

SHARK ATTACK

Thirteen-year-old surfer, Bethany Hamilton, lost her arm in a shark attack but never lost her faith.

Bethany began her career as a surfer with her first competition at the age of 11. By the age of 13, she was at the top of her sport.

Her lifelong dream was to become a professional surfer. But on 31 October 2003, that dream was nearly shattered when she was attacked by a shark while surfing in Hawaii.

As Bethany was paddling her board to the next wave, she felt a violent blow to her shoulder. It was a 4-metre tiger shark. With one bite, it severed her arm, taking it off at the shoulder. Bethany was in shock, bleeding badly and in great pain, but she knew that her only hope of survival was to get to the beach. She pushed her pain aside and began to paddle with one arm. 'I knew God was with me,' she said.

Once on shore, she was rushed to hospital. Her first question after surgery was 'When can I surf again?'

Although Bethany was left with only one arm, the attack did not destroy her eagerness to keep riding the waves. In fact, it just made her determination to surf stronger.



'I know I have something important to say. People need to hear how Jesus helped me,' says Bethany.

Bethany has chosen to use her experience to help others overcome difficult times. 'People I don't even know come up to me. I guess they see me as a symbol of courage and inspiration. One thing hasn't changed—and that's how I feel when I'm riding a wave. It's like, here I am. I'm still here. It's still me and my board—in God's ocean!'

What choices did Bethany have?

How might you have reacted in this situation?

Who do I want to be?

Purpose

For students to understand that people can make wise choices in life, with God's help.

Students will reflect this by:

- giving examples of people making wise decisions
- understanding how Zacchaeus allowed Jesus to take control and change his life
- making wise decisions in real-life situations by following Jesus' example.

Preparation

- Read Luke 19:1–10 (story of Zacchaeus); Ephesians 2:4–10 (unity with Christ); Romans 3:24 (God freely accepts us and sets us free from our sins).
- Choose from options and activities and photocopy worksheets as required.
 - BLM 7 *Shark attack*
- Choose a suitable song for this session from *Sounds and Songs for CRE CD* or from the CCES web site song list.

Biblical Reflection

- Be familiar with the historical background—tax collectors were hated because they worked for the Roman occupying power and because they were often dishonest (that is, they practised extortion). In the eyes of his fellow Jews, Zacchaeus could never be forgiven for being a tax collector for the Romans, and for cheating Jewish people to make himself rich.
- Jesus would not accept other Jewish people's assessment of Zacchaeus. He accepted Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus repented and allowed Jesus to take control and change his life.
- Letting Jesus take control of your life will help you, like Zacchaeus, make a new start.

Learn by Talking

It is often suggested in CRE teaching materials that students discuss together in twos or threes. This gives all the students the chance to voice their opinions. Listening and talking about their ideas with others gives students the opportunity to test their ideas, and to develop respect for and to value the opinions of others. Do not feel you have to know all that is said. The teacher's role is to facilitate the students' learning and to ensure it is done in a supportive environment.

Before you allow the discussion to commence, make sure the students know your expectations regarding noise level. In many schools, learning in groups is a common educational strategy, and the students will understand that their voices must be kept low so that the contribution of all students can be heard and respected.

Key Verse

God is pleased with everyone who worships him and does right. (Acts 10:35)

Values

- Trust
- Forgiveness
- Tolerance
- Honesty
- Acceptance
- Understanding

Take to Class

- *The Bible for Today (CEV)*
- Student Workbooks
- photocopied worksheets as required
- name cards
- backpack from last week
- questions on chart
- music and words of song, if required

Orientation

- Revision from last week: What are some of the things that influence people to make wise choices, and some of the things that influence them to make bad choices? (*Our family, our friends, the television and videos we watch, the games we play and the things we read.*)
- Show the backpack from last week. Remind the class of the previous lesson by putting into the backpack the items representing life influences.
- Discuss or brainstorm with the students: Sometimes people make choices that are good. Sometimes they make choices that are bad. If a person makes the wrong choice, can they change?

Guided Discovery

- Tell the story of Zacchaeus or read it from the Bible.
- Explain the background of Zacchaeus as you tell or read the story. Points to explain to the students:
 - Zacchaeus was unpopular because of his job as a tax collector. Tax collectors worked for the Romans, who had conquered Palestine and were an occupying power. If people did not pay their taxes, they could be thrown into prison or sold into slavery.
 - Zacchaeus was unpopular because of his behaviour. He abused his power and took more taxes than people really owed. He was greedy and dishonest, as this extra money went into his own pocket. The Bible tells us he was very rich, so his dishonesty had been going on for some time.
 - Jewish people believed that Zacchaeus' job and behaviour meant that he could never be blessed by God.
- Ask the students 'What unwise choices did Zacchaeus make?'
- Make a list of what Zacchaeus was like before and after he met Jesus. Put these on the board. Label columns *before* and *after*. Write *Jesus* in the middle.

Unit 1 Session 3 God is pleased with everyone who worships him and does right. (Acts 10:35)

Who do I want to be?

Zac's Xtreme makeover

What was Zac like before he met Jesus?
very unpopular

Why did Zac change?

Why did Zac want to see Jesus?

What was Zac's problem and how did he solve it?

What did Jesus do as he passed by?

What did Jesus tell Zac to do?

How did the people of Jericho act, and why?

Finally, what did Zac do? Who influenced Zac to do this?

What was Zac like after he met Jesus?

Making wise decisions

How could these people turn their situation around?
What would be a good decision for these people to make?

I'm playing really badly. Maybe I shouldn't have missed all these practices.

It's getting late and you have some homework to finish.

Should we do anything about that bully?

Don't despair! Please make the most of every situation!

Should we stand up?

Write and draw another example where YOU may need to change.
Who could help you do this?

A prayer

Dear God, please help me to trust you like Zac did and help me to choose to live my life your way.

- Before the students work on 'Zac's Xtreme makeover' in the Student Workbook, rub off the list on the board. Have the students answer the questions about Zacchaeus.
- Discuss what caused the change in Zacchaeus, then have the students answer the question 'Why did Zac change?' in the Student Workbook. (Teacher reference: Luke 19:10.)
- Discuss the following questions, which link the Bible story back to the students' experiences:
 - What are some of the unwise decisions you make?
 - Why would someone choose to change?
 - How could following Jesus help people make wise decisions?
- You might like to choose a question from the question box to answer, depending on available time.

Student Exploration

- Students, either individually or in pairs, should complete 'Making wise decisions' in the Student Workbook. Ask the students, individually, in pairs or in groups, to brainstorm solutions to the questions at the bottom of the Workbook page. Ask students to share their Workbook answers with the class. List some on the board.
- Have the students form pairs to role-play Zacchaeus giving back what he owed to each person. Person A is Zac and Person B the one who is owed money. Ask some pairs to present this to the class. Discuss how Zacchaeus might have felt as he gave back the money.
- For a more challenging option, have students complete BLM 7 *Shark attack*. This is a modern story that illustrates a 13-year-old making wise decisions in very difficult circumstances. The decisions involved her attitude, not being bitter or angry, and not giving up.

Student Reflection

- Ask the students the following questions.
 - What did Zacchaeus do to put things right? (Lead students to the idea that Zacchaeus did more than just say the right words—he took action.)
 - What did it cost Zacchaeus to change?
 - What do you think the rest of Zacchaeus' life might have been like? (Prompt students with questions like *Did he change jobs? Did he sell everything and follow Jesus?*)
 - What happens when you make unwise choices? (*You can get into trouble with the police/your parents/your teachers/your friends; you can become lonely because no one wants to associate with you; you are no longer trusted.*)
 - What are some of the areas in your lives in which you can choose to act differently?
 - Who can help you do this? How?
- You might like to use this prayer with the class.

Dear God, please help me to trust you like Zac did and help me to choose to live my life your way.

A Roving Eye

When you are addressing a whole class, stand in a position where all the students can see you and you can see their eyes. Look around the class constantly in a sweeping figure of eight pattern. Move slowly to another vantage point while you are still talking. Just looking and noticing a student's distraction will help keep him or her with you. Without stopping your story or comments, you can look surprised, astounded, concerned, amused or just plain watchful—all of which lets the student know you are a 'real' teacher who knows everything!

Your strategic watching and walking can hold the class's attention for several minutes. For a longer time span, visual resources are an important teaching tool.

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Zac's Xtreme makeover

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What did Jesus tell Zac to do?

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Finally, what did Zac do? Who influenced Zac to do this?

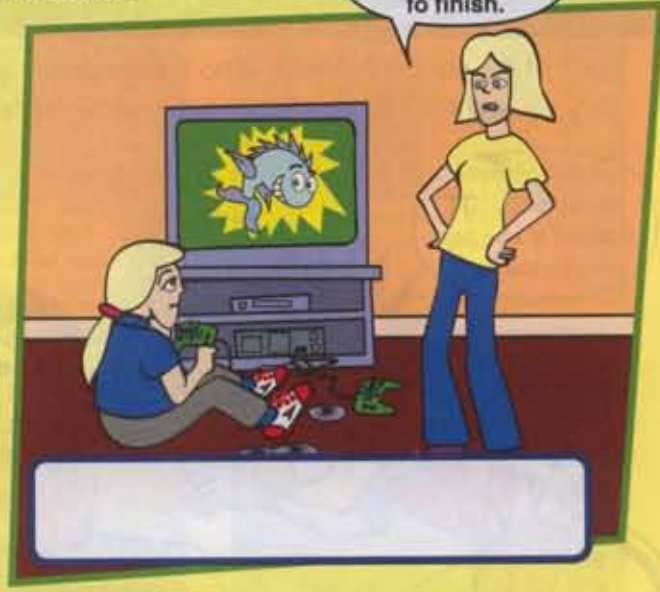
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