

Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Luke 19: 1-10 - Zacchaeus and Jesus

Theme: Are you excited?

Contents:

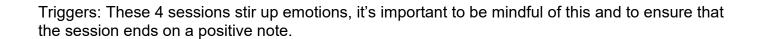
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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Today's story is one that may be well known by some but may also be unfamiliar for others. With it being a very familiar story, we can become complacent and think we know it. With this in mind, do read the Bible passage several times to really see the details in the story. We know it is a story which is documented in all four of the gospels. There are a range of emotions in this story but this session will particularly focus on the emotion of excitement. Saying that, it's important to note that excitement, joy, nerves and happiness can come together so there should be time and scope given for discussion and exploration of other emotions.

Zacchaeus, who was a tax collector and not a well-liked man in his town due to his cheating and devious ways, is the main character of our story, though, we will look at all people in the story. When Jesus noticed Zacchaeus and invited himself round for tea, Zacchaeus allowed his excitement to be evident to all around him. We will be asking in this session what gets you excited for Jesus, for God? It would be useful to have thought that through from a personal perspective when preparing this session.

Be aware that not all things in this session will excite everyone, for some it will cause anxiety.



Together – prayer and games

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Alternatively, you may join with the widget prayer found in the Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game - Eggs-citing Egg Toss

This week our 'emotion' is excitement – so you can play any game that your group finds exciting and fun. If you're looking for something special, and you have the space, you could play Eggs-citing Egg Toss. Work with a partner to toss and catch an egg without breaking it, as the distance between you both increases.

What you need:

- raw eggs (one per pair, plus spares)
- · cones or chalk to mark distances
- measuring tape or rope (optional, for even spacing)
- hand wipes or paper towels
- bucket of soapy water for cleanup
- plastic sheets or tarpaulin (for indoor play or mess control)
- safety goggles (optional, for close-up starts with younger kids)

If you'd prefer not to use real eggs:

- use water balloons, filled just enough to mimic the fragility of an egg
- or use beanbags wrapped in tissue for indoor or dry play

Pair up players and have them stand facing each other, about 1 meter apart. Make sure the playing area is flat, with no tripping hazards. It might be advisable to wear old clothes or offer aprons or smocks to protect clothing.

Each pair is given one egg (or alternative item).

On your signal, one child tosses the egg gently to their partner, who must try to catch it without breaking it. No running or diving to catch eggs is allowed.

If the egg is caught cleanly, the pair takes one big step backwards.



Repeat the toss at the new distance.

Continue taking steps back after each successful catch.

If the egg drops or breaks, that pair is out.

The game continues until only one pair remains – they are the Egg Toss Champions! If using real eggs, keep a designated handwashing and cleaning station nearby.

Quiet game – Zacchaeus' keys

You will need:

- chair
- keys
- blinfold

What you do:

Everyone should stand in a circle. In the middle of a circle place a chair with a set of keys underneath, these keys represent the keys to Zacchaeus house. One player is chosen to be Zacchaeus and this player is to sit on the chair blindfolded. One of the players in the circle is then chosen to try to steal the keys as quietly as possible from under the chair. If Zacchaeus thinks they have heard someone, they point to where they think the noise is coming from. If they are right, then they win and the other person becomes Zacchaeus. If the chosen person gets to the keys and is able to pick them up without Zacchaeus pointing to them, they win and everyone celebrates their success before another Zacchaeus is chosen and the game begins again. Ensure everyone gets to have a go. Watch out for a Zacchaeus who just randomly points anywhere to win.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

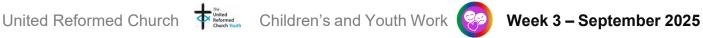
This link takes you to The living Translation

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2019%3A1-10&version=NLT

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

¹Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ²There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³ He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

- ⁵ When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."
- ⁶ Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷ But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.
- ⁸ Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"



⁹ Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man[a] came to seek and save those who are lost."

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Watch: 3 life lessons from Zacchaeus by His promises

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Q9TrNTGZft8

Questions for discussion

- Do you agree with the three suggested life lessons?
- Would you add any, replace any?

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

An Excited re-telling of the Bible Story

We have all seen click-bait type posts on social media, and when a story has been built up out of context. Can we, in pairs/teams, create an honest re-telling of the story, but that emphasizes the excitement felt within the story, but also adds to the excitement of those hearing the story. You could use pen and paper, voice notes, video or a leader could scribe.

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



Peter Parker Meets Tony Stark - Captain America Civil War (2016) By ShortClips https://youtu.be/oCkUyjaZuNI?si=42vSUaHy4cfZQy8n Peter is surprised to find someone so famous in his house when he gets home from school - eating cake with his aunt.

- How do you think Peter would have felt if he'd known Tony Stark was coming to visit?
- Who would you want to visit your house?



Group discussion

- Why might some of the people in the crowd not feel excited?
- I wonder how they knew Jesus was coming?
- Which celebrity would you most like to meet (dead or alive)?

Personal reflection

- When were you last excited?
- Does your new school/ class live up to the excitement you may have felt in the summer holidays?

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together - Prayer tree

Prayer Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Create a prayer tree that can be used in your group or as part of a church service with the whole congregation. Make it either two dimensional or three dimensional.

Use this tree for your own emotion prayers. What are you excited about? What brings you Joy? What makes you happy? Write or draw your prayers onto leaf shapes or tie on tags and stick or tie them to your tree.

You might want to prepare the tree in advance or use some of the time in the session to create your own. The pictures below give you a few ideas but let your creativity flow...

Create a tree using natural items stuck to a board or canvas.



Paint or collage a tree outline onto large board or card. Cut out leaf shapes to add as prayers.



Make a tree out of twigs and branches and use tie on tags for the prayers.



Spoken Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Thank you that you saw Zacchaeus in the tree, and you didn't ignore him or judge him. You knew his name, and you wanted to spend time with him. That moment changed Zacchaeus's life—and it started with excitement.

Help us to be excited about knowing you too. Remind us that you see us, even when we feel invisible. You want to be part of our everyday lives—at home, at school, with our friends. You invite us to follow you and become more like you.

This week, help us to look for someone who might feel left out and take the first step to be kind, just like you did with Zacchaeus. Give us the courage to act, not just watch.

Amen.

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Is the Bible full of excitement? The Living Bible translation has the word excitement included within the text seven times; four in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament. Yet surely the feeling of excitement was experienced more than seven times. Think/research through the Bible stories/passages you know and discuss times where the emotion of excitement could have/would have been felt. The book of Exodus or a gospel is a good starting point.

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today. If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the "conversation starter" questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. If Jesus came to your town today, what would you do to see Him?
- Research something suggested by JPIT, Resources (jpit.uk) Commitment for Life cforl.co.uk
- Take 10 minutes when you'd usually be on your phone and read a bit of the Bible (start with Luke 19:1-10 if you like!) and/or do something kind for someone who often gets overlooked—just like Jesus saw Zacchaeus even when others didn't.



Thank you for exploring the **Luke** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB

