



LESSON SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

Take a chance and make some new friends this year.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn the importance of being a friend to all kids, including those who are different.

KEY PASSAGE:

Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus.

MEMORY VERSE:

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." - Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

SUMMARY:

Don't stick to your regular table and crowd. Enjoy your friends, but step out and make new ones. Be a friend to the new kid, the outsiders, and those who are lonely.

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for loving us and for loving someone like Zacchaeus. Help us to be friends to the friendless so that they may know the love of Jesus.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*



MEMORY VERSE

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." - Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

"But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of those things will also be given to you." - Matthew 6:33 (NirV)

LARGE GROUP:

Write each word of the verse on a poster board. Bring enough kids on stage so each kid can hold one of the words. Then have the kids unscramble the words and put them in order on stage so the audience can read it.

SMALL GROUP:

Look at the verses surrounding this passage, or read the whole chapter so you can hear this verse in context. What was happening? How do the verses before and after the memory verse help you understand its meaning?

BEST YEAR EVER

SKIT

THE KID AT THE OTHER TABLE

ITEMS NEEDED:

Two tables, two chairs, two school lunches (in bags or on trays)

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN: 1M/1F

CHARACTERS:

Jessica and Zach - Two not-so-different kids

Jessica and Zach sit at the tables with their backs to each other, eating lunch in the school cafeteria.

JESSICA: I have great friends. I'm best friends with Carly Johnson, and I'm real close with the Clinton twins. We've all been best buds since we met in dance class when we were three. I don't need new friends.

ZACH: Sure, I could make new friends, but why? Tyler and I have everything in common. We've got each other's backs, and we always will. So what if that girl over there is sitting alone?

JESSICA: Let's face it, some people go together, and some don't. We don't dress alike. We're not in the same class even. And he's a boy! Boys are into things like... like shooting animals, and monster trucks.

ZACH: Tyler's the big monster truck fan. Can't say that I enjoy that myself. I'd rather watch a space movie or read some good comic books. You know?

JESSICA: None of the other girls likes comics, but that's okay. I mean we don't have to have everything in common. So what if they don't know guys like Wolverine.

ZACH: Love Wolverine.

SKIT

JESSICA: And Doctor Strange.

ZACH: Doctor Strange is cool.

JESSICA: And Green Arrow.

ZACH: Green Arrow's my favorite.

JESSICA: I don't mind Disney princess movies. Sometimes. I mean if I'm really honest, I prefer a heroine who can take care of herself like Wonder Woman or Princess Leia.

ZACH: Ah Star Wars. Can't beat that, can you? Although the new Star Trek movies were pretty cool. Tyler doesn't think so. He thinks the old TV show is better.

JESSICA: *(she turns to him)* He's crazy!

ZACH: *(he turns to her)* Who's crazy?

JESSICA: Tyler.

ZACH: Hey, that's my friend you're talking about!

JESSICA: And he's crazy if he likes that crummy TV show better than the movies.

ZACH: Yeah... he kind of is. So you like Star Trek?

JESSICA: And you like comic books.

ZACH: How did you—

JESSICA: I was listening in to your monologue.

ZACH: You were?

JESSICA: Oh come on, you weren't listening to mine?

ZACH: Maybe. A little.

JESSICA: I'm Jessica.

ZACH: I'm Zach.

They shake hands. Then they stand and pick up their lunches.

SKIT

JESSICA: So, Doctor Strange, huh?

ZACH: He's awesome.

JESSICA: I hear he's going to be getting his own movie.

ZACH: No way!

JESSICA: That's what my Dad tells me.

ZACH: Jessica, this may be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

JESSICA: Yeah. But just friends. Not boyfriend-girlfriend.

ZACH: Eww, gross!



BEST YEAR EVER

OBJECT LESSON OR KIDS SERMON

ITEMS NEEDED:

Sushi (something simple, like a California roll. Try to steer away from ones with shellfish, in case of allergies)

Is there anyone here who likes sushi? Is there anyone who hasn't tried it but is willing to sample some this morning?

Pick a few volunteers willing to try sushi for the first time. Ask them what they think of it. How does it taste? Do they like it? Did they think they would have liked it before trying it?

Some people love trying new foods. They'll eat anything from raw fish to beef tongue to exotic fruits and vegetables. Other people prefer the comforts of familiar foods - chicken nuggets, cheese pizza, macaroni and cheese, bananas, and peanut butter and jelly.

For those people, it's no big deal to stick to the old familiar. They know what they like, and they are rarely ever disappointed. But what do they always hear from more adventurous eaters? "You don't know what you are missing!"

You could say the same for anyone who is afraid to make friends with someone in need. There are kids in every one of your schools who sit by themselves at lunch, who are outcast, who are a little different. These kids need friends the same as you do. The question we have for you today is, will you be that friend?

It took courage for these kids to try something new, but they did it, and some of them discovered something new they like. Will you try something new this week? Will you take a chance to try and make a new friend?

BEST YEAR EVER

LARGE GROUP GAME

BREAKFAST WITH AUNT BERU

ITEMS NEEDED:

Six glasses
Regular milk
Milk dyed blue with food coloring.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Fill three glasses up with white milk. Pour just a little blue milk in the remaining three glasses.

Choose three players for this game. This is a milk-drinking contest. Contestants can either drink the full glass of white milk, or take a chance on the mysterious blue drink. Whoever finishes a glass of white or blue milk first wins.

VARIATION:

You can give the kids a choice of milk, or just pour blue milk for everyone.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The blue milk looks different - but it turns out that it's just regular, plain milk! Sometimes we are put off by people who look different than us, but inside, we're all people looking to be accepted and make friends!

BEST YEAR EVER

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

Take a chance and make some new friends this year.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn the importance of being a friend to all kids, including those who are different.

KEY PASSAGE:

Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus.

INTRO

How many of you can still remember your first day of school? How many of you remember the butterflies in your stomach when you left Mom and Dad and went into a classroom full of strangers for the first time? It can be scary and intimidating to find yourself surrounded by strangers. You look around at all the unfamiliar faces and wonder, "Will I have anything in common with these kids? Will they like me? Will we be friends?"

Most of you, I'm sure, had no trouble making friends. Most of us are fortunate enough to find several kids in class who have a lot in common with us. Football, Disney movies, Star Wars, Power Rangers, basketball, and other interests help us to go from strangers to best buddies in no time.

But there are kids in every school who aren't so fortunate. Some of those kids don't have friends because of a physical or mental disability. Some are alone because they're shy, or they've never learned to reach out and make friends. Some are alone because they're new; they didn't start school with everyone else, and no one bothered to connect to them. And some are alone because they've been rejected.

Friends are an important part of school. The more friends you have, the better the school year you will have. If you want to make this the best year ever, then I want to challenge you to be a friend to someone who needs it.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

Today's scripture tells the story of a man who had no friends. He was despised, rejected, made fun of, and ignored by everyone. Then one day, one special person made it a point to be his friend, and it changed his whole life.

READ Luke 19:1-10

MAIN POINT

If you've heard the old song, "Zacchaeus was a wee little man," you've only heard half the story. We know from the song that Zacchaeus was a short man - reason enough that some people might make fun of him - and that he climbed up in a tree to see Jesus. Luke's gospel tells us even more about this new friend of Jesus. He was a tax collector, one of the most despised and hated professions in Israel. Tax collectors cheated good people out of their money. They were rich, but they were dishonest. They had very few friends.

The people in the crowd that day had to be shocked when Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus. "Why would Jesus want to have dinner with HIM? Doesn't Jesus know who HE is? Doesn't he know what a bad person he is?"

What Jesus knew was that Zacchaeus was like all of us. He wanted a friend. He wanted to be loved. When Jesus showed that love to him, it changed Zacchaeus' life. All of us have the power to change lives too, when we take a chance and make friends with someone who needs a friend.

DRIVE IT HOME

I'm sure that's a scary thought for most of you kids. That's okay. It's scary for us adults as well. It takes courage to reach out to someone who is different. It takes courage to talk to someone no one else wants to talk to. Your current friends might find it odd. They may think you're crazy. But being a friend to the friendless is exactly what Jesus wants all of us to do.

Jesus said when we reach out to the poor, the lonely, or the downtrodden, we're not just reaching out to that person.

READ Matthew 25:40

This week, I challenge you to look around the cafeteria at lunch. Look for someone sitting by himself or herself. Look for someone who might be a bit different than you. Look for someone who needs a friend. Then ask God to give you an opening to talk to that kid. Maybe they will push you away. Maybe they'll invite you to sit down. Maybe you, like Jesus, will find a new friend in the one person no one else will talk to, someone who will help you make this the best year ever!

LARGE GROUP LESSON

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for loving us and for loving someone like Zacchaeus. Help us to be friends to the friendless so that they may know the love of Jesus.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*



BEST YEAR EVER

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

ICEBREAKER

What is something cool about your best friend?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Matthew 6:33

Look at the verses surrounding this passage, or read the whole chapter so you can hear this verse in context. What was happening? How do the verses before and after the memory verse help you understand its meaning?

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

Have the kids act out the story of Zacchaeus as you re-read it for them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Luke 19:1-10

Who was Zacchaeus?

Why didn't Zacchaeus have friends?

Why did Zacchaeus climb the sycamore tree?

Why did Jesus go to Zacchaeus' house?

Why does Jesus want us to befriend people who need friends?

SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Help us to see the kids in our school who need good friends, and give us the courage to introduce ourselves so we can be friends with them.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

ICEBREAKER

What is something cool about your best friend?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Matthew 6:33

Look at the verses surrounding this passage, or read the whole chapter so you can hear this verse in context. What was happening? How do the verses before and after the memory verse help you understand its meaning?

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

Have the kids create a skit about the story of Zacchaeus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Luke 19:1-10

Why did Zacchaeus not have any friends?

What do you think the people in the crowd thought when Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus?

Why do you think Zacchaeus had a change of heart?

Why is it hard to reach out and be friends with someone who is different?

What can we do to be a friend to the friendless this week?

SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Help us to see the kids in our school who need good friends, and give us the courage to introduce ourselves so we can be friends with them.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

True or False.

Zacchaeus was a wee little man.

TRUE

The only reason everyone hated Zacchaeus was because he was short.

FALSE

Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house.

TRUE

Zacchaeus wasn't changed at all by his encounter with Jesus.

FALSE

It's okay if we don't try to make friends with someone different because they don't need friends anyway.

FALSE

MAKE IT STICK

5 Simple Ways You Can Make This Lesson Stick With Your Kids

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: MAKE A NEW FRIEND



IN THE CAR:

Ask your child what they learned about this week on the drive home:

Today we talked about the importance of being a friend to the friendless. Just as Jesus reached out to Zacchaeus, he wants us to reach out to kids who need friends, whether they are loners, outcasts, or just a little different from us.



HANGING OUT:

Make this week's lesson real:

Look for opportunities to show kindness to others this week, whether they are neighbors or strangers. Talk with your kids about those moments, and ask them why it's important to be kind to others.



AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

- How do you think the people felt when they saw Jesus be friendly to Zacchaeus?
- Who are some of the "friendless" kids in your school, and why don't they have friends?
- What can you do to be a friend to those students?



AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

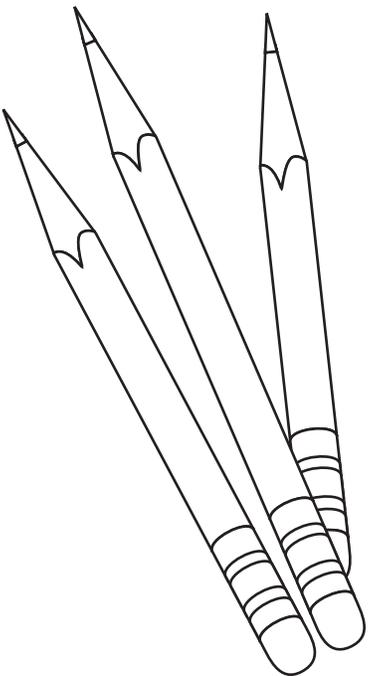
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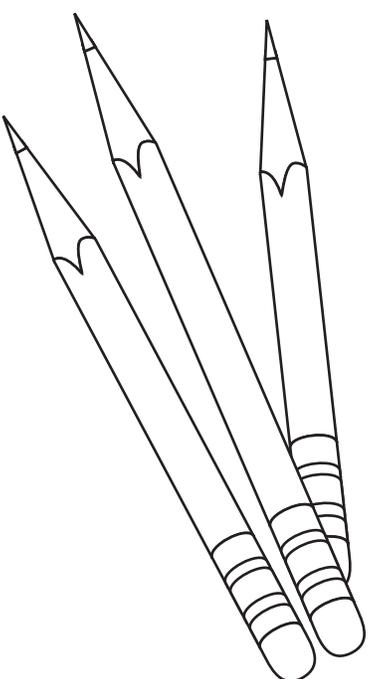
PARENT TIME:

What you need to know:

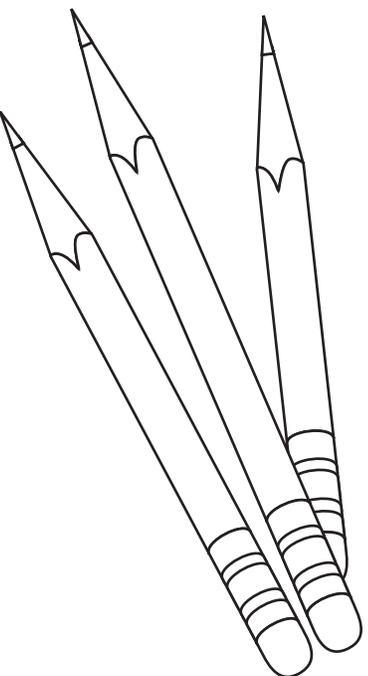
Is there a new person at work who needs a friend? Is there someone you know who needs someone to care? Set an example for your kids by following Christ's example and loving others this week.



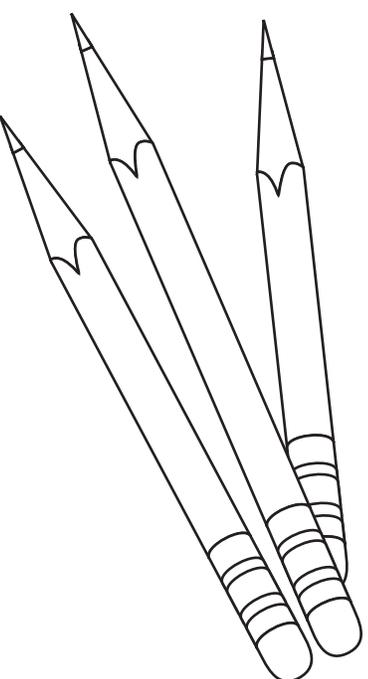
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CRAFT PROJECT

Supplies:

Brown and Green Construction Paper

Glue Sticks

Markers

Old, Kid Appropriate Magazines (*optional*)

Safety Scissors (*optional*)

Have the kids create a collage about the story of Zacchaeus. Have them cut and paste some brown and green construction paper on a page to be the tree, then have them draw Jesus and Zacchaeus into the picture. Or have them cut out people from magazines to stand in for Zacchaeus and Jesus.