



# Turning Over a New Leaf

**THEME:** Autumn

**BIBLE STORY:** The Story of Zacchaeus (*Luke 19:1-10*)

## MATERIALS NEEDED

### OPENING GAME

- Candy corn, 15 pieces per family
- Plastic spoons, one per family
- Small disposable cups (3oz), two per family

### DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

- Two unsharpened pencils per person

### CRAFT

- An empty toilet paper roll, one per person
- [8 mm googly eyes](#), two per person
- [Raffia paper ribbon](#), one handful per family
- [Brown packaging paper](#), a sheet approximately 10 cm by 15 cm per person
- Sheets of construction paper, assorted colors, 3 to 4 sheets per family
- A pair of scissors, one per person
- A glue stick, one per person
- A black marker, one per person

### CRAFT

- [Bottles of tacky glue](#), one per family
- [Small paint brushes](#), one per person
- [Paint palettes](#), one per family
- [A string of twine](#) (about 24 inches long), one per family

Choose from:

- A sheet of recycled cardboard, one per family
- One craft cutter

OR

- A sheet of rigid poster paper, one per family
- One pair of scissors

### GAMES

- Six to eight small or medium pumpkins
- A permanent marker
- Toss rings, five per team
- A dried corn cob, one per team



## 90-MINUTE SESSION OUTLINE

- [Introduction and Opening Game](#) (10 minutes)
- [Family Craft](#) (30 minutes)
- [Games](#) (20 minutes)
- [Devotional Thought](#) (10 minutes)
- [Family Discussion](#) (15 minutes)
- [Closing Prayer and Dismissal](#) (5 minutes)

### Introduction and Opening Game

(10 MINUTES)

#### Introduction

Welcome to family fun night! We are so glad you're here. Our goals are to help your family have fun together and to learn about God's love and his word.

Tonight, our theme is "Turning Over A New Leaf!" because as the seasons change and the leaves change color, we are looking at a Bible story that shows us how the love of Jesus changes us! This story is written in the Bible in the Book of Luke. Let's read it now.

*Read Luke 19:1-10.*

That's an amazing story, and we'll have a chance to come back to it later, but right now let's get things rolling with a little family competition!

#### Opening Game: Candy Corn Relay

**Object:** To be the first family to transfer all the candy corn from one cup to the other.

**Setup:** Give each family two cups and a plastic spoon. One cup will have 15 pieces of candy corn in it, and the other cup will be empty. Family members will place their empty cup on the ground and line up behind it. The cup holding the candy corn should be placed at least 15 feet across from the empty cup, in line with the other families.

**Instructions:** On your GO signal, one family member will take their plastic spoon, run to their cup of candy corn and scoop up a piece of candy, and race back to their family with the candy corn on their spoon. After



dropping the candy into the cup, they will pass on the plastic spoon to the next family member. The first family to transfer all their pieces of candy corn is the winning family.

## Craft Activity

(30 MINUTES)

### Autumn Leaves Wreath

#### Preparation:

Option One: For each family, cut a large ring-shape out of recycled cardboard using a craft knife.

Option Two: For each family, cut a large ring shape out of a sheet of rigid poster paper with a pair of scissors.

Cover tables with newspaper, butcher paper or another covering to protect the surface from glue and paint.

#### Instructions:

1. Paint the ring red, orange, yellow, or a mix of all three.

*NOTE: Use the optional hair dryer to dry the paint quickly before the next step, or play one or two of the games in the next section before returning to this craft.*

2. Optional: If you are meeting in an outdoor space, you may wish to invite families to search for the leaves they'd like to include on their wreath.
3. When the paint has dried, use the tacky glue to attach the leaves to the wreath.
4. Add a second layer of leaves to fill in any gaps or large spaces.
5. Tie on some twine so that the wreath can be hung.



## A Family of Scarecrows

### Preparation:

Each family member will need an empty roll of toilet paper, two googly eyes, one button, a sheet of brown packaging paper, and a black marker.

Give each family three to four sheets of colored construction paper to use for decorating their scarecrows (at least one sheet of blue), a handful of raffia ribbon, a glue stick, and a pair of scissors.

Cover tables with newspaper, butcher paper or another covering to protect the surface.

### Instructions:

1. Make a paper origami hat using the instructions below.
  - a. Fold the sheet of brown packaging paper in half and make a neat crease.
  - b. Fold the sheet in half again and then open it so there is a crease down the middle.
  - c. Fold both corners in and then fold the bottom flap up.
  - d. Flip the paper hat over and fold the second flap up. Secure it with a little glue.
2. Cut some blue paper, wrap it around the bottom half of the toilet paper roll, and glue in place.
3. Add glue to the rim of the toilet paper roll and glue down the raffia ribbon as hair.
4. Add glue to the inside of the origami hat and glue on top of the straw hair.
5. Glue on googly eyes.
6. Draw on facial features using a black marker.
7. Tie on some twine so that the wreath can be hung.
8. Cut and glue on any additional decorative elements using the colored construction paper.

## Games

(20 MINUTES)

### Pumpkin Ring Toss

**Object:** To be the team with the most points at the end of the game.



**Setup:** Set up the pumpkins in any arrangement.

On each pumpkin, write a score value of 100, 200, 300, etc.

Divide the participants into two or more teams, and give each team five rings.

Organize the teams into lines (each team forms a line) extending from a marked starting line on the opposite side of the playing area from the pumpkins.

Depending on the size of your teams, decide how many times each team member will have a turn to toss the five rings (once, twice or three times).

**Instructions:** One member from each team will take turns tossing five rings to gain points for their team. When a team member completes the number of turns decided on by the game leader, they should sit down to indicate that they are finished. Choose a leader to keep score for each team. The team with the most points wins.

### Pass the Corn

**Object:** To be the first team to successfully pass the corncob to the end of the line without using hands.

**Setup:** Divide the participants into two or more teams. Organize the teams into lines (each team forms a line). Each team will need their own corn cob.

**Instructions:** On your GO signal, the corn cob will be passed from team member to team member. They can use any part of their bodies except their hands. If the corn touches the ground at any time, it must go back to the beginning of the line again. The team that gets the corn to the end of the line first wins the game.

## Devotional Thought

(10 MINUTES)

**When summer ends and the fall season begins, a lot of things start to change around us. The weather gets colder, the leaves change color, the sun sets earlier, and school buses return to the streets. What are some changes you've experienced recently? Turn and talk about this with your family.**



Allow each family to talk amongst themselves.

**The Bible introduces us to many people who experienced BIG changes in their lives after they encountered the love of Jesus. Earlier we read a Bible story that introduced us to one of those people, Zaccheaus. Let's hear the story again in a different way. This time, I'm going to need your help as I tell this story.**

This is an interactive story based off of Luke 19:1-10 that can be acted out using unsharpened pencils. Give each person two unsharpened pencils.

Lead the families through the story of Zacchaeus by making motions with the pencils to dramatically illustrate the story and the rest of the participants in the group will follow along with their own pencils.

Explain the concept to the families and perhaps 'prepare them' by doing the first three sentences in the story that require their involvement. The script below includes suggested motions you can make with the pencils, but feel free to be creative and add your own twist to it!

**Jesus was walking along the road with his friends.** (Use the pencils to tap the ground like two legs walking.)

**They came to a town named Jericho. It had many tall buildings.** (Point the pencils tall like a skyscraper.)

**Children played games in the streets.** (Use the pencils to simulate games and describe the games you are imitating, like baseball, golf, or even pick-up sticks!)

**Others made music along the roadside.** (Use the pencils to simulate musical instruments and describe these instruments to the audience, like the guitar, drums, violin, etc.)

**There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was very wealthy and had many possessions. He had many servants who did the work in his house. They swept it and kept it clean.** (Use the pencils to make a sweeping motion.)

**They cooked the food.** (Stir a pot of food.)



**They did the gardening and the landscaping.** (Make a shoveling and raking motion.)

**Zacchaeus was a tax collector. That means he was a Jewish man who collected money from his fellow Jews and gave money to the Romans to pay their taxes. And the Jews didn't like the Romans because they were evil.** (Make an X with the pencils.)

**They had swords.** (Perform a motion like you are drawing a sword.)

**They rode horses.** (Tap the pencils on the ground to make galloping sounds.)

**And they even killed Jews who did not obey them.** (Form a cross.)

**Jews didn't like the tax collectors either.** (Make an X with the pencils.)

**Tax collectors would increase what the Jews had to pay so they could put money in their own pockets. That's how Zacchaeus became so rich!** (Make an arrow pointing upwards with the pencils.)

**Zacchaeus had heard Jesus speak before. He heard that Jesus healed a man born blind named Bartimaeus. So, he wanted to see the man for himself. The problem was that there were many people lined up along the streets...** (Place the pencils one in front of another rapidly to simulate people lined up.)

**...And Zacchaeus was short.** (Hold the pencil horizontally at a low level.)

**Very short.** (Lower the pencil.)

**Shorter...** (Lower the pencil even further and squat if you are able.)

**And he couldn't see above the heads of the people lined up along the street.** (Pretend to peek your head up above the pencil.)

**He tried jumping up and down.** (Jump up and down.) **But that was exhausting.**



**So, he decided to climb up one of the sycamore trees that lined the streets.** (Hold both of the pencils horizontally like ladder rungs and move them one above the other to simulate climbing.)

**He got high enough that he could peek through the branches and see Jesus coming towards him.** (Hold the two pencils outward in a V-shape like branches and peek your head out between them.)

**He thought he was hidden by the branches until Jesus looked up at him and said, "Zacchaeus, you come down from that tree...I'm staying at your house today."** (Hold the pencils way up high.)

**Zacchaeus practically fell out of the tree and landed on the ground.** (Drop the pencils and then pick them back up.)

**He ran as fast as he could to get home.** (Tap the pencils rapidly against the floor like two legs running.)

**He wanted to make sure his house was ready.** (Sweep the sticks like a broom.)

**He told his servants to prepare a meal fit for a king.** (Pretend to set the table with the pencils as silverware.)

**When Jesus arrived at his home, he opened the door and welcomed him in.** (Hold the pencils together vertically in front of you and make a motion with your arm like you are opening a door.)

**The religious leaders were furious. They wagged their long fingers and shook their heads. "Doesn't Jesus know who this man is?"** (Use the pencil to make a wagging finger.)

**But Zacchaeus, touched by Jesus's kindness and broken by his sin, said to him:** (Drop pencils dramatically.)

**"I'll give half of all my possessions to the poor."** (Pick up the pencils again and pretend to divide the room in half with the pencils.)

**"I will go to every person I cheated and pay back what I owe."** (Pretend to hand out money with the pencils.)





**“Then, I will give them four times as much money that I took from them!”** (Drag the pencils in two big sweeping motions.)

**Even though he was short...** (Hold the pencil horizontally at a low level.)

**Very short.** (Lower the pencil.)

**Shorter...** (Lower the pencil even further and squat if you are able.)

**No one stood taller than Zacchaeus that day in the eyes of the Lord.** (Stand up tall and hold the pencils vertically.)

**And Jesus said, “Today, salvation has come to this house. Zacchaeus repented of his sin.”** (Make an upside down V with the pencils to form the roof of a house.)

**“Even though he is broken...”** (Drop pencils dramatically.)

**“I will make his life new.”** (Pick up the pencils.)

**“He was lost...”** (Drop the pencils dramatically again.)

**“But now he is found!”** (Hold pencils out in front.)

**There are several characters in this story, but the main characters are Jesus and Zacchaeus.**

**Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. In this role, Zacchaeus was able to get very rich. Tax collectors often openly added extra for themselves. This left the people overtaxed and quite resentful of people like Zacchaeus who stole from them. He was seen as a traitor to his own people. Now, I want to ask you:**

**What are some things you notice about Jesus in this story?**

Give the families some time to discuss, and then take their answers.



### **What are some things you notice about Zacchaeus in this story?**

Give the families some time to discuss, and then take their answers.

**Jesus noticed Zacchaeus climbing a tree. Jesus could have stayed with the most righteous person in town, with someone respectable or someone important. Instead, Jesus chooses to stay with Zacchaeus, the guy that no one likes.**

**I also noticed three big things about Zacchaeus.**

- 1. Zacchaeus eagerly desired to see Jesus, so he took matters into his own hands. He received something even better: Jesus saw him!**
- 2. Zacchaeus, a man considered unworthy to even be a guest at a dinner party, was given the honor to host Jesus in his home!**
- 3. Zacchaeus wasn't seen by Jesus because he was respectable or important, yet Zacchaeus did not remain the same after encountering the love of Jesus.**

**Here's what I'd like us to remember from this story. Jesus sees us, knows us and wants to meet with us even when we don't do what is right. Encountering the love of Jesus is what changes us from the inside out.**

**Let's pray. Lord Jesus, thank you that not even our sin can keep us from encountering and experiencing your love. We are grateful for your kindness and grace that changes our hearts and our lives to look more like yours. Amen.**

## **Family Discussion**

**(15 MINUTES)**

Distribute the family discussion guide and give the families time to discuss the questions there together.



## Closing Prayer and Dismissal

(5 MINUTES)

Thank everyone for coming. Make any announcements about future family fun nights or other events at your church. Let the families know you love them and want to serve them. If anyone needs prayer, offer to pray for them.

Close the evening in prayer.



## FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE

### What are some of the good things that change can bring? How can change be challenging?

Read the story together again, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

*Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.*

*When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."*

*Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.*

*Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"*

*Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."*

### To Discuss

- Retell the story in your own words.
- What are the three things you found most interesting about this story?
- What was Zachaeus's job? How did the people feel about Zacchaeus because of his job?
- Why was Zacchaeus afraid he might not be able to see Jesus, and how did Zacchaeus solve this problem? Is there anything that makes you afraid that you might not be able to encounter Jesus's love or receive his attention?
- What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus? What did Jesus say to the people?
- How did Zacchaeus change by being with Jesus? What do you think caused this change?