

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.



INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 74



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 76



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 82



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



SESSION TITLE: 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.

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. As kids arrive, ask them if any of them are able to speak other languages. Are they learning a second (or third) language in school?

SAY • People all over the world speak many different languages. Often, people learn to speak more than one language. Today we will learn about a time when everyone spoke the same language. What do you think might have happened that changed all that?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Word Scramble” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Word Scramble” activity page. Kids will unscramble each word and then place the words in the correct order to form the story point: **People tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God.**

SAY • Today we will learn how people tried to get fame and attention for themselves instead of giving fame and attention to God. Only God deserves glory. We will also learn how God put a stop to their plans by mixing up their languages.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: M-um-umble J-um-umble

Teach the kids a “secret” language by inserting an *um* sound directly before each vowel sound in a word. For example, the story point would become *Pumeople trumied tumo bumuild uma tumowumer tumo glumorumifumy thumemsumelves uminstumead umof Gumod.*

SAY • Wow! It was very hard to understand one another when we used that mumbled, jumbled language! When you expect a person to speak a language you understand, it can be frustrating to hear him or her speak a language you don't. Do you think it would keep you from finishing a project together? Today we will hear about a time God mixed up people's languages. Why do you think He did that?

OPTION 2: Builders guild

Form groups of three to five children. Provide each group with uncooked spaghetti noodles and mini marshmallows. Instruct the groups to use the spaghetti and marshmallows as building material to see which group can build the tallest tower. For an added challenge, ask the groups to build without talking.

SAY • That was fun, but difficult. Can you imagine how hard it would be to build a *real* tower without speaking the same language? It might not even be possible! Today we will hear about what happened when people decided to build a tall tower to bring glory to themselves instead of giving glory to God.

- uncooked spaghetti noodles
- mini marshmallows
- Allergy Alert download

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: 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.

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· power drill (adult use)
· Bible

[Leader enters wearing greasy overalls and a tool belt. He or she is carrying a Bible and tinkering with a power drill.]

LEADER • Hey, kids! I'm glad you found your way back to my repair shop. I was just in the middle of fixing this tool. A friend of mine is a carpenter and trying to build a tree house for his kids. His drill burned out in the middle of the project, and he asked me to get it working again so he could finish. He said he hopes to make the largest tree house in his neighborhood, but I'm not sure how hard that would be. It'll be the only one in the neighborhood!

But you know, even though he wants to make a great big tree house, I know that he's really building it for his kids to have fun playing in it, not to make himself look good. It reminds me of a Bible story though. In the story, the people weren't trying to build a tree house, but a tower. And they

Tip: If you prefer to avoid themed content and characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

weren't building it for fun. They wanted to glorify themselves, which means they wanted to make themselves look strong, powerful, and good.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • One thing we need to keep in mind while we learn this story is our big picture question. Who remembers it? [*Allow responses.*] Great job! **Who is God? God is our Creator and King.** That means that God created each of us and all the beautiful things in the world that we can enjoy. He deserves our worship because of who He is.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • As we've seen, after God created the world, it didn't take long for people to choose sin and throw the world into chaos! We learned last week that when sin spread, God decided to flood the earth to punish sin. But, because God is merciful and loving, He chose to save Noah and his family through the ark. This week, we will learn about the continued effects of sin after the flood. God wanted people to spread around the world and have big families to bear His image and glorify Him, but they decided to do things differently. Our story is called "The Tower of Babel."

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

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 • If you remember, one of the first commands God gave people—besides the command about not eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—was a command to have lots of kids and fill the earth. God repeated that command to Noah’s family when they got off the ark. But before long, the people decided they knew better than God.

At first, it probably doesn’t seem like that big a deal for people to say, “Hey, this spot is pretty nice. Let’s just stay here!” But that attitude was directly the opposite of what God told them to do! They decided to build a tall tower specifically to avoid being spread across the earth. The Bible tells us they wanted to make a name for themselves, which is another way of saying they wanted to make themselves look strong, powerful, and good. They wanted to be famous! The problem wasn’t necessarily that they wanted a tower; it’s that the **people tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God.**

So, what does this have to do with our big picture question and answer? We’ve discussed that ***God is our Creator and King.*** That means that only God deserves glory. It means that we owe Him our praise and our obedience. He knows what is best and always does what is good.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • 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. (Rev. 7:9-10)

So does that mean it's a sin to build tall towers or to be famous? Not always, but if you desire to do things to bring yourself glory instead of giving glory to God, then you are missing out on the wonderful purpose God has for you. God created us to love Him and glorify Him. But we need help! Each of us is born with sin and cannot glorify God on our own. That's why God sent Jesus to save us!

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 1, Session 5” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why seeking our own glory is dangerous. What are some ways they may seek to glorify themselves? Guide them to discuss how Jesus' death changes our hearts to want God's glory.

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



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • The Rigneys are a missionary family living in London, England, where over 300 languages are spoken. The Rigneys cannot learn all the languages spoken there which is why they partner with other believers in the city who speak different languages. Missionary kids Aden and Addison also partner with their parents to tell friends and neighbors about God's love. Check this out!

Show the “Our Gospel” missions video.

LEADER • We don't have to learn a new language or even travel to another country to live on mission. We can love people and tell them about Jesus in our own cities!

• “Our Gospel” missions video

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

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

LEADER • Our key passage reminds us that Jesus wasn’t created but was with God during creation! He is the eternal Son of God and all of creation was made by Him to glorify Him. Let’s keep working to memorize this passage together.

Lead boys and girls in singing “All Things Hold Together.”

Sing (4 minutes)

• “My Father’s World” song

LEADER • We are so blessed by God. We have sin in our lives and we deal with the effects of sin in the world, but we know that God’s plan is to restore the world when Jesus returns. This is His world, and He has not abandoned it.

Sing together “My Father’s World.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for the mercy and grace You show us. Help us to live for Your glory and not our own. Give us courage to share the gospel with others as a way to make Your name great. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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



SESSION TITLE: 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.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- tumbling tower block game
- marker

Before class, write each word or phrase of the key passage on separate blocks from the tumbling tower block game. For large groups, you may wish to prepare more than one set. Challenge the kids to say the verse from memory, one word or phrase at a time. Each time the kids say a word or phrase correctly, give them the corresponding block and allow them to use the blocks to build a tower as tall as they can. If it falls, encourage them to say the whole passage from memory before rebuilding.

SAY • Our key passage teaches us that God the Son helped with the creation of the world! That means that He was around with God the Father all along. We know that all of creation exists to glorify God the Son.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute a Bible to each kid and help kids find Genesis 11. Remind them that Genesis is the first book in the Bible, as well as the first book in the group of books known as the Law. Demonstrate how to use the table of contents to find books, then point out the large and small numbers that separate each book into chapters

and verses. Read the passage or review the story using the bolded sections of the Bible story. Then ask the following questions, guiding discussion as suggested.

1. What had God asked Noah's family to do after they got off the ark? (*multiply in number and spread out on the earth, Gen. 9:7*)
2. What did people do instead? (*settle in a valley to build a tall tower, Gen. 11:2-4*)
3. Why did they want to build a tower? (*to make a name for themselves and bring themselves glory, Gen. 11:4*)
4. How did God stop them and force them to spread around the world? (*God confused their language, Gen. 11:7*)
5. God always does what is good and right. Can you think of reasons it was good and right for God to confuse the people's languages and stop their building project? *Guide kids to see that our purpose as people who bear God's image is to glorify Him and spread His glory through the earth. By scattering the people, God was helping them obey His perfect command.*
6. Why is it bad to seek glory for yourself? *Guide kids to see that seeking glory for ourselves is a result of pride and the belief that we are better than others, or even better than God. Remind kids that only God deserves glory because He is our Creator and King.*
7. How can you give God glory instead of seeking glory for yourself? *Guide kids to see that when we work hard and point others to God, it shows that we trust Him and know that He has given us life and the talents and skills we need. When we succeed, we praise God to show others that He is glorious and helps us succeed.*

- packaged cookies
- plastic wrap
- cotton swabs
- potato chips
- jelly beans
- baby pacifier
- Allergy Alert download



Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Language exploration

Display the different items for the kids to see. Ask different kids to name each item. Then ask the kids to take turns guessing what those items might be called in London, England, where the missionary family, the Rigneys live. After they have guessed a name for each item, reveal to them what the items are called in British English.

Names of items in British English: cookies (*biscuits*), plastic wrap (*cling film*), cotton swab (*cotton bud*), potato chips (*crisps*), baby pacifier (*dummy*), and jelly beans (*jelly babies*).

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

SAY • One of the first things many missionaries do when they move to a new country is learn the language most often spoken there. The Rigney family did not have to go to language school because the most common language spoken in England—a country of the United Kingdom—is English.

However, not all English words in England are the same as they are in the United States. The Rigneys still spent time learning new words for common things. Knowing a person's language helps you communicate with him. The most important thing to communicate to anyone is the gospel—the good news that Jesus came to save us from our sin.

OPTION 2: Scatter or gather

Tape a small square on the floor of your room. Scatter table tennis balls around the room, including some in the square. Form two teams of kids. Assign one team the task of gathering all the table tennis balls into the square. Ask the other team to try to keep all the table tennis balls scattered

LOW PREP

- table tennis balls
- tape

around the room. If time allows, play multiple rounds, switching teams between rounds.

SAY • In that game, some of you wanted to scatter the table tennis balls, and others wanted to gather them. It reminds us of our story. The people wanted to gather in one place, but God wanted them to spread across the world to glorify Him everywhere they went.

People tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God. We know that what God plans to happen will always happen, and eventually the people did spread around the world. We can be a part of spreading around the world and giving God glory today by living on mission and sharing the good news about Jesus! We give glory to God because He alone deserves glory.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the activity page and any other pages home with the kids so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

• pencils and crayons
• paper
• Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

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