

Changing for the better – Zacchaeus

Luke chapter 19 verses 1 to 10

This GenR8 Connect looks at the story of when Zacchaeus met Jesus and how this meeting changed his life. After talking with Jesus Zacchaeus realised he had done lots of bad things by stealing people's money and decided he needed to follow Jesus and change his ways. He said sorry, gave away half his possessions to the poor, and paid people back four times over! If we have done something wrong, we too should say sorry, but we should also change the way that we behave to be more like Jesus.

What is the story about?

This story is a message for us all about reconciliation. Everyone was shocked that Jesus would go to the house of someone as bad as Zacchaeus, however Christians believe that God loves us and that fact does not change if we do something wrong or make a bad choice. Christians believe that God is someone who will always forgive us if we say sorry – just like Jesus forgave Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus changed his lifestyle after meeting Jesus – by repaying and rebuilding his relationships with those he had hurt. We all make mistakes but what we choose to do afterwards makes the biggest difference.

This story is very important for Christians. It not only tells us not to cheat or trick people or do them harm, it also tells us what we should do if we do hurt someone and we want to repent (turn around and get back on track):

1. **Change your mind and say sorry** (this is repentance)
2. **Make it right** (return what was taken, repair what was broken, soothe what was injured)
3. **Make it better** (if you can, do something that really communicates that you understand you did wrong and now you want to show the opposite and do good, generous things)

Reflection

- Think about a time you have made a mistake – this can be painful, but we all hurt people often without meaning to. How can we put things right when we make a mistake?
- Sometimes we knowingly do something wrong by making a bad choice or going against our true values, however we can always change our mind and say sorry (this is called repentance).
- Change can be difficult – people often have prejudices about us, like the people around Zacchaeus did, and we may need to ask for help to find a way to make things right.

Story Link

A short cartoon version of the story of Zacchaeus can be found here – please check to see if it suitable for your group: <https://youtu.be/Fe7dTNID6h8>



Inspire Prayer Space Activity – Changing for the better

Equipment

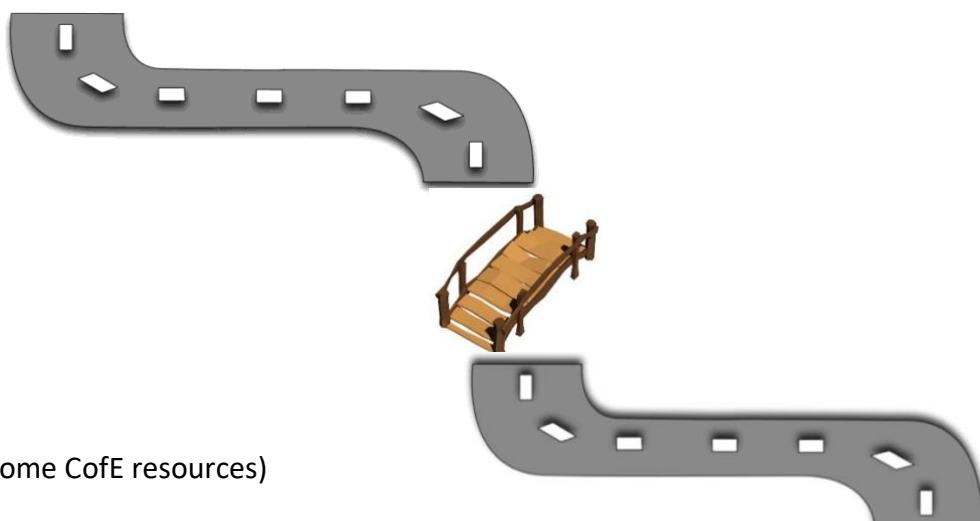
- Pens, pencils or crayons
- Paper

Description

- Zacchaeus asked the people to forgive him. He wanted to repair his wrongs.
- This activity encourages us to think about things that we might need to change or make right in our lives and how we can repair relationships.
- It also encourages us to think about how to respond to others if they reach out to us asking for forgiveness for hurting us.

Instructions

- Study the image to the right. This statue, called 'Reconciliation', is in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. It represents two people coming back together after the Second World War. Some people say it reminds them of a bridge and is a good visual example of repenting and repairing. The two figures are leaning on each other from a distance, showing they depend on each other. Without the other accepting the apology they would collapse. They have their hands holding each other's heads, showing they are ready to listen to each other, to hear the other's thoughts and feelings.
- Christians believe that repenting and repairing relationships is what God wants us to do and that He is always ready to forgive us and to help us to forgive others.
- Repenting and repairing is like a bridge. If you take a wrong path then you can end up facing a big gap caused by your mistakes, but you can build a bridge.
- Take one colour and draw two roads on your piece of paper similar to those below, with a gap in the middle.
- Take a second colour and draw a bridge over the gap to represent saying sorry.
- Think about whether you need to make things right and repair things in your life.



(Adapted from Faithathome CofE resources)

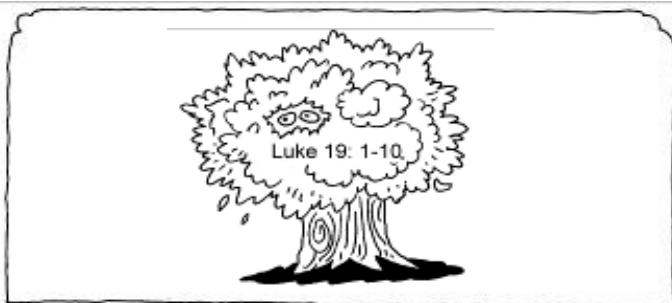
See below for activity sheet

ZACCHAEUS climbs a tree

Print Free: www.lambsongs.co.nz

By Jill Kemp

Illustrated by Richard Gunther



**Zacchaeus the Tax Collector,
was not an honest man.
Meeting Jesus changed
him and the way he behaved.**



**Zacchaeus had lots of money,
but he was not a nice man.
His job was to collect and change money,
but he took too much.**



**When he took money from people
he took some money for himself.
He was not kind.
Nobody liked Zacchaeus.**



**One day Jesus was coming to town
and everyone went to see him.
Zacchaeus was too small to see over the crowd
and no one would let him through.**



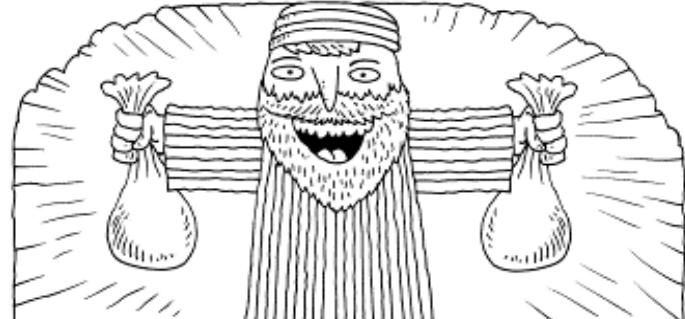
**He quickly ran ahead
and climbed up a tree.
He waited for Jesus to go past.
Now he could see Jesus.**



**Jesus stopped under the tree
He looked up.
“Zacchaeus come down,” said Jesus,
“I am coming to your house today.”**



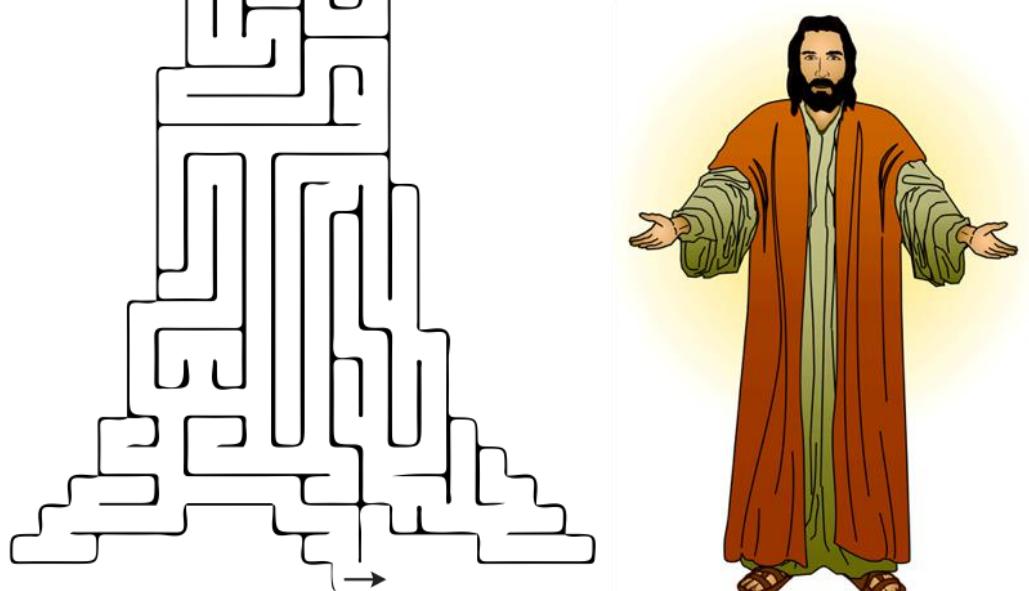
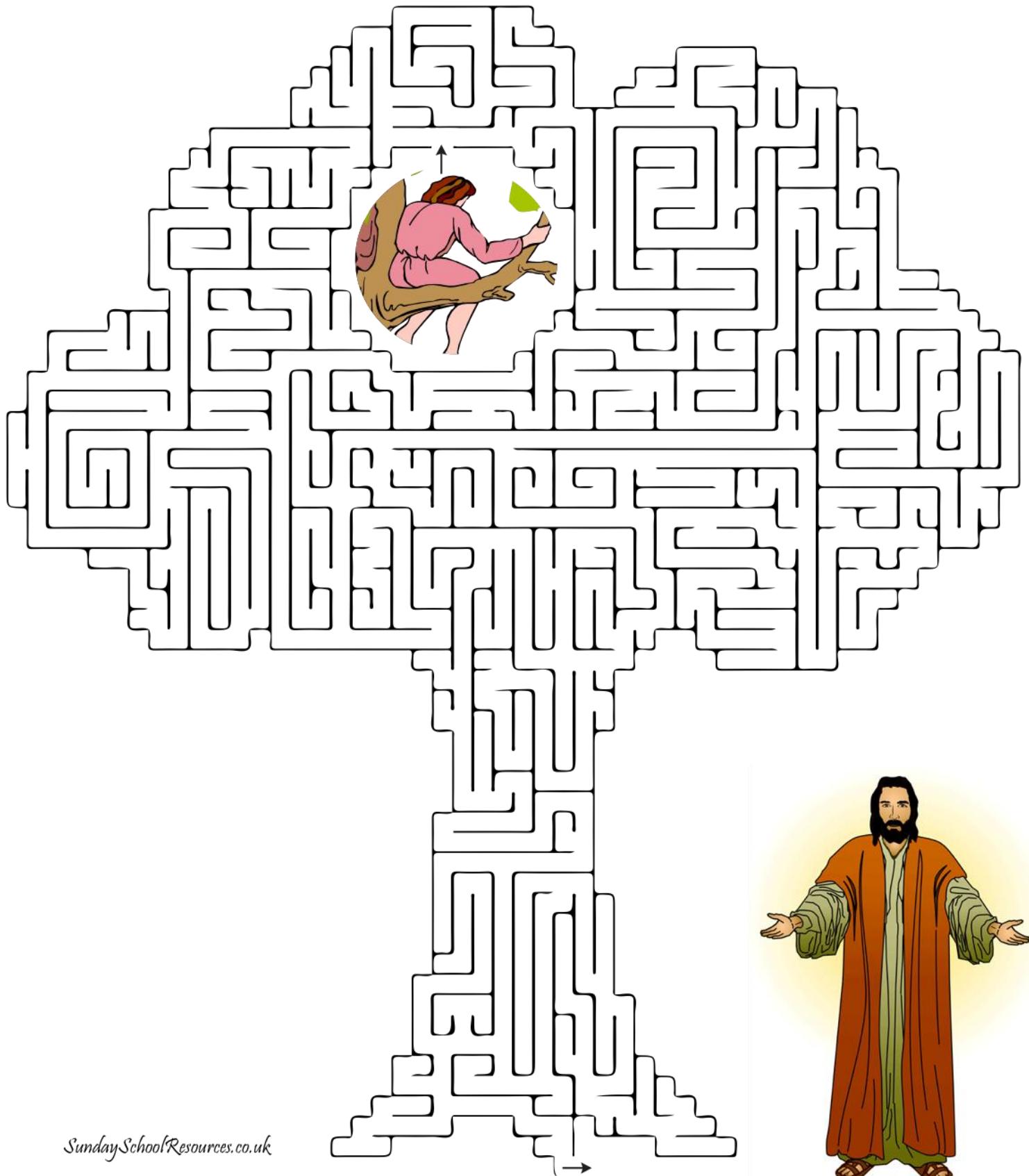
**People said, “Doesn’t Jesus know
that Zacchaeus is a bad man?”
“Do what is good and right, Zacchaeus,”
Jesus said. Zacchaeus listened.**



**He was sorry he had taken people’s money.
He paid it all back.
“I love Jesus,” said Zacchaeus.
“Now I will do what is good and right.”**

Zacchaeus Meets Jesus

Help Zacchaeus climb down from the tree so he can meet Jesus!

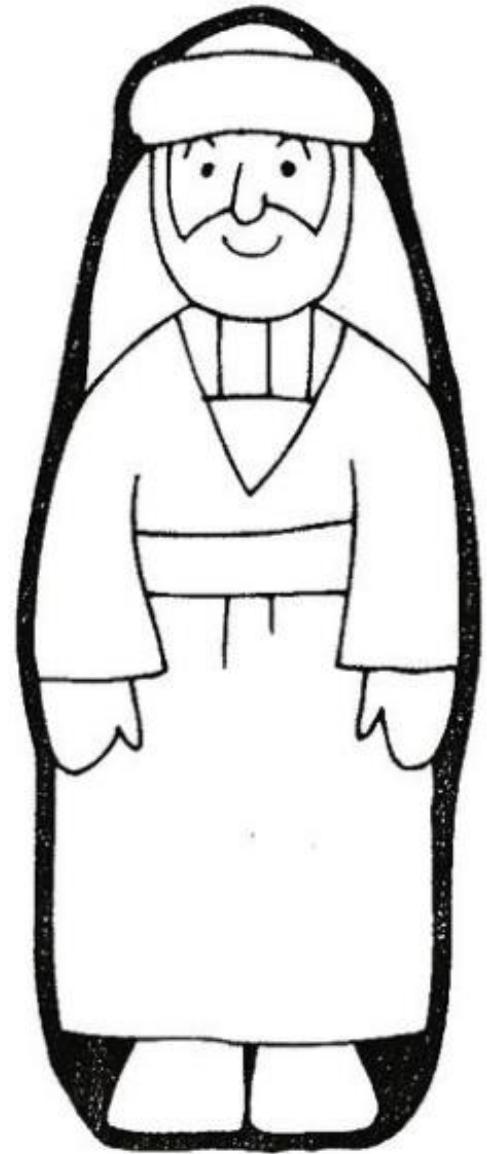


Changing for the Better – Zacchaeus Climbs a Tree

Zacchaeus climbs this tree (with the help of a few strings).

Instructions:

1. Print, cut out and colour the picture of Zacchaeus in thin card, or make a Zacchaeus of your own.
2. Cut two pieces of straw about 5cm long. Tape the straw to the back of Zacchaeus at a slant, with the widest bit at the bottom as in the picture.
3. Cut two pieces of string around 60 cm long. Slide one piece of string through one straw and tie a bead or button on the end of the string so it won't go back through the straw.
4. Repeat this for the other string.
5. Tie the other end of the strings to a lolly stick or similar. Tape it down firmly so that it does not slide on the stick (the stick shown has grooves, but you can use tape instead).
6. Cut another piece of string about 30 cm long. Tie it on a large loop around the centre of the stick and tape it in place.
7. This string can be hung from a doorknob and Zacchaeus can climb there. To make Zacchaeus climb, pull on each of the two bottom strings alternately.
8. To let Zacchaeus come back down to see Jesus, just let the natural weight of Zacchaeus slide down the string by letting the string go.
9. If you want to you can make a tree for Zacchaeus to climb, as in the picture.



A version of the instructions for this craft, along with a video showing how to make Zacchaeus climb, can be found here: http://bibleclasscreations.blogspot.com/2014/07/zacchaeus-climbs-tree.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3ABibleClassCreations%28Bible+Class+Creations%29&m=1

Group challenge - marshmallow and spaghetti tree building

A fun way of exploring the story of Zacchaeus using dried spaghetti, mini marshmallows and a plastic Easter Egg or small Lego or Playmobile figure.

Challenge the children to build a 'tree' with the spaghetti and marshmallows, that will support and hold a plastic Easter egg (real eggs are way too heavy for what they are likely to build!).

