**Children’s liturgy – Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)**

**Preparation of the worship space**

Colour: Green

Props: Coloured pens and pencils, large cardboard tree and card for making lots of leaves and the face of Zacchaeus.

**Song suggestions:** Seek ye first the kingdom of God *(820, Laudate)*

**Welcome:** Today Jesus stays at the house of Zacchaeus - a tax collector, and shows us that everyone is loved. Let’s find out more…

**Opening prayer:** Saving God, you welcome everyone into your kingdom. Help us to be welcoming to everyone that we meet. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Wisdom 11:22-12:2

**Psalm:** Psalm 144:1-2, 8-11, 13-14. R. Cf. v.1

**Gospel acclamation:** everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: ‘Halle, halle, halle’ (Caribbean) from ‘Sing With the World’, Alison Adam & John Bell; ‘Alleluia’ (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; ‘Celtic Alleluia’ (traditional); ‘Alleluia! Raise the Gospel’ from ‘Go Before Us’, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

**Gospel:** Luke 19:1-10

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today's reading?

Jesus tells us that while he was in Jericho, a man called Zacchaeus who was very rich from being a tax collector wanted to meet him. Zacchaeus was so short and there was such a big crowd that he had to climb a tree in order to see Jesus.

Can you remember what Jesus said to Zacchaeus? Why did the crowds get cross?

The crowds were cross because they thought Zacchaeus was a sinner – a person who was not always good and kind.

Zacchaeus really wanted to change his life but didn't know how to do it without someone helping him. He believed that Jesus was the only one who could help.

If Zacchaeus was so rich why did this not make him happy? What does this tell us about money and possessions today?

Jesus looked at this man who was looking for him. Jesus had a way of seeing straight into the heart. Jesus could see that Zacchaeus wanted to change.

Zacchaeus changed his life because of Jesus and now Zacchaeus wants to have better relationships with everyone he knows and with God.

Zacchaeus promises to give away half of his things to those who are poor and to pay back the money he has taken unfairly from other people. He is trying to make things right. Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his home and into his heart.

When we let Jesus into our lives our relationships with each other are much better.

God is always ready to make a home with us. Do you make room for God in your heart and in your home?

Can you welcome God into your life this week and try to make things right with anyone you have hurt or upset? How will you do that?

What change will you make in how you treat others this week?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or*

*you can use the suggestions below.*

Jesus is ready to help us change today and always so we pray together...

We pray for the Church: that it may be a place where everyone is welcome and inspire a change in the lives of all those who hear its message. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our brothers and sisters in every country: that they may have their fair share of the good things God has given for all. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that through God’s help we may make changes so that all people may live together in peace. Lord in your mercy...

**Closing prayer** Welcoming Lord, come and stay with us. Fill our hearts with your love. Help us to show kindness and mercy to everyone we meet. Amen

**Activity suggestions**

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and to write words on the leaves of the tree that explain how Zacchaeus made his relationship with Jesus and with others right again. E.g. love, forgiveness, mercy, justice, peace, kindness, prayer, happy, blessed, grace etc.

Ask the children to make a large cardboard tree and to stick lots of leaves on it with the words above on. Make a cardboard face of Zacchaeus. Leave room on the tree to put Zacchaeus' face on among the leaves. You can first hide him when he hasn't seen Jesus and then make him appear when he has spoken to Jesus.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to make a change to their lives to welcome Jesus in and to try to make their relationships with other people better.