

The Dance of Joy

⚡ Intensity Level—High

Object

Rafters will reinforce the Rapid Reminder while playing a dance competition game.

Preparation

Make sure the recreation area is safe and ready for play. Create a dance floor with plenty of room to move.

Let's Play!

In our Bible story, Zacchaeus did a lot of moving around to meet Jesus. In this game, we're going to turn some of those moves into a dance competition!

1. Have Rafters find places on the dance floor where they have room to move.
2. Instruct Rafters to mirror you as you demonstrate these motions and call out the cues.

▲ **I wanna' see!**

(stretch up on tiptoes)

▲ **Climb that tree!**

(move arms and legs up and down as if climbing)

▲ **Lookin' for Jesus!**

(shade eyes with hands)

▲ **Get down from that tree!** (slowly

lower body to ground)

▲ **Walkin' with Jesus!**

(march in place)

▲ Feel free to add more of your own moves as desired!

When I start the music, follow me as I call out and perform the dance motions. Keep watching me, though; I may change it up! If you miss one, you must move to the edge of the dance floor. Last one still dancing wins!

3. Play "Zacchaeus (Wee Little Man)" and lead the Rafters in the dance moves. As you go, start mixing up the pattern and changing the moves faster and faster until you have a winner.

Bible Tie-Ins!

▲ **In the beginning of our Bible story, what did Zacchaeus want?** *(to see Jesus)*

▲ **How did Zacchaeus get what he wanted?** *(climbed a tree)*

Zacchaeus not only saw Jesus; he walked and talked with him, shared his home with him, and learned that Jesus wanted to be his friend. This gave Zacchaeus incredible, unexpected joy! We can have joy because Jesus always sees us, loves us, and wants to be our friend, too!

Let's say our Rapid Reminder together: *(with Rafters)* **Find Joy on the River!**



Bible Story

Jesus Walks with Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Rapid Reminder

Find Joy on the River!

Rafting Ready Verse

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." Isaiah 43:2

Materials

- ▲ Rolling River Rampage **Complete Music CD** or mp3 file of "Zacchaeus (Wee Little Man)"
- ▲ CD player or music streaming device

Teacher Tip

Consider creating a dance competition feel by decorating your space with colorful lights, a mirror ball, etc.!



SESSION 3

Bible Story
Jesus Walks with
Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1-10

Rapid Reminder
Find Joy on the River!

Rafting Ready Verse

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” Isaiah 43:2

Materials

△ Rolling River Rampage
Logo Balloons

optional:

△ 1 table tennis paddle
per Rafter

⚠ Safety Tip

Check for latex allergies within your group and/or make a plan to use latex-free balloons.

🌐 Test Church Tip

This game is also a great fit for Session 5 of VBS!

Bible Balloon Volley

⚡ Intensity Level—Medium

Object

Rafters will reinforce the Rafting Ready Verse while playing a volleyball-style game with balloons.

4. Begin the game for real!
5. Last Rafter standing is the Bible Balloon Volley Champion!

Preparation

Make sure the recreation area is safe and ready for play. Blow up balloons.

Let's Play!

Our Rafting Ready Verse at Rolling River Rampage says, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” We’re going to play a fun game to help us remember our Rafting Ready Verse!

1. Demonstrate how to volley a balloon (keep it up in the air) using your hands or a paddle.

Your goal in this game is to keep your balloon from hitting the floor. Let's practice!

2. Allow Rafters to practice with their own balloons for a minute.

Now, each time you tap your balloon into the air, say one word of the Rafting Ready Verse. To win the game, you must say the entire Rafting Ready Verse correctly without letting your balloon hit the ground and without running into another Rafter.

3. Do one practice round of volleying while reciting.

Bible Tie-Ins!

- ▲ **What was the easiest part of this challenge? The hardest?**
- ▲ **How did you feel when your balloon touched the ground, or when it didn't go where you wanted it to go?**

Life isn't always perfect. We all have our ups and downs. Sometimes, things are great and you feel like you're floating! Other times, things aren't so good and you feel like you're crashing to the ground. Our Rafting Ready Verse promises that God is with us at all times. God will never leave us!

River Rock Collectors

⚡ Intensity Level—Low

Object

Rafters will reinforce the Bible story by playing a teamwork game.

Preparation

Make sure the recreation area is safe and ready for play. Place tarps on the edges of the play area, one for each team. Spread the stones throughout the center of the play area.

Let's Play!

In today's Bible story, we learned that Zacchaeus was a rich tax-collector. In this game, we're going to be collectors of river rocks!

1. Divide Rafters into teams, preferably 5-6 per team.
2. When you say "Go," invite the teams to collect as many river rocks as they can and take them to their team's tarp. Optional: Use spoons to collect the rocks.
3. Play until the stones have all been collected. Have teams sit around their tarps.

Tax collectors in Jesus' time sometimes collected more taxes than they were supposed to. When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he changed. He decided to give back the extra money he took!

I see that not everyone has the same number of rocks. Let's work

together to share so each team has an equal amount.

4. Invite Rafters to work together to figure out the solution. They will likely be excited to find a way to solve the problem.

Optional variation:

Have Rafters count their rocks. Then say, "I forgot to collect the two-rock tax." Take a handful of rocks from each team. Discuss the reactions to this decision. Next, the leader apologizes and give teams 4 times the amount of rocks taken from them. Discuss the connection with the story of Zacchaeus.

Bible Tie-Ins!

- ▲ **How did it feel to share your river rocks with others?**
- ▲ **What are some other ways we can be sharers in our lives?**

It was fun to get as many rocks as we could for ourselves, but it can also feel good to share with those who don't have as much as we do. Zacchaeus used to find joy in gathering money, but Jesus helped him to find even more joy in sharing with those in need!



Bible Story

Jesus Walks with Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Rapid Reminder

Find Joy on the River!

Rafting Ready Verse

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." Isaiah 43:2

Materials

- ▲ a large number of river rocks and/or stones (available at craft supply stores)
- ▲ 1 large blue tarp or sheet per team

Optional:

- ▲ plastic spoons



Bible Story
Jesus Walks with Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1-10

Rapid Reminder
Find Joy on the River!

Rafting Ready Verse

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” Isaiah 43:2

Materials

Up and Down

- △ 1 small toddler slide
- △ 2 cutouts of a tree, about the same height as the slide

River Rock Collecting

- △ a large number of river rocks (available at craft supply stores)
- △ 1 small wading pool or other shallow container

⚠️ **Safety Tip**

Make sure your river rocks are larger than mouth-size to avoid choking hazards!



Preschool Recreation

Up and Down

Preparation

Make sure the recreation area is safe and ready for play. Attach one cutout to each side of the slide's ladder.

Let's Play!

In today's Bible story, we learned that Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus better. In this game, we will practice climbing a tree, too!

1. Invite Rafters to sit in a circle around the slide.
2. Choose one Rafter to stand, climb the ladder, and slide down.
3. Instruct that same Rafter to walk around the circle and pat the heads of the Rafters while ALL Rafters say the Rafting Ready Verse: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you” (one word per pat).
4. Invite the last Rafter patted to stand, climb the ladder, and slide down. It is now her/his turn to go around the circle.
5. Continue play until every Rafter has had a chance to participate.

Bible Tie-Ins!

▲ **Let's repeat our Rapid Reminder. How did this game bring us joy?**

Zacchaeus felt joy when he met Jesus. Knowing God loves all of us bring us joy. Let's say our Rapid Reminder: Find Joy on the River!

River Rock Collecting

Preparation

Make sure the recreation area is safe and ready for play. Place the pool in the play area with enough water to cover the bottom. Spread river rocks throughout the play area.

Let's Play!

In our Bible story, we learned that Zacchaeus was a rich tax-collector. In this game, we're going to be collectors of river rocks!

1. When you say “Go,” invite Rafters to collect as many river rocks as they can.
 2. Instruct them to place the river rocks into the wading pool.
 3. Play until the stones have all been collected. Bring the Rafters back to sit down together.
- At first, Zacchaeus wasn't kind to people. When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he changed! He gave back the extra money he took!**
4. Invite Rafters to remove the rocks from the pool and return them to the play area.

Bible Tie-Ins!

▲ **Have you ever found something that made you really excited?**

When Zacchaeus found Jesus, he was filled with joy. Knowing God loves all of us brings us joy!