

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Zacchaeus

Adapted by:
Brenda J. Stobbe

**Illustrations by:
Jennifer Schoeneberg**

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INTRODUCTION TO LENT

The season of Lent is another "waiting time". The Good Shepherd program makes it easy for children to see the time pass as they prepare to experience Easter.

The stage is set for Lent by using a series of seven cards. The first six cards are purple with one side showing a blackened silhouette and the seventh card is white with one side showing a blackened silhouette. Each week the cards are removed from the Lent basket and laid out in a straight line to your left with the solid side facing upward. As each week's story is shared, the card is turned over. The first week the purple card with the silhouette symbolizing the story of "Waving Palms" is revealed. The second week that card and the one with the silhouette symbolizing the story of "Zacchaeus" are revealed. And so on. Each week we begin with card one, asking the children to mentally recall each part of the Lent story, before telling the current week's story.

During the story response time, the children are encouraged to take the Lent basket and the story basket from the shelf and see if they can tell the story each week. By using the Lent cards and the story figures the children look ahead with great anticipation to the joy and wonder of Easter.

Each lesson in the Lent series tells you what story, story figures and Lent cards are to be used. During the "circle of light" be sure to place the appropriate bookmark representing each week's story in the Good Shepherd classroom Bible. This allows the children, non-readers as well as readers, to become familiar with where the Lent stories are found in the Bible.

During this time called Lent we learn a lot about Jesus, the stories he told and the things he did. We learn about his relationships with his friends and the people who followed him. The message of Lent is heard as we gradually begin to understand that Jesus showed himself to be the Messiah.

MATERIALS USED DURING LENT--YEAR I

The medium Lent basket on the shelf contains:

- a set of 7 cards are used each week in the following order:
 - a purple card with palm branch silhouette
 - a purple card with Jesus and Zacchaeus silhouette
 - a purple card with basket silhouette
 - a purple card with chalice and paten silhouette
 - a purple card with cock (rooster) silhouette
 - a purple card with a bunch of grapes and vine silhouette
 - a white card with an empty tomb and cross silhouette

The story sets are used in the following order:

- Waving Palms basket
- Zacchaeus basket
- Feeding the 5000 basket
- The Last Supper basket
- Peter Denies Jesus basket
- Unfaithful Tenants parable box
- Crucifixion and Resurrection basket

Items needed from the worship shelf for Lent:

- chalice (for use with the Last Supper basket)*
- paten (for use with the Last Supper basket)*

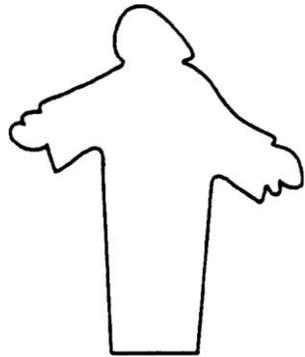
If communion is served during the "circle of light" the week The Last Supper story is presented you will need to purchase bread and grape juice.

* These items are not furnished for you. We recommend their use and hope you can acquire them locally.

ZACCHAEUS MATERIALS

- medium wicker basket to hold:
 - wooden Zacchaeus figure
 - wooden Jesus figure
 - wooden tree
 - 4 wooden onlooker figures
 - brown felt road

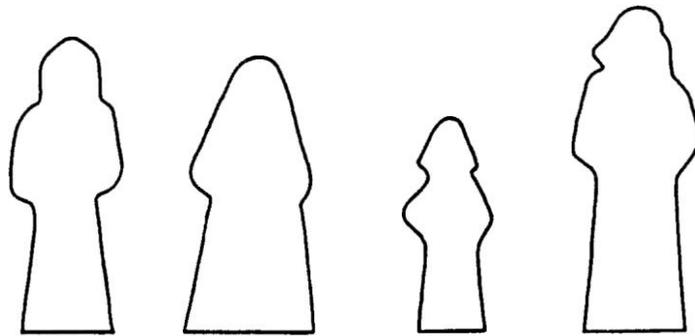
- from worship shelf
 - Lent basket containing 7 cards



Jesus



Zacchaeus



Onlookers

ZACCHAEUS LUKE 19:1-10

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the Lent basket from the worship shelf. Get the Zacchaeus basket from its shelf. Bring them to the circle and sit down.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch the Lent cards or wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Point to the worship shelf.

Remove the six purple cards from the Lent basket and lay them out with the plain purple side showing in a straight line starting to your outer left.

Remove the white card from the Lent basket and lay it next to the purple card closest to you with the plain white side showing.

Turn the first purple card over so the silhouette of the palm branch shows. Touch it reverently.

Turn the second purple card over so the silhouette of Jesus and Zacchaeus shows. Touch it reverently.

Place the brown felt road horizontally in front of you and set the tree a little to the right of center next to the road.

Start Jesus "walking" down the road from the left toward the tree.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get these materials so you will know where to find them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story?

The worship cloth is purple and we know we are waiting. This is the second week of Lent.

These are Lent cards.

They will help us understand the stories we hear during Lent and make us ready for the time we are waiting for. .. Easter.

The first week of Lent (last week) we learned about Jesus coming into the city of Jerusalem while the people waved palms.

This second week of Lent we will hear a story about Jesus and a man named Zacchaeus.

Once there was a man who said and did such amazing things that people began to follow him.

One day Jesus was on his way through the city of Jericho.

Gather the four onlookers in a group by the tree at the side of the road.

Remove the Zacchaeus figure from the basket and hold it.

Have Zacchaeus shoved aside by the bystanders.

Help Zacchaeus "climb" the tree and sit on a branch.

Move the Jesus figure toward the tree and stop it in front of the tree.

Take Zacchaeus out of the tree and move him and Jesus together along the road to the right and off to one side.

Turn Zacchaeus toward the Jesus figure.

Hold both hands over the scene in a sign of blessing.

The people of the city heard that Jesus was coming and they ran to see him as he came through the streets.

There was a man who collected money for taxes. His name was Zacchaeus. He was a very short man. He wanted to see Jesus.

The people did not like Zacchaeus because he took more money than he was supposed to and kept the extra for himself.

Because he was so short he could not see Jesus. All the people in front of him were tall. So Zacchaeus climbed up the sycamore tree. There he could see Jesus.

When Jesus came to the tree he looked up and saw Zacchaeus. Jesus said "Come down quickly, Zacchaeus. I must stay at your house today. "

And Zacchaeus climbed down quickly from the tree and was happy to have Jesus with him.

Some of the people of God were angry that Jesus was with one who cheats.

But Zacchaeus said "Lord, I will give half of what I have to the poor people. And anyone I cheated I will give back four times the money I took. "

And Jesus said, "Today this house has been blessed." Because the one who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things came for everyone--even those who were cheaters.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder who told the people that Jesus was coming?

I wonder if Zacchaeus felt bad when no one would let him in line?

I wonder if it was hard to climb the tree?

I wonder why Jesus decided to have dinner with a man who did so many bad things?

Place the wooden figures and felt piece into the story basket.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Pick up the first two Lent cards and place them in the Lent basket.

This is the second week of Lent.

Pick up the remaining four purple cards and then pick up the white card and place them in the Lent basket.

We will wait and make ourselves ready for five more weeks, then it will be Easter.

After speaking, carry the story basket back to its shelf and the Lent basket back to the worship shelf. Return to the circle.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Dismiss children to their work ONLY after everyone has had a chance to choose their work.

I wonder what you will make your work on this day? Will you paint or draw? Will you work with the story? Let's begin.

ZACCHAEUS ...• TEACHER HELPS

The story of Zacchaeus takes place after Jesus has decided his destiny will be fulfilled in Jerusalem. Therefore, he is on his way to the city of the temple when he passes through Jericho. Just outside the city of Jericho Jesus stops to heal the blind man who calls out for mercy. His impending arrival then is no doubt preceded by people who have just witnessed, or

heard about, the healing. The crowds throng after Jesus and line the streets to see him, or perhaps touch him. Into this scene comes Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was hated not just because he was a tax collector who took more than was required and kept the rest for himself; he was also hated because he was a Jew who was working for the Roman government.

Given this understanding of Zacchaeus' position, it is no wonder that the people who surrounded him were in no hurry to give this short, cheating tax man a place in the front of the crowd.

The most amazing understanding of this story is that Jesus did not ask anything of Zacchaeus. He expected a meal at Zacchaeus' house, but did not ask Zacchaeus to change his lifestyle, his profession, anything. The Jews who saw what Jesus did were angry. How could the Rabbi eat with sinners and tax collectors? It was Zacchaeus, who in response to Jesus' care for him, volunteered to give up all that he had and pay back four times that which he had cheated people out of.

Luke 19:9 (RSV) says "And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.'" Jesus' words calling Zacchaeus a son of Abraham remind us that all of the world is made up of the people of God, people of the covenant. If there had been no sin, there would have been no need for a Savior. Jesus' radical ability to love everyone modeled for us the way we are to respond to others we consider "unclean".

When we wonder who told the people that Jesus was coming you may wish to share that this story happened right after the blind man was healed outside the city. The children will then probably say that it was either the blind man or someone who saw the healing who told the people that Jesus was on his way.

Next we wonder about Zacchaeus' feelings when no one would let him see. Children will identify easily with the feeling of standing up in a crowd of tall people and only being able to see legs and backs. The children will probably say that Zacchaeus felt bad, or maybe angry. Acknowledge their responses, but don't correct those you are not comfortable with.

When we wonder if it was hard to climb a tree we will be dealing with an experience many of the children have had. Some of them will say that climbing a tree is hard, others will say it is easy. And some will qualify it by saying it depends on the kind of tree.

The final wondering question asks why Jesus would choose to have dinner with someone who did such bad things. It will be very special to hear the responses of God's love to sinners from the children.

This story is often a favorite of children since they can identify with being smaller than the rest of the crowd. Jesus' grace is the end we wish to find as the children make this their story.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Zacchaeus was excluded from the group of people lined up to see Jesus. Who are the people we exclude today from doing the things we do? Why?

Zacchaeus was hated because he became very wealthy by taking unfair amounts of money from other people. How do we feel about wealthy people who may have cheated to get money today? Do we still push them out of our society?

Zacchaeus decided he really wanted to see Jesus, so he took matters into his own hands and found a way. What is something you really wanted to do that you had to work at pretty much by yourself?