



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

January 2019

Issue 119



A simple plan for an all-age Meeting for Worship

Preparation – Prepare a table in the centre of the room laid with a jug, cups and some simple food – maybe some fruit and bread. Have enough paper plates for everyone and felt pens, colouring crayons or pencils available.

Tell the story of Zacchaeus from a children's bible or story book or use this account:

Today's story is about a man many people didn't like – Zacchaeus the tax collector. Zacchaeus probably became rich by cheating people, taking some of the money for himself. This is something tax collectors were known for in those days.

The story starts with Jesus entering a place called Jericho. When Zacchaeus heard Jesus was in town, he wanted to see Him. Perhaps Zacchaeus had heard about the miracles of Jesus, or of Jesus' teachings, or both. Or maybe Zacchaeus actually knew little about Jesus, but the crowds and commotion surrounding Jesus caught his attention? But Zacchaeus wasn't very tall, and Jesus was always surrounded by a crowd. So Zacchaeus decided to run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree. From there he could watch for Jesus.

He watched as Jesus drew closer. He held his breath when Jesus stopped right beneath his tree. Then Jesus looked straight up at him! "Zacchaeus," said Jesus with a smile, "come on down. I want to stay at your house today!" Zacchaeus hopped down. "You are welcome at my house, Jesus," said the little man with a big smile. But others grumbled, muttering to each other. "Why does Jesus want to go home with him? He cheats people." Zacchaeus turned to Jesus and said, "Look, I promise to give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone in taxes, I will pay them back four times that amount."



After you've told the story pause and then ask the following questions leaving plenty of time for people to wonder about them. People may answer out loud or just wonder to themselves.

- I wonder why Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus?
- I wonder how Zacchaeus felt when Jesus stopped and asked to have dinner with him?
- I wonder why Zacchaeus changed?
- I wonder if you have ever felt small?

After the time of wondering has finished ask people to draw what they would like to eat at a feast and then to write or draw the person they would like to invite to share it with them. When people have done this, invite them to bring their plate to the table. If there is time encourage people to say who they would invite and why. As an ending, share the feast.

