

Today's Suggested Schedule—February 2026, Week 3

Bible Story: Zacchaeus • *Luke 19:1-10*

Bottom Line: The love of Jesus can change things for the better.

Monthly Memory Verse: *"I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you."* • John 13:34 NIRV

Supplies NOT Included in the Activity Bags

Bible Story Review: Like It or Not

- Floor tape

Application Activity: Change for the Better Hanger

- Coloring supplies

Memory Verse Activity: Voice the Verse

- Bible marked at John 13:34

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

- Jar from previous week
- Leftover candy heart from previous week

Bible Story Summary

In Week 3, Jesus singles out Zacchaeus, a tax collector who has scrambled up a tree for a better view. Instead of scolding Zacchaeus for stealing from his neighbors, Jesus invites himself over to the tax collector's house for a party. Profoundly changed by Jesus' love and acceptance, Zacchaeus offers to pay back anyone he has cheated—four times as much! [BOTTOM LINE] The love of Jesus can change things for the better.

Prayer

Thank God that His love is powerful enough to change us from the inside out. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time Jesus' love made you want to be a better, kinder person. Ask God to help the kids experience Jesus' love so much that it makes them want to be kind, to share, and to say sorry when they mess up. Pray they would see that Jesus loves them no matter what, even when they mess up.

1. Bible Story Review- Like It or Not

What You Need:

- Floor tape

What You Do:

- Place a line of tape down the center of the room or your Small Group rug.
- Instruct all of the kids to stand on the line.
- Explain that one side of the line is the “Like” side and the other is the “Don’t Like” side.
- Start by calling out some fun things and have them jump to the side that matches their opinion.
 - “Pineapple on pizza!”
 - “Doing homework!”
 - “Touching slime!”
 - “Building with LEGO®!”
- After a few fun ones, switch to reviewing the Bible Story. Say a statement about the Bible Story. If it happened in the story, instruct the kids to go to the “like” side. If it didn’t happen, direct the kids to go to the “don’t like” side.
 - “Zacchaeus was a very tall man.” (*“Don’t like” side*)
 - “Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus.” (*“Like” side*)
 - “Jesus was angry with Zacchaeus.” (*“Don’t like” side*)
 - “Jesus went to Zacchaeus’s house for dinner.” (*“Like” side*)
 - “Zacchaeus decided to give back the money he had stolen.” (*“Like” side*)

What You Say:

“You know this story so well! People did not like Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector who cheated his neighbors. Since Zacchaeus was not very tall, he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree just to get a glimpse of Jesus. But Jesus looked up, called him by name, and said, *‘I must stay at your house today’ (Luke 19:5 NIV)*. Jesus showed him love no matter what he had done, and that made all the difference. It’s true that **[Bottom Line] the love of Jesus can change things for the better.**”

2. Application Activity- Change for the Better Hanger



What You Need:

- “Change for the Better Hanger” Activity Page
- Coloring supplies

What You Do:

- Give each kid a “Change for the Better Hanger” Activity Page.
- Let them decorate it with the coloring supplies.
- As they color, talk about how Zacchaeus’s life was changed. Ask: “How can you show Jesus’ love to others when you are at home or on the go with your family?”
- Read the verse on the hanger together.

What You Say:

“These look so great! You can hang this on a door to help everyone remember to share the love of Jesus. Zacchaeus’s life was changed so much by Jesus’ love that he wanted to make things right. He promised to give half of what he owned to the poor and to pay back four times the amount to anyone he had cheated! He learned that **[Bottom Line] the love of Jesus can change things for the better.**”

3. Memory Verse Activity- Voice the Verse

What You Need:

- Bibles marked at John 13:34

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to form groups of 2-3.
- Give every group a Bible and direct them to look up John 13:34 using the Bible Navigation Tips.

Finding verses with kindergartners: Guide children to open their Bibles to the marked page. Point to the book name at the top of the page as you say it aloud. Then, guide children to find the big number on the page—this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look under the big number for the little number; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read it aloud. Then, lead everyone to say the verse together.

Finding verses with 1st graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list. You can help by pointing out the first few letters of the book's name. When the kids find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page. When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the right chapter. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter

- Repeat the verse aloud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Tell the kids you're going to practice the Memory Verse in lots of fun ways.
- Read the verse together in a normal voice first: *"I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you."* John 13:34
- Then, challenge the kids to say the verse in different voices.
 - "Now, let's sing it like opera singers!" (Use big, booming voices.)
 - "Now, let's shout it like a coach!" (Cup hands around mouth and shout.)
 - "Now, let's say it like robots!" (Use a monotone, choppy voice.)
 - "Now, let's whisper it like it's a secret!"
- Let kids suggest other silly voices to try and try saying the verse in them!

What You Say:

"That was so fun! No matter how we say it, the message is the same: Jesus commands us to love. Jesus told the crowd that He, the Son of Man, the Messiah, came to look for the lost and save them. Zacchaeus was lost in his selfish choices, but Jesus found him! And Zacchaeus changed! When we do what Jesus commands, we see that **[Bottom Line] the love of Jesus can change things for the better.**"

4. Pray and Dismiss

What You Need:

- Prayer jar from Week 2
- Bag of candy hearts from Week 2

What To Do:

- Instruct the kids to form a circle. Give each kid a candy heart, and put the Prayer Jar in the middle of the circle.
- Encourage the kids to think of one person who might be younger than them that they can pray for. It could be a baby brother or sister, a cousin, or a neighbor.
- Go around the circle, and as each kid names their person, let them add a heart to the jar.
- Ask for a volunteer to pray for some of those names.
- Store the Prayer Jar in a safe place to use again next week.

What To Say:

“Our prayer jar is filling up with so much love! Let’s pray for all the younger people we named and ask God to help us show them His love.

“Dear God, thank You for loving us. Thank You for the story of Zacchaeus that shows us Your love can change anyone. Please be with the people we prayed for today. Help us to be like Jesus and show them Your love, because we know Your love can make everything better. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name, Amen.”