



# Tower Talking Trouble!

Small Group  
PreK-K

**Bible Story:** The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)

**The Big Truth:** God's plan is to be with us.

**Memory Verse:** 'You realize, don't you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you?'  
1 Corinthians 3: 16

**My Truth:** I can know God by following God's ways.

## Lesson Overview

Children will hear the story of the Tower of Babel in its ancient near Eastern context and engage in the hands-on STEM activity of tower building. They will have fun building towers while learning that God's plan is to be with us-- and to know God, we only need to seek God through our prayers, thoughts, words, and actions.

## Bible Connection

Too often the Tower of Babel story is used mistakenly to 1) explain the origin of the diversity of human languages or 2) teach a lesson about the dangers of human pride. In this short video, Dr. John Walton (Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College) explains the story in its ancient near Eastern context and helps us understand what the biblical author originally intended to tell us about God.

[Tower of Babel: Seven Minute Seminary](#)

## Life Connection

While much has changed since the ancient Sumerians built ziggurats like the Tower of Babel, what hasn't changed is God's plan to dwell with us and our deep need to create "sacred space" for connecting with God. Today we know that sacred space can be found through our prayers, meditations, worship, Bible study, fellowship, Communion, and care for others.

### Credits

Author: Jennifer Secki Shields  
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Build-The-Story Drawings: Scott Shields

### Photo Credits

Burj Khalifa: Katie Sharma  
Washington Monument: Jamie Davidson  
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This applies worldwide.

### Bible Scripture

Bible Scriptures shown in italicized font. Scripture taken from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

## STEM Connection

Tower building with just about every known household item is a common STEM engineering challenge that finds its expression at very early ages through simple activities like block stacking. We encourage you to Google "tower building stem" and discover the amazing variety of fun tower building challenges available for kids of all ages.

## Ancient History Connection

By 5th- or 6th-grade students will learn about ancient Mesopotamia per common standards of learning. The story of the Tower of Babel comes from southern Mesopotamia, an area known as Sumer (where the Sumerians lived). This Bible story and lesson provides an opportunity to make a connection between what is learned from the Bible and what is learned at school.

Mesopotamia is known as the "cradle of civilization" because it is where the first cities developed. Since there was no stone available for construction, building with baked bricks was a tremendous technological innovation (the Tower of Babel story mentions making bricks). The people built ziggurats, which they essentially saw as "elevators" that allowed God to come down and be worshipped in the adjoining temple. The ziggurat, temple, and adjoining garden would have formed a "sacred space."

# Preparation for Tower Talking Trouble!

The basic lesson format (Gather – Go Forth) is designed to run approximately 40-45 minutes in length. The additional options found under “Arrive” and included in the green sidebar of the lesson plan pages can add as much as 30 additional minutes.

## Arrive

Use one or both options as time allows.

### What To Prepare:

#### Option 1

Coloring: Crayons and copies of the Coloring Page (**Page #11**)

#### Option 2

Exploration Station: A flat surface and 3-4 bowls containing small items that can be stacked. Inexpensive and ready-at-hand possibilities include dry Cheerios™ or Fruit Loops™, checkers, and dominoes. **AVOID OBJECTS THAT CAN BECOME CHOKING HAZARDS.**

## Gather

What to prepare: Print or photocopy the Tower Picture Cards (**Page #07**) and cut apart the pictures. You will want to print enough to make 2-3 cards per student.



# Exploring God's World & Word

## Praise & Play

There are two options for this activity. The simple option is to have all the students use Dixie™ cups or plastic SOLO™ cups to build towers. You will want at least 20 cups per student.

The varied option is to provide a variety of building materials from which each student selects one material for his/her tower. For this age group, these can include Dixie™ cups, Lincoln Logs™, Magnaformers™, plastic SOLO™ cups, Duplo™ blocks, cardboard bricks, wooden blocks, Jenga™ blocks, and nesting blocks.

## Tell & Hear

### What to prepare for the teacher and each student\*

- 1 Bible Story Handout (**Page #08**)
- 1 Build-The-Story Cutouts (**Page #09**)
- 1 Build-The-Story Pasting Canvas (**Page #10**)
- Scissors / Glue Sticks or Clear Tape
- Hint: Print handout (#8) on the reverse side of canvas (#10)

\*Only if you have time for the students to make their own individual Build-the-Story pages. Otherwise, one copy for the teacher will suffice.

## Lesson Index

Page 01	Lesson Overview
Page 02	Preparation / Materials
Pages 03-06	Lesson Plan
Page 07	Tower Picture Cards
Page 08	Bible Story Handout
Page 09	Build-The-Story: Cutouts
Page 10	Build-The-Story: Pasting Canvas
Page 11	Coloring Page

# Tower Talking Trouble!

**Bible Story:** The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)

**The Big Truth:** God's plan is to be with us.

**Memory Verse:** 'You realize, don't you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you?' 1 Corinthians 3: 16

**My Truth:** I can know God by following God's ways.

## Arrive

**What you do:** As students arrive they can color the "Tower Talking Trouble!" coloring page and/or take the stacking challenge at the Exploration Station setup with different items that can be stacked.

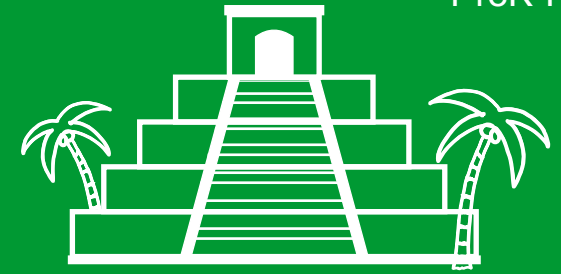
## Gather

**What you do:** Once it is time to begin as a group, have your students find the tower picture cards that are hidden around the room.

**What you say:** Good morning! Let's warm up with a game. There are [state the number] cards with pictures of towers on them hidden around the room. Your job is to try to find all the hidden tower picture cards. Go!

**What you do:** Once all the cards have been found, gather kids into a circle.

**What you say:** How many pictures of towers did you find? Do you like to build towers? If you like to build towers, stand up tall and raise your hands to the sky like you are a tower. Great job being like tall towers! Now we are going to sit down and be small buildings. Good job being like a small building! People have built some amazing towers all over the world. Let's look at a few of them [refer the picture cards they found during]. In the land where Abraham lived, more than 4,000 years ago the people built towers called ziggurats. They were about 100-300 feet tall. That may not seem like much, but 4,000 years ago, that was very tall! Have any of you seen the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C.? It is 555 feet tall and named after the first president of the United States, George Washington. The tallest building in the world today is the Burj Khalifa—it is 2,722 feet tall! That's over half a mile tall! Amazing!



Know which, if any, of the "Arrive" options you will use.

**What you need:**

Option 1: Crayons & Copies of the Coloring (Page #11)

Option 2: Exploration Station (see Preparation)

**What you need:**

Tower Picture Cards (Page #7) already hidden around the room

## Gather (Continued)

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Today we are going to build some towers and hear a Bible story about some people who lived long ago and built a tower so that God could come down and live with them. But, their building of the tower made God unhappy. Let's learn why, but first let's start by asking God to bless our time together:

God, thank you for this day that you have made to be with us. Please bless our time together. Help us know and love you; help us honor you and care for each other. Amen.

## Praise & Play

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**What you say:** Today we are going to build towers using [name your materials]. You can work in pairs if you like or by yourself [as your number of students allows]. You can build your tower as high or wide as you like. Once you build your tower, you will share it with the group before knocking it down later.

Before we start though, what are some things you already know about towers? What do you notice about the Ziggurat, Washington Monument, and Burj Khalifa? Why do you think they were built this way? What do you need to think about when you are building your tower[(note: responses might deal with how the base of the tower will determine how tall it can be)?

I will give you 10 minutes to build your tower. I will give you a 2-minute warning when time is almost up. Any questions? Start building and have fun!

**What you do:** Be sure to keep track of time and give students the 2-minute warning as promised. As students are building talk with them about their towers. Ask questions like: What building material did you choose? What kind of tower are you building? Can you describe your tower? How easy/difficult do you think it will be to knock down?

**What you say:** These towers look great! But, a long time ago, there was one tower that made God very unhappy. Let's hear today's Bible story about the Tower of Babel.

**What to do:** Gather kids into a seated circle.

Know what building materials will be available for your students.  
(See Preparation)



### Have more time?

Give your students more time to build... Snap photos of them next to their towers. Later, print or project them.

# Tell & Hear

## The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 1-9)

**What you say:** As we hear the story of the Tower of Babel, we will build a picture of the story.

God's world is a "good" place that works just right for us. God's plan from the beginning has been to live with us and show love for us. Adam and Eve were the beginning of God's plan to live with us. God made a beautiful garden—a special, sacred space—where Adam and Eve could be with God **[Build-the-Story: palm tree and garden plants]**. But, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and had to leave the garden. No more could they be so near to God. After that, people continued to make God sad by treating each other badly. Then...

*11<sup>1-2</sup> At one time, the whole Earth spoke the same language. It so happened that as they moved out of the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled down.*

The plain of Shinar was in southern Mesopotamia, also called Sumer. Today we call this place Iraq.

*<sup>3</sup> They said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and fire them well." They used brick for stone and tar for mortar. **[Build-the-Story: Use your hands to show how you can make bricks]**.*

In time, the people wanted God to live with them again.

*<sup>4</sup> Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower that reaches Heaven. Let's make ourselves famous so we won't be scattered here and there across the Earth."*

They got the idea to build a tower, called a ziggurat, so that God could come down and be with them. **[Build-the-Story: Ziggurat piece]**. They thought that if they gave God food, clothing, and a place to live, then God would favor and bless them. **[Build-the-Story: Food and clothing items]**. But, God was not pleased with their plan.

*<sup>5</sup> GOD came down to look over the city and the tower those people had built.*

*<sup>6-9</sup> GOD took one look and said, "One people, one language; why, this is only a first step. No telling what they'll come up with next—they'll stop at nothing! Come, we'll go down and garble their speech so they won't understand each other." Then GOD scattered them from there all over the world. And they had to quit building the city. That's how it came to be called Babel, because there GOD turned their language into "babble." From there GOD scattered them all over the world.*

God stopped their plan because the people were trying to honor themselves instead of God. They were trying to use God to get what they wanted. They were trying to make a name for themselves instead of making a name for God.

As you read, you will work to add Build-The-Story Cutouts [in bold and brackets] to your story page / Pasting Canvas. (Pages #9 & #10)

After you finish reading the story, and if time allows, your students can make their own Build-The-Story pasting canvass to review and reinforce the story. As they work, engage them with questions:

What were the towers called?

Why did the people build the towers?

Why did God stop them?

### What you will need for each student:

- 1 Build-The-Story Cutouts
- 1 Build-The-Story Pasting Canvas
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks or Clear Tape

### Have less time?

Skip the students making their own Build-the-Story Pasting Canvas.



## Tell & Hear (Continued)

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After this, God made a new plan to live again with the people—this time, through a promise to Abraham.

Today we know that each of us is a temple of God and that God's spirit dwells in us (1 Corinthians 3:16). And we don't need to build a tower for God to “come down”. God already is here among us; we only need to seek God through our prayers, thoughts, words, and actions.

**What you do:** Invite your students to make their own Build-the-Story sheet by cutting and pasting the story elements.

## Respond

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**What you say:** God stopped the people from completing the tower at Babel because God knew it would be bad for them to continue in their plans instead of God's plans.

Now, who would like to share with the group about their tower? **Give students an opportunity to share.** Who likes to knock down towers? If you want, you can knock down your towers now.

**What you do:** Gather students in a seated circle.

This is the Big Truth. God loves us and has always wanted to be with people. But, the Tower of Babel story tells us that we cannot try to use God to get what we want. Does God want the best for us? Does God want us to have a full and happy life? Yes! And, so, God's plan is to be with us. Today's Bible verse tells us: 'You realize, don't you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you?' (1 Corinthians 3: 16). Can you repeat that after me: You realize, don't you (You realize, don't you), that you are the temple of God (that you are the temple of God), and God himself (and God himself) is present in you (is present in you)? The Big Truth is your truth and my truth. We can know God by following God's ways. And we don't need to build a tower for God to “come down.” God already is here among us; we only need to seek God through our prayers, thoughts, words, and actions.

## Go Forth

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**What you do:** Gather your students in a circle for a closing prayer together before they depart.

**What you say:** God, thank you for the fun we had building towers and learning about the Tower of Babel. Help us to remember that you are here among us and that we can know you by following your ways. *Amen.*



### Have more time?

Allow your students to rebuild the towers they knocked down. This is a great opportunity to talk about how God gives second chances, including to the people who built the Tower of Babel.



### Have more time?

Allow your students to play “hide-n-seek” with each other by re-hiding the Tower Picture Cards.



2,722 Feet Tall

Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE



555 Feet Tall

Washington Monument



Ziggurat of Ur

Ancient Mesopotamia / Modern Iraq



2,722 Feet Tall

Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE



555 Feet Tall

Washington Monument



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## The Tower of Babel -- Genesis 11: 1-9 Told in its Ancient Near Eastern Context

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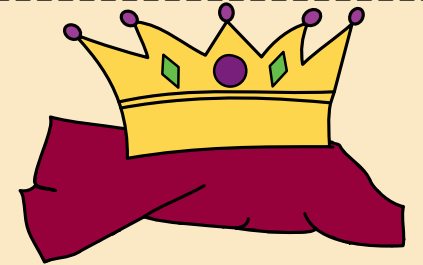
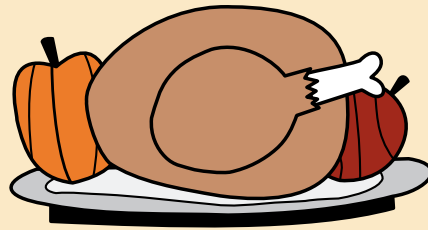
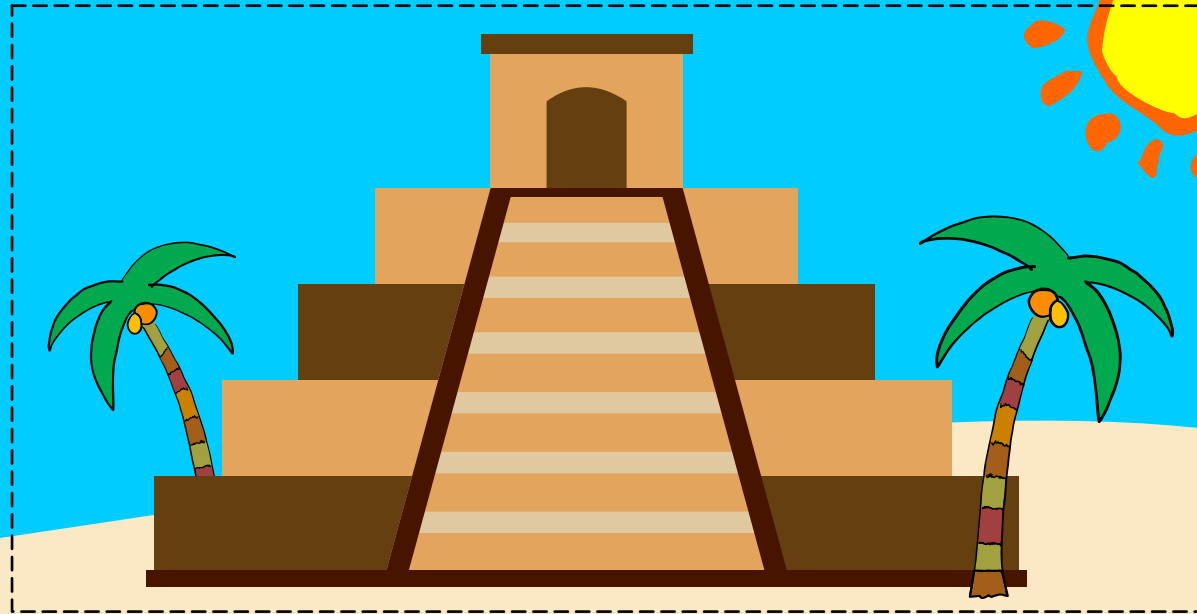
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# Build-the-Story: Tower of Babel

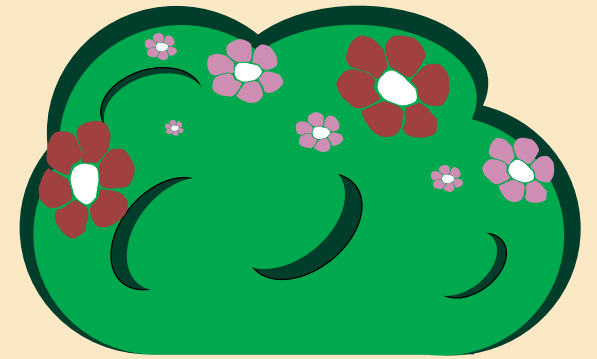
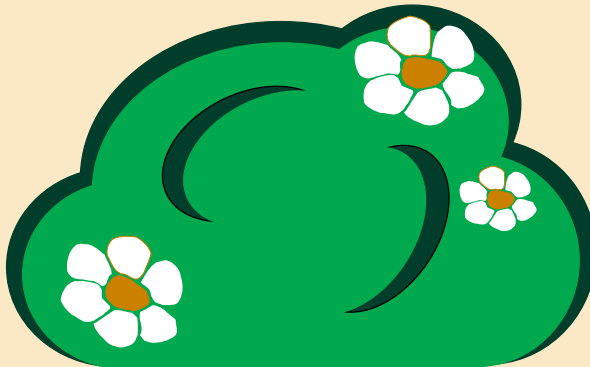
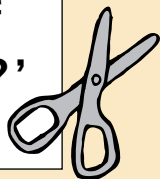
Genesis 11: 1-9



## MEMORY VERSE

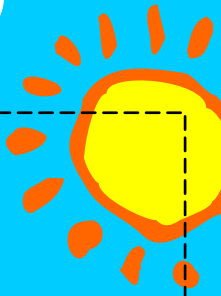
'You realize, don't you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you?'

— 1 Corinthians 3: 16 —



# Build-the-Story: Tower of Babel

Genesis 11: 1-9



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## MEMORY VERSE

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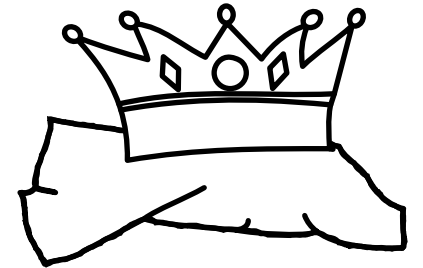
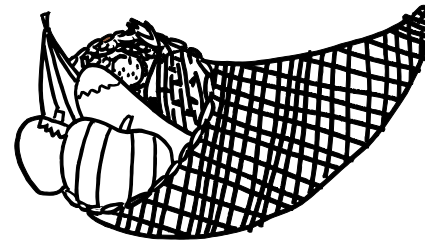
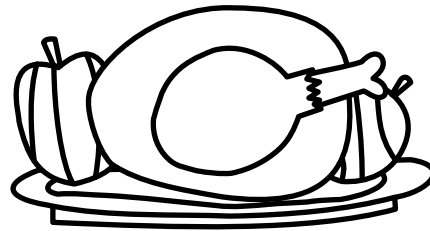
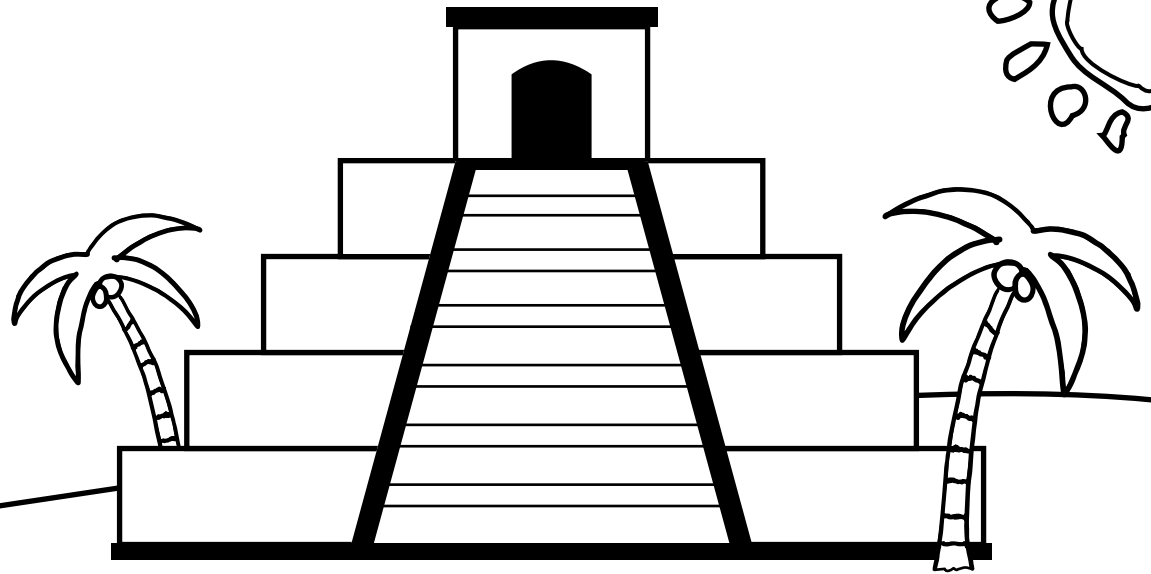
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# Tower of Babel

# Genesis 11: 1-9



## MEMORY VERSE

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