



Date: _____

Series: God is Our Rescuer
Fall Year 2, Lesson 15

God Knocks Down Walls that Keep Us from Jesus

Primary Scripture: Luke 19:1-9

Key Verse: Luke 19:5, "When Jesus came to the tree, he looked up and said, 'Zacchaeus, come down! I must stay at your house today.'"

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kingdom Quest for this Sunday deals with God knocking down the walls of Jericho. Today's Bible event, happening centuries later, finds Jesus in Jericho. Here, he breaks down social walls and spiritual walls that kept Zacchaeus separated from God. Kids today might identify with the people in the Bible event. Like Zacchaeus they may believe they are not good enough to have Jesus come to them. Like other people of the village, they might think that, because of their right social standing, they are entitled to Jesus' attention. In both cases, Jesus breaks down walls to enter their lives personally.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus broke the wall of sin, death and the power of the devil when he gave his life for us on the cross. Because of that we have access to the Father and promise of life with him forever.

Jesus in us: Jesus fills us with the same compassion to reach out to those people whose walls keep them separated from God.

Jesus through us: Jesus can use us as his ambassadors to invite and include others into a relationship with him.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Use some type of prop for an example of a wall. This could be a room divider, large cardboard, or even a poster board.

Kids, you all know what a wall is, don't you? If you use your imagination and this was a wall right here, could I see the person on the other side? No, I couldn't. But could I talk to them? Yes, I could.

Now, have you ever felt like there was a wall between you and God? After all, you can't see him, can you? In a way, there is a wall. We can't see God face to face until we get to heaven, but God wants to be very close to us. He wants us to talk to him, and he wants to talk to us. Just because we can't see him doesn't mean that the wall between him and us can keep us apart.

In worship, God comes to us and tells us about who he is and how he wants to be our friend. In worship, we can also tell him that we love him, and we can receive the gift of salvation that Jesus gives us. So let's worship today. Even if you can't see God, think about him. When you sing the words, don't let them just be words you say without thinking. Think about what they mean and what you are saying to God. As you do, that wall between you and God comes down. He really wants to be a close friend to you, and you can be a close friend to him.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

The main theme is that Jesus breaks down walls that keep us from getting closer to him.

To demonstrate this, use a number of building blocks. If possible, use the larger cardboard building blocks. As you begin building with a number of these blocks, talk about how it is that people can put up walls between them and God. With each brick, you could give an example of an attitude that becomes part of that wall. Some of these would be as follows:

- “I’m good enough by myself. I really don’t need Jesus to get to heaven.”
- “I’m too bad. God couldn’t love me like I am.”
- “I’m embarrassed to come to God because he might see things in me that he doesn’t like.”
- “I really don’t need him anyway. I do fine by myself.”
- “I like to be my own boss. I don’t want God telling me what to do or having more rules.”
- “Things are fine just the way they are. I really don’t need Jesus to be a part of my life. I really don’t need to worship him. I’d rather just goof off in Kids Church.”
- “I don’t think God really hears and answers my prayers, so why pray?”

We need to confess our sins to God so that we may be forgiven and changed.

Lead the kids in confession by giving them quiet time to confess their sins personally. Mention some of those areas in a prayer led by the leader.

**God’s forgiveness is given to you because Jesus gave his life.
Because of that, Jesus wants to knock down any of those attitudes.
Since we have been forgiven, we can change and have new hearts.
Jesus can take away any obstacles. It’s just like this.**

At this point, smash the wall down using some type of object marked with a cross. This could be a baseball bat with a cross taped to it, or even a small cross itself. You might have the kids chant with you as you knock down the bricks, “God knocks down walls!”

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

You will need the prop of a dollar bill for this teaching. Bring a child forward to help you with the demonstration.

Kids what I have here is a dollar. Is money a good thing? Yes, it's a good thing. God made all things, and he gives us money to help provide for all of our needs. But can money ever be a bad thing? If we love it too much, did you know it can be a wall? Look what it can do.

Hold the money over the child's eyes.

Money can blind us to God. If we love money so much and think money can make us happy, then it's hard to see God is the one who gives us all things.

Now place the money in the child's hand and fist it tight.

If we think money is too important to us, we try to hang onto it too tightly. Then we forget how to share. With our hands closed like this, all we can hang onto is money. It keeps us from opening our hands and sharing with others. When we do that, God fills our open hand with our blessings.

Finally, put the money under the child's shoe.

When we spend money only on ourselves, it doesn't do anyone else any good. God gives us money to share with him so that it can be his feet to take Jesus' message to the whole world.

Place the dollar on top of the foot.

Our offerings help churches around the world give the good news of other people. So, it is important for us to share our money and not let

money become a wall between God and us. Anyone who has their offerings today can bring them. If you forgot to bring your offering, remember to do so next week. Don't let money be a wall that keeps you from God. Don't love money more than him. Let money be a bridge to help others come to know Jesus.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Play the large group game “Streets and Alleys.” Since our theme for today is that God breaks down walls, you could rename the game as “The Wall Game.”

This game involves one or more kids as “chasers” and “chasees.” The large group of kids line up in rows with their arms straight out and their fingers touching. The second row should have a child directly behind a child in the first row. They should be at a distance so that if every child turns a quarter-turn to their right, keeping their arms out, they make a new row with the child that was formerly behind them. The large group of kids will have two positions – facing the front or turning to the right. A group leader will give commands to these actions by saying, “front wall” (having all the kids face the front) or “side wall” (having all kids turn to the right).

Try different variations of “chasers” and “chasees.” You might have two “chasers” and one “chasee”, or one “chaser” and two “chasees.” It might be best to have the leader give the group command so the kids understand the game. A child should soon take that role, though. The challenge of the game is to change the walls so that the “chasee” is caught. It becomes the lesson point for the day.

God wants to change the walls in our life that can bring us closer to him. He wants to break those walls down!

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Use the video by Family Entertainment Network that has the story of Zacchaeus. The video is, *The Animated Stories From the New Testament: Treasures in Heaven*. The last eight minutes of this tape focuses on Zacchaeus. This part begins right after blind Bartemaus is healed. Conclude the video by referring to Luke 19:1-9, and ask some questions about Zacchaeus.

What was a wall in his life that kept him from getting close to Jesus? *(His love for money, being hated by religious people, thinking he might not be good enough for God to love him.)*

Where did Zacchaeus go to see Jesus? *(Climbed the tree.)* **Why?** *(He was short.)*

Who invited whom to dinner? Did Zacchaeus invite Jesus, or did Jesus invite himself? *(Jesus invited himself.)*

Why was it surprising that Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house for dinner? *(He was a tax gatherer and considered a thief and robber.)* **How do you think Zacchaeus felt after Jesus came to his house?** *(Take various answers from the children.)*

What did Zacchaeus do after Jesus came there? *(He gave back more than the money he had stolen.)*

Because Jesus had accepted Zacchaeus and shown that he wanted to be his friend, Jesus knocked down some walls in Zacchaeus' life that kept him away from God and from other people. Jesus knocked down the wall of loving money too much. He knocked down the wall of cheating. He also knocked down the wall that Zacchaeus might have had toward God because Zacchaeus probably felt that he wasn't good enough for God to love him.

Application:

If more time is available for teaching, a very simple interactive lesson might be done. Invite six kids up to the stage and have handy six blank sheets of paper with a marker. Give each kid a different occupation or role. They can even help you come up with these. These could include doctor, fireman, teacher, etc. Be sure to have some roles that have little society value, such as criminal or homeless person.

Then ask someone to come and put the kids in order one through six as to who is most and least important. Then ask the kids which ones are not really good enough for God and which one is good enough.

Sometimes we think certain people are more valuable than others. If there are some people we don't like or we don't think are very valuable, we might not help them come to know Jesus.

Today's Bible event shows us how Jesus went to someone who was hated by all of his neighbors and the religious leaders. Jesus showed Zacchaeus that it wasn't a matter of trying to be good enough to be a friend of God. Instead, it is a question of God being so good that he wants to come inside the home of every person and give him or her salvation. Since God does that, it even breaks down the walls that we have against other people that we are prejudiced against.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- wall (could be room divider, large cardboard, poster board)

The Power of the Cross:

- building blocks
- baseball bat with cross taped to it

Offering:

- dollar bill

Bible Reading:

- video by Family Entertainment Network which has the story of Zacchaeus – *The Animated Stories From the New Testament: Treasures in Heaven*

Application (if time):

- six sheets of blank paper
- markers