Mercy is showing kindness to people in need.) God desires that we learn from Him and show unconditional love to others.

Draw a simple Zacchaeus tree by making a brown trunk and branches on a sheet of white paper. Trace your handprints on green paper and cut them out to make "leaves." Each time a family member sees another person showing love, he or she may glue a handprint leaf onto the tree. After several days, gather around the tree and thank God for helping your family show love and kindness.

Read more about the Bible lesson on pages 383-385 in *The Story Bible*, available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH).