

Student Mission Study
Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering

Items needed:
Monopoly money
Large Map or outline of Louisiana
Post-it notes
Pens
Bibles

1. Discussion Starter

As the students enter, give each student a random amount of Monopoly money.

When you're ready to begin the session, ask the students to share how much money they have.

If this was real money, what would you do with it?

If you had to give the money away, where do you think Jesus would want you to spend it?

If you had this amount of money, how would you make it eternally valuable?

Divide the students into subgroups. Ask them to total up their money and create a project that would help the state of Louisiana know Jesus better. After a few minutes invite them to share their ideas.

Say: When we have money, even if we have the intention to help, there is a limited number of things that we could do. But if we work together our options increase and the influence multiplies.

2. Read Luke 19:2 (CSB)

There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.

3. Explain:

Tax collectors were hated by the communities. They were often considered shady and unjust. Tax collectors were treated as the lowest class of sinners. Socially, they were rejected and many thought of them as the worst of traitors. Most people thought they had left the faith. Tax collectors were the villains.

Given the status of tax collectors in Jewish society, it is remarkable that Jesus reached out to tax collectors like Zacchaeus.

4. Ask:

Who comes to mind that might be viewed as modern-day tax collectors?

What negative impact can wealth have on people today?

5. Read Luke 19:3-10 (CSB)

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."

6. Discuss:

How did Jesus' kindness change Zacchaeus?

What do you think the people in the town thought?

What emotions would they have? (Examples: joy, skepticism, shock, etc....)

Explain that there are many types of outcasts. Some are outcasts because they are poor or because of their opinions or past decisions. Zacchaeus was rich, but he was still rejected and an outcast.

Ask: Who are some of the people in our world that are outcasts like Zacchaeus?

All over Louisiana there are people who could be considered "Zacchaeus people". They are outcasts because of their past. Dustin Turner, the pastor of Vintage Church, provided a peek into one day at their ministry: *"In one Saturday, I was able to pray with someone who had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, someone whose husband was addicted to Meth, someone who had had COVID pneumonia for 8 months, and more."*

STUDENTS

Ask:

How would Jesus want us to respond to the needs of people with different addictions, problems, and hurts?

Do you think He would reject someone because of their past?

Do you think there is hope for those who have made a mess of their lives?

Say: Jesus came for all people, and He calls us to go out into our communities to reach all people.

7. Video:

Choose a video from the GBO website to share.

8. Read

The following poem is a parable of a church that focused on their building more than the people in their community and world.

Paint on the Wall

by Matt Tullos

There once was a church upon a hill
where everything was fine until
the paint inside was getting old
and peeling in some spots, I'm told.
The pastor called a business meeting.
And after the preliminary meeting,
The deacons cried, "Come one! Come all!
What color should we paint each wall?"
They gathered in the sanctuary,
each determined and contrary.
Sister Gail said, "What do you think
about a very chartreuse pink?"
Brother Dave said to the crowd,
"Isn't that a bit too loud?
I prefer a subtle blue.
It makes the walls look clean and new."
Six women rebuked, "We wanted gold!"
It seems much warmer. Blue's too cold!"
A man in the back began to bellow,
"Yellow! Yellow! Yellow! Yellow!"

The pastor said, "I'm here more than all of you.
I agree with Dave. The walls should be blue."
From that point on their voices grew stronger.
Each emotional plea became longer and longer.
Then a voice of strong and stern love
silenced the church as it spoke from above.
"You wonder why you can't hear My call
when your greatest struggle is paint on the wall.
Paint your church the pale color of skin,
for you let no other races come in.
Paint your church a wealthy green,
for you ignore starvation that you've seen.
Paint it white and clean as uncalloused feet,
for you refuse to share My joy in the street.
I agree that your walls could be painted in blue,
for your hearts so cold are given to few.
You give many renditions of church as a game,
but you fail to give water in My Holy Name.
You pray using eloquent thees and thous,
and yet you forget about the heres and nows.
You struggle to be an earthly saint,
but My love must not be covered in paint.

9. Define Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering

Many churches, including ours, give to international missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas offering and to North American missions through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. The Georgia Barnett Louisiana Missions Offering goes to spread the gospel across Louisiana through missions and ministries like disaster relief, church planting, multi-media evangelism, and more.

10. Create a prayer wall

Place a large map or outline of Louisiana on the wall. Give each student several sticky notes, a printed copy of the prayer guide, and a pen. Ask them to write short prayers for a person, town, or ministry from the prayer guide. They may also choose to pray for a town (not theirs) that they are somehow connected to through relatives, visits, or events they have attended (like a field trip or concert).

Invite students to use their phones to search other churches in the region they chose and write short prayers for them as well.

11. Wrap-up

Read the GBO Theme Scripture

Jesus replied, "We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people. This is why I have come." Mark 1:38 (CEV)

Ask: What is the good news that Jesus is talking about in this verse?

Explain the plan of salvation in your own words. Mention we cannot only give; Jesus has also called us to share the good news that He saves.

12. Pray: Ask a student or another leader to conclude the time in prayer.

