

Memorize Isaiah 1:18.

Recite Poetry: Let three children each recite one of the verses from Psalm 51:1, 7 and 13.



Prayer: “Father, we thank you that you love us so much. You came to save us even when we were lost sinners. You forgave us and fill us with joy, because of your forgiveness. We always want to thank you and show you our gratitude. We want to show you our love by loving other people, too.”

Jesus Found a Thief in a Tree

Help Children to Repent

Choose among these activities those that fit the children’s ages and needs.

Older child or teacher: **Read** the story of Zacheus in Luke 19:1–10. It tells how a man who had stolen money repented when he met Jesus.

Let the children copy or colour the **picture** on the last page of this study.

Ask: (Answers appear after each question.)

- What job did Zacheus have? (See verse 2. Tax collectors often charged people too much money for their taxes. They kept the extra money and got very rich. They were thieves.)
- Why did Zacheus climb a tree? (See verse 3)
- How did Jesus show that he forgave Zacheus for being a thief? (See verse 5. Jesus went to his house to eat.)
- How did Zacheus feel when Jesus talked to him? (See verse 6. He was glad.)
- Zacheus knew that Jesus had forgiven him. What did he do in gratitude? (See verse 8)
- Whom did Jesus come to save? (See verse 10)

Dramatize the story of Zacheus. Arrange with the worship leader to have the children present this brief drama during worship. Use some of your time with the children to prepare the drama. You do not have to use all of the parts.

- Let **older children** or adults act these parts:

Narrator. Summarize the story and help the children to remember what to say and do.

Jesus.

Zacheus. Hold a bag of stones or paper representing coins.

- Let **younger children** portray **People**.

Narrator: Tell the first part of the story (Luke 19:1–6). Then say, “Hear what the people say.”

People: “Jesus is coming!”

“Look at Zacheus. He is climbing a tree!”



“He stole my money when he collected my taxes.”

“That short, little man is very bad!”

“I hope Jesus will punish him!”

Zacheus: Climb up on a chair.

Jesus: Look up and say, “Zacheus, come down. I will eat at your house today.”

Narrator: Tell the second part of the story (verses 7–10) and say, “Hear what Zacheus says.”

Zacheus: Come down from the chair and say, “Jesus is coming to my house! He forgives me! I am so happy! I will give back more than what I stole!” (Pretend to hand coins from the bag to the people.) Say, “I will help the poor! Here, I give you this money. Here, take it.”

Jesus: “This is the kind of person I have come to save. Zacheus was lost. But now he is saved!”

People: “Look at the money Zacheus gave me!”

“How did Jesus change such a thief?”

“I want God to forgive my sins, too!”

Narrator: Tell when the drama is over. Thank the children.

If the children dramatize this story of Zacheus for the adults, then let them also ask the adults the questions that are listed above.

Ask the children: “What are other examples of ways that we show our gratitude to God for his forgiveness?” (Let the children give examples.)

Draw a picture of a bag of money. Let the children copy it. They can show their pictures to the adults at the next worship time. Let them explain that this illustrates how God changes our hearts, so that loving Him becomes more important to us than money.