

# NEW BEGINNINGS - ZACCHAEUS LOSES HIS BAD NAME

## BIG IDEA

God will give everyone a new beginning - no matter what they have done or who they are.

### PREP *(Kids can help!)*

**Get a bucket of water**

**Find an egg for each person (or water balloons if you are would rather not use eggs in this game)**

**Buy a pile of pegs (clip on type)**

**Buy some sweets (any sort)**

**Get a small dish**

**Put everything into the Faith Box before you start**



### INTRO

At the beginning of the year we sometimes feel that we would like a new beginning. Perhaps we had a bad year last year for some reason, or we are just ready for some new challenges.

Well today we are going to talk about someone who had a bad reputation because he had done some really mean things to other people. But he got a chance for a new beginning. The man's name was Zacchaeus.

But first we are going to put the next magnet on the lid of our tin.

What does it say?

Yes, Jesus the Light of the World. When Jesus came into the world it was like someone had drawn back the curtains in a dark room and the wonderful light of God from heaven shone through him into the whole world.

### PLAY

#### TAKE EVERYONE OUTSIDE

*Do this activity on the drive or a lawn, with the hose nearby for the clean-up.*

*Place the bucket of water on the driveway and, one at a time, have each person stand about five feet from the bucket, then throw their egg (or water balloon) into the*

*water in the bucket. If they miss they must use the hose to clean it up.  
If they get their egg/water balloon into the bucket without breaking it, they must then take a step back and try again.  
Keep going until all the eggs/water balloons are broken.*

**BRING EVERYONE BACK TO THE TABLE**

### QUESTIONS

What happened when you missed the bucket?

Could you put your egg back together again? Why not?

How do we sometimes miss God's way and mess up our lives?

Is it easy to fix things on our own?

When we sin, sometimes we hurt other people, and sometimes we hurt ourselves. If we steal or lie, or tell untrue stories, we face the consequences of being found out – and not many people want to be friends with a person like that.

### **PUT A PILE OF PEGS AND A SMALL DISH OF SWEETS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE**

Today we are going to read about someone who really did mess up his life. Because of that he was not a very nice person at all, and so no-one wanted to be his friend.

Now there are three things you need to know about Zacchaeus:

- 1** He was a little man.
- 2** He was a rich man.
- 3** Nobody liked him very much.

There were some things about Zacchaeus that meant no one wanted to come near him. It was as though he had sharp porcupine spikes to keep other people away. So while we read, if you hear anything in the story that you think would make people dislike Zacchaeus, I want you to take a peg and clip it to your shirt.

And when you hear something that would make people want to be his friend you can take a sweet from the dish.

### READ

**C** Nobody liked Zacchaeus very much mostly because he got rich taking money from other people and giving it to the Romans. Nobody liked the Romans much either. That was because they came in from another country like a bunch of big bullies. They came with all their soldiers and swords and spears and stuff and made people do things they didn't want to do, like give them money. That's what Zacchaeus did. He collected money for the Romans. They called it 'collecting taxes.' Some of the money he gave to the Romans – but lots of it he kept for himself. And that's how he got rich. Even though Zacchaeus hardly had any friends, he knew that everyone in his town was talking about this man called Jesus. Everywhere Jesus went, people who were sick got better and blind people could see.... So everyone wanted to see just who this Jesus really was – including Zacchaeus. The only trouble was, there were always crowds of people around Jesus and Zacchaeus knew that he'd never be able see over the crowd.... he tried jumping up and down. But still he couldn't see.... Then he saw a sycamore tree growing

right beside the road and he had an idea! He ran ahead and climbed up the tree. He didn't care if he looked silly or not. He just wanted to see Jesus!

And, believe it or not, Jesus stopped right under the sycamore tree. He looked up and there was Zacchaeus peeking through the branches. Jesus said to him, "Hurry down from there! Zacchaeus I want to come to your house!" You can imagine, Zacchaeus flew down that tree quicker than you could say his name. When his feet hit the ground, he was so happy and together they started off towards Zacchaeus' house.

But the people in the crowd were not so happy. They had spent all day in the hot sun following Jesus, and now he was going to stay at the house of a rich, cheating tax collector. They began to grumble.

But as they reached his house, something happened to Zacchaeus. He felt Jesus' wonderful light come into his heart. He realised he had done lots of deceitful things and he wanted to make things right, and not live his own selfish way anymore. "I will give half of everything I have to the poor! And to anyone I have cheated, I will pay them back four times as much as I took!" he said. Jesus looked at Zacchaeus, and said "Today salvation has come to this house!"

Zacchaeus was a little man, but now he felt ten feet tall!

Jesus reassured him. "Your life was all wrong, but now it is all right. You were lost, but now you have been saved! That's why I am here. I came to find and save the lost! ))

*Luke 19.1-10 Adapted from © Paul Dallgas-Frey*

## EXPLORE

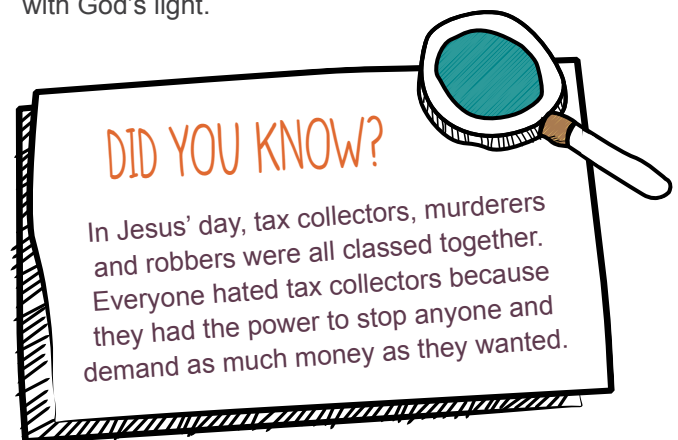
### True or False

- 1** Jesus refused to have anything to do with sinners. *F*
- 2** Jesus thought it was OK for Zacchaeus to cheat people. *F*
- 3** Zacchaeus didn't care whether or not he saw Jesus. *F*
- 4** Jesus came to find people who are lost. *T*
- 5** If we look for God we'll find him. *T*

Zacchaeus could hardly believe his ears that Jesus knew his name and spoke to him as though he was an important person; as if he was innocent and good.

You see Jesus saw Zacchaeus the way he was meant to be.

The cool thing is that when Jesus brought God's light into the world he promised to give us a fresh start. Even if we have messed up big time we can live life in a new 'free' way that is flooded with God's light.



## PRAY

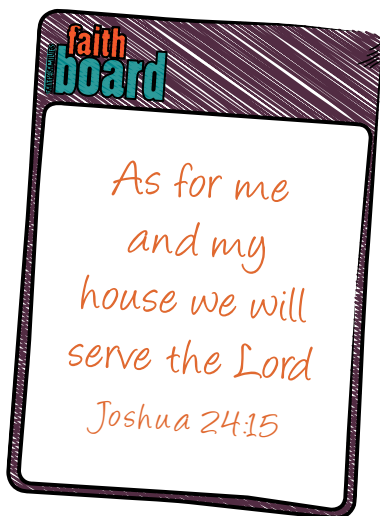
### A FAMILY PRAYER FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Dear Lord  
Give me clean hands and clean thoughts  
Save me from habits that do me harm  
Help me to stand for the hard right against the  
easy wrong  
Teach me to work as hard and play as fair, as if  
the entire world was looking on  
Forgive me when I am unkind to others, and help  
me to forgive those who are unkind to me  
Help me to be prepared to help others at some  
cost to myself  
And so grow more like you  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord  
Amen

## LIVE

Imagine that Jesus is coming to your house.  
Think about his light shining into your house and  
talk about the things that would make him proud  
of your family.

## FAITH BOARD



## OTHER IDEAS

**1** Talk this week about how Jesus shines his light into our hearts and gives us fresh beginnings. Talk about what we need to do to keep living in the light after our new beginning. Play Flashlight Tag outdoors after dark. Choose one person to be 'it' and give that person a flashlight. All the other players run and hide. 'It' counts to 20, looks for other players, and 'tags' them by shining a beam of light on them. Tagged players go to 'jail.' (e.g. to a well-lit porch.) Players who have not been tagged may change hiding places at any time. The game ends when all the players are in 'jail.'

**2** Pin Zacchaeus on the tree. Draw a big tree on a piece of paper/cardboard and a small cardboard silhouette man. Put a piece of blue tack on the cardboard figure and a dot on the tree. Blindfold children and take turns trying to place Zacchaeus onto the dot on the tree.

**3** Watch this cute little movie of Zacchaeus. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6pEDg36bg8&feature=related>

**BUY FOR  
NEXT SESSION**

• Packet of balloons

## SESSION NINE

### SILO

Cut out the 2 pieces. Make the silo into a circle and tape/glue the flap to the other side. Fold the tabs, and place the roof on top.

