



Lesson 15

Pure Hearts See God

Large Group Lesson & Games

Bible Story

Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Bible Verse

“God blesses those whose hearts are pure,
for they will see God.”

Matthew 5:8, *New Living Translation*

Key Teaching Point

Receive a pure heart.

Materials

- A Bible
- Two dowel rods (3/8" diameter and 3' long) per student, and two rods for the leader OR substitute unsharpened pencils
- A beach ball



Large Group Lesson

(15 Minutes)

This is an interactive story based off of Luke 19:1-10 that can be acted out using dowel rods. Use rods or sticks that are 3/8" diameter and 3' long. Give each student two rods. You may also choose to substitute the dowel rods for unsharpened pencils.

Once each student has received two dowel rods, say,

The purpose of the rods is to help me tell the story.

- Stress the importance of safety and allow appropriate space between students and others.
- Teach a specific instruction for “freezing” and allow students to practice it.
- Clarify that any student not handling the responsibility well will lose the opportunity to participate.

Lead the students through the story by making motions with the dowel rods to dramatically illustrate the story and the rest of the participants in the group will follow along with their own dowel rods.

Explain the concept to the students 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 dowel rods, but feel free to be creative and add your own twist to it!

Jesus was walking along the road with his friends.	(Use the sticks to tap the ground like two legs walking.)
They came to a town named Jericho. It had many tall buildings.	(Point the sticks tall like a skyscraper.)
Children played games in the streets.	(Use the sticks to simulate games and describe the games you are imitating. E.g. baseball, golf, pickup sticks!)
Others made music along the roadside.	(Use the sticks to simulate musical instruments and describe these instruments to the audience. E.g. guitar, drums, violin, cello, etc.)
There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was very wealthy and had many possessions. He had many servants who did	(Sweeping motion)



the work in his house. They swept it and kept it clean.	
They cooked the food.	(Stir a pot of food)
They did the gardening and the landscaping.	(Shoveling and raking)
Zacchaeus was a tax collector. That means he was a Jewish man who collected money from his fellow Jews and gave their 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 sticks)
They had swords.	(Perform a motion like you are drawing a sword.)
They rode horses.	(Tap the sticks on the ground to make galloping sounds)
And they even killed Jews who did not obey them.	(Make the sign of a cross.)
Jews didn't like the tax collector.	(Make an X with the sticks)
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 sticks)
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 sticks one in front of another rapidly to simulate people lined up)
...and Zacchaeus was short.	(Hold the stick horizontally at a low level)
Very short.	(Lower the stick)
Shorter...	(Lower the stick 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 stick)
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 sticks 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 sticks 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 sticks way up high)
Zacchaeus practically fell out of the tree and landed on the ground.	(Drop the sticks and then pick them back up.)
He ran as fast as he could to get home.	(Tap the sticks 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 sticks as silverware.)
When Jesus arrived at his home, he opened the door and welcomed him in.	(Hold sticks 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 stick to make a wagging finger)
But Zacchaeus, touched by Jesus’s kindness and broken by his sin, said to him:	(Drop sticks dramatically)
“I’ll give half of all my possessions to the poor!”	(Pick up the sticks again and pretend to divide the room in half with the sticks)
“I will go to every person I cheated and pay back what I owe.”	(Pretend to hand out money with the sticks)



“Then, I will give them four times as much money that I took from them!”	(Drag the sticks in two big sweeping motions)
Even though he was short...	(Hold the stick horizontally at a low level)
Very short.	(Lower the stick)
Shorter...	(Lower the stick 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 sticks vertically)
And Jesus said, “Today, salvation has come to this house.”	(Make an upside down V with the sticks to form the roof of a house)

What did Zacchaeus want more than anything? How can you tell?

Take student responses.

How did Zacchaeus change his mind and his heart in this story? How can you tell?

Take student responses.

He went from a life of cheating and stealing to a life of generosity. He gave half of all his possessions to the poor and he didn’t just pay back what he owed, he generously gave people four times as much money as he took from them! When we change our minds and hearts, it is revealed in how we live our lives. Our lives should look different!

Why do you think Zacchaeus made such a drastic change?

Take student responses.

Jesus was kind to Zacchaeus even in his sin! Jesus came to be a guest at his house even though all the others in his town disliked and despised him. Zacchaeus found God’s love and joy filled his heart. It’s Jesus’s love that changes our hearts and the course of our lives! Zacchaeus’s one desire was to see Jesus, the Son of God, with his own two eyes...and that he did!

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he confessed his sin. He turned his heart away from the world and toward Jesus. Hearts that are turned toward Jesus and desire to obey him are hearts that the Bible calls pure. The Bible promises



that people with pure hearts will see God at work in their lives and in their hearts.

We'll talk about what it looks like to receive the gift of a pure heart in our small groups today!

Dismiss children to their small groups.



Large Group Games (25 Minutes)

OPPOSITES CHALLENGE

Preparation: Set up a chair in the middle of the room.

Choose one student to sit in a "challenge chair." Other members of the group should take turns naming a word with an opposite (hot-cold, dark-light, old-new, etc.) The student in the chair must quickly respond with the opposite of the word named. Let students take turns being in the "challenge chair."

Do you ever act in a way that is opposite of what you should do? Why?

Take student responses.

When Jesus comes into our lives, his love changes our minds, hearts, and our lives! We begin to live differently! That's what we are going to learn about today.

SCATTER BEACH BALL

Preparation: A Beach Ball

Begin by having all players stand close to the center of the playing area. Throw the ball into the air over the players. Whoever grabs the ball first can take three steps in any direction and has five seconds to throw it. They may either throw it up into the air again or try to throw to tag another player. If they tag someone with the ball, the player sits down. If they catch it, the player who threw must sit down. Anyone sitting down can get back up if they are able to grab the ball (without moving from their seated spot) and tag another standing player. There are no teams, and no "winners" in this game, although you may play until there are only a few remaining, declare them "winners" and begin a new round.

