

# THE TOWER OF BABEL

## GENESIS 11



**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 104:24

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is God? God is our Creator and the King of everything.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** People ignored God's plan and tried to make a name for themselves, 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. (Revelation 7:9-10)

**STORY POINT:** God is great and deserves all worship.



## PREPARE

### PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## LEADER Bible Study

Scripture's Tower of Babel account tells of man's disobedience and God's intervening mercy to keep people from their own destruction. Not long after God's covenant to never again destroy the earth by a flood, people chose to follow their own sinful plans rather than obey God's good commands. Despite God's mercy, people failed to trust Him and walk according to His ways.

In what ways is the Tower of Babel story marked by disobedience? How do we see God's kindness in scattering His people and scrambling their language?

After blessing Noah and his sons, God decreed that they were to "be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it" (Genesis 9:7). This command seems like it would be easy to obey, but sin's deception fueled an already present danger: mankind's pride-fueled ambition.

God commanded His people to spread out over the earth and fill it with His glory. However, they decided to stay put and build a name for themselves. They were supposed to make much of God, but they decided to make a name for themselves instead. In His love, God drew near to them and saved them from their plans for self-glorification.

God's decision to scatter His people and scramble their languages was part of a plan that emphasized His own glory above the people's self-glorification efforts. Jesus, the Son of God, became man so that He would one day gather His people unto Himself—those of every tribe, tongue, and nation—not to worship or build a name for themselves, but to worship the only worthy One, King Jesus. His grace unites us, saves us, and brings us back into relationship with Him.

Consider the ways God has redirected the plans you have made for yourself. Are you, in hindsight, able to see His redirection as a means of grace upon your life? Reflect on His goodness in intervening. Pray for the children who will learn from you today, that they would place their trust in the God whose plans are for our good and for His ultimate glory.



## PREPARE

### THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



## WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



## LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



## LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



## LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



## PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



### WELCOME

#### Activity Page

- ☐ "Mixed Up" activity page

#### Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ wooden or plastic building blocks, 10–20 per group
- ☐ timer

#### Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ red, blue, green, and yellow construction paper



### LOVE

#### Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ world map or globe
- ☐ stickers, 9

#### Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

#### Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

#### Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The Tower of Babel" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ wooden blocks (optional)

#### Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 1, Session 5" Questions from Kids video

#### Missions Moment

- ☐ "The Reeses Say Thank You" missions video

#### Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Countless (Psalm 104:24)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ sticky notes



## WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** 🗨️ What is something you made or created that you are proud of? Maybe you drew a beautiful picture or you built an awesome fort. Why did it make you proud? 🗨️

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Mixed Up” activity page.

**SAY** 🗨️ Today, we’ll hear a story about how God mixed up people’s language because they wanted to make their name great. But we’ll learn that only God is great and deserves praise. 🗨️

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### ☐ OPTION 1: STACK THE BLOCKS

Form kids into groups of four or five and provide each group with a set of 10–20 wooden or plastic building blocks. Challenge groups to stack the blocks into the highest tower they can create in 30 seconds. Set a timer for 30 seconds and direct kids to build their tower. Recognize the group with the tallest tower. Repeat the challenge three more times while decreasing the time of each round to 20 seconds, 15 seconds, and 10 seconds. Recognize the winners of each round.

**SAY** 🗨️ Do you think you could ever build a tower that reached heaven? [Allow responses.] No, no one can reach heaven by building a tower or through their own strength. Today, we will hear a story about a group of people who built a tower they wanted to reach the heavens so everyone would think they were great and praise them. Let’s get ready to learn how only **GOD IS GREAT AND DESERVES ALL WORSHIP.** 🗨️

#### ☐ OPTION 2: SCATTER!



Tape the four colors of construction paper to individual walls: red, blue, green, yellow. Assign each of the kids one of the colors of the construction papers. Direct kids to form a large circle in the center of the room. Explain that they will walk in a circle until you yell, “scatter!” Then kids will run to their assigned color. The last kid to reach his color is out. Repeat the activity as time allows, or until one kid remains.

**SAY** 🗨️ After the flood, more and more people were born on the earth. God commanded them to spread out on the earth. Instead, the people stayed together and formed a great city. Today, we will see how God scattered the people throughout the earth by confusing their languages. 🗨️

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**







## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

## INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

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

**SAY** “Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so glad you are here! Today, we will be reading from the book of Genesis. Genesis is the first book of the Bible. If you have your Bible with you, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

Today, we will see how people still continued to sin after the flood. Instead of obeying God and making His name great, they wanted to become great. But only **GOD IS GREAT AND DESERVES ALL WORSHIP**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let's ask God to help us understand this truth today. [Invite kids to pray with you.]

\* I believe

\* offering

\* Way Maker

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

**SAY** “Does anyone remember our big picture question? [Allow responses.] Our big picture question is, **Who is God?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] **God is our Creator and the King of everything.** Because **God is the Creator and the King of everything**, He deserves all worship.

Everyone was created by God to worship Him. He alone is perfect, good, and all-powerful. Worshiping God brings us joy because it is what we are made to do. We worship God because **God is our Creator and the King of everything.**

### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

**SAY** “Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and sin entered the world. Sin spread to Adam and Eve's children, Cain and Abel. Cain sinned and killed his brother Abel. Because of Cain's sin, he was separated from God. Last week, we heard the story of the great flood where God was right to judge sin. God punished people for their sin because everything they did was evil. But God chose to save Noah and his family. God promised that He would never destroy the earth by a flood again. Today, we will see how people continued to sin and wanted to be as important as God.”



LEARN

## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story



#### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Genesis 11:1-9. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Tower of Babel.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### THE TOWER OF BABEL

**“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, and all their families grew. Over time, the people traveled through a valley and decided to live there.**

**At this time, everyone in the world spoke the same language. The people said, “We don’t want to be scattered all over the earth. Let’s build a city with a tower so big that it touches the sky. The tower will make us famous! Then we can stay here together instead of spreading out over the earth.”**

**The people were not doing what God had told them to do. They wanted to be as important as God. They wanted to say, “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 worship Him and 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 as one people all having the same language, they will keep thinking up more bad things to do. We need to stop them.”**

**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. 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.**

Christ Connection: People ignored God’s plan and tried to make a name for themselves, 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. (Revelation 7:9-10) **”**

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Display a tower:** Display a tower built from blocks as you tell the story.

**Define it:** Tell kids that the word *Babel* means confusion.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

## 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “After the flood, people all spoke the same language and lived in the same place. Why did the people build the tower? [Allow responses.] The people built the tower to show how great and important they thought they were. When people think they are more important than God, they are showing pride. Only **GOD IS GREAT AND DESERVES ALL WORSHIP**. Pride is sin and turns us away from God. Pride makes us think we don’t need Him. But all people were created to worship God and make His name great.”

God came down to the people and saw their sin. He knew their sin would destroy them, and because of His love for people, God acted for their good. How did God stop the people from continuing to build the tower? [Allow responses.] God confused the people’s language. One person spoke one language, and another person spoke a different language. Because no one could understand each other, it was impossible for them to work together.

What happened because God confused the people’s language? [Allow responses.] God scattered the people over all the earth. People ignored God’s plan and tried to make a name for themselves, 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. (Revelation 7:9-10) ”

## 3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

**SAY** “Just like God came down to stop the people from building the tower, Jesus came down to earth to save us from sin. God doesn’t want anyone to be separated from Him. Through Jesus, we can be forgiven of sin and have the hope of living with God forever.”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

## 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 1, Session 5” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is reading the Bible and praying enough to be saved? How do we get into heaven?
2. We are saved by faith in Jesus. How does obeying God show we are saved?

## 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Play the missions video.

**SAY** “The missionaries in Brazil are encouraged when people serve on short-term missions trips to help them share the gospel. The people of Brazil are also encouraged to know that others around the world care about them and want to serve them. Missions offerings and prayer make it possible for full-time missionaries, like the Reeses, to live in other countries to tell the people about Jesus.”

Pray for the Reeses and other missionaries in Brazil. Pray for more people to pray, give, and go on missions trips to tell the good news about Jesus all over the world.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)



Before the session, write each word of the key passage on individual sticky notes. For larger groups, consider creating more than one set. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 104:24 together.

**SAY** “Only **GOD IS GREAT AND DESERVES ALL WORSHIP.** God made us to know Him and worship Him. Even though people are now scattered over all the earth, everyone who trusts in Jesus will one day be gathered to Him.”

Scatter the sticky notes with the words from the key passage all over a wall. Lead kids to work together to gather the sticky notes and place them in the correct order of the key passage. Read the key passage aloud together.



Lead kids to sing “Countless (Psalm 104:24).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

#### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

**SAY** “Thank You, Lord, for Your promise to bring everyone who trusts in Jesus back to You. Help us turn away from making ourselves great. Only You are great, God. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**







## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

# LOVE God by Applying the Story

### 1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 11. Invite kids to name the first five books of the Bible, in order. If kids don't know the Bible books, allow them to use their Bibles. Challenge kids to learn the Bible books in order.

Consider pointing out the location of Babylon (E11), where this story took place, on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 11:4 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

**SAY** 🗨️ What do we learn about the people in this verse? [Allow responses.] They wanted to make a name for themselves. It can be very tempting to want others to see how great or important we think we are. Anytime we try to make ourselves greater than God, we are sinning. Only **GOD IS GREAT AND DESERVES ALL WORSHIP**. When we see sin like this in our lives, we can ask God to help us turn away from it. Jesus gives us the power to say no to sin and helps us live to make God famous. 🗨️

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** 🗨️ What are ways people try to make themselves great? 🗨️

Discuss how we can turn good gifts or abilities into ways to bring praise to our own names. Tell kids that building a tower is not bad, but when the people used the tower to make their name great, their actions became sinful. Discuss how kids might brag about what they own or their special athletic abilities or their grades to make their names great.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Why is only God great? 🗨️

Encourage kids to remember that God is the Creator and King of everything. Tell kids that everything exists because He made it to bring glory to His name. Explain how only God is perfect and never sins. Remind kids that they were made to worship Him and find true joy in knowing Him.

| **SAY** 🗨️ How can we show others that only God is great and deserves worship? 🗨️

Discuss how we can make God's name great by telling others about His love, forgiveness, and salvation through Jesus. Tell kids that everyone needs to hear the good news of the gospel. Remind kids that all people sin and that no one can get to heaven by good works, making their name great, or trying to earn God's love. Discuss how Jesus changes our hearts so that our greatest desire is to worship God. Tell kids that sharing the gospel is one way we worship God.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE the Mission

#### 1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

##### ☐ OPTION 1: AROUND THE WORLD

Display a globe or a large world map. Tell kids that the map shows over 190 countries in the world and that across the world there are more than 7,000 languages. Point to each country listed below and share one of the languages spoken there. Invite volunteers to place a sticker on each country you point to.

- China, Mandarin Chinese
- India, Hindi
- Indonesia, Javanese
- Egypt, Arabic
- Argentina, Spanish
- Brazil, Portuguese
- Turkey, Turkish
- France, French
- Kenya, Swahili

**SAY** “In our Bible story, we learned how different languages of the world began. 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.”

##### ☐ OPTION 2: MAKE GOD FAMOUS



Form kids into groups of three or four. Tell groups that they will pretend they are the hosts of a TV show or internet channel. Direct groups to create a show where they broadcast how great God is. Encourage kids to think about why only God deserves our worship and praise. Challenge kids to list out reasons why God is great such as He is holy, Creator, good, Savior, King, etc. Then invite each group to “host” their show for everyone.

**SAY** “**GOD IS GREAT AND DESERVES ALL WORSHIP.** He is our Creator and King. He loves us and proved His love for us when He sent Jesus to die for our sins. He forgives us and promises life with Him forever when we trust in Him. He provides for us and watches over us. And we could list even more ways God deserves our worship and praise. This week, share the good news of Jesus with someone and invite them to see why God is great.”

#### 2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

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

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

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.