

Use Week of:

Unit 1 • Session 5

The Tower of Babel

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Genesis 11

STORY POINT:

People tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:16b-17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.



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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

Following the flood, God commanded Noah in Genesis 9:1 to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” This command echoes the one given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28. God intended the paradise of the garden to spread into the whole world, but sinful people had other desires.

Genesis 10 accounts for the nations that spread out in the land after the flood. (Gen. 10:32) The people moved east and settled in a valley. This story continues the cycle of distrust and disobedience to God. In Genesis 11:2, Scripture indicates that instead of filling the earth as God commanded, the people devised a plan to settle in one place and build a city and a large tower into the sky.

Read Genesis 11:4. The people’s motive was clear: “Let us make a name for ourselves.” The people didn’t want to be scattered. They didn’t believe God would give them what was good if they obeyed Him. They sought to obtain for themselves what they believed was good.

The people tried to build a monument with its top in the sky, but they succeeded only in separating themselves from God and from each other. God confused their language and scattered them over the earth. They were unable to finish building the city, so the city was called *Babel*—which sounds like the Hebrew word for “confused”—because there the Lord confused the people’s language.

This week you have the opportunity to tell the kids you teach about God’s better plan: His plan not for people to reach up to Him, but His plan to reach down to people by sending His Son, Jesus, to live the perfect life we couldn’t live and die the death we don’t want to die. Through Jesus, God brings together people of every tongue, tribe, and nation; we are all one in Christ. That is the gospel. Pray that the kids you teach would have open hearts to receive it.

The BIBLE Story

The Tower of Babel

Genesis 11

After the great flood, God told Noah and his sons to grow their families and fill the earth. Noah's sons and their wives had children. Their families grew, and the people started to travel through the land. At this time, everyone in the world spoke the same language.

One day, the people traveled through a valley. They liked it there, and they decided to stay.

"We don't want to be scattered all over the earth," they said. "Let's build a city and a tower so big that it touches the sky. The tower will make us famous!"

The people were not doing what God had told them to do. They wanted to be as important as God. They were saying "Look how great we are," instead of "Look how great God is." They wanted glory for themselves instead of God. But God is greater than anyone. God created people to give glory to Him alone.

The people made bricks out of clay and baked them in the fire to make stones. Then they used the stones to start building the tower.

God came down to look at the tower. God said, "If they are doing



this, **they will keep thinking up more bad things to do.** So God mixed up the people's words. Instead of everyone speaking the same language, **everyone spoke different languages.**

When people tried to make plans, they could not understand what other people were saying. If one workman said, "Hand me another brick," nobody else knew what he wanted.

The people had to stop building the city. Families had to move away from each other to live with people they could understand. God made it so the people did just what He had told them to do after the flood. They were scattered all over the world. **The city with the unfinished tower was called Babel** (BAY buhl).

Christ Connection: People chose to give glory to themselves instead of God. They ignored God's plan, so God confused their language and scattered the people all over the earth. One day, Jesus will gather together all of God's people—people from every tribe and people who speak all kinds of languages—and they will worship Him together. (Revelation 7:9-10)

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Emphasize dialogue:** Vary your voice to emphasize lines of dialogue.
- **Display art:** Show the Bible story picture and point to elements of the scene at appropriate points in the story.

INTRODUCE the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:16b-17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about times this week they had to follow instructions. Did they follow them? Why or why not? What makes following instructions difficult?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Made Famous” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Made Famous” on the activity page. Kids should write words or draw pictures in the space provided to convey what they want everyone to know about them. Invite volunteers to share with the group.

SAY • Would you like to be famous? Why or why not?

[*Allow kids to respond.*] Today’s Bible story is about some people who wanted to make a great name for themselves. We’ll hear what happened.

LOW PREP

- bell or buzzer

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Opposites challenge

Form two teams. Invite a player from each team to stand at the front of the room. Position a bell or buzzer between

the players. Explain that you will announce a word, and the player who can name its opposite must hit the bell.

Call on the first player who hits the bell to give an answer. If she answers correctly, award her team one point. If incorrect, allow the other player to answer and earn a point for his team.

Invite two new players to compete in each additional round. Begin with simple opposites and then increase the challenge in subsequent rounds. Use the pairs suggested or provide your own.

SAY • Have you ever done the opposite of what a parent or teacher told you to do? Did you face any consequences? In today's Bible story, God told the people on earth to spread out, but they decided to stay put. We will find out what happened to them.

OPTION 2: Construction challenge

Before the session, cut drinking straws into 2- or 3-inch lengths. Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group a lump of play dough and a bundle of straws.

Challenge them to work together to construct a tower. Kids can form small balls of play dough and use them to connect the straws. After several minutes, compare towers to see which is the tallest or which can hold the most weight.

SAY • The tallest buildings in the world today are more than 2,000 feet tall. Today's Bible story is about people who wanted to build a tower with its top in the sky. We aren't sure exactly how tall this tower was, but their construction project did not end how they imagined. Let's find out what happened.

List of opposites:

- hot, cold
- wet, dry
- on, off
- up, down
- light, dark
- long, short
- back, front
- under, over
- full, empty
- top, bottom
- low, high
- apart, together

- flexible drinking straws
- play dough
- scissors

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- safety glasses
- work gloves
- Bible
- paper
- marker

[Leader enters wearing a mechanic's apron, safety glasses, and work gloves. He or she also carries a Bible and a sign that reads ABIERTO.]

LEADER • Hey, everyone! I'm [*your name*]. I'm just finishing up some work here at The Cyclery. We have a lot of customers each week from all kinds of backgrounds, and I've been trying to print a new sign for the front window. [*Hold up sign.*] Can any of you read this? Do you know what it means? [*Allow kids to respond.*]

It says, *Ah-bee-AIR-toh*. That's a Spanish word that means "Open!" I already have an open sign printed in English, but I want my customers who speak languages other than English to feel welcome too.

Did you know that people throughout the world speak more than 6,900 languages? I only know one! The five most spoken languages in the world are Chinese, Spanish, English, Hindi, and Arabic.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Have you ever wondered why there are so many different languages? Where did they all come from? I'm excited to share a Bible story with you today that explains it all.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • First, let's review our big picture question. Do you remember it? [*Allow kids to respond.*] That's right. ***Who is God?*** We need to understand who God is to make sense of the Bible and what God has been doing all along. The answer is, ***God is our Creator and King.***

God made us, and He rules over everything. Let's say the question and answer together: ***Who is God? God is our Creator and King.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. - Giant Timeline

LEADER • Before we get started, let's see where we've been.

In the beginning, God created everything, and everything He created was good.

On the sixth day of creation, God made people. **God created people in His own image, and He loves us.** The first two people were Adam and Eve, but something terrible happened: **Adam and Eve broke God's law, and their sin separated them from God.**

Ever since then, all people have been sinners. Sin spread throughout the earth. But God had a plan to rescue sinners, and that is the plan we see unfolding in the rest of the Bible.

Last time we saw how **God punished sin but chose to rescue Noah and his family.** Today's Bible story tells us what happened after Noah's family left the ark. Let's check it out.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Genesis 11. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "The Tower of Babel."

LEADER • After Noah's family left the ark, Noah's sons had families and their families grew. Everyone on earth spoke the same language. Well, the people came to a valley and decided to stop. But God didn't tell the people to stop. He told them to spread out!

The people said, "Let's build a city and a tall tower. And let's make a name for ourselves so we won't be scattered all over the earth."

In other words, the people did the opposite of what God had commanded them to do. Remember, God created everything to bring Him glory. But these people didn't want to bring glory to God. They wanted to bring glory to themselves.

It sounds like the people forgot who they were and who God is. Let's answer our big picture question:

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

God knew that the people would continue to disobey Him and build the tower unless He acted. So He confused their language. The people stopped building the tower because they couldn't understand one another.

People had to move away to be with other people who spoke their language, so the people scattered all

- Bibles
- "The Tower of Babel" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

over the earth—just as God had commanded.

Christ connection

LEADER • **People tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God.** They ignored God’s plan, so God confused their language and scattered the people all over the earth. God had a better plan. God planned to come down to His people by sending His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world.

One day, Jesus will gather together all of God’s people—people from every tribe and people who speak all kinds of languages—and they will worship Him together. (Rev. 7:9-10)

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 81 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 1, Session 5” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to consider if it’s ever OK to be proud of something you’ve accomplished. Guide them to discuss what type of pride is sinful. What are some ways we try to glorify ourselves today, instead of giving God the glory?

• “Unit 1, Session 5” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • Having so many languages in the world makes sharing the gospel a little more challenging. The Rigneys are a missionary family living in London, England, where more than 300 languages are spoken.

The Rigneys cannot learn all the languages spoken there, so they partner with other believers in the city who speak different languages.

Aden and Addison Rigney are kids who tell friends and neighbors about God’s love. Hear them

• “Our Gospel” missions video

share the gospel in this video.
Show the “Our Gospel” missions video.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Colossians 1:16b-17.

LEADER • Raise your hand if you’ve memorized our key passage. [*Pause for kids to raise their hands.*] That’s great. If you haven’t, keep working at it! Memorizing God’s Word helps us remember what is true. Let’s sing our key passage song to help us remember it. Lead boys and girls in singing “All Things Hold Together.”

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 115:1.

LEADER • The Bible says that the heavens belong to God, and He gave the earth to people. He loves us! Let’s praise Him now together because ***God is our Creator and King.***

Sing together “Our Creator and King.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, we confess that just like the people who built the tower of Babel, we too desire glory for ourselves. We seek our own fame, though You alone deserve all honor and glory. Forgive us, and show us the joy that comes in living for You instead of for ourselves. We love You! Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

• Key Passage Poster
• “All Things Hold Together” song

• “Our Creator and King” song
• Bible

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:16b-17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- marker
- scissors

Before the session, write the key passage on a piece of paper, a few words per line. Cut the paper into strips. If your group is large, make multiple sets. Display the key passage poster. Lead the kids to read it together. Provide the prepared key passage strips and challenge boys and girls to arrange the strips in order. Then open your Bible and ask a volunteer to read Psalm 119:104-105 aloud.

SAY • If you haven't yet memorized our key passage, keep working at it! We memorize Scripture because the Bible is God's Word. Knowing what it says helps us know what is true about God and about ourselves. It guides us as we live to honor God. Think about our key passage as you answer our big picture question: ***Who is God? God is our Creator and King.***

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute Bibles. Ask kids if they remember which book of the Bible the tower of Babel story is found in. (*Genesis*) Ask if they know which chapter the story is in. (*Genesis 11*)

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 9:15-17. Call for another volunteer to read Genesis 11:2-4.

SAY • After the flood, God commanded Noah and his family to spread out over the earth. But the people in our story decided to stick together.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did God stop the people from building the tower? *Lead kids to recognize that God was not threatened by the people, but He cared about them and confused their language to slow their evil actions.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 12:7,11.)
2. What are some ways people today might try to make a name for themselves? Is there anything wrong with wanting to be famous? *Prompt kids to consider athletes, musicians, and so on. Point out that pride is seeking to put yourself before others or before God.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Jer. 9:23.)
3. Why does God deserve all glory and honor? *Guide kids to identify God as our Creator and King.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Chron. 29:11.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Heart language

Before the session, write out John 3:16 in Spanish on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper.

Porque tanto amó Dios al mundo que dio a su Hijo unigénito, para que todo el que cree en él no se pierda, sino que tenga vida eterna. (Juan 3:16)

SAY • A *heart language* is the language you first learn to speak. Missionaries know how important it is for people to hear the gospel in their own heart language. The heart language most people speak in the United States is English, but Spanish and Mandarin Chinese are the next most common.

LOW PREP

- dry erase board or large sheet of paper
- marker

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

Tip: To aid pronunciation, play an audio reading of the verse using a Spanish audio Bible or online translation tool.

Instruct kids to each choose a partner. Ask pairs to practice saying to each other the Spanish verse you've written.

Challenge them to meet and talk with someone in their community whose heart language is Spanish. Encourage them to memorize and share the verse. If any kids in your group speak Spanish or another language, invite them to share some common words in those languages.

SAY • God created all the different languages. Pray this week for missionaries who share the gospel all over the world in so many different languages.

OPTION 2: Practice humility

Write the following scenarios on separate strips of paper:

- *You score the winning goal in the soccer game.*
- *You get a third place ribbon in the school science fair.*
- *You borrowed your sister's toy and accidentally broke it.*
- *Your grandfather offers donuts to you and your sister.*

One donut is plain. The other has frosting and sprinkles.

Form up to four groups of kids. Assign each group a scenario. Explain that they will have a few minutes to read the scenario and decide as a group how to act it out as a short skit. Kids should decide how to respond to the scenario in a humble way.

Remind kids that humility is the opposite of pride.

Humility is thinking of others before thinking of yourself.

After each group performs its skit, discuss how the group demonstrated humility. Talk about possible reactions to the scenario that would be prideful. [See margin notes.]

SAY • Being humble isn't easy! We all desire our own glory.

Pride may get us ahead in the world, but the Bible says that in God's kingdom "a person's pride will humble him, but a humble spirit will gain honor"

- strips of paper
- marker or pen

Humility vs. Pride:

- *Soccer:* Politely wins and gives glory to God vs. Brags about how awesome he or she is.
- *Science:* Gladly accepts the ribbon for his or her hard work vs. Makes excuses or gets angry about not winning.
- *Toy:* Says "I'm sorry" and asks for forgiveness vs. Denies wrongdoing or blames someone else.
- *Donut:* Wants the best for others vs. wants the best for him- or herself.

(Prov. 29:23). We can ask God to give us humility through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our Bible story today, **people tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God.** They ignored God's plan, so God confused their language and scattered the people all over the earth. One day, Jesus—who humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—will gather together all of God's people: people from every tribe and people who speak all kinds of languages. They will worship Him together. (Rev. 7:9-10)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

· pencils
· Journal Page
· "True or False?" activity page,
1 per kid

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking for the Holy Spirit to empower boys and girls to act humbly and to seek God's glory. Thank Jesus for showing true humility by coming to earth and dying on the cross.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "True or False?" on the activity page. Kids should circle whether each statement is true or false. Encourage kids to read Genesis 11:1-9 to check their answers.

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.