



Unit 1: BFFs

Faith Focus: Jesus is our friend.

Friends love all the time. (Proverbs 17:17)

SESSION 3

GROW IN FAITH

Friends Notice—Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus was short, and this is likely the most well-known characteristic about him. But we also know that Zacchaeus was a tax collector. In those times, tax collectors were allowed to keep any money collected beyond the official tax demanded. As the story describes, Zacchaeus's short stature meant he needed to climb a tree to see. However, in Bible times it was considered undignified for a grown man to run and climb a tree. Additionally, a man of Zacchaeus's importance as a tax collector would never do these things. It's fair to say that Zacchaeus really went out on a limb.

Zacchaeus's almost childlike, curious action eventually led to Jesus visiting Zacchaeus's house. Jesus' visit led to Zacchaeus giving half of his possessions to the poor and paying back anyone that he had cheated. Jesus' choice to notice Zacchaeus, despite people's mistrust of him and his dishonest choices, made a bold statement. Jesus is a friend to everyone—even tax collectors.

- Engage in noticing activities.
- Explore measurements and growth.
- Practice being a good friend.

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

Noticing Zacchaeus (Puzzle)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

What Changed? (Game)

Find Zacchaeus (Game)

Nature Collage (Art/Science)

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

SUPPLIES

crayons

scissors

brown craft paper or brown construction paper

glue

markers

pencils

CEB Bible storybook

TV and DVD player or streaming device

sticky notes

tray

small items from around the room (pencils, blocks, toys, utensils, and so forth)

nature items (leaves, twigs, pebbles, flower petals, and so forth)

art paper

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, Activity Sheets, Activity Stickers

Prepare Ahead: Set up your area with the supplies and activity pages needed for today's session. Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15), Unit 1 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 2 & 23), and Unit 1 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14) to use later in the session.

- As children arrive, invite them to join you in a circle.
- Give each child a copy of the "Spring Sticker Page" (Activity Sheets—p. 29) and their own set of Activity Stickers. Have children place the tree sticker on the Session 3 space.

SAY: This month we will hear about how Jesus can be our friend.

ASK: How do you make friends with someone?

Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, crayons, scissors, brown craft paper or brown construction paper, glue, markers

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 1 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 2 & 23). Photocopy "Friendship Tree" (Leader Guide—p. 28) for each child. Use brown paper to make a bare tree that is large enough for the size of your group. Write "Jesus is our friend" somewhere on or near the tree.

- Give each child a copy of "Friendship Tree."

SAY: In our story today we will hear how Jesus paid attention to his friends. That's how he noticed when someone climbed up in a tree!

ASK: What do you notice about your friends? What do you think your friends notice about you? What is special about you?

- Give children time to share their thoughts aloud. Help the children write their names and what makes them special on the leaves on the page. Encourage the children to color the leaves and then cut them out.
- Have the children add their leaves to the tree as a group. Invite the children to notice characteristics of their friends as you work on the tree.

Noticing Zacchaeus

Supplies: Activity Sheets, crayons or pencils

Prepare Ahead: Tear out “Noticing Zacchaeus” (Session 3 Activity Sheet) for each child.

SAY: Sometimes it is easy to notice something. Sometimes it is challenging.

ASK: Is it easy or challenging to notice things with your eyes? with your ears? with your sense of smell?

SAY: Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, so he climbed up in a tree. Jesus noticed people all the time and so he saw Zacchaeus way up in the tree!

- Hand out the activity sheets and have the children find all the hidden images in the picture.
- On the back of the sheet let them notice differences to match the trees.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: CEB Bible storybook

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) from your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

ASK: How do you think Zacchaeus felt when he climbed in the tree? How do you think Jesus felt when he noticed Zacchaeus?

Big Faith Video

Supplies: Big Faith DVD, TV, DVD player or streaming device

- Watch the Session 3 video on the Big Faith DVD or via your Amplify Media subscription.
- Share the questions on the screen with the children. You may also choose to add your own questions. Give children time to share their responses and ideas.

ASK: What was your favorite part of the video?

Faith Response

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, sticky notes, pencils, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 1 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14) and Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) if you haven't already.

- Invite children to wonder about the images on the posters.
- Encourage children to say the Bible verse with you: “Friends love all the time” (Proverbs 17:17).

SAY: Friends notice what is going on in each other’s lives. That’s one way we show we care about others. We can follow Jesus’ example of noticing by getting to know our friends and observing them and listening to them.

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.

ASK: What do you notice about our room today?

- As the children share, invite them to each draw something they notice in the room on a sticky note and add it to the poster.

FUN WITH FAITH

What Changed?

Supplies: *tray, small items from around the room (pencils, blocks, toys, utensils, and so forth)*

Prepare Ahead: *Gather small items and place them on a tray.*

SAY: Jesus noticed Zacchaeus. We can notice things too!

ASK: What do you notice in our room today?

- Gather the children into a circle. Bring the tray of items into the circle and let the kids look for thirty seconds. Then take the tray away where they can’t see it and take a few items off the tray.
- Bring the changed tray back to the group and let them look for one minute. Ask them what is missing from the tray.
- Change the tray a few more times, adding or taking away things and challenging the group to notice.

ASK: Was it easy or challenging to notice the changes to the items on the tray?

Find Zacchaeus

Prepare Ahead: *Print several copies of the picture of Zacchaeus (Leader Guide—p. 89). Before class, hide the pictures around the room. Keep one unhidden for an example.*

SAY: Our Bible story tells us that Zacchaeus climbed up in a tree so he could see Jesus. It was kind of like Zacchaeus was hiding in the tree. Jesus had to observe his surroundings to be able to see Zacchaeus.

- Invite the children to look around the room to see if they can find all of the copies of the Zacchaeus picture. If they find them easily, invite some children to hide the pictures and let the other children try to find them.

ASK: If you had to hide Zacchaeus in our church, where would you hide him?

Nature Collage

Supplies: *nature items collected around your area, art paper, glue*

Prepare Ahead: *Collect nature items (such as leaves, twigs, pebbles and flower petals) ahead of time.*

- Take the class outside. Have children find some nature items they'd like to use for art.
- When you return inside, invite children to glue their nature items to a piece of art paper or create a sculpture.

ASK: What items did you find outside that came from a tree?

SAY: The tree in our Bible story played an important role in helping Zacchaeus see Jesus—and helping Jesus see Zacchaeus! We can appreciate the trees around us and remember how the tree helped in our story!

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: *All-Ages Class Pack*

Prepare Ahead: *Display the Spring Big Faith Idea Poster (Class Pack—pp. 4 & 21). Photocopy the Unit 1 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 91–92) as needed.*

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

ASK: How does noticing our friends show God's love?

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus noticed Zacchaeus up in the tree. Zacchaeus was so eager to be Jesus' friend that Jesus wanted to be Zacchaeus's friend too!

- Invite the children to sit in a circle. Have them go around the circle, saying the words "Jesus is our friend" to the person next to them. Make sure everyone has a turn.
- Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: Repeat after me: "God, thank you for noticing when we are happy, sad, scared, angry, joyful, and so much more. Thank you for sending Jesus to remind us how we can notice each other and be friends with each other. Amen."

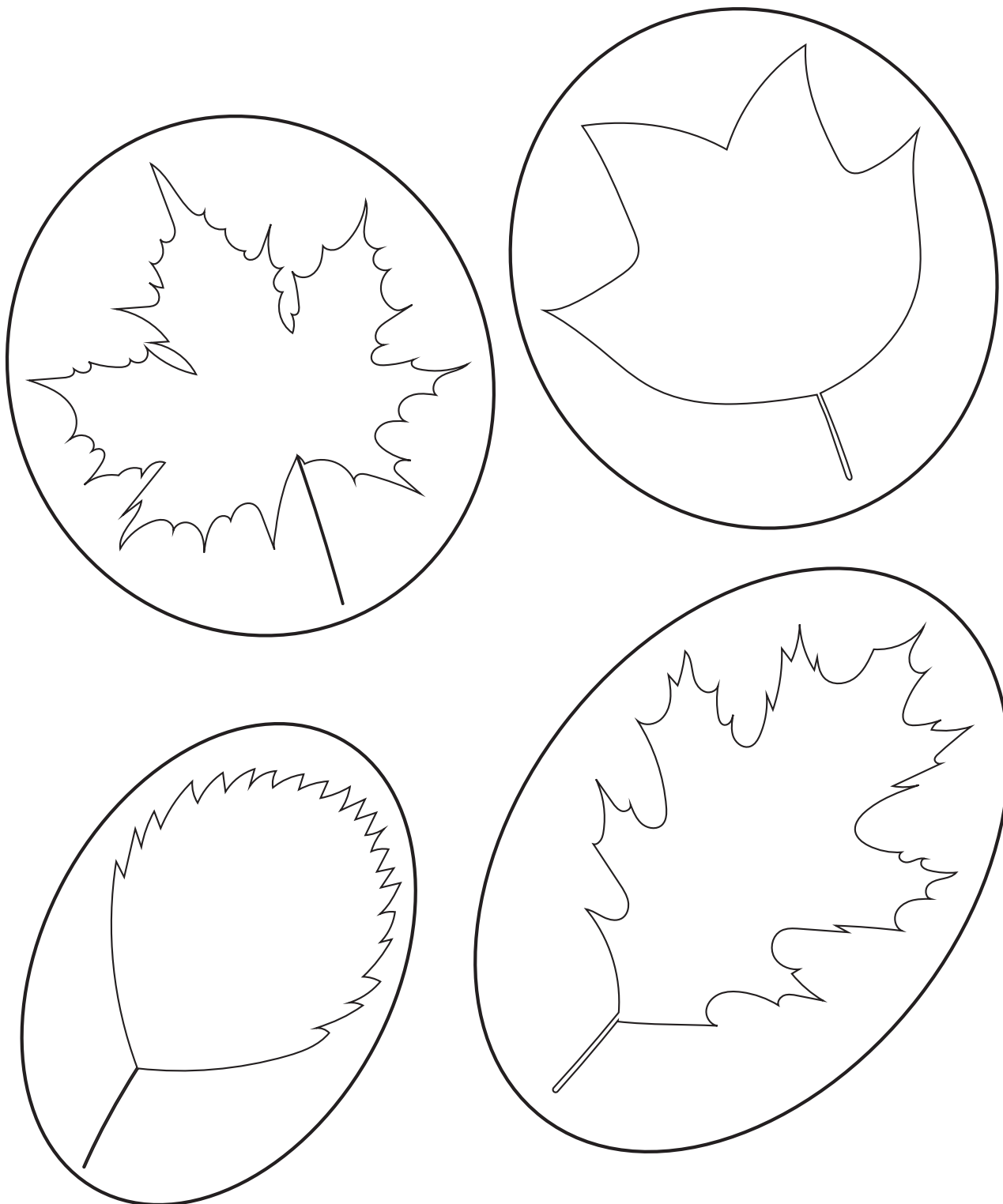
- Send the Unit 1 Family Faith Letter and activity home with each child who has not yet received them.
- Also send home any activities or items made during today's session.

REPRODUCIBLE

SESSION 3

Friendship Tree

Write your name and what makes you special in the center of each leaf. Color the leaves and add them to your group's tree.



Art: Adobe Stock

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