

God Values All People

Quarter 11 | Lesson 8 | Character Development

1. **Connecting:** Do an activity to understand how people are honoured in the community.
2. **Teaching:** Learn how God loves all people from the examples of Moses, the Samaritan woman, and Zacchaeus (Exodus 2—4; John 4; Luke 19; Matthew 10:29–31).
3. **Responding:** Talk about how to show honour for others and practice honouring others.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles

Optional Supplies:

- *The NIV Action Study Bible*
- Memory Verse Poster
- Pencils
- Student Pages

Before class, clear an area at least 4–5 meters long for the Connecting activity. If necessary, move furniture before class to make a space, or do the activity outside.

Also, tear out the page at the end of this lesson with the descriptions of Bible people to use during the Teaching section.

Teacher Devotion

*All the people saw this and began to mutter,
“He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”*
Luke 19:7

Zacchaeus was a hated man. As a Jewish tax collector, others in his community considered him a traitor and a cheater. So when Jesus visited Zacchaeus’ house, He turned the human idea of honour upside down. Jesus chose to honour Zacchaeus even when no one else did. This type of honour may seem confusing or wrong. After all, honour should only be given to those who deserve it. But this is not God’s way. We are all sinners, just like Zacchaeus. God chose to honour us when we did not deserve it, just as He chooses to honour every other person He created.

Think of someone in your life you have considered unworthy of honour. Then turn those ideas about honour upside down. Instead of thinking of that person as less worthy of honour, think of her as worthy of more honour. How can you show her more honour? Ask God to turn your heart upside down and make it more like His.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do an activity to understand how people are honoured in the community.

Greet students as they arrive. Invite them to share their experiences interacting with disabled people since the last lesson. Then ask them to think about who the most important people in their lives are and why. Allow them to share with you and with others in the class.

When you are ready to begin class, have the students stand in the cleared area of your teaching space. The area should be at least 4–5 meters long.

I will say the name of a group, type of person, or occupation in our community. Think about how highly these people are honoured in our community on a scale of 1–10.

Point to 1 end of the cleared space.

This end represents 1, which means not honoured at all. If you think the group is not honoured by the community, you will stand at that end.

Point to the other end of the clear space.

This end represents 10, which means highly honoured. If you think the group is highly honoured in our community, you will stand at that end.

If you think the group is honoured somewhere between 1 and 10, stand at the place you think represents that group. For example, if you think the group is honoured in average ways, you may stand in the middle of the line to represent a 5.

Use the list below or think of your own. After you say a person or group, give the students time to move to the place on the line they think represents the amount of honour that group of people usually receives. Ask 1–2 students to share with the class why they chose the place they did. Repeat these steps 4–5 times, naming a different group of people each time. Be sure to choose groups that represent different ages, genders, and education levels.

Doctor
Mother
People with disabilities
Church leaders
Teachers
Widows

Orphans
Bus drivers
Political leaders
Elderly people
Teens

When you are finished, gather the students together. Have them sit in their usual area.

- **What makes people important in our community and culture?**
- **What groups of people or jobs are honoured most highly in our community? Why do you think that is true?**
- **What groups of people or jobs are not honoured in our community? Why do you think that is true?**

In almost every community around the world, people judge one another based on things such as money, education, social status, and even appearance. People are honoured based on what their jobs are or how much money or power they have.

Humans may judge one another's importance based on status, ability, and money, but God does not. God made every person in His image. Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable, disabled and able-bodied—all people are of equal and great value to God! He loves each of us completely!

2. Teaching: Learn how God loves all people from the examples of Moses, the Samaritan woman, and Zacchaeus (Exodus 2—4; John 4; Luke 19; Matthew 10:29–31).

Many of the people we read about in the Bible were not highly honoured by the people in their communities. Yet God chose to love them and use them to accomplish His purposes. Let's learn about a few of those people.

Divide the class into 3 groups. Have each group sit in a different area around your space. Give each group 1 of the Bible people from the page you tore out from the end of the lesson. Explain that each group has a different person. Their job is to become experts on that person. They will choose someone in their group to read the card out loud. Then their group will discuss the questions together. If possible, give each group a Bible to read more about their person. When the groups are finished discussing their Bible people, they will teach the rest of the class about that person.

Walk around and listen to each group as they learn about and discuss their Bible person. Answer any questions they have and encourage all of the students to participate in the discussion.

For your reference, the descriptions of the people from the Bible are included here.

Moses (Exodus 2—4)

Moses was a Hebrew who lived in Egypt during a time when all the Hebrew people were slaves.

When Moses was a baby, his mother hid him in a basket and placed it in a river to keep him from being killed by the pharaoh of Egypt. The pharaoh's daughter found him and raised him as her son.

As an adult, Moses had a speech impediment. He was "slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10).

When Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he "killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (Exodus 2:12).

When Moses was 83 years old, God called him to lead the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt. Moses obeyed God and asked Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go. But Pharaoh refused. God sent 10 plagues to teach the Egyptians and the Israelites about His great power. Finally, the Pharaoh let the Hebrews go free.

Optional: If you are using *The NIV Action Study Bible*, the students can look at the illustrations of Moses' life near Deuteronomy 27.

- **What do you think most Egyptians thought of Moses? Why?**
- **What do you think many Hebrews thought of Moses? Why?**
- **How did God honour Moses?**

Samaritan Woman (John 4)

When Jesus was traveling through Samaria, He arrived at a well at about noon and rested. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked, "Will you give me a drink." (John 4:7). Most women went to the well in the morning, when it was cool. But this woman was at the well by herself.

Samaritans were hated by many Jews because their ancestors had married foreigners who worshipped false gods.

At the time of Jesus, it would not have been appropriate for women to talk to men they did not know.

The Samaritan woman had been married 5 times and was living with a man who was not her husband.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that He is the Messiah, the Saviour. She went back to town to tell the people about Jesus, and “many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony” (John 4:39).

- **What do you think most people in the community thought of the Samaritan woman? Why?**
- **How do you think Jesus felt about her? Explain.**
- **How did Jesus show honour to the Samaritan woman?**

Zacchaeus (Luke 19)

Zacchaeus was a Jewish tax collector. Jewish tax collectors were hated by other Jewish people because they worked for the Roman government, and the Romans mistreated the Jewish people. Tax collectors were also known for cheating people out of money.

Zacchaeus was a short man. When Jesus came through his town, Zacchaeus “climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him” (Luke 19:4).

Jesus looked up at Zacchaeus and said, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5).

Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his home. Zacchaeus sold half of his possessions and gave the money to the poor. He also paid back 4 times the amount that he had stolen from others.

When the people discovered that Jesus had gone to Zacchaeus’ house, they said, “He has gone in to be the guest of a sinner” (Luke 19:7).

Optional: If you are using *The NIV Action Study Bible*, the students can look at the illustration of Zacchaeus talking to Jesus near Luke 19.

- **What do you think the people in Zacchaeus’ town thought of him? Why?**
- **How do you think Jesus felt about him? Explain.**
- **How did Jesus show honour to Zacchaeus?**

Give groups about 10 minutes to read about their Bible people and discuss the questions. Then have each group share what they learned with the rest of the class. Group members can take turns reading their cards out loud or telling the class about their Bible people using their own words. Ask groups to read the questions at the bottom of their cards and share their answers.

After all 3 groups have shared, gather the whole class together for discussion.

Moses, the Samaritan woman, and Zacchaeus were not honoured by the people in their communities. Moses was a Hebrew with a speech impediment living in Egypt. The Samaritan woman was from a despised ethnic group. Zacchaeus was very short.

- **What are some things that could cause people in our community not to be treated with honour?**

Allow 2–3 teens to share their answers.

Moses, the Samaritan woman, and Zacchaeus also made choices that affected the way others treated them. Moses killed a man, the Samaritan woman was unfaithful in marriage, and Zacchaeus cheated people out of money.

- **What are some things people do in our community that could cause others not to treat them with honour?**

Allow 2–3 teens to share their answers.

God loved Moses, the Samaritan woman, and Zacchaeus, just as He loves all of us. We cannot do anything to make Him love us more or less. Listen to what the Bible tells us about how God values us.

Have a student read Matthew 10:29–31 aloud from the Bible. If that is not possible, the passage is printed here for you. If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:29–31

- **What does this verse tell us about God?**
- **According to this passage, how does God feel about each person?**

God's love for us is so great that He honours us even though we do not deserve it. The Bible tells us that we are all sinners, and our sin separates us from God. But God made a way for us to be forgiven for our sins. He treated us with honour when we did not deserve it. That is an amazing gift!

Teacher Tip: If you have teens in your class who want to learn more about God's gift of salvation, invite them to talk with you after class. You can use the Salvation Path to help you share the gospel message with them. You can download it below.

3. Responding: Think about how to show honour to others and practice honouring others.

All people are created in God's image, and He loves us all completely. Often we do not treat each other with that kind of honour. But God calls us to honour one another as He does.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:10

- **What are some ways we can treat others in our community with honour?**

Allow 4–5 teens to share their ideas. Suggestions could include give them a compliment, pray for them, help them with a problem or need, share a meal with them, give them a small, homemade gift, ask them for advice, listen to them, and treat them with kindness and compassion.

Divide the teens into groups of 3–4.

With your group, think of some people in our community who are not usually treated with honour. Do not say their names; just describe why they are not honoured.

- **How do you think most people in our community would describe the person you are thinking of?**
- **What are some things about that person that are worthy of honour?**
- **What is 1 way you can show honour to these people?**

Give the teens a few minutes to discuss their thoughts.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, the teens can use their pages to write letters to people they would like to show honour to.

It is possible there have been times when you have not been treated with honour. Maybe you have faced challenges or made poor choices as Moses, the Samaritan woman, and Zacchaeus did. You do not need to share these things with your group. Ask God to help you to find your honour in Him. Ask Him to help you treat others as you would want to be treated instead of how you have been treated.

Close with a blessing based on Matthew 10:29–31:

Blessing: May our loving God, who has numbered the hairs on your head, give you opportunities to show others His love by honouring them. May you see yourself as precious and worthy of honour, as God does.

Family Connection: Encourage the students to ask their family members, “Who in our community is treated with honour? Who is not?” They can then share that God loves all people equally and completely.

Lead the teens in singing this quarter’s song, if possible. “Holy Forever” by Chris Tomlin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkHgxCemCRk>