

Jesus Visits a Short, Mean Guy

The Scene: a city street in Jericho

The Simple Setup: Put a chair on the left side of the stage for Zacchaeus to stand on when he's in the tree. Place two chairs facing each other stage right.

For Extra Impact: Give the crowd paper coins or play money to hand to the tax collectors.

Bible Story
Zacchaeus
Scripture
Luke 19:1-10

The Characters

Narrator: a friendly storyteller

Zacchaeus: a guy

Jesus: a guy

Crowd: kids present at Zacchaeus' meeting with Jesus

Tax Collectors: two or three kids who will take money from the Crowd

The Skit

Assign the roles of Zacchaeus and Jesus. Then form the rest of the children into two groups: the Crowd and the Tax Collectors. If you have a small class, have the same child or children play the Crowd and the Tax Collectors.

As the skit begins, the Crowd is center stage. Zacchaeus and the other Tax Collectors will mingle with the Crowd. Jesus is off stage left.

Start the "Zacchaeus" track on *The Humongous Book of Bible Skits for Children's Ministry CD* (track 36). Set your CD player on "repeat" so the track repeats.



Narrator: It was tax time in the city of Jericho, and NO one was happy about

it. Well, no one except the TAX Collectors. The Tax Collectors always took too much money from people. (Sighs.) It wasn't fair. Just between you and me, I think the Tax Collectors didn't give EVERYTHING they collected to the government. I think they used the REST to buy stuff

for themselves. And they didn't have very good manners, either. Look at how the Tax Collectors are DEMANDING money from people in the Crowd.

(Tax Collectors approach the Crowd and ask for money.)

Narrator: There was one Tax Collector who was ESPECIALLY mean. His name was Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus: YOU look rich. How much money do you HAVE? Give me HALF of it. NOW!

Narrator: The Crowd was upset. They HATED being robbed by Tax Collectors, but what could they do? If people DIDN'T pay taxes, the Romans came and threw the people in jail. But suddenly, the mood of the crowd changed. People were SMILING. That's because they heard that Jesus was coming to Jericho! Everyone was VERY excited.

Crowd: Yea!

Narrator: Even Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. But there was one SMALL problem...

(Jesus enters stage left and waves at the crowd. The crowd stands on tiptoe to see Jesus. Zacchaeus is at the back of the crowd and can't see. He tries to peek over the crowd, but can't catch a glimpse of Jesus.)

Zacchaeus: I'm TOO SHORT! Aw, man! Bummer!

Narrator: Then Zacchaeus had a GREAT idea! He could climb a tree and see OVER the crowd! He glanced around.

Zacchaeus: Which tree should I CLIMB? The pine tree over there looks easy to climb, but it's all prickly. The palm tree across the street is tall, but its branches are WAY too high. Oh, here's a SYCAMORE tree. I'll try THAT. *(Zacchaeus stands on the chair.)* Wow! I can see all the BALD spots on people's heads from up here! We should TAX bald spots. And that guy over there forgot to comb his hair this morning. We should tax BAD HAIR DAYS, too. And hey—I can see where people are hiding their coin purses. Hmm. Now why was I up here again? Oh yeah! I can see JESUS from up here! Cool!

Narrator: Jesus was waving and giving people high fives when he saw Zacchaeus climb the tree. He walked over to where Zacchaeus was hanging from the tree.

Jesus: Zacchaeus! Stop looking at people's bald spots and finding their hidden coin purses, and come down from that tree! I'm going to YOUR house today for dinner!

(Zacchaeus climbs down from the tree.)

Zacchaeus: To MY house? But I didn't even INVITE you. Wait a minute! How did you know my NAME? And how did you know what I was doing in the TREE? Are you working for the Romans?

narrator: The Crowd was surprised that Jesus would choose to go to Zacchaeus' house, since Zacchaeus was such a MEAN Tax Collector. Hear how the Crowd is mumbling and grumbling? And see how they're POINTING at Zacchaeus? They can't BELIEVE that Jesus would spend time with a SINNER like Zacchaeus!

Zacchaeus: Are you SURE you want to hang out with me? You DO know what I do for a living, right?

Jesus: I know who you are. I know what you've done. But I STILL love you, Zacchaeus. I want to visit with you.

Zacchaeus: Sounds great, Jesus. See you there! You like lamb chops?

narrator: Zacchaeus dashed home. He quickly called up some of his Tax Collector buddies to join him for dinner.

Zacchaeus: *(Pretending to be on the phone.)* Yeah, Antonio? How about stopping by the house for dinner? I've got Jesus here. Yup—THAT Jesus. No, I DON'T know if he's going to be doing any miracles, but who knows? You can come? Great! Bring Frank and the rest of the guys.

narrator: Zacchaeus quickly swept the floor. He washed the dishes. He took the trash outside and threw it in the trash can. He freshened up the outhouse.



(Zacchaeus and Jesus sit together in the chairs at stage right.)

Narrator: Zacchaeus had a change of heart when he met Jesus. Zacchaeus realized he'd been wrong toward people, so he returned everything he'd taken from them. Not only did he return the money he took; he gave back even more than he'd taken in the FIRST place!

Crowd: (Cheers.) Yea!



To Talk About

- ◆ **The crowd felt that it was unfair Jesus ate with Zacchaeus. Tell about a time you felt something was unfair.**
- ◆ **Jesus forgave Zacchaeus. He also forgives us when we change our hearts and follow him. Tell about a time you asked Jesus for forgiveness.**
- ◆ **Zacchaeus chose to give back the money he had taken from the crowd. What's something you can do to repay someone you've wronged?**

Topical Tie-Ins: Sharing, Forgiveness