Forgiveness

We all make mistakes. That is part of being human. Sometimes our mistakes hurt other people and we need to say sorry. Sometimes other people's mistakes hurt us and we need to forgive.

Forgiveness can be hard, but without it a new start is impossible.

The Bible and Forgiveness

Zacchaeus was rich.

He was rich because he worked for the Romans and collected people's taxes.

To pay the Roman taxes people had to use Roman coins, but to these Zacchaeus charged extra money. He kept the extra money for himself. As you can imagine, Zacchaeus was not popular with other people. In fact, they all shunned him and left him out. Could anyone ever **forgive** what he did?

So, it was no surprise on the day that Jesus came to Zacchaeus's town that all the crowds kept him out. They didn't make way for him. What would Jesus want to do with anyone like Zacchaeus?

To see Jesus, Zacchaeus had to climb a sycamore tree. There he stayed, hidden from the crowds by the leafy branches. He thought he would go completely unnoticed.

And so he was, until Jesus stopped right beneath the tree where Zacchaeus was.
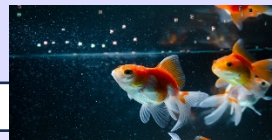
Jesus peered right up between the branches and saw the unpopular tax-collector hiding there.

"Come down Zacchaeus," Jesus called, "I'm coming to your house for tea."

What? Had Zacchaeus heard correctly? Had the crowd heard correctly. Surely Jesus wasn't actually going to Zacchaeus's house to eat with him? Didn't he know who Zacchaeus was?

"Come on Zacchaeus," Jesus called again, "Let's go."

Sure enough, Jesus did go and eat with Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus promised to pay back anyone he had stolen from. In fact, he would pay back more than he had even taken. He was grateful that he had been forgiven.

Forgiveness Quote

'Without forgiveness there is no future. Forgive so that you can move on, and help the person that you are forgiving become a better person.'

(Desmond Tutu)

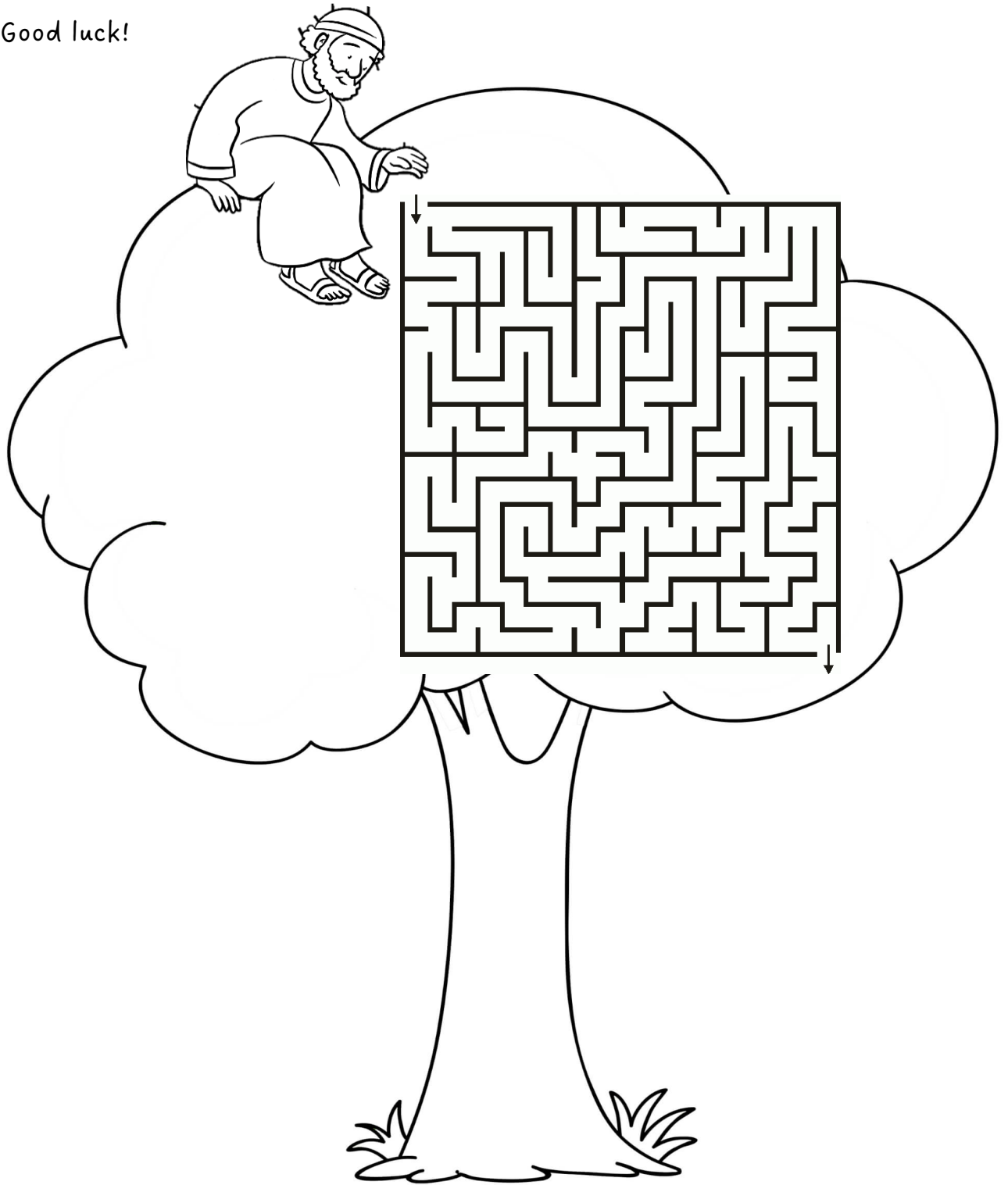On the festival of Rosh Hashanah, Jewish people take a picnic by a river or the sea.

At the end of the picnic, they gather up all the crumbs and throw them into the water.

The crumbs represent the things that the family members are sorry about.

When fish eat the crumbs it is a reminder of God's forgiveness.

Feel free to print this maze and get Zacchaeus down from the tree.

Good luck!

Design Idea – use the dotted paper to design your own maze:

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