

Chairs
A small bell
A teen or adult volunteer
A Louisiana map
A paper grocery bag for each child
Green construction paper
A TV monitor/computer

1. Opening Activity

Have enough chairs for each child. Arrange the chairs in two lines with the chairs arranged so each chair faces another chair. Distance the chair pairs far enough from each other so that the children will be able to hear their partner well.

Explain the activity this way. Say, "I'm going to ask a question and I want you each to take turns answering it. When I ring the bell, change to another seat so that you talk to someone else."

Use these questions for the activity:

- What is the most exciting trip you've ever taken?
- What is the best gift you've ever been given?
- What's your favorite thing about living in Louisiana?
- What do you think a missionary does?
- If you could travel anywhere to tell someone about Jesus, where would you go?

Note: You may not need to use all these questions. The most important ones are the ones at the end.

2. Read Luke 19:2 (CSB)

There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd, since he was a short man. So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus, since he was about to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house."

So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. All who saw it began to complain, "He's gone to stay with a sinful man."

But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much."

"Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus told him, "because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

3. Story Telling

Have the teen/adult volunteer read or act out the following monologue of Zacchaeus:

It's true, you know, I am short. But there's something worse than being short, and that's being a short tax collector. Having money often makes you want more money! You reach a certain status of wealth; you buy things, lots of things; and it's just not enough. You want more and more. There's just no end to it. Some of you know what I mean. I can see it in your eyes. Some of you scrape and save for that special thing that caught your eye. You finally buy it, and then you feel empty. It's not enough. No matter how much money I collected, I wanted more. Money was power! The more I had, the more power I felt! Having power is like having money, you want more! I didn't think anything in the world could be as powerful as my money.

But I was wrong. I'd heard about Jesus from a six-year-old kid in the street. He looked down at me . . . Don't laugh! He looked down at me and said that the Miracle Worker was coming.

"The Miracle Worker?" I asked.

"Yes, Jesus!" The kid exclaimed. I didn't know much about Jesus, but the title "Miracle Worker" caught my attention, especially when it came from a kid. I'd never seen a miracle.

I climbed that tree expecting a magician, but I saw something very different. He was just a man, an ordinary man. I know this sounds strange; but when I saw Him, I saw love in His eyes. My heart stirred within me. As He moved through the crowd, His look of joy and compassion flooded my lonely life. I may sound odd, I know, but I know of no other way to describe how I felt. I felt like I was the loneliest man alive, and this Man was so different.

He mentioned something about staying at my house. I just fell out of that tree! Before I had the chance to change my mind, I blurted out: "Lord, I give half of my possessions to

the poor; and to those I have cheated, I will repay four times!"

I thought to myself, "Did I just say what I think I said?" Before I knew it, I said it again! I rushed to my house, opened up my savings, and well, you know the rest of the story. Those were the happiest moments I had ever known up to that time. I gave and gave and gave.

Do you understand the happiness of giving to the Lord? He's still here. He still wants to bless you with a happiness that's hard to explain. He can break the chains of selfishness and loneliness if you are willing. God loves someone who happily gives to others!

Ask: Why do you think Zacchaeus was so happy?

4. Creative Option

Divide the group into smaller teams as ask each team to create a pantomime of the Zacchaeus and Jesus story.

5. Discussion

Why do you think it's so important to give?

Explain that every time we give to God through our offerings, including the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering, we get a chance to experience the happiness of others finding out about Jesus and how much He loves them.

6. Missions story:

Using a map of Louisiana, show the children where Reserve, Louisiana is located.

Read (or in your own words) share the story of Robert and Madison Roussel:

Robert and Madison grew up in the town where they live now – Reserve, Louisiana. He had no idea that one day he would pastor the First Baptist Church there. They've had many challenges, but one of the biggest challenges happened whenever Hurricane Ida came and destroyed so much of the town. Everyone in the town was very sad because of all they had lost. Robert knew this was a time to help people. He began to work with other leaders to rebuild homes and help families. They organized home Bible studies because the church had lots of damage from the hurricane. One thing that was a big help to Robert and First Baptist Church was the Disaster Relief teams that came to Reserve. Robert didn't know the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering helped the Disaster Relief volunteers help them. As we give, we help provide for the needs when other problems like hurricanes and floods come to Louisiana.

7. Video

Choose a video story from the GBO website.

Ask the group who were some of the heroes in the video. Remind them that because of people all over Louisiana giving through the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering, people are helped and people get to find out about Jesus.

8. Craft

Create a sycamore tree with a brown paper bag. Draw the roots and trunk of the tree beforehand and then cut out and glue leaves using green construction paper. Feel free to add other elements to this craft idea, like creating a background by gluing the trees onto a cardboard square.

During the craft activity, remind them of the story Zacchaeus. Ask them to imagine the story and the view he had from the tree.

