



**JANUARY 2024**

Registered charity no 251394

Welcome to the beginning of the New Year! It's often a time when people think about making a new start and make promises to change something in their lives on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Even if you didn't do this yourself, it could still be a good time to think anew about how we can look with fresh eyes at the world around us. Indeed, we could use all of our senses to do this.

What are our senses? Let's begin with the **SENSE OF TOUCH**. Do you like to touch things around you to see what they feel like, leaves on the trees, or at the moment bare branches which might have knobbly bits on them. These could be lichens that grow on wood, or buds getting ready for the spring.



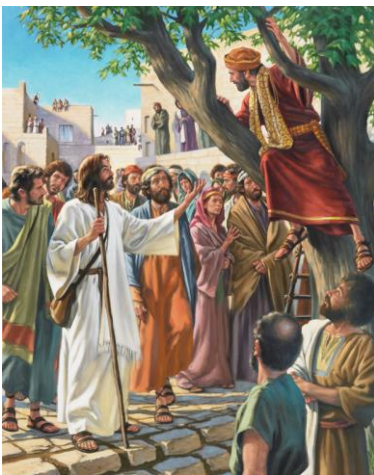
The picture shows lichen growing on a tree trunk. On seeing this you might pull back your hand thinking it could harm you if you touch it, but it isn't harmful and is an indicator of good air quality.

You know, Jesus never hesitated to touch those who came to him asking to be healed. There was a dreaded skin disease called leprosy and everyone avoided anyone who had it. But when a man came to Jesus and asked to be healed, Jesus reached out and touched him, and he was cured. (*Read Matthew ch 8 v 1-4*)

**SIGHT**, another of our senses. Soon it will be spring and flowers will be beginning to grow. You may be able to see the shoots of some early crocuses, or **SMELL** the scents of some winter flowering shrubs as you walk about. Also **LISTEN** out for the birds. Soon they will be getting very noisy at dawn when spring arrives. Jesus would have seen many wild flowers growing in the hills around Galilee, and heard birdsong, as he travelled around talking to the crowds. He even told people to look at how God cares for the flowers and the birds when pointing out that God cares for each one of us. (*Matthew ch 6:28-30*)

*That is three more of our five senses.*

Just some of the wildflowers that grow in Palestine.

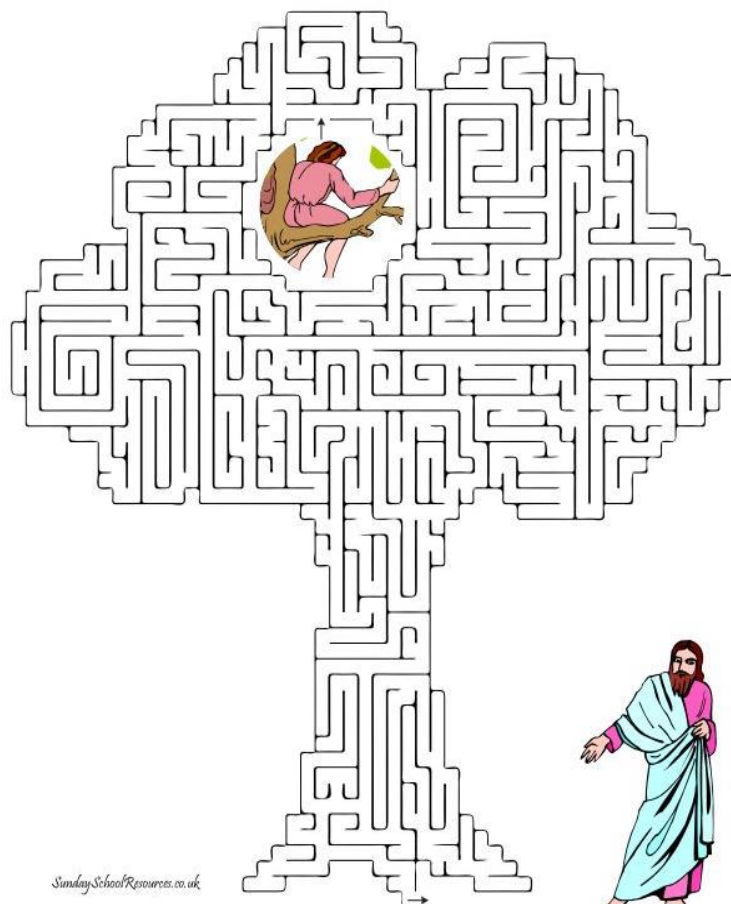


The last of the five senses that we are thinking about is **TASTE**. There is so much good food for us to eat. And we are lucky to have wide choices all through the year because of food that comes to us from different countries.

We read quite often of Jesus sharing meals with people, even some notorious ones such as Zacchaeus, the little man who had to climb a tree to see Jesus because the people hated him and blocked his view. But Jesus saw him in the tree and said he would go to his house for a meal. This changed Zacchaeus' life. *Read about him in Luke ch 19 v 1-8. I wonder what they ate?*

As we think about our senses, can we remember the actions of Jesus and use our senses to be aware of things around us and ways we might help others? Here are some activities based on the full story of Zacchaeus that you will find in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 19 verses 1-10 (NIV). He was a man changed by his meeting with Jesus.

Below, starting at the picture of Zacchaeus in the tree, help him find his way down to Jesus.



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Then you could find all the words from the story in this WORDSEARCH.

J	L	P	O	S	M	S	I	N	N	E	R	E	C	T
E	M	W	R	S	O	Z	F	J	W	H	M	M	A	A
R	Z	E	E	M	C	H	I	E	F	O	S	I	X	
I	L	Z	N	A	N	E	Y	P	C	W	H	T	U	O
C	O	M	A	E	L	H	L	L	D	C	O	R	R	L
H	S	Z	M	C	L	T	E	X	O	D	R	E	B	H
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H	E	G	I	S	E	E	K	C	X	H	E	R	A	W

CLIMB LOST SAVE SEEK JERICHO  
 CHIEF WELCOME HOUSE WEALTHY DOWN  
 TAX CROWD TREE ZACCHAEUS SHORT  
 COME POOR SINNER GUEST COLLECTOR

### A CRAFT ACTIVITY

If you would like to make a puppet of Zacchaeus climbing the tree you will need some card, pens, scissors, wool and a craft stick.

Draw out the shape of the top of a tree, like the one in the picture, on card. Stick that to the top of a craft stick (or draw the whole tree on card). Then draw a figure of a man to be Zacchaeus. Cut a piece of wool long enough to make the figure sit in the tree, and then be lowered to the ground. Stick one end of the wool to the back of Zacchaeus, and then thread the other end onto a needle. Now make a hole in the tree top and use the needle to thread the wool through. Then with the wool through the hole, make a loop at the end for your finger. Now you can make Zacchaeus climb the tree and then lower him down again.

