



Hide and See!

Jesus Came for Everyone!

Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 26

Title: Hide and See! - Jesus Came for Everyone!
Author: Joanne Peters
Church: Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury AB
Text: Luke 19:1-10
Theme: Jesus knows where we are and wants to visit with us even when we are feeling sad or angry or guilty.

Needed:

a smaller child as a volunteer, one who won't mind being hidden for a while and climbing up on a pew or chair.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder if it is hard for outsiders to become insiders.
- I wonder if there are outsiders who would like to become insiders in our church.
- I wonder how we can help everyone that wants to, to see Jesus.

Gathering Activity:

Welcome the children as they arrive and encourage them to get ready for today's children's time by settling into a comfortable spot and preparing their hearts to learn something important about and from Jesus. Show them the story about Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10, and tell them that today's Gospel reading will be about Zacchaeus, a man who was short in size and short of honesty. He cheated people, and this made him unpopular.

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Story:

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, so he climbed up into a tree so he could see him as he passed by. _____ has agreed to help us learn the lesson that Jesus taught people in this Bible Story. _____ will go and stand behind a crowd of people. (*After the child has taken his/her place, ask the people in the rows in front of the hidden child to stand up, so that the volunteer child can't see you, or the rest of the children. Then ask the hidden child and the other children who have gathered for the story the following questions.*)

(ask the hidden child) Without moving, tell me what you see in front of you? Where do your parents think you are?

(ask the other children) Do you think that the parents of this child know where he/she is even though they can't see him/her? (Yes, because they pay attention to where their child is going and saw their child move behind the taller children.)

(ask the hidden child) How would you feel if there was a puppet show going here in our children's time and this was where you had to stand? Where would you rather be standing? Are you feeling like an insider or an outsider now?

Ask those who were standing to block the child's view to sit down and invite the child to stand on a chair or pew so he/she can see over the heads of the people between him/her and the children's group.

(ask the child volunteer): Which view is better? Are you feeling more like an insider now?

(ask the other children): What else could have been done so that the child that was hidden could see what was happening? (*The crowd in front of him / her could have moved to make room and helped the smaller child see.*)

Do you know how I feel about _____ being over there and not being able to see? I feel sad, because _____ belongs here, with the rest of us, and I know that _____ would like to be here with us, too.

_____, please come back now and join our circle. I think you felt a little sad being away from us. We want you to feel like an insider, so come back into our circle. We'll wait for you and try to understand what Jesus was teaching while you come back.

Jesus was sad, too, because he knew Zacchaeus wanted to be accepted, and Jesus helped it happen. Listen carefully to the Gospel reading a little later to see how Jesus helped him. The reason that I was sad to have _____ so far away from us is that he/she belongs here with the church's other children. Jesus wants us to be a community in which we all know that we belong to the church and to Jesus. Jesus wants all of us to be able get close to him. Coming here for children's time is like gathering on Jesus' lap. When we gather here, it is to know and remember that Jesus came for everyone, short and tall, nice and not-so-nice people. Jesus is happy that outsiders get to see him and become insiders.

Prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, for inviting outsiders to become insiders. Thank you for helping outsiders want to become insiders. Please fill us with your welcoming love, so that we can be loving and inviting like you. Amen.