



WEEK THREE – FEBRUARY 2026 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Zacchaeus | Luke 19:1-10*

Bottom Line: *The love of Jesus changes people.*

Memory Verse: *“I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you.” (John 13:34, NIRV)*

Conversation Starter: *How can love change things?*

Application: *Love – Choosing to treat others the way Jesus treats us.*

Series Overview: What’s the first thing you want to do when you discover a funny video or listen to a powerful podcast? Share it, of course! That’s why we chose “Like and Subscribe: Share the love of Jesus” as this month’s theme. We want kids to know that there’s nothing more awesome they can share with others than the love and adventure of a life with Jesus.

8:45 - 9:05 | 10:45 – 11:05 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Connection Centers

Connect: a time that invites kids to share with others and leaders

What You Need: Activity Bins + Coloring Sheets (find on your shelves in space)

What You Do:

- *PRE-CONNECTION TIME*
 - *Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that His love doesn't leave us where it finds us and that it has the power to bring real change. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time God's love convicted you and gave you the courage to make a change or restore a relationship. Ask God to help your preteens truly grasp that Jesus' love isn't based on their performance. Pray for the kid who feels like an outcast (like Zacchaeus) and the one who is making others feel that way. Ask that Jesus' love would change their hearts, their attitudes, and their actions, giving them the courage to make things right.*
- *DURING CONNECTION TIME*
 - Greet each child by name and with a high five or fist bump!
 - **Make sure to grab second sticker from the child + place it on your sticker sheet**
 - Invite kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
 - Pull out your activity bins + set aside some coloring sheets for kids to partake in your small group space
 - Ask questions in order to connect with + get to know your few as you partake in activities alongside them...you can use these :
 - *What was your favorite part of this last week?*
 - *What is something that makes you feel loved?*
 - *How do you show love to your friends and family?*
 - *How do you think showing love changes things?*
- *AFTER CONNECTION TIME*
 - *Use this time to review over how to be successful in small group time as well as Flatirons Kids by using the SG Structure 101 sheet featured on your activity shelf*
 - Go over each rule to create a great small group experience
 - Transition into the Opening Small Group Activity

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | OPENING SMALL GROUP

OPENING ACTIVITY

What You Need: Scenario Cards

What You Do:

- Read one of the scenario cards aloud.
- Ask the group, “What would you normally want to do in that situation?” (e.g., get mad, say something mean back)
- Then ask: “How can you respond with the love of Jesus instead?”
- Brainstorm kind and loving responses together.
- Continue with each of the scenarios.

What You Say:

“It’s not always easy to choose love, is it? Jesus chose love. We can ask Jesus to help us show love to others, too. The love of Jesus can change things for the better. In our true story from the Bible today, we’re going to hear about a man named Zacchaeus who didn’t have many friends because he was a dishonest tax collector. But Jesus loved Zacchaeus, even when he had done wrong things. Let’s go find out what happened.”

9:20 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

In Week 3, Jesus singles out Zacchaeus, a tax collector who has scrambled up a tree for a better view. Instead of scolding Zacchaeus for stealing from his neighbors, Jesus invites himself over to the tax collector’s house for a party. Profoundly changed by Jesus’ love and acceptance, Zacchaeus offers to pay back anyone he has cheated—four times as much! [BOTTOM LINE] The love of

Jesus can change things for the better.

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask your group these questions & talk about them as a group.
 - Zacchaeus climbed a tree just to see Jesus. What do you think made him so eager to see Jesus—and what might that say about what was missing in his life?
 - Jesus called Zacchaeus by name and wanted to spend time with him, even though others called Zacchaeus a “sinner.” What does this teach you about how Jesus sees people who have messed up or feel left out?
 - Zacchaeus didn’t just feel loved—he changed. Why do you think experiencing Jesus’ love made Zacchaeus want to make things right instead of being told to?
 - The crowd judged Zacchaeus and whispered about him but Jesus chose kindness. When have you seen someone judged by others, and how could you respond more like Jesus in that kind of moment?
 - The story says that the love of Jesus changes people. How has knowing that Jesus loves you—no matter what—changed the way you see yourself or treat others?

TOP TEN

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: Whiteboard; Markers; Zaccheaus Water Bottle

What You Do:

- Tell the group that you're going to create a "Top Ten" list together.
- The title of the list is: "Top Ten Ways to Share the Love of Jesus." Write that across the top of the board.
- Challenge the group to brainstorm a list of ten practical, everyday ways they can show Jesus' love to the people around them.
- Write their ideas on the board. Encourage them to be specific.
- Instead of "be nice," maybe "invite someone new to sit with my group at lunch."
- Instead of "help people," maybe "ask my parents if I can help with a chore before they ask me."
- Keep brainstorming until you have a solid list of ten great ideas.

What You Say:

"This is an incredible list that we can put into action. Zacchaeus didn't just feel bad about his choices; he made a plan to change. He took action. The people in the crowd who saw Jesus go to a 'sinner's' house didn't understand. But Jesus said He, the Son of Man, came to look for the lost and save them. Every item on this list is a way to show that **[Bottom Line] the love of Jesus can change things for the better.**

It's amazing to think about how much Zacchaeus changed in one day. Jesus didn't condemn him or order him to pay everyone back. Jesus simply made it clear how much He loved him. Jesus looked up into the sycamore-fig tree and said, 'Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay at your house today' (Luke 19:5 NIV). That love transformed him from the inside out. Zacchaeus went from being someone nobody trusted to someone who was making things right and being generous, promising to pay back four times the amount he took.

Let's try this Zaccheus Water Bottle Challenge!"

What you do:

- Show the group the water bottle. Tell them this is the "Zacchaeus Bottle Flip Challenge."

- Let kids take turns trying to flip the water bottle and have it land standing up.
- Explain that just like flipping the water bottle can completely change its position, Jesus' love completely flipped Zacchaeus's life around.

Close in prayer or invite a kid to pray!