

BIBLE STORY: "ZACCHAEUS"

TEXT: Luke 19:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

Explain what a tax collector was in the time in which Jesus lived.

- Example: Tax collectors collected the taxes (money) from their people to give to the (Roman) government. Also, they would ask for more money than required, because they would give what was necessary to the government and keep the rest for themselves. This way they became rich. The people did not like the tax collectors. This story is about a chief tax collector called Zacchaeus.

BACKGROUND:

(Initial Situation)

Jesus was passing through the city of Jericho.

BIBLE STORY:

Jesus was passing through the city of Jericho. A wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus was there. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was a short man and a large crowd was around Jesus. So Zacchaeus was unable to see him.

Zacchaeus ran on ahead and climbed a sycamore fig tree. He thought this way he could see Jesus, because he was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the sycamore fig tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, you come down immediately, because today I want to go to your house."

Zacchaeus climbed down and gladly welcomed Jesus.

In his home, Zacchaeus said to Jesus, "I will now give half of my possessions to the poor. Also, if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount taken."

CONCLUSION:

(Choose one or more options.)

Option 1: Stop

- After telling the Bible story, stop.

Option 2: Prayer

- After telling the Bible story, lead in prayer.
- In your prayer, you may mention a Devotional Thought (Bible truth) taken from the story that applies to the lives of the listeners.
- Example of a closing prayer: "Dear Lord Jesus, thank you that you love us and know each one of us - even by our names. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Option 3: Devotional Thought

- After telling the Bible story, state the Devotional Thought. It is a Life Lesson (Bible truth) taken from the story that applies to the lives of the listeners. Examples:
 - (1) **Jesus loves us.** Zacchaeus was a short man. He was not liked by the people because he was a tax collector. But Jesus loved Zacchaeus, stopped and talked to him. We may be short or tall; have blond, brown, black or red hair, or even no hair; be liked or disliked by others. Yet, Jesus loves us too!

- (2) **Jesus knows us.** When Jesus was by the sycamore fig tree, he knew that a man was up in the tree and he knew that his name was Zacchaeus. He called him, "Zacchaeus, you come down immediately." Jesus knows where we are and knows each one of us by our names.
- (3) **Jesus wants to be with us.** Jesus wanted to go home with Zacchaeus. So Zaachaeus climbed down from the sycamore fig tree and gladly welcomed Jesus to his home and into his life. May we welcome Jesus to be in our lives, our homes and wherever we go.

Option 4: Discussion Questions

- After telling the Bible story, ask one or more questions, depending upon the time available. Allow the listeners to answer.
Examples:
 - **Generic Questions** (questions that can be asked with any story):
 - (1) What did you learn from the story?
 - (2) What does this story teach us about God?
 - (3) How can we apply this story to our lives?
 - **Specific Questions** (questions that can be asked with this particular story):
 - (1) Who were the tax collectors?
 - (2) Did the people like the tax collectors? Why not?
 - (3) Who was the tax collector in the story?
 - (4) Who did Zacchaeus want to see? What happened?
 - (5) What did Jesus do when he came to the sycamore tree?
 - (6) What did Zacchaeus do?
 - (7) Should we help people we do not like? Why?
 - (8) What are some kinds of things that we can do for people that we do not like?

Option 5: Activity

- After telling the Bible story, do an activity.
Examples:
 - **Pantomime:** Ask for two volunteers, one to be Jesus and another to be Zacchaeus. As you retell the story, the volunteers will pantomime their characters without saying anything.
 - **Figures:** Use a flannel board with flannel on back of each figure or use a magnet board with a magnet on back of each figure. As you or a volunteer retells the story, place the figures on its flannel or magnet board at the appropriate time.

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