



## Messy Money

What's money got to do with faith? Or what's faith got to do with money?

### Activity time

You might want to read the story first from [Luke 19:1-10](#) to remind everyone what happened. (The name is usually pronounced 'Zack-ee-us'.)

#### 1 The money tree



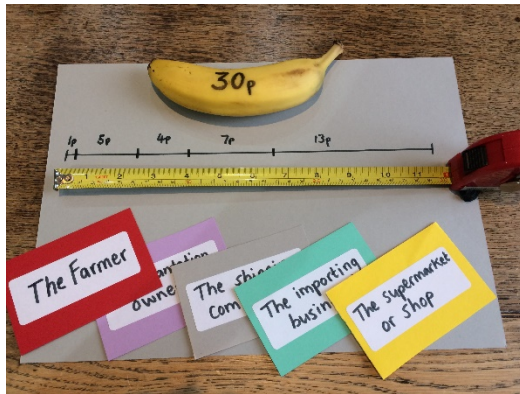
**You will need:** A3 piece of paper with a drawn outline of a sycamore tree with trunk and branches; brown and green card; scissors; glue sticks; a variety of coins to act as templates; pencils

Draw around real coins to create card versions which should be cut out. Cover the outline of the tree with these card coins – using brown for the trunk and branches and green for the leaves.

**Talk about** Zacchaeus climbing a tree to see Jesus – he wanted something more than money. We often joke that ‘money doesn’t grow on trees’, and indeed the excessive spending plans of governments are often mocked because they depend on some sort of ‘magic money tree’.

What things can money not buy? We plant a small seed in the hope that it will grow into a tree to shelter and provide for others, even if we ourselves don’t see the tree reach its full height. What could we use our money for today that could benefit future generations?

## 2 Fairmoney



**You will need: a ripe yellow banana; a measuring tape or ruler with 30cm visible; paper and pens; five cards marked as: farmer, plantation owner, shipping company, importing business, supermarket or shop; a plate of banana pieces, cut up ready to eat**

(This game is based on the [banana split game from CAFOD](#).) This activity is a money challenge. The banana you can see costs you 30p in the shops, but there are lots of people involved in bringing that banana from overseas into your home. How much of this 30p do you think goes to everyone involved? Work out your answers together and mark off the division of the 30p on a 30cm line that they draw. Provide the figures below or make it harder by guessing (and then reveal the figures, which could be written on the back of the cards).

Here are the approximate figures:

The farmer – 1p

The plantation owner – 5p

The shipping company – 4p

The importing business – 7p

The supermarket or shop – 13p

**Talk about** how Zacchaeus took more money from people than he should have done. So poor people really suffered. The trading and money systems of the world can be unfair for some of the poorest. [Fairtrade](#) is a movement that seeks to make the financial share fairer, particularly for the farmers in this example. But are you prepared to pay more for a Fairtrade item in order for this to happen, or would you instead go for the cheapest possible option? There is a justice issue whenever we spend or invest our money.

You might like to use the curved banana to become either a smile or a frown depending on what people say and think about all this!

### 3 Money game



**You will need: a whiteboard (or kitchen worktop with a strip of paper at the edge to mark out the numbered lines) which provides a good slippery surface (roughly 14x20”), with ten equally spaced lines to create nine ‘home’ spaces, the bottom line being four inches from the start; 2p coins (or equivalent); a score-pad; pencils**

Zacchaeus used his money to make more money – to keep him ‘winning in the game of life’, you might say! There are several board games linked to making, spending and investing money, such as: Payday, Monopoly, Go for Broke, shove halfpenny. We’re going to play shove halfpenny.

The aim is to shove the 2p coins up the board to land in between the lines. To do this, you position the 2p coin just overlapping the start line and then use any part of your hand to propel it forward. There is one point for every coin that lands in between the lines. The aim is for a player to be first to score two points for each of the nine sections. Each player has five coins to play with each round.

**Talk about** the competitive drive that many of us have and how this affects attitudes to money, riches and poverty. I wonder what motivated Zacchaeus to be the man he was. Was it greed? Revenge? Ambition? Whatever it was, it makes his transformation on meeting Jesus even more amazing.

### 4 Edible coins



**You will need: packets of round biscuits – can be different sizes; icing sugar; water; yellow food colouring; teaspoons; plates; cocktail sticks; edible decorations**

Prepare the icing with the water, icing sugar and food colouring so that it is fairly thick. Use the back of a teaspoon to smooth the icing on to your biscuits. Use a cocktail stick to engrave your biscuits with

monetary values for different sorts of coins, or use edible decorations. If you have enough differently sized biscuits, maybe you can create on a paper plate the shape of a person. This could be 'Mr Money-Bags' Zacchaeus, who gives away his money when he meets with Jesus.

**Talk about** what you think Jesus and Zacchaeus talked about when Jesus came to Zacchaeus' house for tea.

## Celebration

You can find a [retelling of the story](#) on YouTube and it's in most family Bibles in story form.

Jesus changed Zacchaeus completely, and one way that showed was in the way Zacchaeus used his money.

Put some money or a credit/debit card where everyone can see it.

Ask whichever of these questions seem most interesting:

- What would you all love to spend the money on, if it was yours?
- What would be the worst possible thing to do with it?
- What would be some good things to do with it?
- Whose money is it, do you think, in the end?
- Do you think Zacchaeus was a happier person when he kept his money for himself or when he gave so much of it away?
- Why do you think Jesus never had any money?
- What do you think money is for?
- A lot of people who follow Jesus give a tenth of what they earn back to God – they give it to the church or to charity or to people in need. What do you think of that holy habit, whether it's 10p from your £1 pocket money or £1,000 from your £10,000 wages?

Pray together: Lord God, thank you that we can use our money and other resources to serve you. Help us to use our money for the good of others and for your kingdom. Amen

You could say the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Messy Grace](#).

## Mealtime

You could serve mini pizzas with toppings arranged in the shape of numbers or go for a money-themed feast with all things circular, e.g. burgers, rolls, round pasta wheel shapes, slices of carrot/cucumber or banana/kiwi/orange, bagels, scones, doughnuts.

This session was adapted from the *Messy Money* Messy Church session by Martyn Payne and ECCR, available from the [Messy Church website](#). The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) helps Christians make wise choices in their use of money in order to create a more just and sustainable world. ECCR has a national programme called [Money Makes Change](#), which provides Christians with simple, accessible resources to spark conversations about faith and money.

[Visit the ECCR website](#)