

Finding Jesus

Gospels



"...these are the very scriptures that testify about me." John 5:39

Victorious Light

Finding Jesus

Gospels

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Jesus the King

Who is Jesus and what is the Bible really about?

The Bible is one story that leads to Jesus. Jesus is at the center of every part of the Bible.

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is woven like a tapestry throughout the entire Bible.

God created the world by words. He created man in His own image (Genesis 1:28) and man was meant to rule and reign over the earth as part of the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God.

When Adam and Eve ate of the tree, sin entered the world. Man lost his right to rule; he had voluntarily turned over his domain to the enemy.

But God had a plan of redemption

Jesus was always the plan. He was the "lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8) He was the "seed" spoken of by God in Genesis 3:15. The reader follows this "seed" through the Bible, looking and waiting for the One who will come and save the people and restore God's kingdom on earth.

Prophecies of Jesus

Throughout scripture we see repeated themes and patterns that all point to Jesus. Words were spoken throughout the centuries prophesying about this "seed," this Messiah, who would come to save his people. The prophecies were hidden and spoken in mysteries (1 Corinthians 2:6-8) so that the rulers of this world would not be able to prevent His coming.

The Word

God created the world with words, and all the prophecies of Jesus had to be through words. Everything was prophesied, in a mystery, but it all led to exactly who Jesus would be. But when the fulness of time was come, these words came together and formed the seed, that combined with a young virgin (seed of a woman) became the Son of God, the Word. (John 1:1)

This WORD, Jesus, through his death and resurrection, conquered death and the principalities of darkness. He restored the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. We reign with Him as the body of Christ. And we can reign in this life with him and in the life to come. (Romans 5:17, 21)

This curriculum, *Finding Jesus*, is designed to do just that. He can be found from Genesis to Revelation.





READ THIS FIRST!

Teaching the Lessons

This guide is meant to be a Bible study for the instructor.

These lessons are not written as a script, nor designed to tell you exactly what to say. The lessons are written to help you gain a better understanding of the passages in the Bible.

Each lesson is designed to put the Bible into perspective by showing the historical context, Biblical context, and what was happening on or around that time. Some lessons refer back to the original meaning of the words - the original Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was written, or the Greek in which the New Testament was originally written. Each lesson has multiple cross-references to take the teacher to other places in scripture that are relevant to the story, and also to the message being taught. The author of this curriculum is not attempting to write theology, but to tell the reader a story and highlight other scriptures within the Bible so that the reader can decide. The Bible is meant to be interpreted by the Bible. It is the most complex piece of literature ever written, and contains over 63,000 cross-references.

1. Study the material.

Before the lesson, read the Bible passages first. Then **study** the notes and re-read the passage, multiple times if necessary. If the references give the accounts in more than one book or passage, familiarize yourself with versions in all passages. When you study, always read a few verses before and a few verses after for context. See if there is something that the Lord shows you that will enhance your telling of the story.

The gospels can be challenging to teach, as there are multiple accounts in different gospels. Read and study all the passages in each gospel. Take notes, combine the information in a way that will be helpful to you. Then choose the gospel from which you prefer to teach that particular story. Each lesson may have a different gospel that holds more information or present a more clear narrative, and is up to you as the teacher to choose the passage that speaks to you.

This teacher guide contains many cross-references. These are not-necessarily intended to be read to the students. The cross-references are included for personal study of the material, and designed to help the teacher gain a deeper understanding of the material so they can give a better explanation to the students.

2. Teach **ONLY** from the Bible.

Read the lesson and know the material, but **always** teach from the Bible. You do not need to read the Bible passage word for word, but can paraphrase it for your audience *without changing the meaning*. It is possible to put it into words that your audience will understand without changing the Word of God. When you teach directly from the Bible, it allows the Holy Spirit to speak directly to the teacher and the students. It gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to emphasize what is in the passage that is specifically relevant to the listener. The Word of God is alive and powerful!



Teaching the Lessons:

3. Help create a mental picture of the scene.

Picture it like you were there. This material is designed to tell the story in such a way that helps the listener imagine what it be like if they were there. Elaborate on the story, and help them think about what the characters would have been thinking, doing and feeling, but also being careful to distinguish between what might be speculated, and the definitive details told in the Word.

4. Ask a lot of questions.

The lessons are designed to be interactive; they are not intended to be a lecture. Ask a lot of questions, and allow your students to ask questions also. Questions and discussions make the listeners think.

You know your students! Do not limit yourself to the discussion passages suggested in the material. Feel free to make up your own questions, begin your own discussions. Discuss things in the story that would be relevant to situations with which your students can understand. And ask questions that encourage discussion. Let the kids participate in the study of the Word of God.

5. Relate to the characters.

Remember that the Bible is a real story about real people doing real things. Help your listeners to not see it as a distant story, but a story with characters with which they can relate.

Finding Jesus in every lesson.

Every lesson ends with "Jesus in the Story." The lessons in the gospels will point back to prophecies of Jesus. The lessons in the Old Testament will point forward to the prophecies of Jesus. He IS the Word of God, and the central core, focus, theme and meaning of the entire Bible. Tell the story first, and incorporate the Jesus in the Story themes into the lesson, being sure to make Him the ultimate focus of everything you teach.

Multiple Age Levels:

This material is for ages 3-99. You are the teacher. A story you know is a story you can tell. These lessons can be adapted to any age level. If you are teaching to very young children, tell them the story in a way that they can understand. If you are teaching to older children, give them more information. And if you are teaching to young people, you can bring in some of the cross-referenced scriptures, and discuss how they connect with the story. If you teach to adults, use it as a full study guide to look up all the scriptures and discuss. Always teach a little above what you think they can understand; you may be surprised at the comprehension of your audience.



Teaching the Lessons:

Weekly Lesson:

1. Begin each week by discussing the lesson from the previous week. Ask questions, see what the students remember from the last lesson.
2. You do not have to teach the lessons in the order in this guide. It is up to you if you would like to teach a certain theme, a certain story, or a certain time frame. This is your classroom.
3. Feel free to lead children to Jesus after each lesson or if you feel led by the Holy Spirit to do so. You can tell by the response to the lesson if they are ready. And remember, you know your students!

Memory Verses and Questions:

The lessons are designed with a memory verse and questions for the teacher to display to the class. If you choose, you may ask the students to bring a “church notebook” where they may write down the memory verse every week. Writing down the scripture will definitely help with memorization, and this will help the child learn the responsibility of keeping the notebook and bringing it every week.

The teacher may also choose to give the children the questions on the display page. The children can write down the questions and take them home to look up the answers, or simply write the answers in their book. It is completely up to the teacher how to use these resources.

Coloring Pages:

Each lesson has a black and white coloring page. If you have the ability to print copies, feel free to make copies and distribute these to the younger children. If not, you may choose to have them recreate the illustration with their own drawing in their notebook.

Get Creative!

So many of the stories in the Bible can be acted out. Many of the Psalms can be acted out.

Have fun with it! Creating a play or drama from a story helps the children remember the story.

Let them help you design the play. Let them put their own interpretation into the characters.

Make it fun, and make the Bible memorable!







Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Life of Jesus

If your audience enjoys a drama presentation, this would also be a good story to act out.

The story begins with Jesus entering and passing through Jericho.

The main character in the story is introduced and his name is Zacchaeus.

The first thing we learn is that Zacchaeus is a publican, or tax collector. Not only is he a tax collector, he is the chief tax collector; this means that all the other tax collectors reported to him.

Tax collectors were despised. The only person more hated than a tax collector would have been the chief tax collector. At the time of Christ, the Roman Empire ruled over much of the civilized world, including the land of Israel. The Romans enlisted Jews (Israelites) who were willing to collect taxes from their fellow citizens for the Roman government. The Romans would offer bonuses to the tax collectors to entice them to betray the Jewish people. Tax collectors were allowed to extort money, and most of them had become rich through their dishonest practices.

Jewish people saw tax collectors as traitors, as corrupt men who collaborated with the Roman Empire. Tax collectors were not allowed to go to the temple or synagogue, and their money was considered tainted. They were not allowed to serve on a witness stand in a court of law.

Zacchaeus must have heard about Jesus. Jesus was a well known celebrity at the time. He was passing through Jericho, and it was probably the big news of the day was that Jesus was coming to town. Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. He went to the place where he knew Jesus would be, but there was a huge crowd.

The second thing we learn about Zacchaeus is that he is very short. Some scholars think it is possible he had the condition of dwarfism. The reason he could not see Jesus is because he was so short. However, he was determined to see Jesus. He *ran ahead* of the crowd and climbed up into a tree to wait because he knew Jesus was going to come that way.

Discuss: Have you ever been somewhere that there were so many people you could not see through the crowd?

Zacchaeus had to plan this out. He had to figure out where Jesus would be walking and the path he was going to take.

He could not run through the crowd; he would never get ahead. If he ran ahead, he probably had to run around the crowd. He would not have been able to go through the crowd to get ahead, so he probably took another route to get around.

Then he climbed a tree that was in the path that Jesus was going to walk down. This meant he was there before Jesus, before the crowds. Instead of trying to see Jesus from behind, he would have seen him coming.

The tree that he climbed was a sycamore-fig tree, which was a very common tree in Israel. It was similar to a mulberry tree, and had fruit on it that looked very similar to a fig. But the fruit of this tree was very bitter; it did not taste like the figs, and it was only eaten by very poor people. The branches of this tree grow very low to the ground, making it easier to climb. The irony here is that Zacchaeus, a very wealthy man, uses a poor man's tree to see Jesus.





Zacchaeus

Discuss: Zacchaeus is ahead of the crowd, in the tree, waiting for Jesus to come. If Jesus is at the head of the entourage, then probably most people would be following Jesus. When he looked ahead, it would have been easier for him to see Zacchaeus in the tree.

When Jesus reached the place where Zacchaeus was, he looked up and saw him.

He said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, because I *must* stay at your house today."

We do not know how Jesus knew his name. Perhaps Zacchaeus was well known in a negative way, or perhaps the Holy Spirit revealed it to Jesus, it does not say. But Zacchaeus quickly came down out of the tree and *joyfully* received him. Zacchaeus was excited! He was trying to see Jesus, he had done everything he could to get to him, and now he is coming to stay at his house!

It is interesting that Jesus said today he "must" stay at his house. Could it be that this fulfilled a prophecy? Possibly. There are some parallels here with what Jesus says and Ezekiel 34:11, 16.

It could also be that Zacchaeus was *seeking* Jesus. Throughout the Bible, there are scriptures about seeking the Lord.

If we seek Him, we will find Him. (Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 69:32; Psalm 119:2; Jeremiah 29:13) Draw near to Him, and he will draw near to you. (James 4:8) The Lord will not push himself on you; He wants us to seek after Him. But when we seek him, he quickly responds.

We are told that Zacchaeus joyfully received Jesus. Jesus was often a guest in people's homes. But we know that many of the supposedly righteous Pharisees who hosted Jesus were grumbling and criticizing Jesus, and did not receive him with joy. And then the grumbling starts. People were watching what was happening here. Jesus was being followed by very large crowds, so everyone saw his interaction with Zacchaeus. Everyone was aghast, how dare he go to be the guest of this man - this *tax collector*, this sinner! What an outrage! Jesus should not be talking to him, let alone going to his house! But this man, this "sinner," received Jesus with joy and gave him more honor than those who were seemingly righteous.

Were the people who were upset also sinners? Yes, absolutely. (Romans 3:23) Everyone is born into sin. But they thought they were righteous because they obeyed the law, and this tax-collector was a terrible sinner. This was scandalous.

Jesus is looking at the heart.

He is looking at the heart of a man who is seeking him. Zacchaeus ran ahead of the crowd, and climbed a tree to wait for Jesus to come by, then he welcomed Jesus into his home. Many of these people were critically judging Jesus, and the "righteous" Pharisees were not nearly as excited when Jesus came to their house, or as welcoming as Zacchaeus.

When you hear from the Lord, and have a relationship with him, it changes you. Zacchaeus tells Jesus that he gives half of his possessions to the poor. Not only that, he says he will restore four times the amount back to anyone whom he has cheated.





Zacchaeus

Jesus tells Zacchaeus, "Today, salvation has come to to this house."

Jesus, or Yeshua, is the same as the name Joshua which means **"Jehovah is salvation."** (Hebrew translation for Joshua) When he says salvation has come, it could mean that Jesus has come to this house and he IS God who is salvation. It could be a result of Zacchaeus' response as he simply repented, and completely changed the direction in which he was headed. He did as Jesus has commanded before,

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and might.....love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:30-31)

That is what the whole law essentially means. It comes down to loving God, and loving others.

Jesus continues, "He also is a son of Abraham."

This means that Zacchaeus was a descendant of Abraham, and Jesus came to save the lost sheep of Israel. (Matthew 15:24) Jesus then references Ezekiel 34:11-12 and says,

"The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost." Jesus was the fulfillment of every prophecy in the Old Testament. It was his mission to fulfill everything that was prophesied. Zacchaeus was the sheep that was lost, the one that had been scattered and driven away by the teachings of the Pharisees. (Ezekiel 34:12,16)

Jesus in the Story



Jesus came to bring salvation first to Israel, and then to the Gentiles. (Romans 1:16)

He was the material form of all the prophecies of the Old Testament, and fulfilled everything that was spoken of the coming Messiah.

Because Zacchaeus was seeking Him, Jesus responded to him.

When we seek the Lord with all our heart, we will find Him.

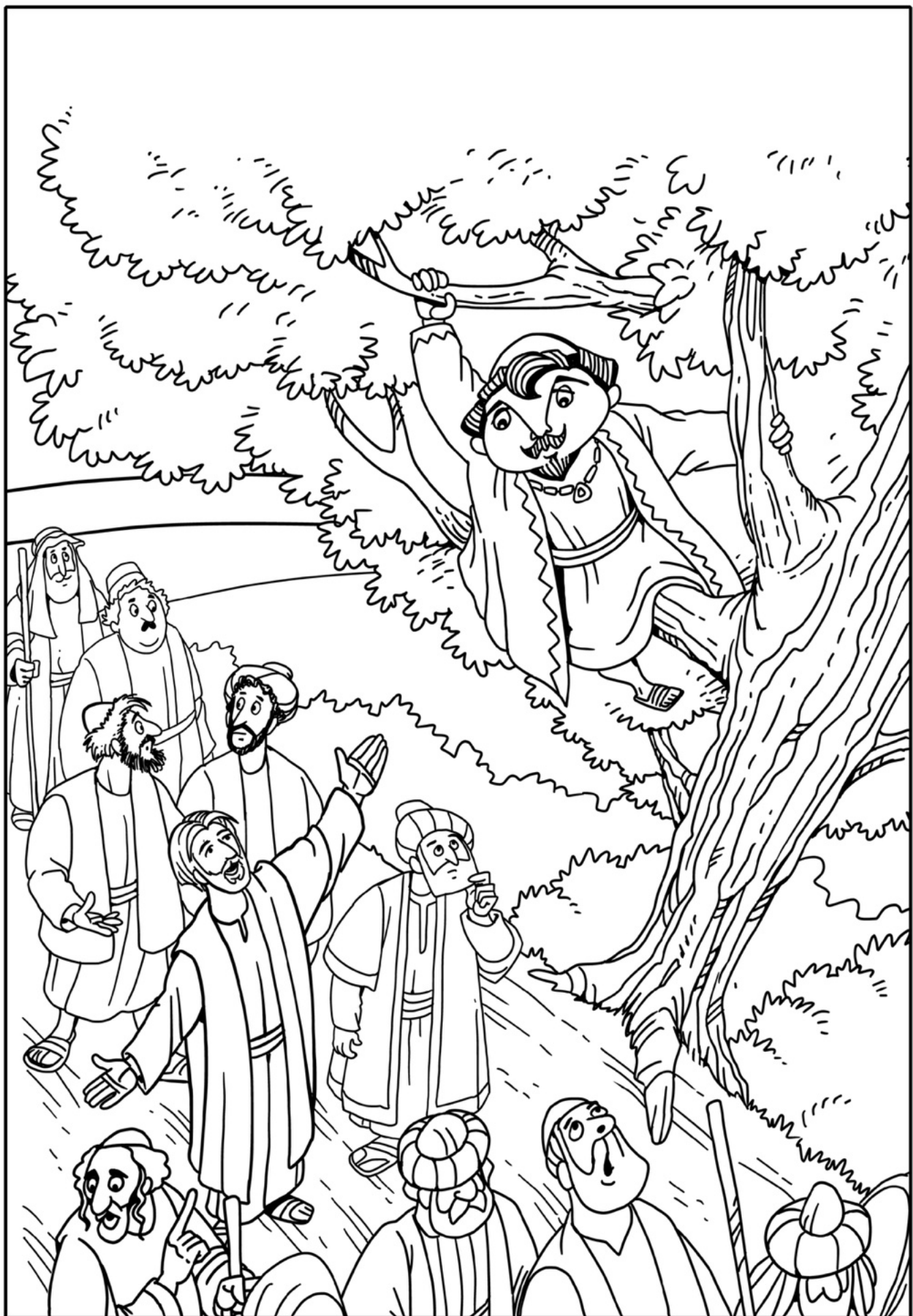
Zacchaeus eagerly looked for Jesus, and rejoiced when Jesus came to meet with Him. That is what the Lord wants from us; he simply wants a relationship with people who desire to know him.

MEMORY VERSE

*And you will seek me and find me when
you search for me with all your heart.*

Jeremiah 29:13







Finding Jesus

is a curriculum designed to help children find Jesus in every story of the Bible. Because the Bible is one continuous story that leads to Jesus, He can be found from Genesis to Revelation. Finding Jesus is a Bible study designed for the teacher. This one-year Gospels volume includes 52 lessons which can be adapted to teach any age from 3-99. The instructor customizes the lesson for their audience, using only the Bible as a text. The teacher decides how to relay the information to their students, with regard to their background and level of education.

Jesus IS the Word of God.

***Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
He is woven like a scarlet thread throughout the tapestry of the Bible.***

VICTORIOUS LIGHT

About the Author



Laura Baca is a lifelong student of the Bible with a heart for reaching the next generation with the truth and love of God's Word. Over ten years ago, while teaching in children's church, she began to recognize a gap in the way that biblical truths were being communicated to young hearts. This sparked the idea to write a curriculum designed to help children

connect deeply with Scripture and find Jesus in every story of the Bible. Once her children were grown, she prayerfully developed this curriculum to speak to children across different cultures and backgrounds. In September 2024, a divine meeting with a Kenyan woman on a layover in Istanbul led to the formation

of Victorious Light, a non-profit organization established in 2025 with a desire to make this resource available to all. Laura is committed to offer materials freely to anyone, anywhere in the world. Through Victorious Light, children around the globe can encounter the transformative love of Jesus Christ through the stories of the Bible.

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