

## ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS CAN BRING ABOUT A CHANGE OF HEART

### Objective

The children find out about the effect of an encounter with Jesus.

### Contents

- Jesus visits Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10).
- Zacchaeus changes.
- We want to change in order to please the Lord.



## Lesson Plan

### Lead-In

#### Workbook, Exercise 1

The children look at the picture entitled “At a Tax-Collection Post” and describe it.

Afterwards allocate roles and have them read the text. Explain that the story takes place at the time of Jesus.

### Implementation

#### Discussion

The children comment on the publican’s behaviour.

The publican is

- dishonest,
- greedy,
- deceitful,
- etc.

#### Teacher’s Presentation

At the time of Jesus, publicans were a type of tax and customs official for the Roman state who collected taxes and duties from the population of Palestine. They were, therefore, regarded as allies of the occupying Roman forces.

Many Jews detested the Roman rule. Radical groups even considered it a sin to pay taxes and duties to foreign rulers.

Not only at the borders and in the harbours, but also in the interior (e.g., at the city gates of Jerusalem or Jericho), the publicans levied taxes and duties. For this tax-collection posts were set up.

Many publicans made a lot of money by demanding much higher taxes and duties than they had to pass on to the Romans. In addition, the publicans constantly defiled themselves according to Mosaic Law because they associated with the Gentiles. For this reason, the Jews regarded the publicans as sinners and crooks, and despised them.

The name of one publican, about whom the Bible reports, was Zacchaeus. He was the chief among the publicans in the city of Jericho. His responsibilities included supervising other tax and customs officials.



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### Workbook, Exercise 2

#### Discussion

The children look at pictures 1 to 3 and read the accompanying texts.

Afterwards the children summarize the contents of the story.

- Jesus comes to Jericho and sees Zacchaeus, the publican, there.
- Zacchaeus, who was of small stature, sits in a tree to be able to see Jesus.
- Jesus calls him by name and asks him to come down from the tree because he wants to come to his home.
- The people grumble because Jesus is going into the house of a man who is a great sinner in their eyes.

#### Statement Prompt

The encounter with the Lord Jesus has a great effect on Zacchaeus.

#### Discussion

The children list what Zacchaeus resolves to do.

- He wants to give half of his fortune to the poor.
- To everyone whom he cheated, he wants to give back fourfold what he took from them.

Emphasize that these intentions are an indication that Zacchaeus had recognized his previous behaviour as having been wrong.

The children read how the Lord Jesus assesses what went on in Zacchaeus in

#### Bible

Luke 19:9:  
*"This day is salvation come to this house."*

### Workbook, Exercise 2

#### Statement Prompt

They record these words under the fourth picture in the workbook.

We, too, have encounters with the Lord Jesus.

A child reads

#### Bible

Matthew 18:20:  
*"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*



## Discussion

We encounter the Lord Jesus

- through his word in the divine service, and
- during a family visit by a servant of God.

Both cause us to know ourselves better and have the desire to change in order to please the Lord.

We therefore experience something similar to what Zacchaeus experienced, but with one significant difference: At the time of the encounter with Zacchaeus the Lord Jesus had not yet brought his sacrifice. Through the encounter with Jesus Christ today we are able to take advantage of salvation to a far greater extent than was possible for Zacchaeus.

## Statement Prompt

You can surely explain this!

- Our sins are being forgiven.
- In addition, we receive the strength to overcome evil through the Holy Communion.

The children consider what behavioural changes encounters with Jesus Christ should cause within us.

Afterwards bring their examples together.

We are no longer

- dishonest,
- pretentious,
- mean,
- jealous,
- self-opinionated,
- disobedient,
- etc.

Encourage the children to translate their suggestions into action.

