

Kindergarten—Unit 4

What Can We Share?

Young children can respond to God in real ways. As children learn the parable of the growing seed, they will discover that God has a purpose for even the smallest things. With God's help, an ordinary little seed can be transformed into a flower of great beauty and delight.

When God needs a willing servant, God does not look at age or outward appearance. Instead, God looks at our hearts. The stories of David the shepherd boy and Zacchaeus help children understand what happens when we give ourselves willingly to God.

LESSONS

1. Something Big from Something Small
2. The Seed Grows
3. Zacchaeus
4. David the Shepherd Boy

Unit 4: What Can We Share?

Unit Information

SUMMARY

This unit highlights the parables of the mustard seed and the growing seed, and the stories of David and Zacchaeus. The focus is on how young people can respond to God in real and wonderful ways. Children will discuss how they can use their special gifts and talents to help people.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

- Matthew 13:31-32
- Mark 4:26-29
- Luke 19:1-10
- 1 Samuel 16
- 1 Peter 4:10

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The Mustard Seed

Jesus prefaced his parable with the words, “The kingdom of heaven is like...” The story illustrates the tremendous potential in small things to grow into something big. Jesus’ ministry grew from a small movement to the Christian church as we know it today. He used well-known objects, such as seeds and yeast, to illustrate his parables. Just as a tiny seed can grow into a great tree, so our small acts can have a huge impact on furthering God’s kingdom.

The Growing Seed

This parable points out several facts about seeds and growth. Although we cannot see the daily sprouting and subsequent growth of a seed beneath the soil, we do know that the growth leads toward harvest. Each seed has a specific task to perform: to grow into a plant of its kind. Relating this parable to ourselves and our students reminds us that though we might know the genetic and social backgrounds of our students, these are not the total of who they are. There is a mystery, an unknown about each person—a surprise waiting to unfold as we get to know one another.

Each person has a task to perform. We often think of students preparing for tasks as grown-ups. Yet they have valid roles to play as children. Just as the growth of a seed can be seen only over a long period of time, we need to look at students over a longer period of time to clearly see the progress they are making in working with and caring for each other.

Zacchaeus

On his travels, Jesus passed through Jericho, which was an important trade center in Palestine. While there, he encountered Zacchaeus, the tax collector. Since Jericho was a wealthy town, we can surmise that Zacchaeus was a successful tax collector, rich even compared with other tax collectors. He had reached the top of his profession. However, Zacchaeus was not satisfied with his life. For whatever reason, he was determined to see Jesus.

Because tax collectors were despised people, it took courage for Zacchaeus to go out and mingle with the crowd. The crowds would not have readily made room for him, a short person, to get to the front where he could see Jesus. Zacchaeus was resourceful enough to find a solution to his problem. He climbed a tree! The sycamore was a tree commonly found along major roads. It had a short trunk and wide branches and was much easier to climb than some other trees.

After Zacchaeus met Jesus, he immediately and publicly made known his plans to show that he had changed. The tax collector's acts of restitution exceeded those required by law.

This story illustrates the upside-down nature of Jesus' ministry. A person who was not valued by society became someone who had much to offer. Good things happen in unexpected ways!

David the Shepherd Boy

Saul had been anointed king of Israel by the prophet Samuel. But Saul disobeyed the Lord's commands and lied to Samuel about what he had done. He professed to have done what the Lord asked. Whether Saul deliberately lied or misunderstood what God (*through Samuel*) had asked him to do, we do not know. We are told, though, that God was unhappy with Saul's disobedience. As a consequence, Samuel refused to serve Saul as a prophet from God.

God told Samuel to anoint another king for Israel. He followed God's directions. He went to Bethlehem, offered a sacrifice, and waited for the Lord's leading. God then asked Samuel to choose from Jesse's sons the one who should be king. When all but one of Jesse's sons had been shown to Samuel, the prophet knew none of them was the one God wanted. David, the youngest, was the one the Lord had chosen. Samuel told Jesse that God looks on the inside. God chose David because the young boy's heart was right.

Samuel anointed David as the future king when he was quite young. Saul was still in power. Many years passed before God fulfilled his promise that David would be king. David is an example of a child who was chosen by God for a specific task and responded in obedience.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- God desires us to use our talents in service to God.
- Sometimes God will prepare us for a special task.
- We can help others at home, school, and church, and those we meet along the way.

WORSHIP / BIBLE MEMORY

Each day before beginning the lesson, light a candle (or use a battery-powered light) and call the children to worship with these activities:

1. Introduce the Bible memory verse by saying, "The next few Bible lessons are about sharing our gifts. Our gifts are what we can do to help others. This verse will help us remember to share our gifts." Read the verse:

Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.
1 Peter 4:10 (NRSV)

"Sometimes we think we have nothing to share. But God has given every person something to do. God wants us to do it." Ask the children to say the verse with you.

Talk about the verse: Each person is to help others with the things that he or she is good at doing. Whatever you can do well, that is what you should do to help others.

2. Pair up children to practice the memory verse. Have them do the following motions with their partner. *Note: If you it is too difficult for your class to do motions as they say the verse, you recite the verse as they do the motions. Then you do the motions with one child as the children recite the verse.*

Serve one another (*extend cupped hands toward partner*)

With whatever gift (*hold cupped hands in front as if receiving something*)

Each of you (*point to partner*)

Has received (*hold cupped hands in front as if receiving something*)

3. Sing one or more of the following songs in *Jubilee Songbook*:

—Love One Another, page 50

—Be Kind to One Another, page 52

—Song of Forgiveness, page 55

4. Pray, “God, please use our small gifts:

To create something big from something small (mustard seed)

To flourish and grow with proper care and nourishment (the seed grows)

To recognize the gifts in others (Zacchaeus)

Even though we are young (David the shepherd boy).”

5. You may also want to include in the worship time stories of people who were insignificant or from humble beginnings but did great things: Mother Teresa, George Washington Carver, Abebe Bekele, etc.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

These first four units give clear messages of each child’s value and worth to God. In this unit, you will be able to determine whether that message is getting through to students. One can give wholeheartedly to others only after feeling valued. Listen to students’ conversations for their comments on Zacchaeus, the value of the seed, and whether they feel they can serve God as David did. Actively seek ways that kindergarten children can make a difference in your school. Take note of how they participate in the “gift-giving” session of the last lesson.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize: 1 Peter 4:10 (NRSV) and the bonus verse, 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NRSV). You will find them in large format on pages 128-129, to copy as take-home sheets for students.



Serve one another
with whatever gift
each of you has received.

1 Peter 4:10

NRSV





Each of you must give
as you have made up
your mind . . .

God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

NRSV

What Can We Share?

LESSON 1: SOMETHING BIG FROM SOMETHING SMALL

Objective

Children will watch yeast grow. They will think of small things they can do that might result in something big.

Key Concepts

- Small grains of yeast can make bread dough grow, to make good bread.
- Small seeds can grow into big plants.
- Even though we are small, we can do important things.

Text: Matthew 13:31-32

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Dry yeast, warm water, sugar, large bowl
- Various kinds of seeds in small cups or plastic bags, pictures of the plants the seeds will become (from seed catalogs or packets)
- Whole mustard seeds (found with spices), picture of a mustard tree (plant)
- Lima bean seeds (several per child), plastic bags, paper towels
and/or
- Wheat berries, mung or alfalfa seeds, quart jar, cheesecloth or screen
- 8" x 8" pieces lightweight cardboard or card stock (1 per child), white glue, various kinds of seeds (dry beans, sunflower seeds, etc.)
- *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow (Harper Collins Children's Books, 1982) or *The Little Brute Family* by Russell Hoban (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: ingredients for soft pretzels (see p. 132)
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: small plastic bags

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story.
- With a number system, match seeds with pictures of the plants they will become.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option three, invite a doctor or nurse to come to your class to talk about germs.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, pages 126-127.

2. Yeast and seeds. Show the children a small amount of yeast. Ask if they know what it is. In a large bowl, mix the yeast with a half-cup of warm water and a teaspoon of sugar. Explain that something big will come from that small amount of yeast. Set the mixture aside until later in the lesson.

Next, show the children several different kinds of seeds. Get out the pictures of plants and see if they can match which seeds will grow into which plants. Say, "Seeds are small things. But with soil, rain, sun, and air, a seed can grow into

something big. Sometimes children feel small, like these seeds. They think they have nothing to share. But God can use children to do big things. You have a lot to share with the world.”

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of the mustard seed. Give the children each one mustard seed, asking them to carefully hold the seeds in their hands and not drop them. Ask what they think would grow if they planted these seeds. Explain that they are holding mustard seeds, and show a picture of a mustard plant. Long ago, Jesus told a story about a mustard seed. Collect the seeds in a bowl, then divide students into two groups. One group will be the seeds, and the other group will be birds.

This is the story that Jesus told:

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field. *(Pretend to be a sower and spread seeds over the ground. Indicate to the seed group that you are “planting” them.)*

It is the smallest of seeds. *(Seeds curl up into the smallest balls they can.)*

But when it has grown . . . *(Seeds begin to uncurl and slowly get bigger.)*

It is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree *(seeds stretch arms as high possible and stand on tiptoe)*, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

(Birds fly around room, each one finding a “tree.” They reach their hands up high, holding hands with a child pretending to be a mustard tree.)

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder why Jesus used stories to describe the kingdom of God.
- I wonder if the people understood what Jesus was saying.
- I wonder how something so small could become something so big.

Pray, “Dear God, you have created a wonderful world. In your world, small things can become big things. Help us to believe the small things we do can make a big difference in the world. Amen.”

3. Seed-sprouting activity. Choose one or both of the following activities:

- Watch lima beans grow. Give each student a plastic bag, a paper towel, and several lima bean seeds. Moisten the towel, fold it to fit in the bag and lay the seeds on the towel. Be sure children have zipped their bags shut tightly. Place the bags in a sunny, warm place and watch the roots grow.

- Sprout wheat berries, then eat them. You will need:

½ cup wheat berries

water

1 quart jar

cheesecloth or piece of screen (or punch holes in jar lid)

Scald jar with boiling water. Wash wheat berries and place in jar. Cover with warm (not hot) water. Set in a warm, dark place. After 12 hours, pour off water and rinse wheat berries with fresh water. Set in warm dark place. Repeat every 12 hours for three days, or until wheat berries have sprouted. *(You may also use mung beans or alfalfa seeds.)* Wheat berries can be found at a local nursery or health food store.

4. Make a seed collage to help students remember that something beautiful sometimes comes in small packages. Give each student a small piece of lightweight cardboard or card stock. They may use pencils to pre-plan a design to make, then spread glue on the design and fill it with different seeds. If children finish early, they may go back to the introductory activity of trying to match seeds with the plants they will become.

5. Check on the yeast. When everyone is finished gather together again. Look at the yeast mixture to see how big it has grown. Explain that Jesus said the kingdom of God is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with flour until it grew very big (Matthew 13:33).

6. Read a book. Finish the lesson by reading *The Little Brute Family* by Russell Hoban or *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow. These books emphasize the idea that something good can come from something small. Ask the children to think of something little they could do that could make a big difference (*a smile, a hug, a kind word, a flower gift, etc.*).

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Make mustard** from mustard seeds. Recipes are available online.
- **Make soft pretzels.** Use the yeast mixture and the following recipe to make soft pretzels. *(If making mustard, you can spread it on the pretzels.)* Ask your school cook or a parent that lives nearby to bake them for you.

2 cups warm water
2 packages dry yeast (or 2 T.)
½ cup sugar
2 t. salt
½ c. butter or margarine
1 egg
6½ to 7½ c. flour
1 egg yolk
2 T. water
Coarse salt

Measure warm water into large, warm bowl. Sprinkle in yeast; stir till dissolved. Add sugar, 2 t. salt, butter, egg, and 3 cups flour. Beat until smooth. Add enough additional flour to make stiff dough. Cover bowl tightly with foil. Refrigerate 2 to 24 hours. Turn dough out onto lightly floured board. Divide in half; cut each half into 16 equal pieces. Roll pieces into pencil shapes about 20 inches long; shape into pretzels. Place on lightly greased baking sheets. Blend egg yolk and 2 T. water; brush pretzels with egg yolk mixture. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Let rise in warm place, free from draft, until doubled in bulk, about 25 minutes. Bake at 400° F. about 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove from baking sheets and cool on wire racks.

- **Invite a doctor or nurse** to your class, to talk about how small germs can make big diseases.
- **Take a seed walk** on your school's property. See how many kinds of seeds the children can collect in small plastic bags. Take them back to the classroom to add to your science center.

What Can We Share?

LESSON 2: THE SEED GROWS

Objective

Children will be able to tell ways they can grow their gifts and talents.

Key Concepts

- We are like seeds and God is the gardener.
- We can grow into something wonderful.
- We can share the good news of God's love.

Text: Mark 4:26-29

Estimated Lesson Time: 45-50 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Small cups of birdseed (1 per child)
- Props for Bible story: wheat kernels, grass plant, stalks of wheat, small sickle (*optional*)
- *The Little Red Hen* storybook (any version)
- *The Little Yellow Chicken* by Joy Cowley, Wright Group/Mcgraw-Hill, 1989 (*optional*)
- Ingredients and utensils for making bread, blender to grind wheat (*optional*)
OR
- Celery (one piece per child), shelled sunflower seeds, chow mein noodles, chocolate sandwich cookie crumbs, small paper plates and cups
- Bowl and bird seed
- "Good and Bad Ingredients" (p. 137), cut into strips
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: supplies for planting seeds OR small houseplants
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: sprouted lima bean seeds from Lesson 2
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: a book about planting seeds

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with props.
- Pre-measure ingredients for bread and practice grinding wheat, OR divide sunflower seeds, chow mein noodles, and cookie crumbs into small paper cups, one set for each child.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, you may want to invite parents to send in houseplants for your room.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 126-127.

2. Give each child a small cup of bird seed. Ask what seeds are good for (*growing things, eating, feeding the birds*). We can eat these seeds (*or other good ones*), give them to the birds, or plant them so they can grow into something beautiful and

green. Say, "Each of you is like a seed. You are young and still have a lot of growing to do. God is like your gardener. God is growing you into someone wonderful, someone who can share the good news of God's love." Take children outside and let them scatter the birdseed on the sidewalk or parking lot.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of the growing seed. This parable of Jesus emphasizes how God's word and spirit take root in our hearts and grow into something good. The concept may be hard for kindergarteners to understand. Highlight the idea that each of them has good gifts. God wants to grow these good gifts so they can share them with others.

Use wheat in different stages to tell this story. If you have trouble finding props, show pictures to illustrate each stage of the wheat's growth. (*Wheat stalks are sometimes available in craft stores.*)

Jesus told this story about seeds.

(Show wheat seeds)

The Kingdom of God is like a farmer scattering seeds on the ground.

(Scatter wheat seeds across floor.)

The farmer sleeps and eats. *(Pretend to sleep and eat.)*

The seed sprouts and grows.

First comes the stalk. *(Show grass plant or pictures of young wheat.)*

Then comes the head. *(Show stalk of wheat with head of kernels on it.)*

And when the grain is ripe the farmer goes into the field and cuts the wheat because it is ready to eat.

("Cut" wheat with small, real sickle or imaginary one.)

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder whether I am a seed that has begun to sprout.
- I wonder if God is already starting to grow some good things in my heart.
- I wonder how I can share the good things God grows in me.

Pray, "God, you are like the farmer, and we are like the seeds. Help us to share the good things that you grow in us. Amen."

3. Do an action rhyme:

(Children curl up on floor.)

When I am small, God plants good seed in me. I feel seeds of love, joy, patience, kindness and peace land in my heart.

(Children pretend to carefully catch falling seeds.)

God waters me with the rain of kind parents and Sunday school teachers.

(Children open arms and hands as though enjoying rain.)

God warms me with the sunshine of good stories and good friends.

(Children pretend sun is shining on their faces. Put heads back to look at sky.)

I begin to grow. *(Children slowly rise as you speak the following words.)*

I am becoming more patient. I will wait for my mom without complaining.

I am becoming more kind. I will share my candy with my sister.

I am becoming more loving. I will tell my dad that I love him with a big hug.

I am becoming more joyful. I will sing songs because I am happy.

I am becoming more peaceful. I will walk away when people say mean things, and not say mean things back.

(Now children are standing, with arms raised.)

I am growing into someone God wants me to be—a kind, happy, loving, patient peacemaker. I will share these good things with others.

4. Read *The Little Red Hen*. Invite children to read the “Not I” sections with you. When you finish, discuss the following questions:

- What did the Little Red Hen do to grow her wheat into something good?
- Why didn’t the other animals want to help her?
- What could the Little Red Hen have done to get some help?
- Would you have shared the bread if you were the Little Red Hen?

If available, you may also read the book *The Little Yellow Chicken*. Compare the two stories and the different attitudes of the two chickens.

5. Choose a seed-related activity:

• Bake bread. *(If you are not a bread baker, you may recruit a parent or grandparent to do the actual mixing. This would also free you to supervise the children.)* As children watch, grind some wheat in a blender, coffee grinder, or food processor. Use this wheat and other ingredients to make bread. Let children add pre-measured ingredients to the bowl. As you mix, talk about where all the good ingredients came from. Discuss how you wouldn’t put dirt or soap into your bread. That would make it taste bad. We need to put good things into our minds, too, so we can grow into good “bread.” Talk about how those little seeds grew into wheat, which eventually became something good to eat.

If your school has an oven available, bake the bread for children to enjoy. If no oven is available or you have a half-day kindergarten, bake it at home and bring it back the next day. Or invite a parent to take it home to bake.

- Wheat artwork/snack. At desks or tables give each student the following items:
 - Paper plate
 - Stalk of celery
 - Small cup chow mein noodles (crispy type)
 - Small cup sunflower seeds
 - Small cup crushed chocolate sandwich cookies (for dirt)

Let children arrange their food items into representations of wheat stalks. *(Show them the wheat from the story.)* Have them show their neighbors or you the roots, stem, and head of wheat in their artwork. Then they may eat it for a snack.

6. Birdseed exercise. Set a bowl on the floor in front of the children. Explain that you are going to pretend you are planting seeds. Say, “The bowl is the ground.” Sprinkle some birdseed into the bowl. Then ask the children, “What do I need to do to these seeds to make them grow?” *(Water them, put them in the sun, keep them warm but not hot, make sure they have air, etc.)*

Tell the children to pretend that this bowl represents their lives. Now put some seeds into the bowl. Say, “The seeds are the good gifts that God plants inside you.” Read each of the “Good and Bad Ingredients” on strips of paper. Ask children to decide whether each thing will help the seeds (*good gifts*) grow in them, or whether it will hurt their growth. Add the good “ingredients” to the bowl.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45-50 minutes.)

- **Plant an indoor garden** from seeds, or ask each family to send in a small houseplant for your window. Give children the task of watering the plants. Measure the plants' growth. You might even vary their care, giving some plants more water than others or putting some in more direct sunlight. Tie a discussion about their growth to a discussion of what helps children grow into the people God wants them to be.

- **Plant sprouted lima bean seeds** from Lesson Two.

- **Sing an action song**, to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush."

This is the way we plant the wheat, plant the wheat, plant the wheat
This is the way we plant the wheat, so early in the morning.

This is the way we water the wheat, ...
This is the way we watch it grow...
This is the way we harvest the wheat...
This is the way we grind the wheat...
This is the way we mix the bread...
This is the way we eat the bread...

Thank you, God for giving us wheat, giving us wheat, giving us wheat
Thank you, God for giving us wheat
You give good things to eat

- **Read a book about planting seeds**, such as *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert (Voyager Books, 1992).

Good and Bad Ingredients

Watching movies with lots of guns and killing

Making a new friend who can't do everything I can do

Doing what my parents tell me to do

Laughing with my friends at someone who looks different

Talking with my family about my Sunday school lesson

**Thinking about which of my toys I could
share with my brother**

Listening carefully when my grandma reads me a story

**Going with my mom when she visits an older
person in a nursing home**

**Looking up at the blue sky and thinking about
what God is like**

Praying for God's help when I need to decide something

Spending all my money on a video game

Choosing a friend who is mean to other people

**Staying up late, even though I know it
makes me grumpy the next day**

What Can We Share?

LESSON 3: ZACCHAEUS

Objective

Children will understand that everyone has something good to share.

Key Concepts

- Everyone has something good to share.
- Meeting Jesus can change someone's life.

Text: Luke 19:1-10

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Props for Bible story: story cloth, story figures, cloth or paper road, cup
- Pictures of people others may think have nothing to share: young, poor, other ethnic groups, old, people who are sick or have disabilities
- Empty egg carton, yogurt container (with lid), empty cereal box
- Supplies for “junk” activity: glue, construction and white paper, scissors, tape, string, stapler, glitter, rubber bands, stickers, markers, tissue paper, drinking straws, pipe cleaners, hole punch, yarn
- Possible “junk” items: bathroom tissue tubes, egg cartons, cereal boxes, yogurt containers, small glass jars, jar lids, mushroom boxes, foam meat trays, oatmeal boxes, pine cones, small cardboard boxes, wallpaper scraps, newspaper, cookie and candy trays, half-gallon milk jugs, tin cans
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles (Scholastic, 1995) OR *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman (Dial, 1991)

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with props.
- Prepare a story about a time when you prejudged someone.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, three, or four, practice the rhymes and song about Zacchaeus.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, pages 126-127.

2. Share a story with the children about a time when you prejudged a person and found out you were wrong. Describe how you changed your mind about that person after you got to know him or her. You may even have a story to tell about one of your students—what you thought the child was like on meeting him/her for the first time and how you think about the child now. Say, “I thought I knew what the person was like, but I was wrong. In our Bible story today, people believe that someone is a bad person who has nothing good to share. That person is Zacchaeus.”

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Zacchaeus. You will need the story cloth and story figures for Zacchaeus, Jesus, and the crowd. The Zacchaeus figure should be a small one. Place a cloth or paper road down the middle of the story cloth. At one end of the road, put an overturned cup to represent the tree Zacchaeus will climb. Place the Zacchaeus figure and several crowd members close to the tree. Place Jesus and the rest of the crowd at the other end of the road.

One day, Jesus was walking with his disciples through the city of Jericho. *(Move Jesus and his followers along road.)* A man named Zacchaeus lived there. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. In those days, people had to pay lots of money, or taxes, to their leaders. Certain men had the job of collecting the taxes. Often the tax collectors collected extra money from the people and kept it for themselves. Because of this, most people hated tax collectors. They thought they were thieves.

Zacchaeus had taken extra money from people and was a very rich man. *(Touch Zacchaeus story figure.)* He had also heard about the wonderful things Jesus was doing. He wanted to get a look at Jesus. But a big crowd of other people was waiting to see Jesus, too. When Jesus and his followers got closer to Zacchaeus, he realized he was too short to see over the crowd. *(Move Jesus and followers closer to “tree.”)* Zacchaeus saw a sycamore tree close by. He hitched up his robe and climbed up high in the tree so he could see Jesus as he walked by. *(Place Zacchaeus figure on top of “tree.”)*

When Jesus came to the tree *(move Jesus figure right next to “tree”)*, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down. I am coming to your house today.” Zacchaeus thought, *Is Jesus talking to me? How did Jesus know I was up here?*

Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree. *(Move Zacchaeus down, next to Jesus.)* He welcomed Jesus gladly into his home. *(Move Zacchaeus and Jesus to another part of the story cloth.)* But the crowd hated Zacchaeus and began to grumble. They said, “Jesus has gone to that bad man’s house.” Zacchaeus told Jesus, “Look, I will give half of everything I have to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I will pay them back four times as much!” Jesus was happy with Zacchaeus’ promise. Zacchaeus would make things right with the people.

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder how Jesus knew Zacchaeus was up in the tree.
- I wonder what made Zacchaeus decide to do good things instead of bad.
- I wonder if the people changed their minds about Zacchaeus.

Pray, “God, sometimes we think someone doesn’t have anything good to share with the world. Help us to believe that everyone can share something good, with your help. Amen.”

3. Show pictures of people the world might think have nothing to share, such as young children, poor people, people of other ethnic groups, very old people, people who are sick or have disabilities. Ask children to just think about, not answer the question, “What do you think God sees in these people?” Give them time to think, then say, “Jesus believed that Zacchaeus had something good to give. God believes there is good in everyone. And God wants us to look at other people like that, too—expecting that everyone has something good to share.”

4. Treasures from trash. Show the children an empty egg carton, empty yogurt container with a lid, and empty cereal box. Explain, “Most people think these things are trash, that we should put them in the garbage or recycling bin. I want you to think about these things as treasure. What are some good ways we could use these items?”

Let the children brainstorm. Prompt ideas with these possibilities: egg carton (*game board for mancala, place to start seedlings, jewelry container, storage for small items in a workshop, Barbie couch, Lego sorter*); yogurt container (*jelly or jam container for the freezer, place to store leftovers, fill with rice to make a shaker, sand toy, cookie or play-dough cutter, planter*); cereal box (*storage for books or notebooks, cut apart to make a puzzle, Barbie furniture, hamster hiding place, file for school papers, fire kindling*).

5. Create things from “junk.” Supply a variety of “junk” items (*see Materials, p. 139*). and encourage children to think of creative ways to use them. Refrain from making suggestions, allowing them to see the possibilities in the junk on their own. Accept any and all creations. Children may enjoy working in groups for this activity. Give them plenty of time to create. If some finish earlier than others, let them retell the Zacchaeus story with the story figures.

6. Wrap-up. When everyone has something (or the beginning of something) to share, clean up the BIG mess and invite everyone back together to tell the group about what they created. Then explain that God does what the children just did with “junk,” only God does it with people. God can see good possibilities in every person. Every person can do something to serve God. No one should be thrown away.

Close with the following prayer: “Thank you God, for believing in each of us. You see good things in each one of us. You know that each of us has something good to share. Amen.”

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

• **Do an echo pantomime** about Zacchaeus:

There was a man who lived in the days of Jesus and his name was Zacchaeus.
One morning he got out of bed (*everyone stretches*)
And put on his robe (*slip arms into imaginary robe*)
And sandals (*lace up imaginary sandals*)
And hurried out of his house (*run in place*)

He had heard that Jesus would be passing by that day, and he wanted to see him.
He waited a long time for Jesus to come (*shift from one foot to other*)
As he waited, other people came and pushed him to the back (*pantomime pushing*)
Oh dear! What would Zacchaeus do? He was very small and could not
see over the crowd (*stand on tiptoes*)
He tried to look around the people on one side (*lean to left*)
But he could not see (*shake head no*)
He leaned to the other side (*lean to right*)
But he could not see (*shake head no*)
He stood as tall as he could (*on tiptoes*)
But he could not see (*shake head no*)
He stood as tall as he could (*on tiptoes*)
But it was no use (*shake head no*)
Zacchaeus would not be able to see Jesus after all.

Then he had an idea! He would climb a tree. Then he could see over all the crowd.
He ran to a nearby tree (*run in place*)
And began to climb (*pantomime climbing motion*)
When he got to a good strong limb, he held on tight (*grasping motion*)
And looked down the road (*shade eyes with one hand and look*)
Sure enough, there was Jesus coming his way. If only he would pass by this tree!

Closer and closer Jesus came, until he was right under the tree where
Zacchaeus was sitting. Jesus looked up (*tilt head*)
And called (*hand to side of mouth*), "Zacchaeus, hurry up and come down,
for I will stay at your house today" (*all children call*)
Then Zacchaeus climbed down the tree as fast as he could (*pantomime action*)
He pushed past the tall people (*hands meet and part*)
"Jesus is coming to my house," he called (*children repeat*)
And he was so happy, he skipped round and round (*children skip around room*)

All the waiting had been worth it for Zacchaeus. The little man was changed
from that day on. He gave back the money he took from the people. He gave
half of his money to the poor.

Jesus was pleased and said, "Happiness has come to this house tonight."

- **Read *The Story of Ruby Bridges*** by Robert Coles or *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman. Talk with the children about prejudice and how it hurts others when we believe they have nothing good to give the world.

- **Learn a Zacchaeus finger play** by Elaine Ward:

Zacchaeus was short (*indicate low with hand*)
And not very tall (*raise hand*)
In crowds he couldn't see at all (*hand over eyes, shake head no*)
The day that Jesus came to speak (*walk fingers*)
Zacchaeus thought (*chin on hand*)
And thought. "I'll seek
A place where I can see!"
He said, and then he climbed a tree (*climbing motions*)
When Jesus saw the little man (*look up*)
He smiled and said, "I have a plan (*shake finger*)
Come down (*beckon*) and be my friend today,
And I will teach you how to love and pray."
And on that day Zacchaeus grew (*stretch*)
In love, because he had a friend.
And so do you, and that's the end!

- **Sing "Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man":**

Zacchaeus was a wee little man,
A wee little man was he.
He climbed up in the sycamore tree,
For the Lord he wanted to see.
And as the Savior passed that way,
He looked up in the tree.
And he said, "Zacchaeus, you come down," (*spoken*)
For I'm going to your house today.
For I'm going to your house today.

What Can We Share?

LESSON 4: DAVID THE SHEPHERD BOY

Objective

Children will learn that God looks at people differently than people look at each other.

Key Concepts

- God sees what we are like on the inside.
- We can serve God no matter what our size, age, skin color, or physical abilities.
- Sometimes God prepares us for a special job.

Text: 1 Samuel 16

Estimated Lesson Time: 40-45 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Aesop’s fable, “The Lion and the Mouse” (any version)
- *Sing and Rejoice* songbook
- Poster board and markers
- “Gift Suggestions” (p. 145), cut apart into strips, basket
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: book about sheep-herding
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: black construction paper, chalk or light-colored crayons, scissors, cotton balls or quilt batting, glue

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story.
- Print multiple copies of the “Gift Suggestions” strips, so that more than one child can respond in lesson step 7.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, you may want to make arrangements for visiting a sheep farm rather than reading a book.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, pages 126-127.

2. Share Aesop’s fable of the lion and the mouse. Ask children, “What did the lion think of the mouse at the beginning of the story? How did that change by the end of the story? Has anyone ever told you that you’re too little to do something? How does that make you feel?”

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of David the Shepherd Boy by acting it out with the students. In order to have a part for everyone, some students can be sheep. You will need: Samuel, Jesse, 7 older brothers (*you can use girls for these parts*), David, and sheep. You will be the narrator and also play the part of God. Instruct students where to go and what to say.

Before beginning the story, remind children of Hannah’s baby, Samuel. Remember

how he grew and was taken to the temple to serve God by helping the priest, Eli. Explain that the grown-up Samuel is in your story today.

Narrator: The boy Samuel grew up and became a servant of God. He was a leader of the people of Israel. *(Call Samuel to you.)* God told Samuel that Israel needed a new king. Their old king, Saul, was not a good king. God was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel.

God: *(change voice for God)* Israel needs a new king. I will send you to Jesse, in Bethlehem. One of his sons will be Israel's new king. Take a cow with you and invite Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. I will show you what to do and whom you should anoint. *(Samuel and God move close to Jesse. Brothers and sheep should be in another place.)*

Narrator: One by one, Jesse brought his sons to meet Samuel. Every time Samuel met one of Jesse's sons, he thought, *This must be the one God wants to be king.* But every time God said, "This is not the one I have chosen." *(Walk Jesse's sons one by one in front of Samuel. Each time instruct Samuel to say, "This must be the one." Then you say, "This is not the one." David should stay back with the sheep.)*

Narrator: Finally, Samuel said to Jesse,

Samuel: Are all of your sons here?

Jesse: My youngest son is taking care of the sheep.

Samuel: Tell him to come. *(David comes close to Jesse and Samuel.)*

Narrator: Samuel saw that David was very young. He wondered if God could use someone so young.

God: This is the one! I do not choose someone by age or appearance. I choose those who have a heart ready to serve the Lord. Anoint David to be the next king of Israel. *(Instruct Samuel to put his hands on David's head.)*

Narrator: Then Samuel took out a horn filled with oil and poured some of it over David's head. *(Samuel pretends to pour.)*

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder how God knew that David would make a good king.
- I wonder how David's brothers felt when they weren't chosen.
- I wonder what God sees when God looks at my heart.

Pray, "God, you are very wise. You see what we are like on the inside. Help us to have hearts that are ready to serve you. Amen."

3. Teach the song, "Like David the Shepherd, I Sing," #59 in the *Sing and Rejoice* songbook. Use the following motions with the chorus:

I sing . . . *(cup hands around mouth)*
I pray . . . *(fold hands for prayer)*
I dance . . . *(dance around)*
I praise . . . *(raise hands in air)*

Invite children to think of other verses (run, hug, shout, jump, kneel, etc.)

4. Make song posters. Prepare posters for each of the four phrases of the song. Cut two poster boards in half to make four. *(If you made up more verses, you might want to make more posters.)*

Write the two-word phrases that are repeated in the chorus by means of shared writing *(children come forward to sound out and write letters)*. Write “I Sing” on the first poster board, “I Pray” on the second, etc. Use the bottom half of the poster. *(The top half will be used in the next activity.)*

I Sing
I Pray
I Dance
I Praise

5. Illustrate posters. Divide the class into as many groups as you have posters. Assign each group one of the posters to illustrate. Invite them to draw people doing the action printed on their poster. Talk about what people’s mouths, arms, and hands will be doing in their pictures. If you have a large class, you may want to do more than four phrases to limit the number of children in each group.

6. Practice the song, using the posters as prompts as the children sing. If possible, invite a guest to listen to your song—perhaps the principal or custodian.

7. Sharing circle. Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor. Place a small basket in the middle of the circle. Review for the children the four stories in this unit: the mustard seed *(God uses something small to grow something big)*, the growing seed *(God wants us to grow the gifts inside us)*, Zacchaeus *(God can see good gifts in all of us)*, and David the Shepherd Boy *(Young people can share God’s gifts too)*.

Say, “We have heard lots of stories about God growing good gifts in us and how God wants us to share those gifts. I have papers with some of your gifts printed on them. I’m going to read them aloud to you. If you would like to share this gift, come and take the paper and put it in the basket.”

When every child has responded, close with this prayer: “Dear God, thank you for the gifts of each student in this class. Even though we are small, we can share your gifts with the world. Help us to be generous with our gifts. Amen.”

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 40-45 minutes.)

- **Read a book about sheep-herding** or visit a sheep farm.
- **Make hand sheep.** Using chalk or light-colored crayons, help each child to trace one hand, spread apart, onto black construction paper. Have them cut out their hands as best they can. Tape on any severed fingers! With the four fingers facing down to represent the legs of the sheep, and the thumb representing the head, let children glue cotton balls onto the body of the sheep. Finish with small, triangular construction paper ears and eyes. If you like, fasten a bell to each sheep.

Gift Suggestions

I can sing praises to God.

I can be kind to a new student.

I can help my mom and dad with work.

I can pray for sick or sad people.

I can listen carefully to Bible stories so I can tell them again.

I can make a picture for my grandparents.

I can read a book to my little sister or brother.

I can give a smile to someone who is sad.

I can give some of my money in the offering at church.

I can take some flowers or cookies to my neighbor.
