

# Seeking and saving

## Luke 19.1-10

- Jesus is an unlikely guest in the home of a despised man.
- Zacchaeus' greed is transformed into generosity when he is 'found' by Jesus.
- Zacchaeus' salvation is good news for the poor and those he has defrauded.

**This week's resources explore:** reciprocal hospitality; God's priorities; dramatic change.

**Lectionary Bible readings**  
RCL Proper 26 Year C  
Isaiah 1.10-18  
Psalm 32.1-7  
2 Thessalonians 1.1-4,11-12  
**Luke 19.1-10**

## Bible notes WEB

### Old Testament

#### Isaiah 1.10-18

Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of four kings of Judah in the second half of the eighth century BC, when the Assyrian empire dominated the region. The 'book' that bears his name is the longest single prophetic collection in the Bible, and includes material from nearly three centuries. Isaiah 1 is an introductory collection of poems and fragments. Verses 10-18 are difficult to date. Their critique of worship in the face of injustice is common to several prophets (see also Jeremiah 7.21ff.; Hosea 6.4ff.; Amos 5.21-24; Micah 6.6-8), and also appears in the Psalms (e.g. Psalm 40.6; 51.1-17).

Isaiah accuses Israel's leaders of making their land no better than that of the archetypal symbols of inhospitable oppression, Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis 19). Temple worship may well be flourishing, with its animal sacrifices (v.11), incense (v.13), prayers (v.15) and ritual washing (v.16), but by ignoring injustice, worshippers have the wrong sort of blood on their hands. Their attempts at cleansing are merely superficial, and God is simply not interested (vv.15-17).

The wellbeing of the groups mentioned in verse 17 should be a particular concern of rulers (see Psalm 72). So the prophet demands an altogether different kind of worship, which will benefit rather than disregard those at the sharp end of an unfair society. Rulers too have much to gain: their sins will be healed and transformed as dramatically as the bleaching of blood (v.18).

### Gospel Luke 19.1-10

After last week's fictional hero, Luke introduces us to a real tax collector. Jesus has already been criticised for mixing with his kind (Luke 5.30; 15.1ff.). Zacchaeus becomes an unlikely role model for rich Christians in Luke's church, a perfect foil for the respectable and well-intentioned rich man who is unable to rise to Jesus' demands and who is left disappointed (18.18-23).

The Romans contracted out the collection of taxes to locals. As chief tax collector in the Jericho area, Zacchaeus would have further subcontracted the work. Taxes were levied on a wide range of goods and services – land, agricultural produce, fish, imports and exports – as well as on individuals. Collection was open to abuse from the additional levies that tax collectors were free to impose. This was a risky business run by disreputable people, some of whom profited greatly at the expense of their own people. So it is not difficult to imagine why Zacchaeus and his kind were regarded with such widespread contempt.

We are not told why Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus. And Jesus seems to take at least as much initiative (v.10), thereby realising the message of the parables of the 'lost' in chapter 15. If the fractured family of Abraham is to be healed, a spirit of compassion is needed (see 18.13). For his part, Zacchaeus is prepared to invest his commission in the poor, as well as the victims of the unfair imperial economics that he represents (he pays back far more than the law of restitution in Leviticus 6.5 and Numbers 5.7 requires). The story shows how hospitality and generosity are among the hallmarks of a down-to-earth vision of salvation that would surely fulfil the hopes of Isaiah and the prophets.

Rowan Williams notices the significance of Jesus' being on the receiving end of hospitality here (vv.6-8). Jesus' welcome sets people free to invite him into their lives, and to embrace others, too. This turns the Eucharist into a parable of salvation, in which, says Williams, 'we are welcomed and we welcome; we welcome God and we welcome our unexpected neighbours' WEB.

### The links between the readings

The vision of salvation in the Gospel has far more in common with Isaiah than with 2 Thessalonians. Paul's extravagant language in 1.7-10 drives a deep divide between believers and the rest. Isaiah, Jesus and Luke are far from shy in offering sharp critique – particularly of the self-contained and self-satisfied – but they also seek to heal the wounds of the divided family of Abraham.

WEB Notes on Psalm 32.1-7 and ideas for using it together.



**Picture pointers** WEB Questions for reflection

- ▶ Which way are you heading?
- ▶ What do you receive from those around you?
- ▶ How can you give more to others?

# Prayers

**WEB** All prayer text and Welsh translations.

## Call to worship

Faithful God,  
we come, at the beginning of this service,  
to lay down our burdens,  
to rest in your presence,  
to receive your love,  
to discern your priorities,  
to pray for those on our minds,  
and to draw closer to your heart,  
which breaks with all who suffer  
and rejoices with all who are at peace.

**Amen.**

## A gathering prayer

Loving God, you are a great welcomer,  
and you delight in drawing people to your table,  
seeking and saving those who have isolated themselves  
through their actions or words.  
We pray for one another, as we gather to worship,  
that we too would be people of welcome,  
opening our church and our fellowship to those longing to be  
accepted.  
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## A prayer of approach

God of all,  
we pray for those who make money their god,  
that like Zacchaeus they may be transformed  
from greed to generosity, from hoarders to hosts.  
Bless our finances,  
that we too may be open to the needs of others  
and be thankful for all we have.  
In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

## A prayer of confession

Forgive us, Lord, when we are slow to see  
opportunities for change in our lives  
and in the lives of others.  
May we never turn away those you would welcome,  
or turn aside from your welcome for us;  
but grow in faith and trust and generosity  
and walk more closely towards Jesus,  
our friend and our guide.

**Amen.**

## Prayers of intercession

We pray for all who seek out:  
the vulnerable in our world, and offer them protection;  
the elderly hidden away at home, and save them from  
loneliness;  
the abandoned, and save them from suffering;  
the mentally distressed, and help them find peace and stability;  
the poor, and save them from starvation;  
your rejected people, and save us from forgetting them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus,  
who ate with Zacchaeus, and changed his life. **Amen.**

## A prayer of thanksgiving

We give thanks for:  
those who have invited us into their homes  
for meals and celebrations;  
those who have invited us  
to join the church fellowship;  
those who have helped us to make changes in our lives,  
both minor and major.  
May we be open to your prompting  
and make change where change is needed,  
and be ready to open our homes  
to those you have placed on our hearts.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

## A personal prayer

Lord, there are things I want to change in my life,  
but I don't know how – my priorities, my busy-ness,  
my need to have, and to be in charge.  
Where I am anxious, make me adventurous;  
where I am driven, help me to rest;  
where responsibilities overwhelm me, help me to be realistic;  
where my quiet time has slipped away, help me to make space  
for you;  
that when the demands of each day come knocking at the door,  
I may welcome them with a sense of peace, not resentment or  
fear.  
Help me to change today, Lord.

**Amen.**

## A way into prayer

Think about people or groups of people that are on your  
conscience: for example, those you haven't written to or emailed  
or visited, those you haven't prayed for. Imagine a table and  
invite God to bless each one of those people/groups as they  
come to sit with you. At the end of your prayer time, try to  
contact one person who was at your imaginary table.

## A prayer for all ages together

You could distribute cards for people to read out (template on  
**WEB**), or let them write their own petitions.

Begin by saying: 'Zacchaeus climbed a tree because he wanted to  
see Jesus. What do we want to see?'

Then, in turn, each person stands up to speak their words,  
beginning with, 'I want to see...' (e.g. justice for the poor/an end  
to cruelty to animals/more opportunities for young people).

## A sending out prayer

May God who seeks and saves,  
who invites and welcomes,  
who loves and cherishes,  
be your strength today and every day.

**Amen.**

## Gather

### Prepare the space

Prepare a table with a paper tablecloth and plates of Middle Eastern-style foods, such as flatbread, fruit, cheese, hummus, falafel. If you are using *A simple worship activity for all ages*, you will need at least one plate of bread and one of grapes. If you are using the activity *Enjoy a feast*, prepare plates with a mixture of each type of food.

### Children's talk

**WEB** This week's talk, before they go into groups, considers giving money away as an illustration of doing the right thing.

## Open the Word

### To help the listener

The reader could use these words to provide context.

The prophet Isaiah warns rulers against worship that covers up the evils of injustice and oppression. Jesus meets a member of a despised social class, whose transformed life is good news.

### Present the Old Testament

The reading begins with condemnation of Israel's worship, which while outwardly conventional ignores an oppressive injustice. Before beginning the reading, draw attention to the weight of the prophet's words with several strikes of a cymbal or gong. Add further strikes before verses 11 and verse 12, and introduce a long pause after 'who asked this from your hand?' (v.12a). The reader could look around at the congregation as if waiting for a response. If you can, you could sustain a shimmering sound from the cymbal or gong as the reading continues, with a further pause and strike before verse 16, which is where the tone changes from condemnation to corrective instruction.

### Present the Gospel

**WEB** Script to print out.

The story of Zacchaeus is both dramatic and highly visual. You could enact the story (see script), or use pictures to illustrate it, or make simple puppets-on-sticks to mime the story while the Bible text (or the script) is read. **WEB**

### With very young children

**Play, and explore putting things right.**

**Play materials:** card cut-outs of the crowd, Zacchaeus in a tree, Jesus and Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus giving his money away (templates **WEB**), crayons, coloured card, sticky tac.

### Mini Bible story with actions

Zacchaeus collected too much money ('collect' money). No one liked him (*shake head*). He wanted to see Jesus (*put hand above eyes*), but the people pushed him back (*push*). So Zacchaeus climbed a tree (*pretend to climb*). When Jesus came by he called out, 'Zacchaeus (*cup mouth*), I am coming to your house today!' (*beckon*). The people were angry (*shake fist*). Zacchaeus said, 'I will give back the money (*mime giving*), and even more (*mime giving more*).' Jesus said, 'Now you are saved (*hold out, then clasp arms*)! You have put things right with God (*point up*) and with the people (*point around*).' Repeat so the children can join in.

### Play activity

Invite the children to colour in the characters and make a three-fold story scene.

Further provision for very young children is available online.

## Explore & respond

On the **WEB** find links, images and additional resource suggestions.

### Sermon ideas

**WEB** *PostScript*: up-to-the-minute comment on Thursday morning.

- Middle Eastern tradition sees the traveller as a gift of God; whereas people from the West might react with suspicion to travellers, those from the Middle East are generous with their time and their resources. Hospitality is central to the Middle Eastern lifestyle. Jesus' request for hospitality and welcome brings the opportunity for change for Zacchaeus. Hospitality is key to Christian life. In her book *Take this Bread*, Sarah Miles, one of many who have written on the power of Christian hospitality, tells of the dramatic change in her life after she was welcomed to the Eucharist **WEB**.

- Zacchaeus was trapped in the stressful lifestyle of middle management. As chief tax collector he would have employed local people to collect the taxes, from which he took his percentage, before handing the rest on to the Roman rulers. Middle management is a known predictor of stress. Maybe it was this that precipitated Zacchaeus' curiosity to see Jesus, and to be noticed. Jesus sees Zacchaeus, recognises his problem and need, and comes and spends time with him. Often we reflect on spending time with Jesus, but perhaps it should be the other way round. Perhaps we need to let Jesus spend time with us.

- The instruction of Isaiah in 1.17 is a recurring theme in Scripture. Deuteronomy 27, Exodus 22 and Psalm 68 all remind the people of God of their responsibility to care for the orphan, the widow and the stranger. It is found again in Mary's song (the Magnificat, Luke 1.46-55). Care for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable are the building blocks of a just and healthy society. Isaiah reminds us that God's priority is not how we order our worship, but how we welcome others to it.

- What was Zacchaeus like, and how had his life changed, 10 years on from this encounter? Did he ever play back in his mind the dramatic change he experienced as a result of that encounter with Jesus? We can only speculate. But that encounter offered him a welcome he was not used to while living on the

margins of society, enjoying great wealth but regarded with contempt by his community. His marginalisation would surely have affected his whole household. Jesus' welcome restored his sense of self-worth, and gave him the courage and determination to make restitution to those he had cheated. When we look back on our lives, particularly at moments of dramatic life changes, can we see God's presence with us?

**WEB** Sermon ideas on 2 Thessalonians 1.1-4, 11-12.

## Informal talk

A way for leaders to guide all ages through the reading.

In medieval times, healing ointments were called salves. These were creams made with herbs, oils and fats. Although the formula has changed, the name – or variations of it – can be still found. Ask if anyone knows the name of a brand of ointment sold today, used for scratches, stings, etc. You could display a pot or tube of Savlon™. And there is another variation of the word, often used to describe those who are sent to retrieve the remains of a shipwreck or a car crash, and those who look to reuse or recycle the materials brought back. Ask if anyone can tell you what it might be. You could display a salvage truck.

Salve and salvage are both words that mean rescue. Sometimes we say that we salve our conscience by doing a good deed or giving a present, which means we save or rescue – or heal – our conscience. We make it feel better. We make it better. Salve, salvage – and salvation: they all have the same underlying meaning.

It is, our reading says, what Jesus brought to Zacchaeus and his household. Zacchaeus was healed and rescued. Rescued from loneliness. Rescued from poor self-image. Healed by Jesus' friendship. Healed by salving his own conscience. As a result of feeling better – of being made better – Zacchaeus gave away half of his possessions, and paid back the money he had taken from others four times over. Salvation came to Zacchaeus and his household. Jesus' care for Zacchaeus was like a salve that brought healing to someone who had previously been lonely and mean.

### Spiritual styles:

**W** Word **E** Emotion **S** Symbol **A** Action

**WEB** More info in the *Support* section

## Active worship

Ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences.

### A simple worship activity for all ages

Prepare a table with a paper tablecloth and some simple bread and grapes (see *Prepare the space*), and have pencils and pens available.

Ask everyone to think of someone they would like to invite to come to the table with them. It could be a friend, a family member, a neighbour, a colleague – but someone they know, someone who, like Zacchaeus, might be in need of kind hospitality. Invite everyone to come to the table and write the name of their guest on the tablecloth. If mobility is an issue, you could give out pieces of tablecloth that are then placed on the table when ready. While this is happening, quietly play or sing a suitable song (e.g. 'All are welcome'). Finally, invite people to think of those they have brought to the table, and say this prayer:

Today salvation has come to this house.  
We pray for those who long for healing,  
for those who long for welcome,  
for those who long for rescue.

**The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. Amen. E S**

### Sharing your gifts

Divide the congregation into groups, and give each group a sheet of paper and some pens. Ask them to discuss all the skills and talents they could share with others in the wider church and local community. Invite the groups to imagine that the piece of paper is a table to be prepared for a sharing feast – but instead of food items, the feast is made up of their gifts and talents. Ask them to write or draw their sharing ideas on the paper. You could display the results by placing the pieces of paper on or near tables used for refreshments after the service. **W E A**

### Play a change game

Divide the congregation into small groups, and give each group some play dough (or a couple of pipe cleaners). Each person in turn should mould a figure or an object of their own choice, then hand it to the next person. That person then makes something different. Allow each person a set amount of time (say, 15 seconds), so that things move quickly. You can mark the time with a whistle or a shout. As they are doing this, invite everyone to reflect on this action as representing God reshaping our lives. **E S**

## Enjoy a feast

Divide the congregation into groups, and give each group a 'tasting plate' of Middle Eastern foods – the sort of foods that Zacchaeus might have given Jesus, such as flatbread, fruit, cheese, hummus, falafel (see *Prepare the space*) – and invite them to try all the items (remember to warn about allergies, where appropriate). Ask the groups to discuss the best foods to choose for a party, to make sure everyone feels welcome. **W E S**

**WEB extras** [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com)

**Children's talk:** to use before they go into groups

**Children's Sheet:** to do in worship and at home. Welsh version available.

**Drama sketch:** *Tacky Zacky*

**Psalm 32.1-7:** ideas for all ages

**Picture pointers:** with questions for reflection

**Pass it on:** resources to share for DIY discipleship

## Hymns & songs

Songs in italics are suitable for all ages.

**WEB** See *Hymns, songs & music* for key to abbreviations.

All who hunger, gather gladly (LAU)

*Because of your love* (TS)

Brother, sister, let me serve you

*Change my heart, O God, make it ever true*

*Do something new, Lord* (TS)

For the world and all its people (CH4, HGSP)

Gather around for the table is spread

Give us the wings of faith

*I have decided to follow Jesus*

Jesus, be first in everything (PRA)

Let us build a house where love can dwell

My Lord, what love is this?

Put peace into each other's hands

Sing of the Lord's goodness, Father of all wisdom

Speak, Lord, in the stillness

The church is like a table round (RS)

Thy kingdom come, on bended knee

*We have a strong and certain hope* (SoF, SP)

When the music fades, all is stripped away

## Send out

### Live in faith S A

Donate one good thing to a local charity shop that works on behalf of the poor.

# Seeking and saving

## Luke 19.1-10

- Jesus is an unlikely guest in the home of a despised man.
- Zacchaeus' greed is transformed into generosity when he is 'found' by Jesus.
- Zacchaeus' salvation is good news for the poor and those he has defrauded.

**This week's resources explore:** reciprocal hospitality; God's priorities; dramatic change.

**WEB** Download a Planning Sheet to help prepare your session.

### Other lectionary Bible readings

RCL Proper 26 Year C  
Isaiah 1.10-18  
Psalm 32.1-7  
2 Thessalonians 1.1-4,11-12

## Bible notes **WEB**

- The story of Zacchaeus is about a real person, rather than a parable, and an unlikely role model for rich Christians in Luke's church. It is a multi-layered story of inquisitive approach, repentance, dramatic change and restitution.
- Zacchaeus' abundant wealth is derived from imposing Roman taxes on an occupied people, and collecting extra levies. As chief tax collector he would have subcontracted the work, which made it open to further abuse. Great wealth and power is usually associated with high status, yet he is reviled by his neighbours. This is a classic cause of stress and may have contributed to his odd behaviour in climbing a tree to see Jesus.
- Jesus takes the initiative by speaking to Zacchaeus and is rewarded with the tax collector's hospitality. Jesus meets many people around the meal table and makes it a place of reconciliation. As Jesus is welcomed into Zacchaeus' home, so he welcomes Zacchaeus into God's kingdom and inspires radical change. Zacchaeus' offer to reimburse those he has defrauded goes far beyond the biblical law of restitution (Leviticus 6.5).
- In the Old Testament, Isaiah offensively describes Israel's leaders as no better than the oppressive rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1.10), saying that their animal sacrifices and ritual washing are pointless if they ignore injustice. But God is not concerned about offence if the end result is radical salvation, whether that is blood-stained sin bleached clean like snow (v.18), or a corrupt tax man restored to God and his community.

## Prayers **WEB** All prayer text and Welsh translations.

### A gathering prayer

Bullies can become gentle,  
the greedy can learn to share,  
those who are lost can be found,  
the selfish can learn to care.  
Thank you, Lord, that this is true,  
and thank you, Lord, for all you do.  
**Amen.**

### A prayer for others

People were stomping mad  
*Mime stomping.*  
when you ate with Zacchaeus, a sinner.  
But Zacchaeus was chomping happy  
*Mime chomping.*  
as he shared his food and wealth.  
We are stomping mad because of  
injustice,  
*Mime stomping.*  
but we are chomping happy  
*Mime chomping.*  
when we see wrongs righted.  
Lord, bless our stomping and chomping,  
that we may change your world.  
**Amen.**

### A prayer of thanksgiving

*Response line: All change.*  
We thank you, Lord Jesus,  
that by following you we can  
**All change.**  
You help us think through our priorities  
and restore our confidence, so we can...  
You inspire us to think of others' needs  
and encourage us to share our resources,  
so that they can...  
Give us faith to believe that sometimes  
gradually, sometimes dramatically,  
we can...  
**Amen.**

### A prayer for forgiveness

Forgive us, Lord, when we only invite  
our friends to eat or play with us,  
and not those who are lonely.  
As you have been kind to us,  
so may we be kind to others. **Amen.**

### A sending out prayer

Cherish that which is good,  
change that which is wrong,  
and be blessed, as you give and receive.  
In Jesus' name.  
**Amen.**

## Gather **WEB** Open the Bible at Luke 19.1-10

### Prepare the space

Create an imaginary room in Zacchaeus' house. Make it look untidy, e.g. dirty plates and papers on the table, cushions on the floor, clothes/shoes that need picking up, etc.

### Gathering activity

Invite the children to comment on the state of the room. Do they think it is ready for visitors? Encourage them to tidy up and lay the table for two with plates, glasses and cutlery, so that it is ready for a special visitor.

## Open the Word

### Present the reading Luke 19.1-10

Jesus speaks to Zacchaeus, a hated tax collector, who is sitting in a tree in Jericho. Jesus invites himself back to Zacchaeus' house and changes his life.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

**Promenade** Put up signposts around your space: Jericho; Zacchaeus' house. Draw a sycamore tree on a roll of paper and stick it on a wall. Start the story at the town sign and read until \*, then move to the tree. Read until \*\* then move to Zacchaeus' house. You could sit at the table laid in the Gathering activity to finish the story.

**Play reading** Beforehand, print copies of the script [\(WEB\)](#), enough for one per child. Invite two volunteers to play Jesus and Zacchaeus; everyone else can be the crowd. Read the script together. You could pause at intervals and ask members of the crowd, 'What do you think or feel about what's going on?'

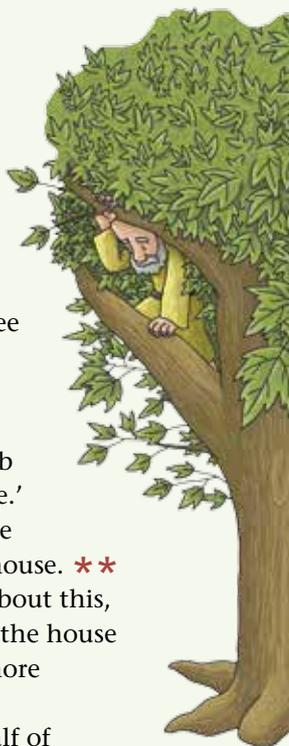
Jesus was on his way through the city of Jericho, where there lived a man called Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector and he was very rich. Zacchaeus desperately wanted to see Jesus, so he joined the crowds that were waiting at the roadside. But Zacchaeus was quite short, so he couldn't see over people's heads! He looked around wondering what to do, and as he looked, he spotted a sycamore tree. Zacchaeus ran to the tree \* and climbed up. Now he could see everything.

A little while later Jesus walked past. As he came towards the tree, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus sitting there. 'Zacchaeus,' he shouted. 'Quick. Climb down! Today I am going to be a guest in your house.' Zacchaeus was shocked but very pleased. Quickly he climbed down the tree and welcomed Jesus to his house. \*\*

Some people in the crowd were not very happy about this, though. They began to grumble, 'Jesus is a guest at the house of a tax collector, a sinner! A man who has taken more money from us than he should have!'

Zacchaeus turned to Jesus and said, 'I will take half of everything I own and give it to the poor. And anyone I have wrongly taken money from, I will pay back. In fact, I will pay back four times what I owe them.'

Jesus looked at Zacchaeus and said, 'Today salvation has come to this house.' Then he turned to the crowd and said, 'Because this man too is a Son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to find and save those who are lost.'



### Glossary

**sinner** someone who is not living life as God intends; **salvation** being saved by God and having our relationship with him restored; **Son of Abraham** a descendant of Abraham, or one who shares his faith; **Son of Man** a title from the Old Testament's Book of Daniel, used by Jesus to describe himself.

### Talk together

- Have you ever had a surprise visitor? What happened when they arrived?
- How do you think the people of Jericho will treat Zacchaeus in the future?
- What do you think is the most important part of this story?

### For very young children

Play, and explore putting things right.

**Play materials:** play tea set and food.

### Mini Bible story with actions

#### You are saved!

Zacchaeus collected too much money.

*'Collect' money.*

No one liked him.

*Shake head.*

He wanted to see Jesus,

*Put hand above eyes.*

but the people pushed him back.

*Push.*

So Zacchaeus climbed a tree.

*Pretend to climb.*

When Jesus came by he called out,

*'Zacchaeus,*

*Cup mouth.*

I am coming to your house today!'

*Beckon.*

The people were angry.

*Shake fist.*

Zacchaeus said, 'I will give back the money, and even more.'

*Mime giving more.*

Jesus said, 'Now you are saved!'

*Hold out, then clasp arms.*

You have put things right with God,

*Point up.*

and with the people.'

*Point around.*

Repeat so the children can join in.

### Putting things right with God!

**You will need:** a cloth 'road', a model tree, toy figures, plastic coins/counters.

Invite the children to use the figures to retell the story.

### Meeting Jesus

**You will need:** card cut-outs of the crowd, Zacchaeus and Jesus (templates on [\(WEB\)](#)), crayons, coloured card, sticky tac.

Invite the children to colour in the characters and make a four-fold scene.

### Prayer

**You will need:** strips of cloth, washable felt tips, a bowl of soapy water, towels.

Invite the children to draw on the cloth to represent something they would like to say sorry for, then wash away the pen markings.

Finish with this prayer. Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you:

Lord Jesus, thank you that when we say sorry, you forgive us.

Help us to put things right. **Amen.**

## Explore & respond

Ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences. On the [WEB](#) find templates, and links to video clips and other online resources.

### Do

#### Points of view

10 mins **E**

Explore how different people feel about what happened to Zacchaeus

**You will need:** cards with names of characters in the story, e.g. Zacchaeus, Jesus, someone in the crowd, a disciple, Zacchaeus' wife, a friend, a cheated woman, another tax collector.

- Invite the children to pick a card at random.
- Ask a volunteer to come and sit in the 'hot seat' and pretend to be that character.
- Encourage the rest of the group to ask them questions about what happened and how they feel about Zacchaeus before he met Jesus and afterwards, including how his behaviour has changed.
- Give everyone a chance to be in the 'hot seat'.

#### Showing hospitality

15 mins **E A**

Serve savoury snacks to others at church

**You will need:** savoury biscuits, different toppings, e.g. soft cheese, pâté, hummus, guacamole, olives, tomatoes, grapes, etc. Be aware of anyone with food allergies.

- Talk together about why hospitality is important. What can it involve? How does it make people feel?
- Suggest the group make some savouries to share with others at church. Help them add different toppings to savoury biscuits, and serve them to people after the service.

### Make

#### Who's knocking at the door?

15 min **W E S**

Think about Jesus coming to visit us

**You will need:** a copy of the painting 'The Light of The World' (1853) by William Holman Hunt, illustrating Revelation 3.20 [WEB](#), A4 card, pencils, scissors, crayons/felt tips, glue sticks.

- Show the children the painting 'The Light of The World' and talk together about the image of Jesus knocking on the overgrown door. Hunt wanted it to represent a person's mind being closed to Jesus.
- Can they spot something strange about the door? There is no handle on the outside, so it can only be opened from the inside.
- Beforehand, arrange for someone to knock on the door to your room at an appropriate moment, and ask who it might be. Could it be Jesus? Ask the children how they would feel if it was Jesus knocking on the door. What would they want to say to him or show him?
- Give each child a piece of card. They should fold it in half, draw a door shape on the front and a handle. Help them to cut along three sides of the door and bend back the fourth side to open it.
- Show them how to stick the border around the door onto the card underneath, leaving the door free to open. They can draw the figure of Jesus knocking at their door.

#### Dramatic transformation

10 mins **S**

A symbolic activity to show how Zacchaeus' life changed from dark to light

**You will need:** Scratch Art doodle sheets [WEB](#) or pieces of white card, felt tips, black wax crayons, round-ended scissors.

- Talk together about how Zacchaeus' life changed dramatically from dark to light after he met Jesus.
- Demonstrate how to use the Scratch Art sheets, or show the children how to create their own, by drawing a pattern on a piece of card in felt tip, covering it with black wax crayon, then scratching a pattern with the end of a pair of closed scissors to reveal the colours below.
- The children may like to do something to symbolise the story, or just create a pattern.

### Pray

#### Visual reflection

5 mins **E S**

Think about the needs of others

**You will need:** newspapers, or for younger children, a collection of pictures of people in need of help or hospitality.

- Encourage the children to look through the newspapers and tear out a picture of people in need of help or hospitality, or choose one of the pictures from the display.
- Invite them to hold their picture and pray silently for the people concerned, that God will be close to them and help them.

More prayers are on p.38.

### Sing

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for key to abbreviations.

Change my heart, O God  
Rich man Zac (KS, RSJ)  
This little light of mine  
Mighty is our God (CJP, JP, TS)  
Welcome, welcome (KS)  
Zacchaeus was a very little man

#### WEB extras [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com)

**Children's Sheet:** for session and at home. Welsh version available.

**Psalms 32:** response line with actions

**Picture pointers:** to download, print and share

**Pass it on:** resources to share for DIY discipleship

## Send out

#### Live in faith **E A**

Encourage the children to look out for someone who is left out or lonely this week. They could try to include them in a game or invite them round for tea.

Spiritual styles: **W** Word **E** Emotion **S** Symbol **A** Action  
[WEB](#) More info in the *Support* section

# ROOTS YOUNG PEOPLE

## BIBLE Luke 19.1-10

Find Bible notes and more prayers on p.38. Use this section first, then choose any combination of activities from the other sections. Extra ideas can be found in *Explore & respond* opposite. On the [WEB](#) find templates, links, images and *Pass it on*: resources to share for DIY discipleship.

### Warm up 5 mins W E

Beforehand, ask the young people and other leaders to bring in some baby photos of themselves. Can everyone guess who is who? Whose physical features have changed the most dramatically? Today's Gospel is about someone whose character underwent dramatic change.

### Social media gospel 15 mins W E

Invite each person to choose a peripheral character from the story, e.g. onlookers sympathetic or antagonistic to Jesus; disciples; Zacchaeus' wife; servants at home. Provide a large sheet of flipchart paper and pens. Read **Luke 19.1-10**, pausing at each key moment. Encourage everyone to write a tweet or Facebook status update about what is happening, from the point of view of their persona.

## CONNECT

### Quick, Jesus is coming! 10 mins W E

Ask the young people: If Jesus suddenly announced he was turning up on your doorstep to have a meal in your home, what would you do to prepare? How much tidying up and cleaning would you do? What would you have on display, or put away? Discuss how reactions reflect the differences between our and Jesus' priorities.

### Be the change 10 mins W A

Mohandas or 'Mahatma' Gandhi (1869-1948), non-violent campaigner for Indian independence from British rule, said, 'Be the change you want to see in the world.' Ask the young people what injustices they see in their school or community. What changes do they want to see and what is stopping them from making them? How can they live in a way that begins to make change happen? Whose advice or help could they seek?

[WEB](#) PostScript: weekly topical issues and commentary every Thursday.

## Listen

The Lost Get Found, Britt Nicole  
Always, One Sonic Society  
Your Words, Third Day

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for links.

## EXPLORE

### Simple hospitality 15 mins+ E A

Plan to hold a soup lunch at church, after the morning service, or on a Saturday. Find a favourite recipe, look online or use a quality brand of ready-made soup. Make or shop for the soup together and serve with fresh bread. You could charge a modest price that generates a profit for a food bank or ask for donations.

### Blessing bookmarks 10 mins E S

Provide coloured card, a guillotine and fine liner pens and give the young people a quote from Max Lucado, a Christian writer: 'God loves you just the way you are, but he refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus.' Invite them to make decorative bookmarks with the quote inscribed or printed on them and hand them out to people at the end of a service.



**Picture pointers** [WEB](#) Questions for reflection

- ▶ Which way are you heading?
- ▶ How can you give more to others?

## PRAY

### Prayer flowers 5 mins E S

Place a bowl of water on the floor and give everyone a paper flower (template on [WEB](#)) to cut out. Invite them to write a prayer about something they want to see changed in the middle of the flower, then fold the petals over. Have a moment of quiet so people can pray silently, then place the folded flowers on the water with the petals uppermost. Wait and watch. All the flowers should open within 30 seconds.

### What's to do? 5 mins E S A

Invite everyone to make a 'To do' list for the coming week. Play 2 minutes 30 seconds of the track 'Your Words' (see *Listen*), then fade it out so that everyone can quietly pray over the list, that God will help them see any changes that need making, so that his priorities come first.

## Live in faith E A

Think of someone with whom you don't normally spend much time, and whom you could take for a drink at a café or invite to your home. Then take/invite them.