

SKY

Saving Faith
Series 4—Lesson 4

StoryTime



A Little Man Up the Big Tree

Primary 3-7

Bible Text:

Luke 19:1-16

Lesson Aim:

To teach children that honesty is a trait that God requires of His children.

Memory Verse:

"You should do that which is honest..."

(2 Corinthians 13:7)

Words to Learn:

- Honest
- Tax Collector
- Honorable

Always Close in Prayer

The Teacher's Bible Study

To be a person that is honest is to be authentic, genuine, and real. When you are honest, you are displaying a piece of your character that expresses respect both for yourself and others. Honesty is the ability to live in openness with your light shining in a dark and evil world.

The standard for honesty comes from Christ. We live in a world that is continually pulling at us to conform to its way of thinking. Rationalizing our actions is an easy way out. Simply giving in because "I deserve a break today" is a compromise of Christian values.

Our goal is to teach our children the value of honesty. We ask ourselves, *Why would anyone want to be dishonest?* But our world is filled with dishonesty. Our children must understand that honesty is as necessary for the human spirit to thrive as good food, water, and air are for our body's health.

For honesty is not only about telling the truth, it is a WAY OF LIFE; it is part of your CHARACTER and PERSONALITY traits. When you are honest, you have integrity. It says you are who you say you are. There is no hypocrisy in the life you lead.

Our personal traits indicate the QUALITY of who you are on the inside; they will show the good, or the bad. God wants each of us to take on His traits which He has revealed in the Bible.

One of the important traits of God's character is HONESTY. God can be trusted. He does not lie, He does not defraud, He keeps His word, He shows His love by action and not just empty words.

Jesus, by His example, showed His unflinching honesty in all aspects. He responded with encouragement, patience, and forgiveness to human weakness, but He reacted strongly to hypocrisy and dishonesty, for dishonesty is conscious fraud. There is premeditation involved. It becomes a way of life. And guess who is the father of deception and lies? Yes, Satan.

As parents and teachers we must impress on our children the need for the ageless virtue of being an honest person. Be someone whose

“no” is no and “yes” is yes. If our children avoid telling lies and half truths they will grow up with a reputation of being a trustworthy person. It is part of their character.

The following story is about a man named Zacchaeus (*zac-KEY-us*). He was a publican and the “chief” Jewish tax collector for the Roman government. Tax collectors were usually Romans, but it is believed that Zacchaeus was a Jewish representative from Jericho. To become a tax collector, you had to place a bid on the job. The individual who placed the highest bid received the privilege to collect taxes. Your rights to collect taxes usually lasted five years. Tax collectors were not well liked as they were known for cheating the government and the people.

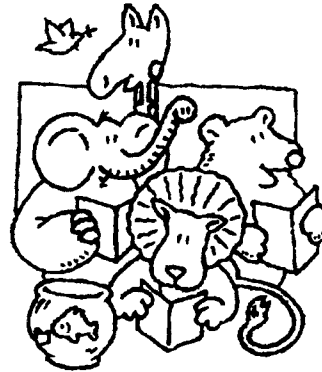
Zacchaeus was probably a man of tremendous wealth—accustomed to servants and others doing thing for him.

For a man of his stature and wealth to climb a tree to see Jesus was a significant action. It shows a side of his character that others did not suspect. To them he was just one of the bureaucrats.

It could be that Zacchaeus was tired of his dishonest life and saw in Jesus a way to be restored.

This meeting with Jesus completely changed Zacchaeus’s life—forever. When we think of it, meeting Jesus seems to affect people that way. What do you think? □

Simple as 1,2,3...



1. Additional Reading for Teacher Study

Deuteronomy 32:34

John 1:14; John 8:32; I John 3:9

2. Are You Listening?

After you read or tell the story you may ask the following questions:

1. True or false: Zacchaeus lived in Jerusalem—*FALSE*
2. True or false: Zacchaeus was a tax collector—*TRUE*
3. True or false: The people trusted Zacchaeus—*FALSE*
4. True or false: Being wealthy always brings happiness—*FALSE*
5. True or false: Jesus is our standard for honesty—*TRUE*
6. True or false: Zacchaeus desperately climbed a tree to be able to see Jesus as He passed by—*TRUE*
7. True or false: Jesus went to Zacchaeus’s home even though many people didn’t think He should—*TRUE*
8. True or false: Being honest is a way of life—*TRUE*

3. Word Definitions

These definitions were taken from *Webster’s New World Dictionary*.

- **Honest**—not disposed to lie, cheat, and steal; honorable in intentions, principles, and actions.
- **Tax**—a sum of money charged on the goods, income, or property you own by a *government* for its support.
- **Honorable**—worthy of high respect and honor; consistent with honor and a good reputation

SKY Story Time

A Little Man Up the Big Tree

Once there lived a man who named Zacchaeus. He was a tax collector and a very rich man. Now tax collectors had reputations of not being honest. The people did not trust tax collectors for they were greedy and lived off the labor of others, and Zacchaeus was the **CHIEF** tax collector! He could require more money from the people than he needed to. He wasn't a real popular fellow among his people.

Zacchaeus, in spite of his wealth, often found he wasn't happy. His conscience had started to bother him. He had found that money does not take the place of friends, a good reputation, respect and trust. He was troubled in his heart, and didn't rest well at night.

One day he had seen a crowd of people gathered around a man. He had caught a glimpse of the man's face, and heard His voice as He spoke to the people.

Zacchaeus stood and listened for a few minutes. When he asked who the man was, he was told, "His name is Jesus, the teacher from Nazareth."

"That's him?" Zacchaeus questioned, for he had heard about this man. Jesus had a reputation as a good teacher, a healer, and a friend to people others avoided. He was a man that people either hated or they loved deeply.

"There is something about that man that brings encouragement to my troubled heart," he thought to himself. "I certainly wish I could get close enough to meet Him. I think He would help me."

Zacchaeus found himself thinking about this

often. Zacchaeus didn't know then how much his life was about to change.

The Road to Jericho

One day Jesus and His friends were were traveling through Jericho. He had been teaching and healing all over the countryside. Some had noticed the teacher from Nazareth and began to form in groups along the road. The travelers and farmers coming into the city must have wondered what was causing all the hubbub. There was a feeling of excitement in the air. Zacchaeus was among the crowd.

"There He is!" someone in the crowd cried out. The people strained to see Jesus. Zacchaeus began to feel desperate. There were many people standing in front of him and he was just too short to see over their heads! "Oh, no! I must **SEE** him!" he said. He frantically looked around for a solution.

His eyes fell on a large sycamore tree by the side of the road. He quickly decided to climb the tree so he could see Jesus as He passed by. Although Zacchaeus hadn't climbed a tree since he was a little boy he hiked up his fine garments from around his legs and scrambled up into the branches.

"Now this is better!" he thought happily. He now could see Jesus among His friends, walking and talking as they came. They were going to pass right under his tree! What a piece of good fortune!

How Did You Do That?

When Jesus came to the tree He suddenly stopped and looked up. With a smile on His face and a twinkle in His eyes he said, "Zacchaeus, hurry up and come down here, for today I must stay at YOUR house."

Zacchaeus couldn't believe his ears! "How did Jesus know my name, and that I was up in the tree?" he wondered. He climbed down from the tree, and eagerly ran over to stand in front of Jesus. Zacchaeus was very pleased to finally meet Him. His heart felt overwhelmed with this honor.

The people standing close-by were very surprised that Jesus would want to go to the house of a despised tax collector. For he was a **SINNER!**

But, unlike anyone else, Jesus looks past the outside and looks deep into our hearts and sees the need that is there. He loves the sinner and wants to wash and heal the sick in heart. Jesus wants everyone to turn their life around.

My Home is Yours

Zacchaeus was overjoyed that Jesus would want to visit him.

When accused of being unfit for Jesus to be around, Zacchaeus looked into Jesus face and replied earnestly that he would give half of his riches to the poor and repay those he had cheated with four times the original amount!

Jesus could see the deep desire to be honest from that day forward in the eyes of Zacchaeus, for honesty is a way of life.

Jesus never let the opinions of those around Him prevent Him from helping someone in deep distress. Jesus knew Zacchaeus wanted to make the change from wrong to right, and

He responded to it.

He will do the same for us.

Let's Talk About It

Have you ever made mistakes and someone you love and respect very much forgives you? How did you feel? Were you thankful, and deeply resolved to not disappoint them again? Probably.

This is very likely what Zacchaeus felt. This was Zacchaeus' way of showing how sorry he was for his sins. That day not only did Zacchaeus invite Jesus into his home, he invited Him into his life; and for the rest of his life

This we can know for sure: The little man Zacchaeus never forgot the day he climbed a sycamore tree. □

Crafty Idea

Using a hammer and a nail punch two holes, 1 inch from the top, on opposite sides of the can.

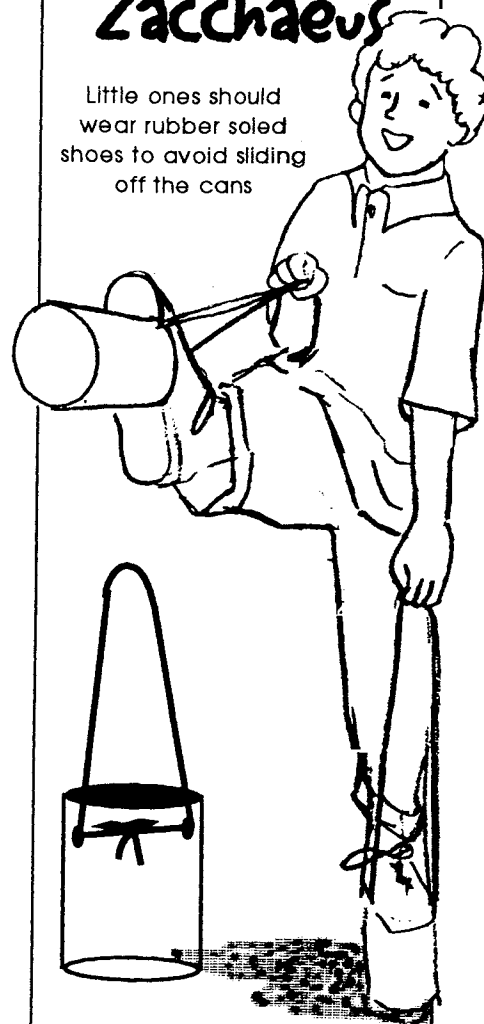
With the screwdriver widen each hole to about 1/2 inch diameter. On the inside of the can hammer any sharp edges down flat with the hammer.

Cut two pieces of rope that measure *three times* the length from your child's knee to the floor. Thread ends of rope through the holes from outside the can. Tie overhand knots, and pull the rope so the knots rest on the inside of the can (see the example). Have lots of fun!

Crafty Ideas

Up Here Zacchaeus

Little ones should wear rubber soled shoes to avoid sliding off the cans



Materials To Use:

- 2 large, empty matching tin cans
- Hammer • Ruler • Nail
- Phillips head screwdriver
- 10 feet of 3/8-inch cotton rope