



## SESSION FOUR

# Jesus Forgives Zacchaeus

### SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:1-10

### BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

*[Love] is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

1 Corinthians 13:5-6

### LESSON FOCUS

God's love is forgiving.

### BIBLE AIMS

During this session, each student may

1. DISCOVER that Jesus showed God's love by forgiving Zacchaeus, the tax collector;
2. DESCRIBE actions that show forgiveness to others;
3. ASK God to help him or her forgive others;
4. PRAY to become a member of God's family, as the Holy Spirit leads.

### BIBLE STORY RECAP

When Jesus and His friends went to Jericho, people lined the streets just to see Jesus. One man, a tax collector named Zacchaeus, was too short to see over the people around him. He wanted to see Jesus so much that he climbed a tree. Then Jesus surprised Zacchaeus. Jesus walked right up to the tree and told Zacchaeus to come down. Jesus wanted to have dinner at Zacchaeus's house!

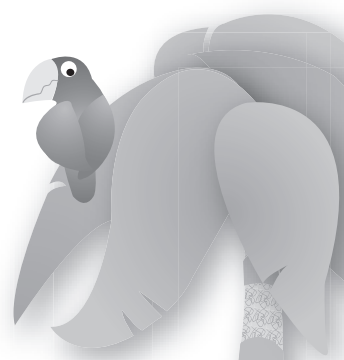
Everyone was surprised that Jesus would be kind to a sinner like Zacchaeus. Tax collectors were known as cheats and thieves! But Jesus' kindness and love changed Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus said that he would give back FOUR times the money he'd taken unfairly and HALF of all he had to the poor. Jesus forgave Zacchaeus for the wrong things he'd done.

### TEACHER'S DEVOTIONAL

Some of us are planners. We neatly file all records, regularly balance the books and use spreadsheets to calculate our debts and assets. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, was probably a planner. Judging by his wealth and his neighbors' dislike of him, he was probably very thorough. He may have even kept a neat set of DOUBLE books—one for the Romans and one for himself.

Planners probably also understand Zacchaeus's initial shock when Jesus called him down from the tree and invited Himself to dinner. That appointment was not in Zacchaeus's personal planner—not even in pencil! But in one act and one statement, Jesus lavished Zacchaeus with a love, forgiveness and acceptance that Zacchaeus had never known. It didn't take Zacchaeus long to recover his balance. He realized the great grace he'd received and declared that he was giving back four-fold to anyone he'd cheated!

Whether or not we balance our books and file our receipts, there is one area of accounting in which we can relax: We need never keep any record of wrong! Jesus tells us to stop keeping our own double sets of books—our "Christian" set and another set in which we note in permanent ink unpaid debts. As forgiven followers of Jesus, we are free to forgive all debts, burn the old records and let Him free us from the pain, bitterness and frustration bound up in every one of those old accounts. The forgiveness God lavishes in Jesus' name frees you to focus on giving your students the greatest treasure ever—God's amazing love!



# BIBLE STORY REVIEW GAME

## HURRICANE!

**PREPARATION:** Photocopy appropriate age-level Hurricane Quiz.

**PROCEDURE:** Ask a volunteer to be "It." Remaining students divide into two teams. If teams are uneven, a teacher or helper joins a team to balance the numbers. Team A forms a circle. "It" stands in the center of the circle, the "eye" of the hurricane. Each member of Team B stands behind one of the members of Team A (see sketch). "It" starts clapping, which signals that the hurricane is storming. The inside circle, Team A, claps with "It" and Team B moves clockwise around the circle. When "It" stops clapping, Team A stops clapping, too. "It" and Team B members each hurry to stand behind a member of Team A. The player left without someone to stand behind is the next "It." Team A and Team B change places before next round begins.

Play a few practice rounds. For each new "It," ask if he or she would rather have a Rainstorm- (easier) or Monsoon- (more difficult) level question from Hurricane Quiz. Read question. "It" answers or selects a volunteer to answer question. Continue playing, repeating question if needed, as time allows.

**KEY CONVERSATION:** How did Zacchaeus's life change when Jesus forgave him? Because he wanted to show God's love to others, Zacchaeus chose to pay money to people he had cheated and to give money to the poor.

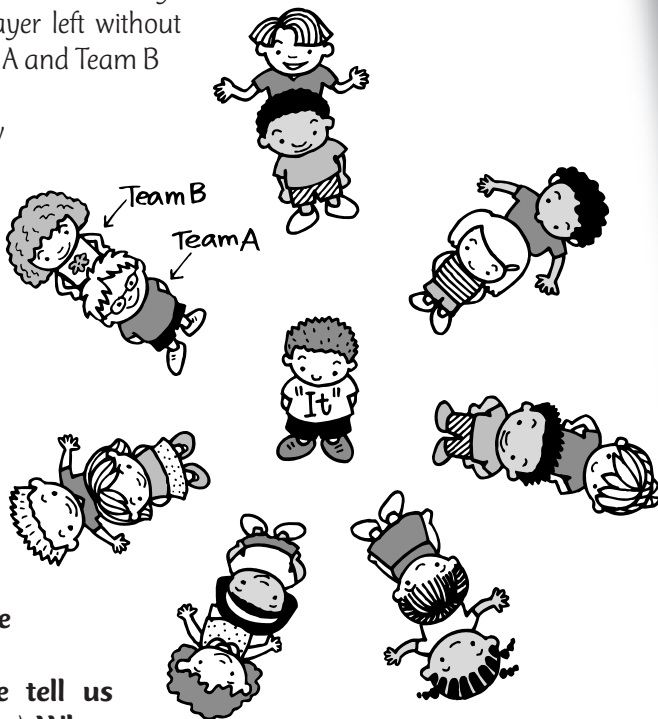
What does today's Daily Treasure tell us about God's love? (God's Love Is Forgiving.) When we ask, God forgives us for the wrong things we do, too. We can share the treasure of God's love with others by forgiving them the way God forgives us!

**PRIMARY SIMPLIFICATION:** Instead of having a student be "It," students form pairs as described above. Remember who your partner is. During our game you'll have to find each other again. Play "Treasure Forever" from *Son Treasure Island* CD as students on the outside of the circle walk around other students. After a few moments, stop the music. Pairs find each other, give a high five and sit down. Last pair to sit answers a Rainstorm-level question from Hurricane Quiz or selects another pair to answer question.

**PRETEEN CHALLENGE:** Team A moves counter-clockwise as Team B moves clockwise. In addition to Rainstorm and Monsoon questions, students may choose Hurricane questions on page 44.

### Materials Checklist

- ◆ Hurricane Quiz (pp. 43-44)





## Rainstorm (All Ages)

**Why did a crowd of people gather?** (They wanted to see Jesus.)

**Who did the townspeople think of as a thief?** (Zacchaeus.)

**Why did Zacchaeus climb a tree?** (So that he could see Jesus.)

**Why were people surprised Jesus would talk to Zacchaeus?** (Zacchaeus was considered a bad man.)

**What did Jesus say about the wrong things Zacchaeus had done?** (Jesus knew Zacchaeus was sorry. Jesus forgave him.)

**How much did Zacchaeus promise to pay people he'd cheated?** (Four times as much money.)

## Monsoon (All Ages)

**What are some reasons people wanted to see Jesus?** (They wanted to hear Him talk about God. They wanted Him to heal them.)

**Why didn't the townspeople like Zacchaeus?** (Zacchaeus was a tax collector and had cheated them out of money.)

**What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus when He saw him up in a tree?** (Jesus told Zacchaeus to come down from the tree. Jesus said He would have dinner at Zacchaeus's house.)

**Who do you think the people expected Jesus to have dinner with?** (Religious leaders from the town. Important and well-liked people.)

**What did Zacchaeus say he would do about the people he had cheated out of money?** (He said he'd pay back four times the money he'd taken unfairly.)

**What do you think the townspeople thought when Zacchaeus paid back the money he'd taken unfairly?** (Zacchaeus had changed. Zacchaeus wouldn't cheat them anymore.)

## Hurricane (Preteen Only)

**At the beginning of today's story Zacchaeus had money and power, but what is one thing he didn't have?** (Friends. A good reputation. Popularity.)

**What kind of man was Zacchaeus at the beginning of the story?** (He was a rich man, but he was a cheater and a thief. He was lonely.)

**Compare and contrast how Zacchaeus felt at the beginning of the story and how he felt at the end of the story.**

**What might you have said if you were one of the people who heard Jesus say He'd have dinner with Zacchaeus?**

**Describe the choices Zacchaeus made in today's story and the result of his choices.**

**Why do you think Zacchaeus wanted to pay back the money he'd taken unfairly and give even more money to the poor?** (Now that he was forgiven, he wanted to do right things. He wanted people to know that he had changed.)



# MEMORY VERSE GAME

## COCONUT BOWLING

**PREPARATION:** Display poster. Pour approximately 2 inches (5 cm) of sand or water in each bottle. Attach lid and secure with tape. Cut palm fronds from construction paper and attach to top of bottles. At one end of the playing area, set up bottles like bowling pins (see sketch). Make a masking-tape line at least 6 feet (1.8 m) from bottles.

**PROCEDURE:** Point to poster and read verse aloud, asking students to read along with you. Students stand in a line behind masking-tape line. Students take turns rolling the coconut or ball toward the bottles. For each bottle the student knocks over, he or she selects a word on the poster and covers it with one or more Post-it Notes. Students repeat verse, saying the covered words from memory. First student goes to end of line and the next student takes a turn. When the verse is completely covered, remove all Post-it Notes and start again. Repeat as time allows.

**KEY CONVERSATION:** “Self-seeking” means being selfish or thinking only of yourself. What do you think it means to keep no record of wrongs? (Forgive. Don’t remember only the bad things. Don’t try to get even.) Keeping a record of wrongs is like making a list of reasons to be angry. Our Bible verse says that when we love others we won’t keep track of the wrong things that they do.

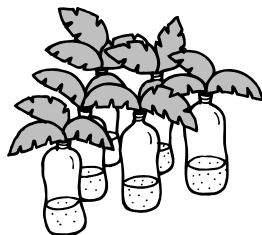
What does today’s Daily Treasure tell us about God’s love? (God’s Love Is Forgiving.) This is a very important part of loving others. That’s why the Bible says a lot about forgiveness. Why do you think it’s better to forgive than to hold on to anger? Since God forgives us, we can share the treasure of His love and forgive others, too!

### PRIMARY SIMPLIFICATION:

Use the primary version of the memory verse. Move starting line closer to bottles.

### PRETEEN CHALLENGE:

If a student gets a strike by knocking all the bottles over, he or she attempts to say the entire verse from memory.



### Materials Checklist

- ◆ Session 4 Memory Verse Poster from *Elementary Teaching Resources*
- ◆ 6 2-liter bottles with lids
- ◆ sand or water
- ◆ masking tape
- ◆ green construction paper
- ◆ scissors
- ◆ coconut or ball
- ◆ Post-it Notes

# Rainstorm

Why did a crowd  
of people gather?

Who did the townspeople  
think of as a thief?

Why did Zacchaeus  
climb a tree?

Why were people  
surprised Jesus would  
talk to Zacchaeus?

What did Jesus say about  
the wrong things  
Zacchaeus had done?

How much did Zacchaeus  
promise to pay people  
he'd cheated?

# Monsoon

What are some reasons  
people wanted to see Jesus?

Why didn't the  
townspeople like  
Zacchaeus?

What did Jesus  
say to Zacchaeus  
when He saw him  
up in a tree?

Who do you think the  
people expected Jesus  
to have dinner with?

What did Zacchaeus say he  
would do about the people  
he had cheated out of money?

What do you think the  
townspeople thought when  
Zacchaeus paid back the money  
he'd taken unfairly?



# Rainstorm

# Monsoon

# Hurricane

Why did a crowd of people gather?

What are some reasons people wanted to see Jesus?

At the beginning of today's story Zacchaeus had money and power, but what is one thing he didn't have?

Who did the townspeople think of as a thief?

Why didn't the townspeople like Zacchaeus?

What kind of man was Zacchaeus at the beginning of the story?

Why did Zacchaeus climb a tree?

What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus when He saw him up in a tree?

Compare and contrast how Zacchaeus felt at the beginning of the story and how he felt at the end of the story.

Why were people surprised Jesus would talk to Zacchaeus?

Who do you think the people expected Jesus to have dinner with?

What might you have said if you were one of the people who heard Jesus say He'd have dinner with Zacchaeus?

What did Jesus say about the wrong things Zacchaeus had done?

What did Zacchaeus say he would do about the people he had cheated out of money?

Describe the choices Zacchaeus made in today's story and the result of his choices.

How much did Zacchaeus promise to pay people he'd cheated?

What do you think the townspeople thought when Zacchaeus paid back the money he'd taken unfairly?

Why do you think Zacchaeus wanted to pay back the money he'd taken unfairly and give even more money to the poor?