

Jesus Befriends Zacchaeus

Bible Point

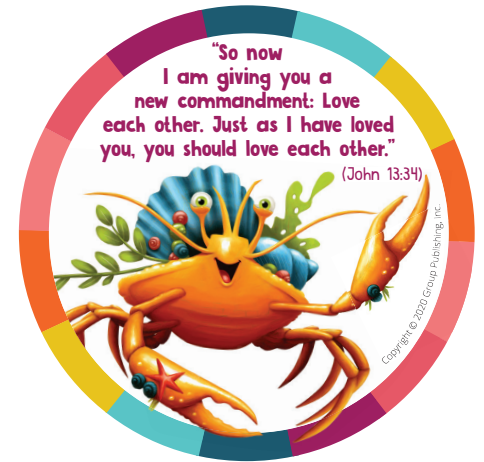
Jesus loves everyone...and sees our potential.

Purpose

We all have our not-so-friend-like moments: times we choose ourselves over others, say things we later regret, or take something without asking. It seems Zacchaeus had *a lot* of those moments, yet Jesus still wanted to be his friend. Jesus still wants to be your friend, too.

That's because Jesus sees who we are and what we can be. He sees world-changers instead of screw-ups, and helpers where others see bossy pants. He sees us as his friends instead of his servants. (John 15:15)

Wouldn't it be cool to wear glasses that allow you to see all the kids in your class the way Jesus sees them? These magic lenses may not exist, *but* you can still ask Jesus to give you a better view. You may be surprised at the friendships that form as a result.



Prayer

Jesus, help me see kids the way you see them. Bring affirming words to my mind, and give me courage and clarity to speak them over kids' lives. Thanks for seeing my potential, too. It's in your name I pray, amen.

Prep

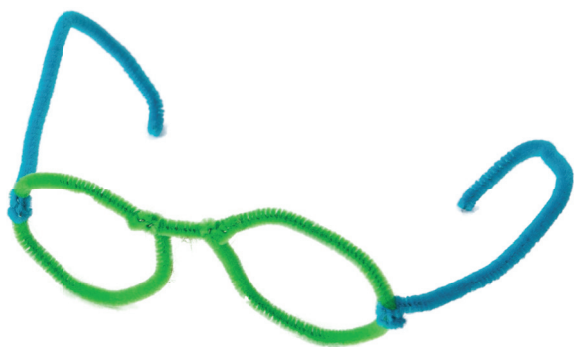
Opening Options	Sing & Play	Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale	Apply-It Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pipe Cleaner View:</i> chenille wires, child-safe scissors <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Paper Plate Trees:</i> paper plates, construction paper, child-safe scissors, markers, clear tape, glue sticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> countdown video* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> Decker Bible Memory Buddy poster* <input type="checkbox"/> media player <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark John 13:34) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "Jesus Befriends Zacchaeus" Bible Story poster* <input type="checkbox"/> Decker Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 3, Week 2) (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Luke 19:2, 5-6, 8-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More:</i> Bibles, tennis balls (1 per Crew), basketballs (1 per Crew) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game:</i> 1 or 2 foam balls or paper wads

* in your **Simply Loved Kit**



Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



Pipe Cleaner View

Supplies

- chenille wires, child-safe scissors

Twist chenille wires into eyeglasses to wear.

? Have you ever gone to the eye doctor? What did you like or dislike about your visit?

Jesus loves everyone—people with glasses and without. Today we'll hear about a man who couldn't see Jesus very well. We'll find out what he did to get a better view!

Paper Plate Trees

Supplies

- paper plates, construction paper, child-safe scissors, markers, clear tape, glue sticks

Make a tree. Tear pieces of construction paper, and tape them to a plate to make leaves. Then trace your arm onto a piece of construction paper to make the tree trunk.

? Imagine you're creating a one-of-a-kind treehouse. What surprise features would you include?

In our Bible story, we'll hear about a man who climbed a tree to see Jesus. When Jesus saw him, he did something surprising that showed **Jesus loves everyone**.

Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options. Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

Sing & Play

Hello! It's so great to see everyone today. Shield your eyes with your hand like you're on the lookout, and take a look around at everyone. Pause while kids look. We're all looking good! Now let's get moving with a song.



"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" music video

Bible Point

Jesus loves everyone. That's our Bible Point today. Every time you hear the words "Jesus loves everyone!" cross your hands over your heart like this (demonstrate) and say, "Thank you, Jesus!" Let's try that together.

- Cross your hands over your heart and say, "Thank you, Jesus!"
- Repeat several times.

Repetition helps kids remember! So be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "Thank you, Jesus!"

It's easy to love people who love you back; it's harder to love people who are mean to us. But even when people let us down, Jesus never will. He's a friend who's got our backs no matter what. And he gives us the strength we need to share his love even with big meanies. This is because **Jesus loves everyone.** Let's sing a song to tell about our friendship with Jesus.

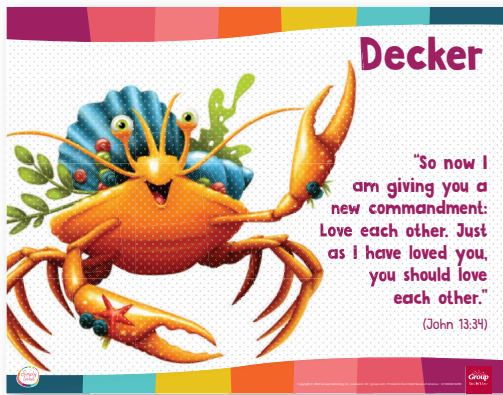


"We Can Trust Him" (Psalm 33:4) music video



Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Buddy Video* DVD
 - Decker Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 2)
- *Music Video* DVD
 - "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" music video
 - "We Can Trust Him" (Psalm 33:4) music video
 - "To God Be the Glory" music video
- Decker Bible Memory Buddy poster



Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Decker the decorator crab is our Bible Memory Buddy! Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. **Crabs can be kind of pinchy. I know I'd rather not step on one—ouch! How much do you know about crabs? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge! You'll hear two fun facts about decorator crabs. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!**

- ❓ **Do crabs have an exoskeleton (a skeleton on the outside of the body) or an endoskeleton (a skeleton on the inside of the body)?**
 - Have everyone wave their hands high to vote for *this* (exoskeleton) or wave their hands close to their bodies to vote for *that* (endoskeleton).
 - Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
 - Dramatically give the answer: **Crabs have an exoskeleton!**
 - Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video.



Decker Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 2)



Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! The Bible is made up of different types of writing, including history, poetry, and even letters. Our Bible Memory Verse comes from the Gospels in the New Testament; it's John 13:34. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat it after me.**

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: *(hold hands out like a tray)*
Love each other. *(give a friend's shoulder a squeeze)*
Just as I *(point up)*
have loved you, *(point forward)*
you should love each other." *(give another friend's shoulder a squeeze)*
(John 13:34)

Jesus loves everyone. *(Thank you, Jesus!)* **Let's praise God for sending Jesus to earth to show us what real love looks like.**



"To God Be the Glory" music video

Bible Discovery

Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Divide kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
 - Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.
 - Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other fist bumps.
 - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **What's a characteristic you'd like others to see in you—and why?**

The Heart of the Matter

Beforehand, think of something the kids in your class really like to do: perhaps it's running technology, getting to eat the first piece of a snack, or taking attendance.

I'm looking for a volunteer to help me [say the activity you've chosen]. Pause while kids raise hands. **But before you volunteer, you need to listen to what the qualifications are. Ready?**

- **You need to always wash your hands after you use the restroom.**
- **You need to always pray before you eat.**
- **You need to always wear matching socks.**
- **You need to have a Snickers bar in your pocket for me right now.**
- **You need to be able to drive a car.**

Does anyone meet all those qualifications? If you do, raise your hand.

- ❓ **How does it feel to be disqualified for something you want to do?** Invite a few responses. **Let's talk a little more in our Connect Crews.**
- Have everyone circle up in their Connect Crews.
- ❓ **Tell about a time your behavior disqualified you from something cool.** Share a quick story from your own life to begin. Perhaps you got a penalty when playing soccer and had to sit on the bench, or you procrastinated doing homework or housework and missed out on going to a movie with your friends or family.
- Have Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

In our Bible story today, we'll meet a man named Zacchaeus. The people who knew Zacchaeus thought he should be disqualified from being friends with Jesus. They didn't think he was good enough. But Jesus had other ideas. Since **Jesus loves everyone**, (Thank you, Jesus!) **Jesus sees who we are and what we can be—his friends!** Let's dive in to our Bible story and see what happened to Zacchaeus.

Supplies

- Bible
- "Jesus Befriends Zacchaeus" Bible Story poster

We call helpers **Crew Guides**. If you lead a small class, you can be the **Crew Guide**. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!



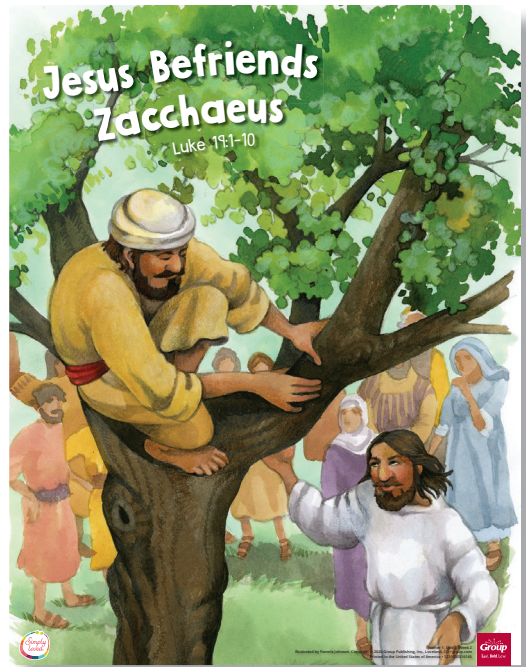
Experience the Bible Story

We all have happy days...and sad days. And some days have both happy and sad in them. I'm going to tell you a story from the Bible about a guy who had one of those happy and sad days. But instead of just listening to a story, you'll actually help me tell it and play an important part!

Ready? Let's jump into this story from the Bible. We'll hang out with our buddy Zacchaeus—we'll call him Zach for short—as he goes through his super-good, super-hard day. As you share this story, be sure to use lots of energy, emotion, and excitement.



Read aloud Luke 19:2.



Zach lived in a town called Jericho. Zach had a job there—he was the chief tax collector, which meant he made a lot of money.

Zach made his money by collecting taxes for the Romans, but he also cheated and took extra money for himself. His neighbors knew Zach was cheating them, so they didn't like him. Zacchaeus may have had a lot of money, but he wasn't very popular. Let's see how it feels to be all alone.

Have kids spread out around the room so they can't touch anyone else. They should all face away from you as they sit with their heads in their hands, as if no one wants to hang out with them.

Then Jesus showed up. Slowly walk around the room as if you're Jesus walking through town. **One day Jesus came through town, and people lined up to see him. Zach wanted to see Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd, and he couldn't reach Jesus. Without moving from your spots, try to reach me as I walk by.** Zigzag around kids, avoiding them as they reach out to you.

Zach couldn't reach Jesus, so Zach climbed a tree.

- ? How do you think Zach—a grown-up—felt about climbing a tree?** Invite a few responses from the whole group.
- ? How do you feel about climbing trees?** Invite responses from the whole group.

Let's pretend to climb a tree. Have kids stand and make climbing motions. **Look! We can see now! When Jesus walked by the tree, he looked up at Zach. And he called out to Zach using Zach's name.**



Read aloud Luke 19:5-6.

Zach scrambled out of that tree and took Jesus to his house. Well, some other folks weren't so thrilled about that. They grumbled, "He has gone to be Zach's guest? Everyone knows Zach is a sinner!"

Let's talk in our Connect Crews for a bit. Go ahead and circle up.

- ❓ Why do you think people didn't like Jesus going to Zach's house?
- ❓ When have you been upset because someone who was mean got something nice?
- Give Crews several minutes to discuss.

Thanks for sharing. People didn't see Zach's potential. They may have thought, "Once a meanie, always a meanie." But **Jesus loves everyone.** *(Thank you, Jesus!)* He sees potential when others see a lost cause. And guess what? After spending some time with Jesus, Zacchaeus wanted to change. He didn't want to be a cheater anymore. Here's what he said.



Read aloud Luke 19:8-10.

Zacchaeus found a friendship with Jesus. Jesus wasn't just kind to Zach when everyone else was mean to Zach; he also let Zacchaeus know he was simply loved.

You are simply loved, too. Jesus loves you, and you're never alone. As I call your name, come walk with me and welcome everyone to be friends. Walk around the room again. This time, call kids by name, and offer each child a hand to stand and join you as you move toward the next child. Once everyone is up, gather for a huddle and shout, **Jesus loves everyone!** *(Thank you, Jesus!)*

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one—or both—of the following reinforcement activities support today's Bible discoveries before the Friendship Finale.


Apply-It Options

Choose one—or both—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

Explore More

Supplies

- Bibles, tennis balls (1 per Crew), basketballs (1 per Crew)

 Distribute Bibles, and help kids find and read Luke 19:9-10 together.

Jesus saw what Zacchaeus could be—his friend. When Jesus is our friend, we have even more potential to do great things for him! It's like the science of potential energy. Try this in your Connect Crews.

Round One:

- Drop a tennis ball and see how high it bounces.

Round Two:

- Hold a basketball with one hand.
- Hold a tennis ball on top of the basketball with the other hand.
- Drop the balls at the same time, and observe how high the tennis ball bounces.

- ❓ **What was the difference between the two rounds?**
- ❓ **Tell about a time a close friendship with Jesus helped you do more than you expected.** Share a quick example from your own life to begin the conversation.

Jesus loves everyone. *(Thank you, Jesus!)* **When we're close friends with Jesus, he'll change our lives in amazing ways!**



Game

Supplies

- 1 or 2 small foam balls or paper wads
- Place balls in the middle of your playing area, and have kids spread out around the balls.
- On "go," kids rush in to grab a ball and throw it at other players.
- If a player is hit by a ball, that player must stay in place and act out a profession he or she would like to work in someday (as if playing charades). Ideas include a basketball player, a baseball player, a ballerina, a surgeon, and so on.
- In order for the player to be free to play again, a fellow player must correctly guess the profession that player is acting out.
- Play as time allows.
- If you have a larger group, add more balls to your playing area.

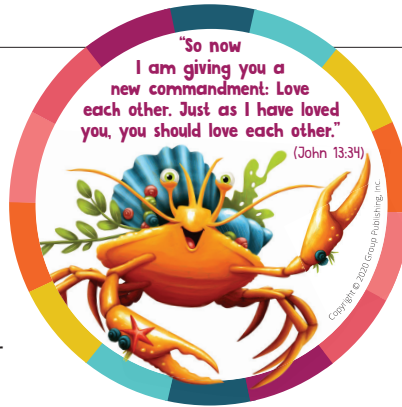
In our game, your friends helped you by seeing who you are *and* who you want to be. Jesus does that, too! **Jesus loves everyone! *(Thank you, Jesus!)* When we're friends with Jesus, he's there to help us and see our potential.**

- ❓ **Tell about something good you see in a Connect Crew friend.**



Friendship Finale

Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.



Supplies

- Decker Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)
- Take-It-Home Flyers (Unit 3, Week 2) (1 per child)

Decker, our Bible Memory Buddy, helps us remember Jesus loves everyone. (Thank you, Jesus!) You'll each receive a Decker sticker to help you remember Jesus' love throughout your week. You can collect stickers you receive each week or wear yours now. Crew Guides will give each child a sticker like this:

- Have Crews sit in knee-to-knee circles.
- Demonstrate the following actions with a Connect Crew.
- In their Crews, kids will take turns standing up to receive a Bible Memory Buddy sticker from their Crew Guide.
- Crew Guides say, "[Child's name], you have potential. **Jesus loves everyone...** including you!" That child will then sit down as the Crew Guide moves to the next person in the circle.

Saying each child's name in a loving way helps kids simply experience Jesus' love through you!

I love that Jesus was willing to reach out to someone other people didn't like. And I love that Jesus still reaches out to people—to you, to me, to everyone. We can all be friends with Jesus! Jesus loves all of us.

I'd like to read you something about our friend Jesus. As you listen, close your eyes, hold your hand in front of your face, and imagine you're looking in a mirror. Pause. As you look, imagine you're seeing yourself like Jesus sees you.

- Read the first section of the Unit 3, Week 2 Take-It-Home Flyer.
- **Now I'll give you one of these flyers to help you talk about Jesus' love in your Connect Crews and at home, too.**
- Distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to Crew Guides, and have them share about their own friendship with Jesus as they answer the "Talk Starter" question and then invite kids to talk.
- Kids share prayer requests—things they'd like to tell Jesus—in their Connect Crews.
- Connect Crews pray together.
- Crew Guides distribute Take-It-Home Flyers and follow the directions to help kids fold the paper to "fly" home. 🌈

