Preschool–Grade 6

The Tower of Babel

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: The people at Babel wanted to make a name for themselves, but God is greater than anything people can build. Pride leads to a fall; God wants us to honor His name, not our own.
Bible passage: Genesis 11:1–9. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." *Proverbs 16:18 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), about 10 paper cups for each team of 3 or 4 kids, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Silent Tower (5–10 minutes)

Put the kids in teams of 3 or 4 and give each team about 10 paper cups. **Round 1:** teams have one minute to build the tallest tower they can, talking freely. **Round 2:** teams build again, but no one may speak, write or point. Compare the towers. Ask: *What happened when you couldn't understand each other? Could a whole city get built that way?* Say: "Today we will read about the day God mixed up the languages of the whole earth."

2. Bible story: The City and the Tower (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Genesis 11. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

After the flood. God had blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 9:1). **Replenish** means fill. Noah's family grew into many families and nations (10:32). **Look up Genesis 11:1.** Everyone spoke the same language.

A plain in Shinar. Look up Genesis 11:2. (**Journeyed** means traveled; a **plain** is wide, flat land; **dwelt** means lived.) **Look up Genesis 11:3.** (**Go to** means "Come on, let's"; **burn them throughly** means bake them hard all the way through; **slime** is a sticky tar; **morter** is what holds bricks together.) They used brick instead of stone.

Let us make us a name. Look up Genesis 11:4. On the board, write the two things they wanted to build: *a city* and *a tower*. Then write their two reasons: *make us a name* (be famous and honored) and *lest we be scattered* (so we won't be spread out). Ask: "God told Noah's family to fill the earth (9:1). What did these people want instead?"

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The LORD came down. Look up Genesis 11:5. (**The children of men** means people; **builded** means built.) They wanted to reach up to heaven, but the LORD came down to see. God sees everything (Psalm 33:13). The LORD said that the people were one, with one language, and nothing they **imagined**, planned, to do would be **restrained**, held back (11:6).

Confound their language. Look up Genesis 11:7. (**Confound** means mix up.) God mixed up their language so they could not understand each other's speech.

Scattered. Look up Genesis 11:8. (**Left off** means stopped.) The very thing they were trying to stop, being scattered, is what happened. **Look up Genesis 11:9.** The place was called Babel, because the LORD confounded the language of all the earth there. They wanted a great name for themselves; instead, the place is remembered for what *God* did.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The builders said, "Let us make us a name" (11:4). What are some ways people try to make a name for themselves today?
2. Their tower was supposed to reach heaven, but "the LORD came down to see" it (11:5). What does that tell you about how big God is?
3. God told Noah's family to fill the earth (9:1), but the builders wanted to stay together so they wouldn't be scattered (11:4). Why is it important to do things God's way, not our own way?
4. Proverbs 16:18 says "Pride goeth before destruction." How did that happen at Babel?
5. Psalm 34:3 says, "let us exalt his name together." How is that different from "let us make us a name"?

Recall questions

1. What did they use instead of stone? *(Brick, Genesis 11:3)*
2. What did they use for morter? *(Slime, 11:3)*
3. What did they stop building? *(The city, 11:8)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **pride** means thinking you are better than others or that you don't need God; **goeth before** means comes before; **destruction** means being ruined; a **haughty spirit** means a proud, stuck-up attitude; and a **fall** means falling down or failing. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "At Babel, God mixed up the languages of the whole earth. Many years later, on the day of Pentecost, God filled believers with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke with other tongues, and people from many nations heard them 'speak in his own language' (Acts 2:4, 2:6). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: when you do something well, give God the credit. Say "Thank You, God" instead of bragging.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Genesis 9:1: What did God tell Noah and his sons to do? *(Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth)*
2. Genesis 11:1: How many languages did the whole earth have? *(One language and one speech)*
3. Genesis 11:2: Where did the people find a plain? *(In the land of Shinar)*
4. Genesis 11:3: What did they have for stone? *(Brick)*
5. Genesis 11:4: What did they want the top of the tower to reach? *(Heaven)*
6. Genesis 11:5: Why did the LORD come down? *(To see the city and the tower)*
7. Genesis 11:8: What did the people leave off building? *(The city)*
8. Genesis 11:9: What was the name of the place? *(Babel)*

Or choose the **Tower of Babel word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/tower-of-babel-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/tower-of-babel-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/tower-of-babel-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/tower-of-babel-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are greater than anything we could ever build. Forgive us when we are proud and want to make a name for ourselves. Help us honor Your name and do things Your way. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about "let us go down" (11:7): don't build a teaching on the word "us"; the Bible doesn't explain it here. Point to what the passage says plainly: "the LORD came down" (11:5), "the LORD scattered them" (11:8), "the LORD did there confound the language" (11:9). One LORD did it all, and "The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4).
If a child asks how tall the tower was, or who led the building: the Bible doesn't say. Genesis 11:1–9 gives no height and no leader's name, so don't add one.

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