COUNT ON IT

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 33:11 "But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever. What he wants to do will last for all time."
BIG IDEA: God has a plan!
SCRIPTURE: Luke 19:1-10 | Zacchaeus meets Jesus!

LIVE IT OUT: A new section to our KXP lessons, the LIVE IT OUT challenge will prompt kids to make the KXP lesson personal and give them something that encourages them to live out what The Bible is teaching us.

SERIES OVERVIEW

- Welcome back to another week of "Count On It"!
- This month, we've been learning about the special plans God has for His people.
- God's plans for us are way better than anything we could think of or plan for ourselves. He made a plan to save us through His Son, Jesus, and when we know, love, and follow Jesus, we make a covenant promise with God to be in His family forever.
- Sometimes plans change and we get disappointed, but God has promised a very special plan for us that we can count on. We can count on Him to always keep His Word.
- Today, we will learn about God's special plan for His children to follow Jesus and share the Good News with others!

Luke 19:1-10 | Zacchaeus Meets Jesus

- Our story today comes from the book of Luke in the New Testament. The New Testament is where we read and learn about the time Jesus spent on Earth.
- Today, we are talking about God's plan for sinners, and we'll learn how Jesus is the plan!
- In our story, Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem and was passing through the city of Jericho.
- Jericho is called the City of Palms and was considered an oasis or paradise in the middle of the desert. Some even say Jericho is the oldest city in the world.

Luke 19:1 "He entered Jericho and was passing through."

- Today's story introduces us to a man named Zacchaeus who went to great heights to see Jesus. We'll learn how Jesus wanted to meet Zacchaeus, too, and how after Zacchaeus met Jesus, his life was changed forever!
- All the people in Jericho hoped to see or meet Jesus on His way through the city, including a man named, Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:2 "And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich."

- Zacchaeus was a tax collector. His job was to make sure people paid whatever money they owed the government. We still pay taxes today, just like in the Bible. But Zacchaeus was dishonest – sometimes he took more than he was supposed to. He had lots of money and power, and people thought he was a bad man and did not like him because he took extra money to keep for himself.

Luke 19:3 "And Zacchaeus was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd, he could not, because he was small in stature."

- Zacchaeus was not a tall man. Many people were gathered in the streets to see Jesus, but Zacchaeus couldn't see over the crowds!
- Have you ever had a hard time seeing over a group of people? Has your dad ever put you on his shoulders so you could get a better look? Man, that is frustrating when you can't see something exciting around you!
- But Zacchaeus had an idea! He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed up a sycamore tree – a super tall tree with lots of leafy branches. Climbing that tree was probably hard work, but Zacchaeus must have thought it was worth it to get a glimpse of Jesus!

Luke 19:4-5 "So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for Jesus was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

- Wait… did you hear that? When Jesus saw Zacchaeus in the tree, He asked Zacchaeus, a disliked tax collector, to come down from the tree so He could go to his house!
- What would you do if Jesus said that to you? Let's see how Zacchaeus responded to Jesus!

Luke 19:6 "So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully."

- Of course, Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed Jesus joyfully!
- But the people of Jericho were angry. They could not believe Jesus wanted to go to a sinner's house - that Jesus wanted to stay at a tax collector's home! This man had stolen their money, they probably didn't think he was worthy of Jesus.
- But that's why Jesus came! That was God's plan – for Jesus to come and save sinners, people aren't perfect!

Luke 19:7-8 "And when they saw it, they all grumbled, 'He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.'"

- When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he was changed! Zacchaeus wanted to give away half of his money to the poor, and then pay everyone back the money he had taken from them times four! Talk about a changed heart!
- Jesus ignored the angry crowd; he wanted to go to Zacchaeus's house because he came to earth to meet and save the sinners - like you and me! That was God's plan to save us! He doesn't care that we aren't perfect; He wants to meet us where we are, just like He did Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:9a,10 "…and Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house ... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

- No one else understood why Jesus would go to Zacchaeus's house, but He went to share the Good News with Zacchaeus anyway.
- God doesn't just want us to share messages with people who are like us and that we like – He wants us to share His Good News with everyone.

SMALL GROUP: REVIEW & DISCUSSION

1) What book of the Bible was our story from? What is special about this part of the Bible?
   - Our story is from the book of Luke in the New Testament. The New Testament is where we read about Jesus' life on Earth.
2) Why did Zacchaeus run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree?
   - He couldn't see over the crowd of people, but he really wanted to see Jesus as He passed through.
3) What did Jesus do when He saw Zacchaeus in the tree?
   - Jesus told Zacchaeus to come down, so He could go to his house to stay.
4) Why were the people mad that Jesus wanted to go to Zacchaeus's house?
   - The people did not like Zacchaeus because he had taken more money from them than he was supposed to! They thought Jesus shouldn't hang out with sinners. God loves everyone, no matter our differences! Tall, short, rich, poor, girl, boy – Jesus loves us all!
5) People are changed when they meet Jesus. How was Zacchaeus changed?
   - Zacchaeus was sorry for what he had done wrong and asked for forgiveness. He lived differently. Instead of taking money from people, Zacchaeus gave back four times more than he had stolen.
6) When we follow Jesus, He wants us to live differently. What can followers of Jesus do to be more like Him?
   - Answers will vary.
7) The crowd didn't want to be around Zacchaeus, but Jesus was kind to Zacchaeus and even though other people hated him. How can you be like Jesus this week at school? At home?

PRAYER

Prayer: *Dear God, thank You for always wanting to meet us exactly where we are. You sent Your Son, Jesus, to save us. He came to meet and change lost sinners like us. Please help us want to be like You, even when it means trying hard things or making tough choices. Help us ignore the crowd when they're saying things that aren't from You. Thank You for reminding us that You want everyone to be changed just like Zacchaeus. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

LIVE IT OUT CHALLENGE

Challenge: Make It Right!
Repent means to turn from what is wrong and follow Jesus. When we accept God's rescue plan for us and become followers of Jesus, we have to repent. Whenever we do something wrong as followers of Jesus, He is always there with open arms to lead us when we repent.

- **Scouts**: Draw a line down the middle of the whiteboard. On the left, make a list of things you have done wrong. On the right side, write how you could repent and make it right with the person you have wronged (like asking for forgiveness).
- **Navigators**: Draw a line down the middle of your blank sheet of paper. On the left, make a list of things you have done wrong. On the right side, write how you could repent and make it right with the person you have wronged (like asking for forgiveness).