

# Genesis

Tower of Babel  
(Genesis 11:1-9)

## INTRODUCTION

What does the word “babble” mean? (*A confusion of sounds or voices.*) How do you think that sounds?

What would you think if you woke up one day and couldn't understand a word anybody around you was speaking? At first you might think it was funny, but after a while you might get pretty frustrated. Today we're going to learn about a whole city where that happened. The story took place in a town called Babel, which means “Gate of God” in the people's native tongue.

## OPENING PRAYER

Lord, we want to learn how to honor You in everything we do. Please help us to learn from the mistakes the people of Babel made, who lifted themselves up in pride before You. We want never to do that, so open our ears and the eyes of our hearts this morning as we read and study Your word. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## MEMORY VERSE

*And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined...the boundaries of their habitation... (Acts 17:26)*

## LESSON

Last week we learned that after the great flood, when Noah and his family first got off the Ark, God told them to populate the whole earth.

Genesis 9:1

*Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.*

Well, Noah's sons and their wives began to have children who grew up and had more children. Soon there was another population explosion just like before the flood. So, they were obeying the first part of God's command. They were being fruitful and multiplying! Let's see if they were obedient to the second part of God's command.

Genesis 11:1-2

*At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there.*

As the families journeyed from the east they came to the plain of Shinar and decided that it would be a great place to settle down and make for themselves a great nation. At this point everybody still lived together in one area and all spoke the same language.

Genesis 11:3

*They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.)*

The people began to talk about building a great city, with a temple-tower reaching to the skies. It was probably built as the central focal point of the city. The tower of Babel most likely looked like a pyramid with steps or ramps leading up the sides. The brick used to build this tower was man-made and not as hard as stone.

[Teacher, show a picture of the Tower of Babel, if available.]

Genesis 11:4

*Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."*

The people built their tower for themselves, not for God. They wanted to show everyone how clever they were. Their hearts were full of pride. And notice that they did it so that they could be famous and to keep them from being scattered all over the world. This was prideful disobedience to the Lord's command to "fill the earth."

Sometime we do things to call attention to ourselves, too. Have you ever known someone who tried to impress others into thinking they were better than others? Sometime people buy things to impress others, like name-brand tennis shoes. When that happens "things" take God's place in our lives. Can you think of other ways that people call attention to themselves?

Isn't it interesting that because of wickedness of mankind, God wiped all of them off the face of the earth with the great flood, except for Noah and his three sons and daughters-in-law? The human race began again and it didn't take but another one hundred years and wickedness ruled in the hearts of mankind again! It just goes to show you that wickedness is born with a person. We all have the "want to" to do bad things. Our parents need to teach us to be kind and loving and thoughtful and courteous. People are not born good and turn bad later; we have to learn to be good. That's why God gave us the Ten Commandments; He knew it's natural for us to steal or lie or not honor our parents.

Genesis 11:5-7

*But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. "Look!" He said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."*

Who is talking in verse 7? Who is the "Us?" (The trinity!) When God saw what they were doing, He knew that they had left Him out of their lives thinking only of how clever they were. God also knew that soon they would become as evil as the people who had lived before the Flood. For their own good, God had to stop them. God had to force them to populate the whole earth as He had commanded them when Noah and his family first got off the ark.

So, God decided to give them different languages, so that they wouldn't be able to understand each other. Wouldn't that be confusing?

One morning when the people came to work on the tower something weird happened. Suddenly, throughout the city, people were not speaking the same language anymore. They couldn't understand each other.

One man would ask, "May I borrow your tools" and the other man would think he had asked for more bricks. All was confusion. They became frustrated. No matter how loud they shouted they couldn't make themselves understood. Nothing was getting accomplished. Soon they gave up trying to work together and the tower building stopped.

Soon the people got fed up with all the confusion. Groups of people that could understand each other decided to move away.

Genesis 11:8-9

*In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way He scattered them all over the world.*

God had shown that as clever as the people of Babel were, they couldn't accomplish anything of lasting value if they wouldn't honor and obey God.

Now you know how all the different nations developed; God spread the population out over all the earth by confusing the languages at Babel. All the people who could understand each other grouped together.

Today many different languages are spoken. Each country has its own language like Chinese, Spanish, French and German. All people came from Noah. Through his three sons came all the colors and nationalities of the world today. But, God is the God of all peoples, of every nation and of every tongue.

## **Closing Prayer**

However good the work is that we are doing, Lord, it will fail if You don't bless it. That's why we should always consult You in prayer so our plans will be according to Your plan for our lives. Keep us from building towers in our lives to promote our own greatness. Keep us humble before You. And help us always to keep You high and lifted up as the center of our lives. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## **LEARNING CENTERS**

### **Imagination Station**

(Craft Center)

#### ***Tower of Babel Crossword Puzzle***

Write in the words and color the pictures on the following crossword puzzle. Hint: To help you solve the crossword puzzle, you can use the picture clues or you can find the words for the crossword in the following sentence:

*As time passed, people began building a tower to reach heaven. To stop the men from building the tower, God caused them to speak different languages (Genesis 11:3-9).*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

1

2

3

4

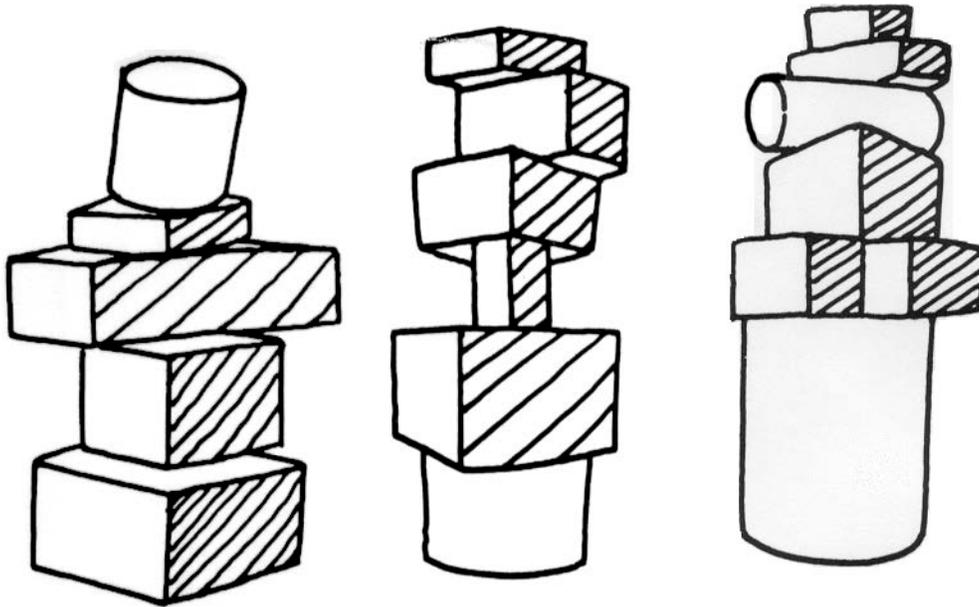
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6

## Fun House

(Game Center)

### 1. Tower of Babel Relay



#### Materials

You will need the same number and kind of stackable objects for each team, such as:

- Blocks
- Boxes
- Empty containers

#### Game Rules

Divide children into two teams. Teams line up about twenty feet from their stacking materials. The first player stacks one of the objects on top of another, runs back to the starting line, tags the next player, and goes to the end of the line. Players take turns stacking an object onto the tower. If a player knocks down the tower, he must leave the objects as they are and return to the end of the line. The next player may restack one object. The game continues until one team has completed their "Tower of Babel."

### 2. Groupies

On small pieces of paper write an animal name. Have at least two of each animal. On "GO" have the children find the member(s) of their species by just uttering the sound of their animal. Thus, all the "moos" gather together as cows and all the "quacks" gather together as ducks, etc. This demonstrates how the people of Babel grouped together by like languages.

### 3. Language Game

The following game will demonstrate man's ability to reason and put together complicated ideas.

Divide the children into various groups and give each group ten different words written on separate pieces of paper. Each group should receive the same words. Give the groups a set amount of time to see how many

different sentences they can create out of the ten words. One person in each group needs to write down the sentences so that they don't have any duplicates within their group. See which group can make the most sentences.

## God's Weird and Wonderful World

(Science Center)

### 1. *Discover Where Races Came From*

#### **Key Points**

- Very tiny things called cells make up the human body.
- In the nucleus of our cells is genetic material, which determines what characteristics we are born with, such as eye color, skin color, height, intelligence, etc.
- We receive half of this genetic material or genes, from each parent.
- We notice similarities in those who are related.
- This genetic material started with the first parents—Adam and Eve. They passed their genetic material onto their children who passed it onto their children.
- Following the flood, all human races were descendants of Noah's three married sons and their wives. They passed their genes onto the human race.

#### **Background Facts**

In order for races to arise, a population must split into small, isolated groups, leading to "inbreeding". (Gish, pg.92) In that way traits become common among a people. This is what happened at the Tower of Babel.

"According to a recent summary of modern biological knowledge on human racial characteristics, the difference in human genes linked to race is only .012%. Humans all have the cellular machinery to make them very white or very black. What color you are reflects only trivial genetic differences. In transplant surgery, an organ from a white donor can make a more acceptable match for a black patient, and vice versa" (Discover, November 1994, pp. 72, 73).

#### **Science Activity**

Compare traits among your students. How many can roll the end of their tongue, or raise an eyebrow? Who has dimples, or free ear lobes versus those that are attached? When they fold their hands naturally, does their left thumb cross over their right thumb? All these traits were there even when they were in their mother's womb.

Give each child a piece of paper with a cell in the middle and the following instructions: Imagine that the cell represented on the paper is the beginning of a unique life form—YOU! We know that we each began as a single cell with all the information needed to make a human being. Think about your unique self—then add words or phrases that describe you to complete your genetic puzzle.

#### **Spiritual Lesson**

God allowed each of us to inherit special and unique traits from our parents. He created different colors, sizes and shapes of people but really what matters to Him is what is inside our heart. God wants us to view people the same way and realize that we all have one thing in common. That one thing is the need for a savior!

#### **Genetic Oddities**

Black and white twins—twins with different skin color have been noted in both England and New Zealand. A couple in New Zealand have twin daughters, one light and one dark, who have become less alike as they have grown older. Melissa is taller, with dark brown eyes and black curly hair. Marianna has the light European tone of

her mother, with straight red hair. There is also documentation of boys in New Zealand who are known as the "black and white" twins because one looks European while the other has Maori features. Doctors in Britain said the chances of producing such black and white twins were a million to one" (The Dominion, Wellington, NZ, Aug. 31, 1994, p. 8).

There is a very rare condition of excessive body hairiness that has not been known to inflict anyone outside of a large family in rural Mexico. Newborn males are born with hair all over their face, including the eyelids, with only the lips remaining hairless. Men with the condition have inch-long hair all over their face, and parts of their upper body. Women with the condition, while not being affected to the same degree as the men, have random patches of hair on the face and the body. Scientists have written that the gene has "reawakened from a long sleep during human evolution", meaning that it is a leftover trait from our alleged ape-type ancestry. Another, just as viable explanation is that it is simply a mutated gene changing the amount of hair that has existed in humans since creation (Creation ex nihilo vol. 18 no. 1, December 1995 – February 1996).

## **2. Discover Languages**

Look at the confusion of languages. Discuss how different nations developed out of this and how Jesus will be Lord of all Nations.

### **Key Points**

The primary objective is to communicate how so many different nations came about, viewed from a Biblical perspective.

Differences of languages are one of the reasons for the divisions in the human race. Others are culture and religion.

Illustrate how frustrating it would have been for people of Babel. Invite someone to Sunday School who speaks a foreign language. Have them try to communicate a fairly difficult message to another person who doesn't speak the same language.

Have the children name as many different languages that they can. Do the people that speak these languages get along with each other? Help the children to realize that one day all nations shall live together in peace under Christ's rule (Isaiah 2:1-4).

Where did our ability to speak come from? Were we born with this ability or did we learn it from people around us? Have the children give their answers to these questions.

One theory is that language developed from animal grunts or calls, or from people making instinctive sounds caused by pain. Another theory is that people reacted to the stimuli of their surroundings. An example is the expression, "bye, bye" which supposedly simulate the lips and tongue waving goodbye.

There are cases of children who were reared in the wild by animals or kept isolated from all social contact. Most attempts to teach them had no success.

We know, of course, that God created the first man with the ability to speak and that as babies, we hear our parents talk and therefore advance in our God given abilities to use language.

Have the children think about the different features that God has given them to enable them to speak. What parts of their body are being used when they speak? The vast majority of speech sounds are made using lung air. Before we can speak, lung air has to be changed into audible vibrations using the various organs within the vocal tract. The most important source of vibration for the production of sounds is in the lower region of the vocal tract, at the larynx. The front part of the larynx can be easily felt and we refer to it as the "Adam's apple".

There are several other types of speech sounds which do not use air stream from the lungs such as click sounds, like, "tut tut," and "tsk tsk" which are made by the tongue against the top of the mouth.

Have the children say the following words and identify what parts of their bodies besides their lungs that are being used to make these sounds

“Thin” - uses upper the teeth.

“Tall” - uses the ridge behind the upper teeth.

“You” - uses the hard palate.

“Paw” - uses the lips.

Have them grit their teeth and say something. They use their jaw for this.

Animals also have the ability to communicate but it is not the same as man. Man has a unique gift of using language, not only spoken, but written.

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