

LESSON 5

ZACCHAEUS IS SORRY

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Roman Taxes

Roman taxation was an issue that caused great resentment among the Jews. They were required to pay taxes to Roman officials on the basis of their property and income. There were also other indirect taxes such as import and export duties, road tolls, and the Roman equivalent of a sales tax. Roman taxes also had to be paid in Roman currency. The Jews believed that using Roman currency was a violation of the Second Commandment because the money bore the stamp of the emperor's head. As much as they were openly opposed to this, they were still forced to pay. As a result, tax collectors were not popular people. That was why Zacchaeus was a despised man. Born a Jew, he chose to work for Rome, and, for that, he was considered a traitor to his own kind. On top of that, it was well known that tax collectors supplemented their own income by cheating the Jews, taking more than was due.

Repayment

When Zacchaeus repented, he offered to repay four times what he owed. This was almost the extreme repayment required under the law in cases of theft (cf. Ex 22:1; 2 Sam 12:6; Prov 6:31).

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Zacchaeus was probably a very crooked tax collector. The crowd had great disdain for him. But after he met Jesus, he made a determination to change. He demonstrated true repentance through his outward actions. He agreed to pay back four times what he owed and to give money to the poor. God forgives all who admit their wrongs and ask for forgiveness.

Being sorry and expressing it takes a lot of maturity. It is not as simple as saying sorry as a reflex reaction, such as apologizing when you accidentally bump into someone. Your students may not have reached such a level of maturity, but they should still be encouraged to show repentance for wrongs they have committed. It can begin in the classroom. Throughout a lesson, students make many mistakes, both verbal and behavioral. Model the right behavior and commend those who admit their wrongs and want to do something about it. Your students need to be assured that God is always ready to forgive. They also need to learn how to express their repentance to God. It is not enough to admit it in their hearts. They need to show changed behavior. Encourage them to follow through with actions that demonstrate the sincerity of their repentance. Then, they can appreciate it when others ask them for forgiveness.

BIBLE TEXT

Luke 19:1-10

BIBLE TRUTH

God forgives those who truly repent.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To know that Jesus knows each of us by name.
2. To learn how to show true repentance for mistakes that we have committed.
3. To remember that Jesus has come to seek and to save what was lost.

MEMORY VERSE

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

(Acts 3:19a)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord Jesus, You are a wonderful teacher and friend. In every part of our lives, You lead us with Your unfailing hands. We know that we are weak and sometimes we make mistakes. Please help us truly repent to You, for You are merciful, kind, and forgiving. Let us give You all the praise and glory. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

repent: to feel sorry and regretful; to apologize
salvation: deliverance from sin

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about how Jesus healed a man who had been unable to walk for thirty-eight years. This man had waited at the pool of Bethesda, hoping to be cured. But no one ever helped him get into the water. One day, Jesus came to Jerusalem and saw this man. He had compassion on him. When Jesus asked the man whether he wanted to get well, he answered, "Yes." Then Jesus told him to get up, pick up his mat and go home. The man was healed completely by Jesus even though he had been unable to walk before. God's power and love are great and limitless. Nothing is impossible with Him. We learned to trust in God's power to overcome all difficulties.

BIBLE STORY

[Optional preparation: Bring in printouts and/or books about different kinds of trees, especially sycamore trees. During the lesson, you can talk about all the different kinds of trees there are, what we use trees for, and the different things trees provide: nuts, fruits, paper, maple syrup, lumber, housing for animals, etc.]

Jesus Visits Jericho

During Jesus' time on earth, He went to many different places, preaching the gospel. One time, He went to the city of Jericho. This was the same city that God had helped Joshua defeat a long time ago. When the people heard that Jesus was coming to town, they were very excited. They had heard so much about Him and His miracles. Everyone wanted to see for themselves what Jesus was really like.

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

There was a man called Zacchaeus who lived in Jericho. He was a chief tax collector. Do you know what a tax collector is? It is a person who collects an amount of money or payment for the support of a government. Zacchaeus was disliked by many because he worked for the Roman government and always collected more money than he should have. He took the extra money and kept it for himself. Therefore, he became a very rich man by cheating the people. Nobody liked him at all. Would you be friends with someone like Zacchaeus?

Zacchaeus Climbs a Tree

When Zacchaeus learned that Jesus was coming to town, he also wanted to see Him. He didn't think Jesus would like him either, but he had heard so much about Jesus that he just had to see Him. However, there was a small

problem. When he arrived at the place where Jesus would be passing by, there was already a huge crowd. Zacchaeus was not a very tall man. He couldn't see past the crowd and no one would let him through to the front. There was no way he could see Jesus from where he was standing. So, Zacchaeus thought of a plan. He saw a sycamore tree nearby. It was thirty to forty feet high with many branches—that's like looking down from the third floor of a building. That's very high! This was also a very sturdy tree. Zacchaeus knew that if he climbed it, Jesus would pass by right underneath. So, Zacchaeus climbed the tree and sat on a branch, waiting. Now no one could stop him from seeing Jesus! Would you be brave enough to climb a tree that high?

Jesus Calls to Zacchaeus

Not long after, Jesus came walking down the road. Zacchaeus was very excited. He had a great view even though he didn't think Jesus could see him sitting way up there. Just then, as Jesus came closer to the tree, He stopped. In fact, He stopped right beneath the tree where Zacchaeus was sitting. Jesus looked up and spoke to him.

"Zacchaeus," said Jesus. "Come down. I am going to stay at your house tonight."

Zacchaeus was shocked when he heard what Jesus said. He didn't even think Jesus would notice him. But he quickly climbed down the tree to meet Jesus. His heart was full of joy. Jesus was willing to stay at his house. This was his first real friend!

Others Complain

When the other people in the crowd saw what was happening, they were shocked too. They didn't understand why Jesus wanted to visit Zacchaeus' house.

Some of the people complained, "Jesus is going to the house of a sinner!"

Jesus knew, of course, that Zacchaeus was a sinner, but he loved Zacchaeus and wanted to give him a chance to change.

Zacchaeus Repents

When Zacchaeus heard the people talking about his wrong deeds, he was very sorry. He realized how wrong he had been.

He said to Jesus, "I am very sorry for all the bad things I have done. I am going to give half of everything I own to

the poor. And if I have taken money that doesn't belong to me in the past, I will give back four times the amount." [You may have to explain what "four times" means using a sample amount.]

Zacchaeus wanted to show everyone how sorry he was. He asked Jesus to forgive him. Jesus was glad to hear his words.

Jesus smiled and said, "Zacchaeus, I came into the world to help people like you. Today, salvation has come to your house."

Zacchaeus was very happy because Jesus loved him, even though Zacchaeus had been a longtime sinner.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- 1. Why was Zacchaeus up in a tree? Why did Jesus call out to Zacchaeus?** Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but was too short to see past the crowd, so he climbed a tree. Jesus knew Zacchaeus had done wrong things and wanted to give him a chance to repent. He also wanted to be his friend.
- 2. As a tax collector, what did Zacchaeus do wrong?** He cheated the people by collecting extra tax money and keeping it for himself.
- 3. Why did the people think Jesus was crazy for going to Zacchaeus' house?** Zacchaeus was a sinner, a dishonest tax collector with whom no one wanted to be friends.
- 4. How did Zacchaeus truly repent?** He said he would give half of his possessions to the poor and pay back four times the amount of money that he had wrongfully taken.
- 5. Describe how Zacchaeus must have felt when Jesus said He was coming to his house.** He must have felt shocked and surprised that Jesus noticed him and wanted to go to his house.
- 6. How would you feel if Jesus came to your house?** Answers may vary.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19a)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. money
2. tree
3. repent
4. False; they complained that he was a sinner.
5. False; He wanted to give sinners the chance to repent.
6. True
7. B
8. C
9. B

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. Jesus knows us by name, just like He knew Zacchaeus. He wants to tell us the good news of His home in heaven.

Jesus called Zacchaeus on the tree by his name. How did Jesus know his name? More surprisingly, why did Jesus want to stay with Zacchaeus, whom everyone disliked? These are very good questions! If we can answer these questions, we are another step closer to knowing who Jesus really is. So, let me answer these questions one by one.

Firstly, how did Jesus know Zacchaeus by his name? In fact, Jesus knows all of us by our names. This shows that Jesus knows every single one of us very well. Moreover, He cares about all of us equally. He loves me, just as He loves you. What He has prepared—a home in heaven, is available for all of us, as long as we believe and obey Him.

Secondly, why did Jesus want to stay with Zacchaeus? Well, we have to first understand the reason why Jesus came. His sole purpose was to tell us of God's greatest gift: salvation. The Bible tells us that God doesn't want any of us to perish, but to come to repentance so that we can be saved (1 Tim 2:4). This is why He sent His son Jesus to us. Salvation is for everyone, and Jesus knows us all. He will speak to all of us the good news of His home in heaven. In everyone's mind, Zacchaeus was a bad person, and they probably didn't think that Zacchaeus deserved to have Jesus stay with him. But in Jesus' mind, we are all the same. He gives salvation to all those who are willing to repent. In Zacchaeus' case, yes, he displeased God when he took people's money, but Jesus came to this world to find sinners and tell them the good news of salvation. He told people to believe in Him—to believe that He is the Son of God and that He will open a pathway to His home in heaven for every single one of us. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, He knew that Zacchaeus needed Him—His love, His care, and His good news! Before Jesus, no one loved and cared for Zacchaeus, but Jesus did and He told Zacchaeus that God would forgive and save him if he repented. It was this immense love and forgiveness that touched Zacchaeus and allowed him to show true repentance for the mistakes he had made. And Jesus is the same way towards every sinner today.

2. To learn how to show true repentance for mistakes that we have committed.

Everyone makes mistakes and sins against God. From this lesson, we learned that we must show true repentance for the mistakes that we've made and that we should know that God will give everyone a chance to repent. If we don't repent, God may punish us. Adam and Eve were a perfect example. They sinned, and God gave them a chance to repent, but they did not. Instead, they blamed each other and, in the end, were punished. Therefore, it is important to reflect on our mistakes every day and repent. In addition, we must learn how to show that we have truly repented and that we will not do it again. For example, if we lie to our parents, not only should we ask God for repentance, we must also be determined not to lie again. Saying "sorry" aloud or just saying it in our hearts is not enough. There are also some mistakes and sins that we may not know we have committed. It is important to repent and ask God for forgiveness for those sins we do not know we have committed and to ask God to reveal those mistakes to us so that we can determine not to make them again. Again, we know that it's important to repent, but it's just as important to determine to make a change in our lives and not make the same mistake again. We should not be stuck in a cycle where we continue to sin and ask for repentance, over and over again. [Encourage the students to do Part 2 of the homework so that they can reflect on their daily lives.]

Actions speak louder than words. When we do something wrong intentionally or accidentally, many of us know to say sorry. But saying sorry is not enough. We must take actions to show that we are truly sorry. For example, if we bump into someone and cause that person to spill their drink, "sorry" may come out of our mouths as a reflex. Then, after saying sorry, we may just walk away. In this example, we should show that we are sorry by stopping and helping this person to clean up the floor or by giving the person a napkin to dry his clothing. Actions are stronger than words. God wants to see our repentant actions when we do something wrong against Him. It could be a mistake or it could be intentional, but we must always repent and show true repentance. [Ask the students to think about some of the things they've done wrong and whether or not they did more than just repent or say sorry.]

When Linda returned to school after Spring Break, her English teacher asked everyone to write a short commentary on the book they had been assigned to read during the break. However, Linda forgot to read the book, and she didn't know what to write for her assignment. It was not possible for her to read the entire book in one day and write the commentary. Therefore, Linda secretly took her friend Emma's work and

and copied a few points she had written in her commentary. Linda went home that day and wrote her commentary based on what she copied from Emma's work.

A few days later, Linda and Emma's English teacher called them both to see her after school. The teacher asked Linda if she copied Emma's work, and Linda denied it. Likewise, the teacher asked Emma the same question and Emma said that she was innocent. The teacher knew that one of them was lying, but she didn't know which. She said to Linda and Emma, "I don't want to punish the wrong person. I will give you another day to think about this. If you copied the other person's work, come back tomorrow and tell me. If none of you come back tomorrow, I will have to punish you both."

That day, Linda went home feeling extremely guilty. If she hadn't tried to hide the fact that she hadn't read the book or if she had admitted the truth to her teacher, her friend Emma wouldn't be going through all this. She knew that Emma must be very anxious. She knew that it was all her fault, and she felt very sorry. Therefore, Linda picked up the phone and called Emma. She said sorry to Emma very apologetically and asked for her forgiveness.

The next day, Linda and Emma both went to see their English teacher. At first, the English teacher was confused. Linda told her the truth and said, "I am really sorry that I lied. But I promise you that I will never do this again! I felt so bad that I didn't do my own homework and I created so much trouble for you and Emma. From now on, I will be honest with everyone." Emma, having accepted Linda's apology, also said to her teacher, "Please don't punish Linda. She already feels very sorry, and I trust that she will never do this again."

The teacher was very touched that Linda was able to humble herself and ask for forgiveness. Moreover, she learned a very important lesson and promised not to make the same mistake again. At the end, the teacher trusted Linda's words and didn't punish her. She gave Linda another week to read the book so that she could write her own commentary.

3. The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Luke 19:10 tells us, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." This is the perfect and only reason Jesus came to us. Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to this world and performed many miracles. He healed the sick, cast out demons, became friends with sinners, and preached about God and His heavenly kingdom. He did all these so that everyone could turn back to God.

No one in this world is perfect; we have all sinned against God and fell short of His glory (Rom 3:23). In other words, sin has separated us from our heavenly Father; sin has taken away our pathway to heaven! We are all lost because we can't go back to where we belong. But students, Jesus came to us. As we discussed earlier, He created a way for us to reach God's presence—He made salvation available for us! And He is constantly seeking out those who are lost and telling them about His saving grace. When Jesus was still on earth, He once said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mk 2:17). In this verse, the "sick" refers to those who are spiritually unwell. When we are spiritually unwell, that means we are far away from God and our spirituality is weak. The physician represents Jesus. He said that the people that need Him are the ones who are weak in Spirit—those who haven't fixed their eyes on salvation and are lost! Today, Jesus is still the same way. He is seeking out for all those who are lost, and those who may have sinned but are willing to repent, just as He sought out for Zacchaeus. Let me share a testimony with you from a once "lost" member who is now a firm believer of Christ.

Before believing in Christ, I worshipped the traditional Chinese religion. My late mother used to worship the Chinese "gods." I followed her as well, praying to those gods and participating in the rituals.

It began in 1972. I was a player in a table tennis team led by Elder Elijah Yeh from our church, who also happened to be my manager. We travelled to East Malaysia frequently and I often overheard Elder Yeh asking the locals if there were any True Jesus Church (TJC) churches nearby. This left an impression on me.

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On one occasion, we had to travel to Hong Kong for a table tennis match via the South China Sea. We encountered a thunderstorm during the journey, and I started to become extremely anxious. I thought that we would surely perish at sea, especially when the waves hit the ship violently. We had to close the windows to prevent water from flooding our cabins. During this time, I noticed our team leader, Elder Elijah, kneeling down and praying in tongues. After that, I saw someone walking over to take control of the ship's helm. Miraculously, the storm calmed down and the ship continued with the journey. I vividly remember that the person was one of the passengers on board. Out of curiosity, we asked him what happened. The man replied, "He was an inexperienced captain and had we not avoided the waves, the ship would have capsized." I wondered to myself. If our team leader had not prayed at that time, would we all have perished?

In 2009, I found out that my son and his family attended church services. Out of curiosity, I asked them which church they were attending. It was the True Jesus Church! This jolted my memory and made me recall that incident nearly forty years ago. My son then asked me to come attend a family evangelistic luncheon held by Adam Road Church in Singapore. Thereafter, I started to join my family for every Sabbath service. My first observation was that many people knelt down and prayed in tongues. This did not surprise me, as I had seen my manager praying in this manner before.

I continued to attend services at TJC for a few months. After listening to more sermons, I felt that the sermons had "opened my eyes" to things in which I formerly did not believe. Also, as age started to catch up with me, I started to think more about life after death. I firmly believe that God has His merciful salvation plan for me and that He has been waiting patiently for me to accept Him, just as is recorded in Scripture, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (Jn 15:16).

Reflection Questions

- 1. Why do we say that this member was "lost"?** Because he worshipped traditional Chinese religions and did not believe in God. He was separated from God.
- 2. How did Jesus seek for this member and find him?** He arranged for him to meet Elder Elijah Yeh from our church a long time ago and to witness a miracle. Many years later, he was brought to church by his family and finally found the truth in True Jesus Church.

Students, Jesus has already come to seek us, and it is now our chance to help Him seek more lost sheep to bring back to His fold. Do you remember how Jesus found you? [If your students attended True Jesus Church since birth because of their families, ask them to think about the time when they first experienced Jesus themselves. It could be a time when they received a blessing from God, witnessed a miracle, or were touched by His words.] What changes have you made for Him since that moment you were found? Zacchaeus repented and determined to make a change for God. Many members began to preach the gospel and share their testimonies after they believed in Christ. What about us? What can we do for Jesus, our close friend and Savior?

ACTIVITIES

1**Bible Story Diorama****Objective:** To recall the events of the Bible story.**Materials**

- Scrap material (e.g., tissue paper, paper towel rolls, tongue depressors, yarn)
- Construction paper
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue
- Tape

Instructions

Cut up the story below into strips of paper. Put them into a hat. Divide the class into groups. Have each group draw a strip. Each group is responsible for creating that scene using the available materials so that the finished product is three-dimensional. This is known as a diorama. When the dioramas have been completed, have students tell the story by asking each group to present their part of the story in chronological order.

The Story of Zacchaeus

1. My name is Zacchaeus. I lived in Jericho. I was a chief tax collector. I was very rich but I earned much of my money dishonestly.
2. One day, Jesus came to my city. I wanted to see Him but the crowd was too large. Then I saw a big tree, and I decided to climb it.
3. Jesus walked by to get a better look and stopped under the tree. He told me to come down because He wanted to stay at my house. I was very happy.
4. Other people complained that Jesus was going to my house, the house of a sinner. I was very sorry. I said I would pay back the money I owed. Jesus forgave me.

2

We Are Sorry

Objective: To help students identify which steps to take to show repentance.

Instructions

As a class, brainstorm what should be done when we have done something wrong. After the discussion, write down the three important steps to take.

1. Tell the person you hurt that you are sorry.
2. Show that person you are sorry with actions.
3. Pray to God and repent in the prayer.

Now present them with specific scenarios. For example, one day you see some money on the kitchen table that you know belongs to your mom. You have been wanting to buy your favorite comic book that has just come out. You only need one more dollar. Your mom will not notice the difference if several coins go missing from the table. So you go and buy the comic book by grabbing four quarters off the table. At first, it feels great to finally hold the comic book in your hands, but as you read it, you begin to think about what you have just done. Just because it was only a few coins didn't make it okay to just take it without telling anyone. It is the same as stealing. You feel awful. You don't even want to read the comic book anymore. It feels like you stole the comic book. That night you just can't sleep. The next morning, you feel terrible. What are you going to do?

You may wish to come up with your own example and have the class brainstorm what they would do to show their true repentance. Help them identify what to do by following the three steps listed above.

3

Where Is Zacchaeus?

Objectives: 1. To teach students that Jesus showed the people that He loved them.
2. To teach students to be kind to one another.

Materials

- Activity patterns (1 set per student)
- Glue
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons

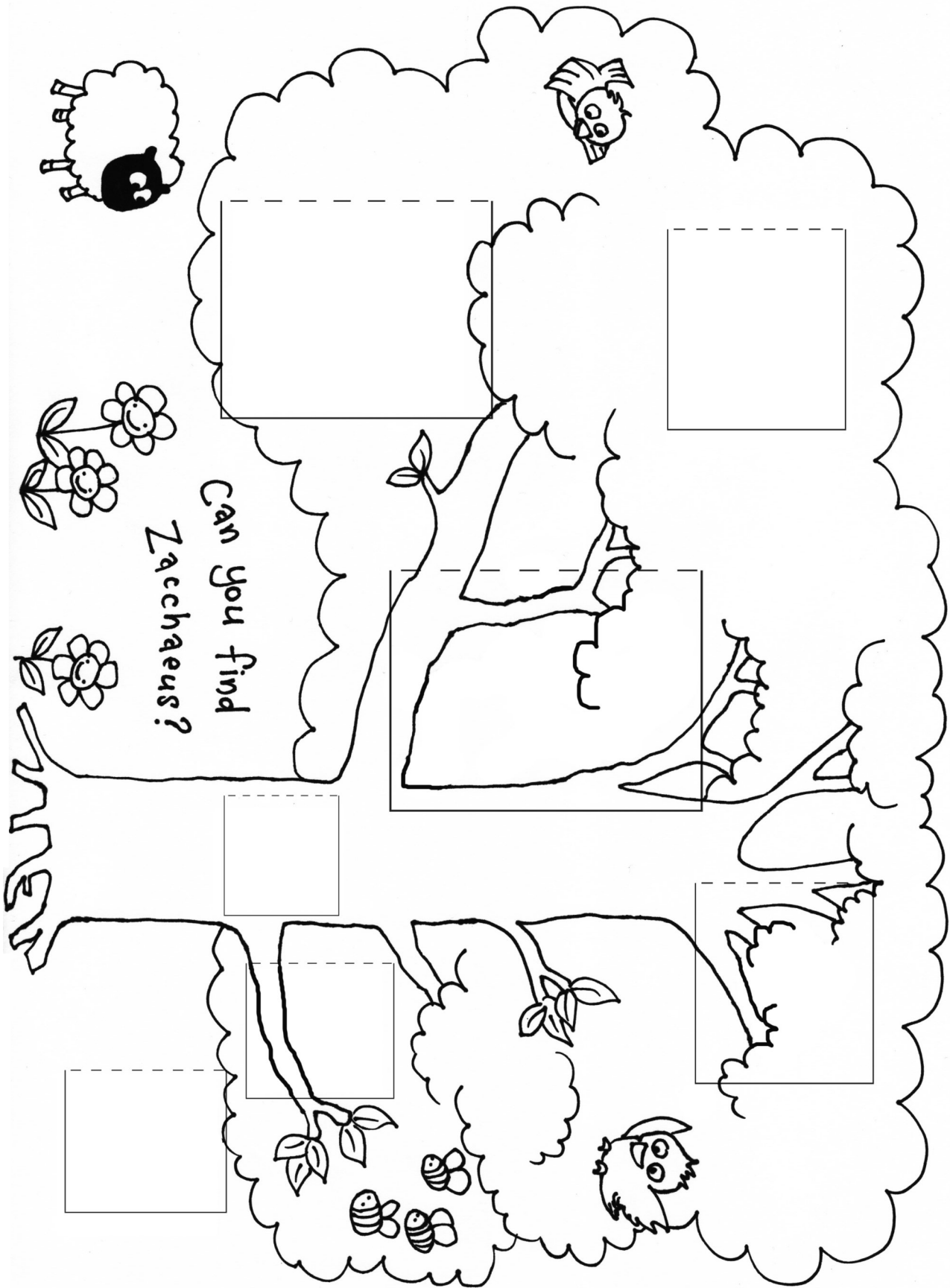
Preparations

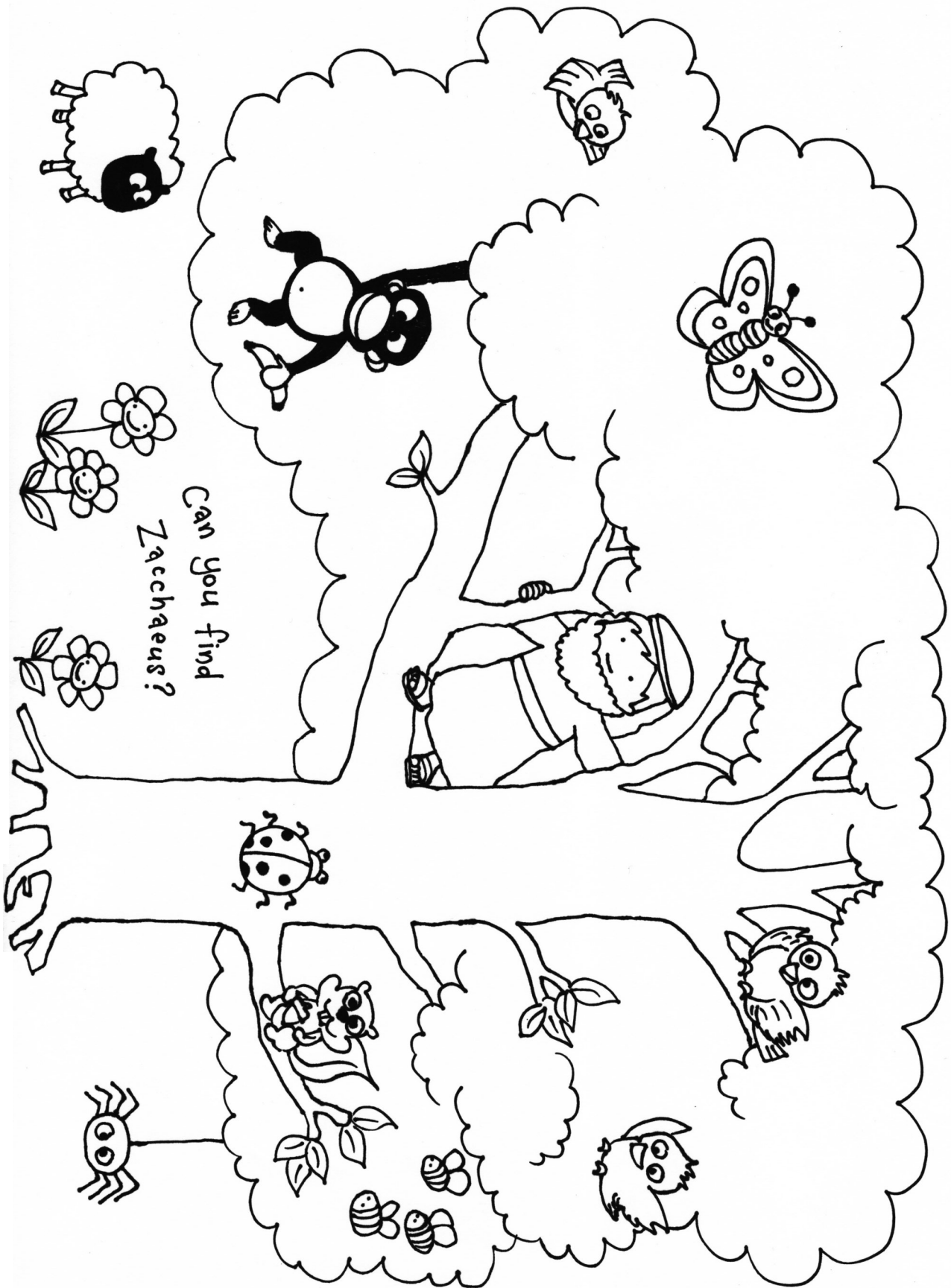
Before class, print out the patterns in landscape mode and cut out the windows with a razor. Only cut the solid lines, leaving the dotted lines intact so that you can "open" the windows. If you want, you can fold back the windows for the students beforehand and crease the folds to make them straight. Each student will need one of each page.

Instructions

1. Have students color in both of the pictures.
2. Put glue on the back of the top page, making sure not to put any glue where the windows are.
3. Glue the top page onto the bottom page, making sure that the windows line up with the pictures first.
4. The students can have fun lifting the flaps and searching for Zacchaeus in the tree.

Tell students that this can serve as a reminder to them that Jesus loves all kinds of people and wants to save everyone. Furthermore, the story of Zacchaeus can remind them to treat others well and repent if they've done something wrong.





E1 Year 2 Book 4 Lesson 5—Zacchaeus Is Sorry

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: God forgives those who truly repent.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To learn how to show true repentance for mistakes that have been made.
2. To know that God will give us a chance to repent.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Acts 3:19a)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Fill In the Blank

1. Zacchaeus was called a sinner by others because he collected more _____ than he should have.
2. Zacchaeus was very short, so he climbed a _____ because he wanted to see Jesus.
3. Jesus wanted Zacchaeus to _____.

True or False

4. The people were happy to hear that Jesus wanted to go to Zacchaeus' house. _____
5. Jesus refused to have anything to do with sinners. _____
6. Jesus came to the world to save people like Zacchaeus. _____

Multiple Choice

7. _____ : What kind of tree did Zacchaeus climb?
 - a. Maple tree
 - b. Sycamore tree
 - c. Redwood tree
 - d. Chestnut tree

8. _____ : Jesus was coming to the city of _____.
 - a. Bethlehem
 - b. Jerusalem
 - c. Jericho
 - d. Nineveh

9. _____ : Zacchaeus agreed to pay back _____ times the amount he wrongfully took.
 - a. 2
 - b. 4
 - c. 6
 - d. 8

Homework: Part 2

Instructions: During the week, use this log to write down the mistakes you have made and describe how you showed you were sorry.

	Mistakes I Made	How I Showed I Was Sorry
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		