

People Build a Tower at Babel

Genesis 11:1-9



Worship Theme:



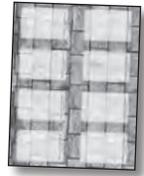
God is all we need.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will worship God for providing all we need.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
1 Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Only a Prayer Away" • "God Is for Me" • "The Love of God" • "Love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) • "God Will Guide Us" 	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD,</i> Brick Cards Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, pencils



Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	* Gifts From God Shake a gift package, and talk about the good gifts God gives.	Classroom Supplies: Box, wrapping paper, 1 package cookies, scissors, tape
	The People of Babel Listen to the story of the tower of Babel, and make up their own languages.	Classroom Supplies: Bible
	God Is All We Need Thank God by pantomiming the things God provides for them.	

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	* What Did You Say? Act out the story of the tower of Babel.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: Brick Cards Classroom Supplies: Poster board, marker
	* Breaking the Code Decipher a puzzle.	Classroom Supplies: Poster board, marker
	Precarious Tower Play a game to see what happens when they look away from God, and read Isaiah 33:6.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: Brick Cards Classroom Supplies: Bible, pencils



Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	The Offering Offer their gifts to God.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: Brick Cards Classroom Supplies: Offering bowl
	"Into the Bible" Praise God by singing "Into the Bible."	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment



* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point! Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

People Build a Tower at Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

The pattern continues. Just a few generations and only 150 to 200 years after the miraculous saving of Noah's family in the ark, the descendants of those ark-dwellers turned away from God. After Noah came out of the ark, one of God's commands to him was to "fill the earth." It appears that God wanted people to spread out across the earth, but some of the people decided to group together in a city, make a name for themselves, and keep themselves from being scattered. They showed no concern for glorifying or obeying God. And Noah lived to see all of this happen, as Genesis 9:28 tells us that Noah lived 350 years after the flood!

The people's intent in building a tower was not to reach heaven, as some have suggested. They wanted to build something showy that would bring them recognition. People from all around would see the tall tower that seemed to reach into the heavens. Others would marvel at what they had done, and they would be proud. These people weren't interested in serving God; rather they wanted to elevate their own standing before others. In essence, they tried to make themselves look more important than God.

God's response again appears to be one of sorrow. If these people were able to do such a self-serving, God-defying thing as to build this tower, what other evil things were next on the horizon? Who would stop the decline? How long would it be before none were left who honored God? God wanted people to depend on him, and instead they were trying to compete with him. So again, more out of concern for keeping people from further evil than out of a desire to punish, God put a stop to what was happening by causing people to speak different languages.

It's interesting to think about how God might have used this incident to differentiate various races. By selectively giving certain individuals the same language, God could have directed which people clustered together, and their gene pools could have resulted in races with very different physical characteristics, such as exist today. Whatever happened, the people were scattered, just as God intended.

Some ancient reports indicate that an unfinished tower stood—perhaps for centuries—just outside of the city of Babylon. Isn't it just like God to take something that evil people intended as a monument to themselves and turn it into a monument to his power and sovereignty? God wants us all to remember what he's done for us and how much we need him!

Devotion for Leaders

In all our decisions and experiences, we need God. God meets our needs through Jesus, who fulfills our greatest needs for mercy, love, and eternal life. Jesus is our everything!

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: How are you relying on God? You can use those situations as a testimony to God's power in times of need. Allow others to see you depending on God. Letting God sustain you is a great witness to others who are struggling. Consider how you can use your life to show your students that God always takes care of them.

Why We Worship for Leaders

The people at Babel wanted to make a name for themselves, so they decided to build a tower that reached to the heavens. At first glance, it's hard to see what their sin was because our culture values ambition and hard work. However, in choosing to build this tower, the people were developing a pattern of self-sufficiency that left out God. It's a pattern that plagues us to this day.

God made us for his glory and for his purposes. God is neither pleased nor glorified when people turn away from him to pursue their own goals. Today's worship session will help children realize that God deserves more than just a portion of their devotion—God deserves it all. Children also will see that giving God their whole hearts is vastly more satisfying than pursuing their own agendas. That's because God really is all we need.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!—Make sure your video equipment is ready.

What Did You Say?—Prepare four posters, each with the words and pronunciation for the numbers one through three in a different language. Here are four languages you can use:

Spanish:

1 Uno (oon-oh)

2 Dos (dose)

3 Tres (trace)

French:

1 Un (uhn)

2 Deux (duh)

3 Trois (trwah)

German:

1 Eins (eyn)

2 Zwei (tsveye)

3 Drei (dry)

Swahili:

1 Moja (mo-jah)

2 Mbili (m-bee-lee)

3 Tatu (tah-too)

Breaking the Code—You'll need a large poster board with the following written on it:

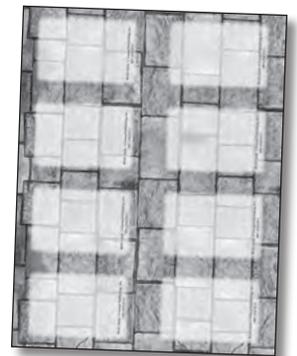
ABGCDOEFDGHIJKSLMANOLPQLRWSETUVNEWXEYDZ

If you have a group of more than 25 elementary children, make smaller posters or handouts with the message so the children can work on them in small groups.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. As the children enter the worship area, hand each child a pencil and a Brick Card from the KidsOwn Worship Kit. Speak with each child to share the directions.



Say Think of all the things you own. What's the one thing you really need most of all—the one thing you wouldn't want to live without? Write or draw that thing on one side of your Brick Card. Then keep your card in your pocket while we worship.

Begin worship when each child has arrived and written on a card.

Say Hello, everyone! You all have a card on which you've written or drawn the one thing you wouldn't want to live without—something you really need. There are lots of things we need. And there are other things that are really important to us, but they aren't things we have to have.

- Ask**
- **What did you write on your card?** (My teddy bear; my family; my new bike.)
 - **What does it mean to need something?** (We can't live without it; it helps us stay alive.)
 - **What are some things we need to stay alive?** (Food; warm clothes; a place to stay warm and dry.)
 - **What is the difference between wanting something and needing something?** (We don't usually need what we want; people are usually selfish with things they want.)

Say There are many things we need and many things that are important to us. But today we're going to explore the fact that God is all we really need. God is all we need because everything else comes from him. God gives people strength to work and earn money to buy food, and God created the air we breathe. As long as we have God, we'll have the other things we need. That's because God is always just a prayer away.

 Sing "Only a Prayer Away."

Say God is all we need, and we can trust him to give us the things we need. God can do anything—anything at all. If anybody can help us, it's God. That's one of the reasons we are here to worship God today. God can help us because he's great and powerful. There's nothing he can't do! Let's sing "God Is for Me" and celebrate that we can depend on God.

 Sing "God Is for Me."

Say It's great to know that God, who can do anything, loves each one of us. God takes good care of us in the same way that good parents take care of their children. We worship God because he loves us and wants to provide us with all we need. As you sing this song, be happy that God knows you and loves you.

 Sing "The Love of God."

Say Our God is great and good. He's a perfect parent who loves his children. In fact, God loves us so much that he wants to give us everything we need. God promises to give us good and perfect gifts. All God wants from us in return is our love and devotion. This is how the Bible puts it: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." When we love God in this way, we're worshipping him.

- Ask**
- **What do you think it means to love God with all your heart? with all your soul? with all your strength?** (Give him our best; to do everything as if we're doing it for God.)
 - **What would it mean to love God halfheartedly?** (To put others before him; to give him only our second best.)
 - **Why is God worthy of all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength?** (Because God made all of us; God is holy; God deserves our best.)

Say Let's worship God by saying this verse together. It'll be our way of showing God that we love him completely and that we recognize that he gives us everything we need.

Teach the children these motions for the key words in the verse:

- *Love*: Cross your arms over your chest.
- *God*: Point to the ceiling.
- *Heart*: With both index fingers, outline a heart on your chest where your heart is.
- *Soul*: Put your left hand in front of your stomach as if your hand is around a very small cup. With your right hand, thumb and index finger together, touch your left and then raise your right hand up high as if you were pulling something out of the cup.
- *Strength*: Make both your hands into fists, and bring them down in front of you as if you are hitting them on a table.

After you have reviewed the motions, say the Bible verse together. Say the Bible verse several times, getting quieter and quieter until you are only mouthing the words silently but still doing the motions. On the last time, don't even move your mouth; just silently do the motions together.

Say God loves us so much that he gives us everything we need. He wants us to love him, too. But we get caught up in sin, and that blocks us from being close to God. That's why God sacrificed his Son, Jesus. God wanted us to be with him so much that he sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins. Now we can be with God again! All we have to do is believe in Jesus and love him and then we can fully love God with our whole heart. Let's use our next song to tell God that we want to love him with our whole heart, every bit of it.

 Sing "Love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Say God is truly worthy of all our devotion because he gives us everything we need. But it's easy to forget that God is all we need. It's easy to take God's good gifts for granted. God wants us to trust him. He wants us to trust him to lead us. Let's sing "God Will Guide Us" to commit ourselves to following his guidance every day.

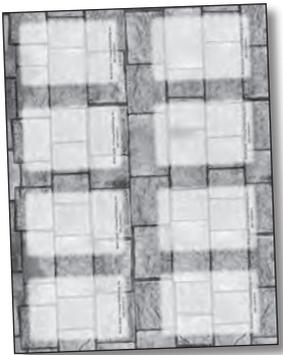
 Sing "God Will Guide Us."

Pray God, we know that every good and perfect gift comes from you. We know that each day you give us air to breathe, food to eat, and clothes to wear. You've provided schools for us to learn in and friends and families to love. Thank you, God, for being all and providing all we need. In Jesus' name, amen.

2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 89-90

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Give the Preschool Activities page to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.



Elementary Activities

* What Did You Say?

Have kids form four groups, making sure that each group has a good mix of older and younger children. Have each group gather around one of the posters you prepared before the session.

Work with each group's members to help them pronounce the numbers on the poster.

Say Each of you has been assigned to a group, and you have learned how to count to three in another language. We have only looked at four different languages, but people speak many, many languages all around the world. The Bible tells us that it wasn't always this way.

The story of the tower of Babel tells about a time when all the people of the world spoke the same language. The people decided to build a city with a tall tower in order to make a name for themselves. But things didn't work out well. Let's use the Brick Cards to build a tower, and we'll see what happened.

(continued on page 91)

People Build a Tower at Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

Worship Theme:



God is all we need.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Gifts From God—Place a package of cookies in a box that’s slightly larger than the cookie package. Then gift-wrap the box, and set it out.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo speak to the children in puppy talk during the “People of Babel” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



* Gifts From God

Gather the children in a circle. Show them the gift box you prepared before the session.

Say The Bible says every good and perfect gift comes from God. I have a large gift right here. Let’s use it to talk about the good gifts God gives us.

Rattle the gift box.

Say Hmm, I wonder what’s inside. Let’s pretend that all of God’s good gifts are inside this box. Think about all the good gifts that come from God, and remember that God gives us everything we need.

Pass the gift box around the circle, and have the children take turns rattling it and telling everyone about one of God’s good gifts—sunshine, families, snow, and food, for example.

After everyone has had a turn to mention several of God’s good gifts,

Say God is all we need. He gives us wonderful gifts every day. Let’s look inside the box and see what’s really inside.

Open the gift box, and pass around the cookies.

Say God’s gifts to us are sweet and good just as these cookies are sweet and good. God gives us what’s best for us. God takes care of us and provides everything for us. God really is all we need. We can depend on him to take care of us.

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

The People of Babel

Say Some people in the Bible forgot that God was all they needed. They decided that instead of depending on God, they were going to make a name for themselves. Let’s find out what happened to them. Watch and follow my motions to help me tell the story.

Open your Bible to Genesis 11.

Say God created people, and he loved them very much. But one day, many years ago, people at Babel decided they wanted to build a tower to show how good and important they were. So the people made bricks. Pretend to pat some bricks together.

The People of Babel (continued)

Say Then they stacked the bricks into a tall, tall tower. Pantomime stacking bricks to make a tall tower. Ask the preschoolers to help you pretend to stack bricks to make the tower as tall as they can.

God saw what the people at Babel were building and thought, “If the people build this tower, they’ll think they can depend on themselves instead of depending on me. Then they’ll forget about me.”

God loved the people very much. He didn’t want the people to forget him, so God decided he needed to stop them from building the tower.

At the time, everyone spoke the same language, just as we do here in this room. All of you can understand what I’m saying because we all speak the same language. It was the same for the people of Babel—they could all understand each other. But God made the people all speak different languages.

Let’s pretend that we all speak different languages. Each of you speaks your own language. Think of something you’d like to say to the rest of the group, and then think of how you’d say it in your language. For example, I’d like to say, “Good morning” to all of you. In my pretend language, you’d say, “Bamayo hoogey.”

Give the children a little time to think of something they’d like to say and then to “translate” it into their own pretend language. Then have each child say his or her message to the rest of the group. Have the other children try to guess what the child said. Then have the child tell the other children what he or she was saying.

Give everyone a chance to speak in a pretend language.

Say When all the people in the Bible story spoke different languages, they couldn’t understand each other, just as it was hard for us to understand each other when we were talking in our pretend languages. When the people couldn’t understand each other, they had to stop building the tower. When the people couldn’t understand each other, they had to start looking to God instead of depending on themselves.

God Is All We Need

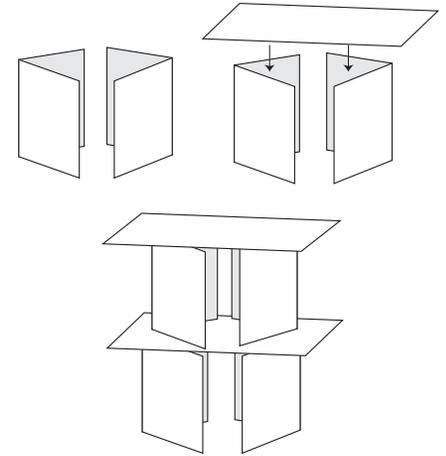
Say The people of Babel found out that it’s better to depend on God than to depend on themselves. They didn’t need a big tower. What they really needed was God. God is all we need, too. He’ll give us everything we need. Let’s thank God for giving us everything we need.

Have the children sit in a circle. Have the group say together, “Thank you, God, for being all we need. You give us...” Have the child sitting on your left act out something that God gives. Have the rest of the group guess what it is. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a chance to act out something that God gives. Then finish the prayer by cheering together, “Yea, God!”

(continued from page 88)

Invite children to start a tower on a table at the front of the room. For each level of the tower, have kids set two folded cards sideways and one unfolded card over the top—see the illustration in the margin.

Stop kids after they've built four or five levels, and have kids return to their seats.



Say **God didn't want the people to build the tower. God knew that if they could build such a tower, they could do anything they put their minds to. Then the people would think they didn't need God and would forget God. God wanted his people to remember him, so God mixed up their languages, which made working together much harder.**

When someone asked for one brick (have all the groups say "one" in the languages on their posters), **no one understood.**

If someone asked for two buckets of tar to spread on the bricks (have all the groups say "two" in the languages on their posters), **most of the people had no idea what was wanted.**

When someone called for three helpers (have all the groups say "three" in the languages on their posters), **people looked around and shrugged. They didn't know what was said.**

It became impossible to complete the tower. God scattered the people all across the world. Have the children in the different language groups move to different corners of the room. Have the groups take turns saying the numbers aloud in the respective languages on their posters.

Because God mixed up the languages at the site of the unfinished city, that city was called Babel, which sounds like the Hebrew word for "confused." Then all the people were scattered, and they had to learn to rely on God instead of each other.

It's been thousands of years since the people tried to build this tower, but people still need to learn to depend on God for all they need. Let's learn more about that.

Leave the tower standing. You'll need it for the third activity in this section.

* *Breaking the Code*

Display the poster you prepared before the session.

Say **These letters contain a very special message.**

- Ask**
- **What does it say?** (I can't read it; it's a code; God is all we need.)
 - **Why isn't it obvious what message I want you to get?** (I can't break the code; it's hard to read.)

Say **The letters don't look like they make any sense. But there is a pattern, a way we can try to decipher the meaning of the message. Let's see if we can figure out what it is.**

Have kids form groups of three to five. Pair younger children with older children. Have the groups work to decipher the meaning of the puzzle. Give the groups a minute or two to work on the puzzle. Then call their attention back to you, and ask what messages they found.

Ask • **What kept us from being able to read this simple message?**

Say **The extra letters in this important message kept us from quickly seeing and reading the message that was there. Those extra letters worked as a distraction; we were so busy looking at all the letters that we couldn't see the most important ones. Without those extra letters, we can easily read the message.**

Cross out the letters of the alphabet so that "God is all we need" is all that is visible on the poster.

Ask • **In real life, what distractions keep us from acting like God is all we need?** (People; the toys we have; popularity; video games.)

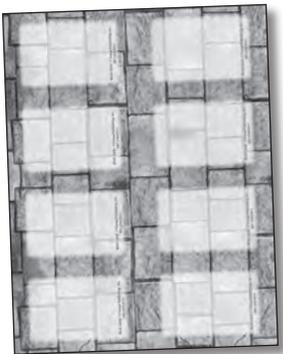
Say **Our friends, sports, computers, video games—even books or school—can take up so much of our time and attention that our time for God is crowded out.**

Ask • **Is it wrong to do these things? Why or why not?** (Yes, because they get in the way of God in our lives; no, they're fine until we put them first instead of God.)

Say **All the things we mentioned can be good things. God wants us to have friends to share special times with, to cheer us when we're sad, and to encourage us to be the best we can be. Sports can be a wonderful way to learn how to be a team member and keep our bodies healthy. Computers can help us do our work and learn about the world God has made.**

Ask • **When do good things become problems?** (When they get in the way of us loving God; when we focus on them instead of God.)

Say **Sometimes we allow even good things to take up so much of our time that we don't make time to read the Bible or attend church or pray. We get so busy with our own stuff that we forget to rely on God. We forget that God is the one we serve. And we forget that God is where our strengths, abilities, and talents come from. Pretty soon we've crowded God out of our lives and we're relying on ourselves. That's a pretty weak foundation for our lives. It's much better to look to God, to make him the first and most important thing in our lives. Let's explore how to do that.**



Precarious Tower

Point to the tower the kids made in the "What Did You Say?" activity.

Say **On the cards that make up this tower, we wrote things we thought we couldn't live without. Let's see what happens when we try to build an even taller tower with them.**

Have children form two groups, and have groups line up on opposite sides of the card tower. Have the two groups take turns adding one card at a time to the tower, continuing to build it in the same way as before with two folded cards and one unfolded card per level. Play until the tower falls, and then have children return to their seats.

- Ask**
- **What did you notice about this tower as it kept getting taller and taller?** (It got less sturdy; it looked closer to toppling over.)
 - **How was this experience like building your life on something other than God?** (Our life can wobble and topple over if God isn't our foundation; God keeps us straight if we keep him first.)
 - **What can you do to build your life on God instead of on other things?** (I can spend more time with him; I can worship him; I can focus on him and love him in all I do.)

Say Right here on this table, we see the effects of building our lives on something other than God. Sooner or later, things come crashing down when we don't recognize that God is all we need. Listen to this verse from the Bible.

Have someone read Isaiah 33:6 from the New International Version.

- Ask**
- **What can you do to make God a sure foundation in your life?** (I can change my attitude about what I need; I can get to know God better; I can trust God with everything.)

Hand out pencils and the Brick Cards. (It doesn't matter whether kids get the same cards they started with at the beginning of the worship session.)

Say Spend some time talking with God about what you can do in your life to show that God is all you need. Maybe you'll change what you consider to be important, or maybe you'll change the way you behave in certain situations. Then write or draw your idea on the blank side of your card.

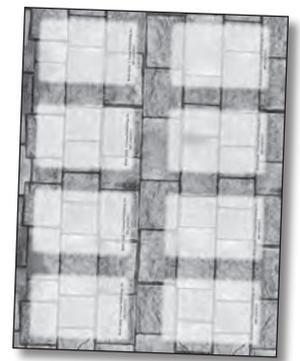
Give kids time to talk to God and draw and then move directly into the offering time.

3 Let's Pray!

The Offering

You'll need the Brick Cards from the "Precarious Tower" activity.

Say When we give an offering, we're giving God a gift. Sometimes our gifts are gifts of money. You'll have time today to give God your money if you brought some. Sometimes our gifts to God are the decisions we make about how we're going to live our lives. All of us took time to talk to God about putting him first in our lives and about showing him that we recognize that God is all we need. As part of our offering today, let's create a tower of those ideas. The tower at Babel was designed to draw attention to the people who built it. Our tower will be designed to show God that he is the sure foundation—that he is all we need.



Show children the table that will act as the foundation for the tower. Then have the children come and build a sturdy tower with the Brick Cards (shorter and wider than before). Set an offering bowl nearby for the children to put their monetary gifts in.

When the children have finished the card tower, lead them in prayer.

Pray ▶ **God, we know that you are all we need. We realize that it's foolish for us to depend on ourselves. You are strong and mighty. You are wise and loving. You give to us every good gift. Help us to live lives that put you first. In Jesus' name, amen.**

"Into the Bible"

Have the children stand in a circle around the card tower.

Say ▶ **Putting God first is a way to glorify him. It's a way to show that we know God is great and mighty. God is all-important. And we are his children. It's our job to trust him, rely on him, and live our lives to please him. God gave us the Bible to help us do that. As we read the Bible and put his Word in our heart, we learn how to live lives that please God. Let's sing "Into the Bible" as our closing prayer. Think about the actions you will do to glorify God this week, and offer those as a prayer to God.**

 Sing "Into the Bible."



Encouragement for Leaders

Dear God, thank you for placing each of these children in my life and in my class. Teach me to love these children as you do, and to see them as you see them. In Jesus' name, amen.