



Super Duper Sticker Party

Jesus and Zacchaeus

BIG IDEA: Jesus wants to be my forever friend.

BIBLE BASIS: Luke 19:1–10

KEY VERSE: “There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”
Proverbs 18:24 (NirV)

SCHEDULE

PLAY TIME
ACTIVITIES

10:30-11:00

LARGE GROUP
LESSON

11:00-11:30

SMALL GROUP
ACTIVITIES

11:30-12:00

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

The story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 shows Jesus loving someone that society both literally and figuratively looked down on. As I read through the story of Zacchaeus, I think about what that might be like for us — to love people regardless of who they are or what they do. It actually reminds me of my parents, who have provided the best example of living out this kind of active love that I have ever seen.

For my mom and dad, there wasn't much of a choice in this matter, since their respective families weren't exactly the most stable groups. Every year, I'd meet a slightly different group of people at Christmas, due to divorce, jail, death, remarriage, and the like. It got hard to track all the step-whatevers and half-whoever, so those terms just got dropped. We had aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Those were all the terms we needed, and we just had to learn how to love them, no matter how little we knew about them or how differently we were choosing to live our lives.

Because of this, my parents held a pretty loose definition of family. If you needed a safe place to go, you could be part of their family. If you didn't have a family of your own, you could be a part of their family. Even if your own family was great, you could still be a part of their family. They proved it by maintaining a family tree of portraits on a big wall in their house. I've never known anyone to leave the wall. But every so often, a new person is added. There's a picture of Kamal, a man from Sri Lanka who happened to work with my dad for a few months. He didn't have anywhere to go over the holidays, so he became a part of the family. He has kids of his own now, and they're all up on the wall too, right next to my cousins. There have also been several babies — all of them made their way up there, next to their respective parents. Sometimes, those parents didn't stick around, but the pictures always do. They're still a part of the family.

I like to imagine that God does something like this too. Maybe in God's throne room, there's a huge wall of portraits. On that wall is every single human that has ever lived. He loves them all so much. The pictures all go up there at some point, and they never come down. Of course, some of those people make bad choices and turn from God, but He doesn't stop loving them. In fact, He sends you and me to cross their paths, hoping that we will give a glimpse of His love and draw them back toward home. That image makes it a little easier for me to not look down on people, like Zacchaeus, who can be hard to love.

Patrick Thompson
GO! Contributor

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LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Establishing Rules and Consequences for Large Group

“Houston...we have a problem!” If you’ve been teaching kids for any length of time, you’ve probably wanted to say something like this. Unfortunately, most of us are flying solo and don’t have a ground control to call into. Kids are great and well-behaved most of the time, but problems still occur. Here are some things you can do to help prevent or address problems:

Establish rules. If you haven’t already, work with your leaders to come up with a short list of rules for the room. GO! gives you Topher the Gopher’s Three Story Time Rules to help you with that. The three rules are: Be Kind (listen quietly and treat others with respect), Be Safe (keep your hands to yourself and follow instructions carefully), and Have Fun.

Communicate the rules to your kids. Kids can’t abide by your expectations if they don’t know what they are. For preschool kids, it’s helpful to go over the rules weekly.

Have consequences. What good are rules if there aren’t any consequences for breaking them? An example of consequences might be something like “three strikes.” Strike one is a warning. Strike two is a time-out on the wall. Strike three involves calling the parents out of service to pick up their kid.

Don’t be afraid to enforce the rules. Inevitably, there will be kids who test the boundaries. When you enforce the rules, most kids will see that you mean business and quickly comply.

Call out the best in kids. Whenever you apply consequences to a kid, it’s a good idea to have a follow-up conversation with them. Make sure they understand what behavior led to their consequences. Be sure to do it with grace, though. Always end by calling out the best in that kid. Tell them you know they can do better and that you look forward to seeing them again.

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UNIT DESCRIPTION

A sticker for you, a sticker for me, what's more fun than a sticker party! During the "Super Duper Sticker Party," each preschooler gets their own set of stickers to stick to their Bible story picture. The story unfolds one sticker at a time to reveal the Bible's best friendships. Through it all, the preschoolers will discover the beauty of a friend who sticks closer than a brother and the forever friendship we can have when we stick with Jesus.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Print one Bible story drawing for each child. (See Resource Folder.) Place the drawings in the storytelling area and give them to the children at the appropriate time.
- Print one set of four Bible story stickers for each child. (See Resource Folder.) Print them on a sheet of 2-inch blank round labels, then cut each sheet into three strips containing four unique Bible story stickers.
- In the storytelling area, place a clear glass container filled halfway with water. Next to the container, place a bottle of dark food coloring.
- Place a half cup of bleach in a safe place that is out of reach of the children. Use caution — bleach is harmful if touched or swallowed. When indicated in the lesson, retrieve the bleach and pour it into the water/food coloring mixture. When the lesson is over, remove the mixture from the reach of children.
- **Note:** If you use too much food coloring or not enough bleach, the water may not turn clear. Practice ahead of time to get the ratio right.
- Create a "Super Duper Bible Box" and place your storytelling Bible inside. This box will be used every week. See the Resource Folder for details on how to make the "Super Duper Bible Box."
- If using the non-video options for the Topher segments of the lesson, print the Topher's Story Time Rules signs and Topher's Big Idea signs on 8½" x 11" cardstock paper and place in the story time area. See "Getting Started" in the Resource Folder for the printable signs and for more instructions on how to perform the non-video options.
- **Note:** Any media repeated throughout the unit, such as the Topher videos and the title slide, is located in the Lesson 1 Resource Folder only.

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★ LARGE GROUP LESSON

WELCOME AND MUSIC

Music: Play one or two upbeat worship songs

BIG IDEA AND BIBLE VERSE

Large Group Leader: Hello, everybody — we are going to have so much fun today. That's because we're going to have a sticker party. It's not an itty-bitty sticker party, it's a SUPER DUPER sticker party! During today's super duper sticker party, we're going to hear a true story from the Bible.

Say: Today's true Bible story is going to teach us that **Jesus wants to be my forever friend.** That's our Big Idea for the day. Let's say it together. *(Repeat Big Idea with children.)* **Jesus wants to be my forever friend.** It's true! **Jesus wants to be my forever friend.** In fact, that's what our memory verse for today tells us. Let me teach it to you.

*“There is a friend (clasp hands together)
who sticks closer (hug yourself)
than a brother (high five someone next to you).”
Proverbs 18:24 (extend hands like you're holding a book).*

Say: Let's do that together. *(Repeat memory verse with children two or three times.)*

Music: 2 worship songs – no worship after the lesson

STORY TIME RULES

Say: Wow — nice job! I think you kids are ready for the Bible story. Before we get started, though, I think we should go over our three story time rules.

Video: Play “Topher the Gopher Story Time Rules” video

(Note: Play the “Topher the Gopher Story Time Rules” video or use the Story Time Rules script found in the Resource Folder.)

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SUPER DUPER STICKER PARTY INTRO

Say: Do you know what I need right now? I need someone to come up here and give me a five. I'll pick someone who is seated quietly. *(Choose a child and invite them to the storytelling area.)* Give me a low five. *(Hold hand down low.)* Now give me a regular five. *(Hold hand a little higher.)* Now give me a high five. *(Hold hand just above child's head.)* Now give me a SUPER DUPER high five. *(Hold hand high up, out of reach.)* Oh no — you missed! Try it again. *(Child attempts again.)* Oh no — you missed again! I think I know what the problem is — you're too little! But thanks for trying! *(Give child one more regular five and have them take a seat.)*

Say: "You're too little!" Has anyone ever said that to you before? *(Children respond.)* In today's true Bible story, there's a man who was too little for a lot of things, but he learned that there's one thing you're never too little for. You're never too little to be friends with Jesus.

Say: If you're ready to hear that story, clap your hands three times. *(Children clap hands.)* Great! First, let's get our Bible out of the Super Duper Bible Box. *(Move to the Super Duper Bible Box.)* I need your help getting the Bible out, though. We need to say our special Bible words together. Repeat these special words after me: It's true, it's true, the Bible is true!

Slide: Show the "Jesus and Zacchaeus" slide

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BIG BIBLE STORY — JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

(Note: Give each child one strip of Bible story stickers and a Bible story drawing. The Bible story drawing is missing some pictures. When placed on the drawing, the stickers will fill in the missing pictures.)

Say: Are you ready for our super duper sticker party? (*Children respond.*) Great! Hold onto your stickers until I tell you what to do with them.

Say: In the Bible, in the Book of Luke, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was VERY short. Oh, no — it looks like Zacchaeus is missing from our picture. Let's put the first sticker on the #1. (*Children place sticker.*) Zacchaeus tried to see Jesus as He was walking through town, but he was too little to see over the crowd of people. No matter how hard he tried, (*stand on your tippy toes*) no matter how high he tippy-toed, he couldn't see Jesus.

Say: Zacchaeus wasn't ready to give up, though. He looked all around for a way to get above the crowd of people. Just then, he saw a sycamore tree. Oh, no — it looks like part of the tree is missing from our picture. Let's put the second sticker on the #2. (*Children place sticker.*) Zacchaeus climbed and climbed until he was way up high in the sycamore tree.

Say: As Zacchaeus held tight to the branches of the tree, Jesus walked by. Oh, no — it looks like Jesus is missing from our picture. Let's put the third sticker on the #3. (*Children place sticker.*) When Jesus reached the sycamore tree, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down from that tree. I want to stay with you at your house."

Say: When the people in the crowd heard that Jesus wanted to stay with Zacchaeus, they weren't very happy. Oh, no — some of the people are missing from our picture. Let's put the last sticker on the #4. (*Children place sticker.*) The angry people whispered things like, (*whisper loudly in a judgmental voice*) "Zacchaeus is a tax collector. He steals money from people," and "Why would Jesus want to stay with a bad guy like Zacchaeus?"

Say: Suddenly, Zacchaeus felt bad for the things he had done. He said to Jesus, "If I have stolen money from anybody, I will pay it all back. In fact, I'll give them even *more* money than I took." Jesus was so happy with Zacchaeus. He told Zacchaeus, "Today you have become my forever friend! I have come to save people like *you* from the bad things they've done."

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CLOSING

(Encourage the children to stand up. Lead them in a worship song of your choice. Following the song, use the rhyme from earlier to help the children sit down again.)

Say: Even though Zacchaeus had done bad things, Jesus still wanted to be friends with him. Jesus wanted to be forever friends with Zacchaeus, and He wants to be forever friends with us too!

Say: We're all kind of like Zacchaeus — we all do bad things sometimes. Those bad things are called "sin." Can you say "sin" with me? *(Repeat with children.)* What are some of the sins that little kids do? *(Take three to five answers. For each answer, add a drop of dark food coloring to the glass container of water. When finished, stir until dark.)*

Say: This is kind of what our heart looks like with sin in it. Sin is dark and icky. And worst of all, sin is what keeps us from living with Jesus in heaven. But there's good news. When Jesus died on the cross and came back to life, He took our sins away. *(Retrieve bleach from a safe place, then carefully add it to the water.)* Now when Jesus looks at our heart, He doesn't see all the dark and icky sin. Instead, He sees this. *(Stir the mixture until clear again. After the lesson, remove the mixture from the reach of children.)*

(Note: If you use too much food coloring or not enough bleach, the water may not turn clear. Practice ahead of time to get the ratio right.)

Say: If you love and follow Jesus, your heart can look like this water — all clean and clear of sin. Best of all, someday when you die, you'll get to live with Jesus in Heaven. Not just for a little while, but forever! That's because **Jesus wants to be your forever friend.**

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TOPHER'S BIG IDEA

Say: Hey — that's our Big Idea for today! I think we should tell it to our parents when we see them. Maybe we should practice first. (*Appear to be thinking.*) Hmm...who could we practice telling? I know! We could tell our friend, Topher the Gopher. Let's see if we can find him.

(Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 1" or, for a non-video option, print out the "Topher's Big Idea Cards" ahead of time and hold up card #1. See the "Topher's Big Idea" document in the Resource Folder for more suggestions on how to perform the non-video option.)

Video: Play "Topher's Big Idea Video"

(Whisper.) Uh-oh. It looks like Topher is asleep. I think we should wake him up. When he wakes up, we can all tell him that **Jesus wants to be my forever friend**. On the count of three, let's all yell, "Topher the Gopher, wake up, wake up!" (*Count to three and yell with kids. Then play "Topher's Big Idea Video 2" or hold up card #2.*)

Topher: Hey, what's the Big Idea?

Children and Large Group Leader: **Jesus wants to be my forever friend.** (*Repeat the Big Idea several times. When finished, play "Topher's Big Idea Video 3" or hold up card #3.*)

Topher: Wow! That is a Big Idea! Thanks for telling me! Goodbye, kids. (*Encourage kids to wave goodbye to Topher as he disappears back into his hole.*)

Large Group Leader: Let's say a prayer together and thank Jesus for taking away our sins. (*Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.*)

**Dear Jesus,
Thank You for dying on the cross
And taking away my sins.
I want to be Your forever friend
And live with You in Heaven.
Amen.**