



# Rattles and Prattles

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A resource for caregivers of infants and toddlers

## Trees: A Look at God's Story

We need a Friend and Savior.

### Story:

Zacchaeus

### Scripture Reference:

Luke 19:1-10

### Background for Teachers/Caregivers

When I say February, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Love! Valentine's Day! Friendship! Heart Healthy Month! Presidents' Day!

This February, we'll focus on Valentine's Day—more specifically on friends and how we show our love to each other. Friends say and do loving things to help each other. Friends often like to give each other hugs. Or, friends may make things to give to each other. Friends don't do these things because they are required to do so; it's because they want to.

To teach this, we'll use the story of Zacchaeus, a tax collector who lived at the time of Jesus. Tax collectors were notorious for requiring people to pay more than was required and then pocketing the excess. Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector for Jericho, a town on the trade route from northern countries to Egypt; he was in a position to make a lot of money.

How can this setting fit into our theme of trees? Well, Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus. Zacchaeus was curious about Jesus. He had heard that Jesus was a Friend to all—no matter their job, income, or stature in society. When he learned that Jesus was coming to Jericho, he decided to go and see Jesus.

But this presented a problem. First, many people had the same idea. Second, since Zacchaeus was a not-so-reputable tax collector, no one was that anxious to move aside so he could get up close and personal with Jesus. In addition, Zacchaeus wasn't very tall, which made his ability to see Jesus more difficult.

This did not stop Zacchaeus. He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree so he could look down at Jesus as He passed by. When Jesus passed beneath the tree, Jesus looked up and saw Zacchaeus. He told him to come down, and said, "I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5).

Zacchaeus was thrilled. God's Spirit moved him to respond to Jesus by saying he would give half of his wealth to the poor and repay anyone he had defrauded four times the amount. Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9). Jesus was Zacchaeus' best Friend and Savior.

When Jesus enters our lives, God's Spirit moves us to change too. May God's Spirit enter your lives and bring about a change, moving you to respond to His love through all your words and actions. Jesus is our example. His love moved Him to suffer and die in our place. May what was said of Zacchaeus be said of us, "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9). Remember Jesus is your best Friend and Savior.



## JESUS TIME

### ■ Get Ready

- \* Enlarge the patterns on heavier stock paper, e.g., tag board. Color and laminate. Punch holes at the top left, and use a key ring or shower ring to secure the pages. Or, place adhesive pieces of “hook” Velcro on the back, and use with a flannel board.
- \* Use a favorite hand puppet, e.g. Lily or Sprout from Concordia Publishing House or purchase one ([www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org)).
- \* Songbooks: *Lift Little Voices* (CPH, 1997); *Little Ones Sing Praise* (CPH, 1989).  
Book: *Fingers Tell The Story* (CPH, 1989).

### ■ Set/Go

Invite mobile infants and toddlers to sit close to you. Ask caregivers to hold younger infants and join you. Use the puppet while singing, “Hello Everybody” (*LLV*, p. 51). Show a picture of Jesus and sing, “Jesus Loves the Little Ones Like Me, Me, Me” (*LOSP*, p. 41). Sing a second verse changing me to you.

(Show the heart-shaped book.) Jesus loves us very much. He loves you and me, and He loved a man named Zacchaeus a long time ago. Only Zacchaeus didn’t know it yet.

(Show the first page.) Zacchaeus was a little man, as small as he could be. When Jesus came to teach the crowd, Zacchaeus couldn’t see. Zacchaeus heard Jesus loves all people. He wondered if Jesus loved him. So, he wanted to see Him and find out.

(Show the second page.) He stood up on his tippy toes and stretched his neck way out. He jumped and jumped up high until he had to stop.

(Show the third page.) At last, he cried, “I’ve got a plan!” He climbed up a tree. And from the branches way up high, Zacchaeus now could see.

(Show the fourth page.) When Jesus walked beneath the tree, He looked up happily. “Zacchaeus, come down here. I’m coming home with you.” Zacchaeus grinned from ear to ear (adapted from *FTTS*, p. 61).

(Show the fifth page.) Zacchaeus was happy to learn Jesus loved Him; Zacchaeus wanted to show His love for Jesus too, as do we. We love Jesus because He first loved us. Sing “Oh, How I Love Jesus” (*LOSP*, p. 44).

(Show the sixth page.) Jesus showed His love by dying on a cross to take away all the times we are not kind and loving.

Let’s talk to Jesus, our best Friend and Savior. “Dear Jesus, I’m glad You loved Zacchaeus. I’m glad You are His best Friend and Savior. I’m glad You love me. I’m glad You are my best Friend and Savior. Amen.”

End with the song “My Best Friend is Jesus” (*LOSP*, p. 45) and the puppet singing “Goodbye” (*LOSP*, p. 40).



# PERMEATING THE FAITH THROUGHOUT THE DAY

## Emergent Literacy

- \* Read a book about Zacchaeus: "Too Tall, Too Small" by Mary Manz Simon (CPH).
- \* Use action poems:
  - Zacchaeus was sad, sad as could be (make sad face). When Jesus loved him (hug self) he was so glad (make a happy face).
  - How much does Jesus love me? This much! No! That is not enough! Jesus loves us so much. How much do you love Jesus? This much! No! That is not enough!
  - I love Jesus so much! (*FTTS*, p. 26)
- \* Talk about opposites: Jesus was tall, Zacchaeus was small. Zacchaeus was sad; Jesus helped him to be happy.
  - Action poem
  - Sometimes I'm very small (crouch down);
  - Sometimes I'm very tall (stretch up) .
  - But Jesus loves me all the time (hug self).

*source unknown*

- Nursery rhyme:  
Jack and Jill; use the picture from the reproducible.

## Math

- \* Use the pattern of a child from the November issue of *Rattles & Prattles*. Make 10, and sing (use the tune "10 Little Indians"):  
1 little, 2 little ... Jesus loves them all. Repeat and end with "They love Jesus too."

## Science

- \* Use the pattern of ears from the reproducible.
  - Talk about things that could be heard during the story: the crowd, Jesus talking to Zacchaeus, Jesus at Zacchaeus' home, Zacchaeus telling Jesus what he would do, etc.
  - Sing "I Have Ears That Can Hear" (*LOSP*, p. 29).
  - Share opposites that ears can hear, e.g., loud/soft; low/high; happy/sad.
- \* Jesus loved Zacchaeus and came close to him. We love Jesus and enjoy being close to Him. God made magnets that love to be close to each other. Show a variety of magnets, and demonstrate how they work.

## Social Studies

- \* Zacchaeus didn't have many friends. We may have some friends or a lot of friends. But we all have a Friend, who is above the rest—Jesus, best Friend and

Savior. As you share this with the children, use the figure of Jesus. Talk about the friends they have in the classroom.

## Art

- \* Use brown construction paper and cut a tree trunk and a few main branches. Assist as older infants and toddlers tear small pieces of paper—green tissue paper, construction paper, etc., and glue or paste them to the tree trunk. As the children work, talk about the tree Zacchaeus climbed to see Jesus.
- \* Use a large leaf or a cluster of small leaves. Dip it/ them in green tempera. Place it on the left side of a piece of 8 ½" x 11" paper. Fold in half, and press down. Open it, and see the print of the leaf/leaves. Remove the leaf/leaves and let dry. See faith focus.
- \* Color of the month: pink. Invite older infants and toddlers to paint, using red and white. Demonstrate how to make pink, mixing some white with red. Paint with the pink. Let dry and cut out heart shapes. Place shapes during the chant, "Jesus loves you. Jesus loves me. Jesus loves our whole family."

## Music

- Sing songs about Jesus
- \* "Zacchaeus" (*LOSP*, p. 55)
  - \* "Oh, How I Love Jesus" (*LOSP*, p. 44)
  - \* "My Best Friend is Jesus" (*LOSP*, p. 45)

## Large Motor

- \* Zacchaeus ran and climbed a tree to see Jesus. How might we go to see Jesus? Run! Walk! Tiptoe! Stomp!
- \* You might make an adaptation of "Let's Go on a Bear Hunt" to "Let's Go and See Jesus" – just like Zacchaeus did.
- \* Invite walking infants and toddlers to hold onto a hula hoop. Walk around, and chant, "Ring a ring of roses ... God loves you."

## Taste

- \* Spread strawberry cream cheese on crackers. While eating, sing Jesus-loves-me songs. Talk about what Zacchaeus might have served to Jesus at the dinner they had together.
- \* Use the opposite concepts from the story, e.g., happy/sad of Zacchaeus with foods, tart (pickles) and sweet (sugar coated breakfast cereal); cold (milk) and warm (macaroni and cheese).

# COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

*Use this letter as a means of sharing what is happening in the center with your parents and things they can do at home to reinforce the focus of the Bible story.*

Dear Parents,

February and Valentine's Day brings back many memories of my childhood. It was always exciting to either purchase Valentines or make my own to give to family members, friends, classmates and teachers. It was a special way to show people around me that I really cared.

This month, as we celebrated Valentine's Day, we shared a special story from the Bible about a unique way Jesus showed someone He really cared about him. We shared the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). You may recall, Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Tax collectors often extorted more money than was required and pocketed the excess. As a result, they were shunned. They probably lived a very lonely life.

Inherently, we all desire to be loved and accepted. Zacchaeus was no exception. He had heard of Jesus, the traveling preacher who expressed God's love for all. Zacchaeus wondered if that included him. When he heard Jesus was coming to his town, he was curious and wanted to see Him. However, since he was short, he couldn't even get a glimpse of Jesus.

Being resourceful, Zacchaeus climbed a tree near the road on which Jesus was walking. When Jesus walked beneath that tree, Jesus looked up at him and told Zacchaeus to come down quickly, for He wanted to have dinner with him. Scripture tells us this was a life-changing event for Zacchaeus. God's Spirit moved Zacchaeus to say he would give half of his wealth to the poor, and if he had defrauded anyone, he would repay four times the amount.

When Jesus becomes part of our lives, we are changed. Jesus is not only our best Friend, but also He is our Savior, who gave His life for us. Such love moves us to love and forgive others and to show our love as we interact with people—whether it's in our family, our neighborhood, our church, our work place, our community, or our world.

May what Jesus said of Zacchaeus be said of us too. "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9).

Your child's teacher,



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Use the patterns on this page to prepare visuals to tell the Bible story, and integrate God's story throughout the whole day.

