

Youth Sabbath School

The standard Youth Sabbath School materials contain a Student Lesson and a Teacher's Guide. In addition to these materials provided by the General Conference Sabbath School Department, the North American Division Youth Department is providing supplemental materials you may choose to add to this lesson. Think in terms of your specific setting and the young people at your Youth Sabbath School. As you seek to involve them in the study and application of the Bible for this week, prayerfully pick and choose the components that will form the Youth Sabbath School for your young people. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as you make your plan and then continue to be sensitive for the Holy Spirit to guide you during the Sabbath School.

Session 6 Reaching Toward Heaven (Feb. 9, 2019)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 11:1–9

OVERVIEW

The Tower of Babel demonstrates an attempt to live independently of God and in direct defiance of God's instructions.

Read the *Student Lesson* as well as the *Teacher's Guide*. This may provide everything you need to teach the Youth Sabbath School lesson.

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CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY 2019

reaching toward heaven

keytext
"Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'"
(Genesis 11:4, NIV)

flashlight
"There were some among them, however, who heeded the Lord, but who had been deceived by the pretensions of the arrogant and drawn into their schemes. For the sake of those left over the Lord limited their arguments and gave the people time to reveal their true character" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 112).

Student Lesson

LESSON 6
CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY 2019
reaching toward heaven

Scripture Study 11:1-9
Commentary: Genesis and Patriarchs (p. 112), chapter 11.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Few stories in the Bible capture the imagination as does the Tower of Babel narrative. It reminds our attention for several reasons. The sheer audacity that a group of people would set upon building a structure that would literally reach into the heavens is not spectacular. What is astonishing is the reason for their project.

The Babel builders decided to pursue their project in clear violation of God's pronouncements. God had promised that He would never destroy the world by flood again, but they chose to erect an insurance policy in case He later changed His mind. They also built the tower to circumvent God's second command to disperse throughout the world.

The signature lesson we can take away from the Babel episode is one of obedience to God. When God tells us to do something, no matter how much it goes against our own way, we are to obey. This lesson explores the concept of obedience to God and seeks to get students to consider leaving down any desire that they have reached in their own lives. As you teach, be on the lookout for other themes in this story, such as the power of unity.

II. TARGET
The students will:

- Learn about the importance of God's commands to His people. (Patriarchs)
- Understand that obedience to God's directives is the only route to peace of mind in the Christian life. (Patriarchs)

III. EXPLORE
• Their attitude
• Obedience
• Ambition
• Humility

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED
Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson after they have completed a discuss their responses.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
Who doesn't admire the obedience a dog shows to its master? (Archibald) (Archibald, first post, town-asa of South Carolina, wrote that one day he met a man whose dog had just been killed so it killed the heartbroken, "the man explained to Rutledge how it had happened."
Because he worked outdoors, he often took his dog with him. That morning, he left the animal in a clearing and gave him a command to stay and watch his lunch bucket while he went into the forest. His faithful friend understood, for that's exactly what he did.
Then a few started in the woods, and soon the

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Teacher's Guide

Following are additional components that you can pick and choose, use "as is" or adapt to your specific Youth Sabbath School. These supplemental ideas provide more options for this topic. Here's a brief description of the seven supplemental materials:



1. Opening activity

An icebreaker or something to get people focused as you begin.



2. Video clip and follow-up questions

A short video clip and an idea for you to create your own video on this week's topic, plus a few questions to follow up with discussion.



3. Music

It's best if you create your own and choose what's best in your setting. We are not endorsing a particular style or even a specific song. Select songs related to this week's lesson. We'll suggest several different songs with lyrics that relate to the topic for this week. Sing along with a prerecorded track (YouTube is a good source) or better yet, ask youth with musical talent to play instruments and lead the singing.



4. Bible study guides for Scripture for this lesson

This is another approach to the same topic found in *Teacher's Guide*, but approached from a different angle. Expect activities to illustrate the topic, followed by some questions.



5. Application ideas for living out this lesson this week

Let this spark your ideas to move from talk to action by living out the lesson in practical ways in your life this week.



6. Youth leader tip for the week

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip and an illustration to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this, or you may learn it through trial and error. Here's a way to get it with a quick infusion.



7. Teen Q & A

Here's a question one teen is asking, with a response from a youth pastor. This might be a question your teens are asking. Use the response to springboard into a discussion with your Youth Sabbath School participants.

And here are those seven supplemental materials in more detail for this week's lesson: "Reaching Toward Heaven"



Opening activity

OPTION 1: JENGA TOWER

Have a Jenga-type of contest by having participants see how high they can build their tower. You can use the game called Jenga (available for less than \$10 online in case you don't already have it), or you can create your own pieces. The dimensions are such that three blocks stacked next to each other form a square. The stack alternates directions at each level. Determine your own limits, such as time, and whether teams are one person each, two people each, or more. Keep track of how many blocks are removed as well as how high the tower is becoming as you restack the removed blocks on top of your structure. Eventually the tower will tumble.

OPTION 2: 5-MINUTE COUNTDOWN VIDEO

Play a 5-minute countdown video to lead up to Sabbath School. When people arrive at Sabbath School is anything happening? Is anyone else there? If nothing's happening, many will turn around and walk out. Heaven forbid someone is the very first person to enter the room! On the Youth Sabbath School Ideas website you can download a 5-minute countdown video with drone footage of countries where Maranatha Volunteers International has constructed buildings. Feel free to add your own background music.

If you play a 5-minute countdown video, keep in mind these important factors as the leader:

- You must be ready five minutes before Sabbath School begins
- You'll need to be able to project the video so those who enter see it
- You need to start Sabbath School as soon as the video ends, whether anyone is present or not.

TRANSITION: As we consider our lesson for today, think back to times you have reached toward heaven. What motivated you to do that? How successful were you? What does it take for a person to reach heaven? What might stop us from reaching this important goal and inward longing?



Video clip and follow-up questions

Create a video clip that illustrates the human tendency to try to live without God, or to be so responsible that we cover our bases ourselves rather than depend on God. Ask someone in advance to create follow up questions.

You can also go to YouTube and the kids' video "Storytellers: Tower of Babel" (3:27 minutes) and use the follow-up questions provided (or create your own).

1. Why did people build the tower of Babel? If you had lived at that time, would you have been in favor of it? Explain.
2. Why did God stop the people from completing this major construction project?
3. What would be the equivalent of the Tower of Babel for us today?
4. Have you ever wished that everyone spoke the same language as you, or that you could understand each other better?

5. People encourage us to "find our identity" by being good at something, or by making a name for ourselves. Is that wrong?



You have options!

1. It's best to do live music in your own setting, even if people are just learning.
2. Tap into Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) to access Christian music legally. Your local church might already be doing this. If not, we recommend that you start. Their website is us.ccli.com.
3. Sing along with existing music. You can also type song titles into YouTube and see how others are doing the same songs you are. If you need lyrics, you can Google the song title and find them that way.
4. Here are ten songs related to today's lesson, "Reaching Toward Heaven."
 - Lead Me to the Rock
 - Strong Tower
 - He Reigns
 - Draw Me Close
 - Ego
 - How Great is Our God
 - Reckless Love
 - Amazing Grace
 - What a Beautiful Name
 - Love Like I Mean It
5. "Your Kingdom" is an original song written specifically for Youth Sabbath School. Go to the Youth Sabbath School Ideas website and download the lyrics, download the music, and download the video to learn and teach this song in your Youth Sabbath School. The lyrics have been added to the collection of items at the end of this PDF. People usually need to sing new songs several times before they learn them. You may want to have a few get familiar with it in advance so they can lead the rest of the group.



Bible study guides for Scripture for This lesson – "Reaching Toward Heaven"

This is another approach to the same topic as the Teacher's Guide, but just a different way of looking at it. Expect activities to illustrate the topic followed by some questions.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 11:1–9

- Standing on the Promises – Genesis 11:1–9
- Trusting God’s Heart – Genesis 11:1–9
- Talk My Language – Genesis 11:1–9

Standing on the Promises

(BASED ON GENESIS 11:1–9)

You would think that after a catastrophic flood, nobody would ever doubt the reality of God and the consequences of living apart from Him! But every generation and every individual must choose God for themselves. That’s been true all throughout history. Later, the story of the various kings that ruled over God’s people shows tremendous swings from following God to following many other type of gods.

This brings up a set of questions for us today.

QUESTIONS

- Do your parents/guardians believe in God?
- Has this changed in any noticeable way during your lifetime?
- Do you believe in God?
- In what ways in your belief in God similar and different from your parent(s)?
- Do crises or catastrophes take you toward God or away from God?

After the Flood, a generation of people decided to find their own greatness through what they were able to construct. Their desire for greatness was to construct a tower that would take them up to the skies (Genesis 11:4). Humans were made to be in connection with God. Even those seeking greatness seem to have an innate sense that getting closer to heaven or moving upward is the way to achieve their goal. It’s so easy for the desire to be with God to switch to a desire to be God. Satan knows all about that, and seeks to plant that desire in every human—the attempt to become God rather than to worship God and be connected to Him.

Whether you choose to follow God or choose to be your own god, there are some basic ideas that go along with your choice. Some people make these decisions consciously, while others sort of drift or become influenced in these areas by others. Let’s take a moment to look at these foundational ideas so you can choose which way you will go. These things may have been chosen for you in the past, but now that you’re in Youth Sabbath School, it’s time for you to start making some personal decisions on your own since you’re coming of age and must give an account for yourself. It’s part of growing up.

Let’s take a quick look at some of the foundational ideas for several of the common belief systems and practices today. Modify these depending on your priorities and perhaps even edit them as you see fit. We’ll look at Christianity, the Christian denomination of Seventh-

HERE’S ONE WAY OF STUDYING THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 brick per participant
- A collection of colorful Sharpie markers

day Adventism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and secular humanism. These are not official or complete descriptions, but they form a good starting point in terms of our discussion and discovery today.



Give each participant a brick and set out a collection of colorful Sharpies for participants to write symbols or notes on their brick. Explain that the brick represents their beliefs. As you go over the various beliefs, they can mark the beliefs or symbols for beliefs on their respective bricks.

CHRISTIANITY

1. Jesus is God, shows what God the Father is like, and died for our sins
2. God: is, is eternal, is the Creator, and is connected to us
3. Holy Spirit is God, and is present throughout the earth now
4. Scripture is God's supernatural messages to humans
5. Salvation is how God restores us to himself when sin separates us from him
6. Discipleship is God's call for us to follow Jesus and become more like him
7. Service is God's goodness to others passed on through us
8. The church is God's people coming together to worship and going out to serve
9. Death is the result of sin, is overcome by Jesus, and is not the final word for his children
10. The Second Coming is Christ's return to end this earth and recreate a new earth for his children

QUESTIONS

- Do you agree with these foundational beliefs for Christianity?
- Upon what do you base your beliefs (background, Scripture, other)?
- Which of these beliefs will you symbolize on your brick? (Go ahead and do it)
- What changes would you make?
- Put them in order of importance to you.
- What is most compelling about these beliefs?
- Why would so many people reject or ignore these?

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS (ONE OF THE DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY)

1. The same as the ten Christian beliefs above
2. Emphasis on Christ's Second Coming shaping one's world view
3. The seventh-day Sabbath continues as God's gift and symbol for his children
4. God continues to speak through prophets and act through his children
5. Death is like sleep, with resurrection at Christ's Second Coming
6. God is present in his people on earth; humanity is present in Christ in heaven
7. A cosmic battle between good and evil is playing out right now, and we're in the play

QUESTIONS

- Are these your foundational beliefs?
- What would you add? What would you subtract? Why?
- Which of these will you add to your brick?
- Are Seventh-day Adventists also Christians? Explain.
- What do SDAs have to share with other Christians? With other religions? With those who aren't religious?
- How could SDAs benefit from other religions? From those who aren't religious?

JUDAISM (JEWS)

1. Everything begins with God the Creator
2. God is real, and is one/unity
3. God is not human—he is beyond that or something other than that
4. God is eternal
5. God calls for our worship, and is not to be shared with any other gods (false gods)
6. God communicates to humans through prophecy
7. Moses is the primary prophet and teacher
8. The Torah (the first five books of the Bible; all of God's messages) comes from God
9. The Torah doesn't change
10. God knows everything and cares for everything
11. God is the divine judge who rewards and punishes in his time
12. God's Messiah will come to earth and usher in a new messianic era
13. God can resurrect the dead

QUESTIONS

- What similarities do you see between Christianity and Judaism?
- What differences do you see between Christianity and Judaism?
- Which one appeals to you more? Why?
- Which symbols will you add to your brick at this time?
- Who do you know who believes and practices Judaism?
- What would it take for more dialogue between Christians and Jews?

ISLAM

1. Belief in Allah, the one and only God
2. Belief in angels
3. Belief in the Holy Books
4. Belief in the prophets, starting with Mohammed
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment
6. Belief in God's predestination for all people

QUESTIONS

- What do you know about Islam?
- Do you have any friends who are Muslim?
- Which of these beliefs do you also have?
- What other beliefs are just as important to you?
- Why do so many Americans fear Muslims?
- In what ways do beliefs affect actions for Muslims? For Christians?

HINDUSIM

1. There is a supreme being (Brahman)
2. The sacred writings (called the Vedas) are authoritative
3. Truth is eternal; seek it
4. Live right (dharma)
5. Karma (the idea that what you do returns to you eventually)
6. Reincarnation; your soul is immortal
7. Your goal is moksha (liberation from reincarnation so we can be united with Brahman; this can be done through the path of duty, knowledge, or devotion)

QUESTIONS

- How is Hinduism similar to Christianity? To Judaism? To Islam?
- How does it differ from these other religions?
- What do you find attractive about Hindu beliefs? What's not attractive?
- How would you know if Hinduism is the way for you to live?
- What do you want to add to your brick from this list?
- What is the role of Jesus in Hinduism?
- Does reincarnation seem desirable to you? What about karma?

SECULAR HUMANISM

1. Humans are basically good, and are the measure of all things
2. The natural is real; the supernatural is not real
3. Do what is best for yourself
4. Don't hurt others
5. This life is all there is
6. There are no absolutes
7. Tolerance is good in all things (except for intolerance)
8. Morality is decided individually and based on the situation
9. Seek happiness as much as you can (without hurting others)

QUESTIONS

- Why has this become so common in our culture?
- What are the benefits of this world view?
- To what extent do you live by these foundational beliefs?
- How aware are you of these in how you live day-to-day?

- With these beliefs, what do you do with God? With Scripture? With Jesus?
- What happens after a person dies? How do you know?
- What is your purpose in life?
- What if you bank on this and you're wrong?

We've covered quite a bit, and quite a bit of heavy stuff! What is on your brick now? Let's take turns sharing just one or two of the symbols we put on our bricks. Some of us might have chosen some of the same things, and yet we may have done so for different reasons. Let's talk this through.



Divide into groups of two for sharing time, or stay as one group instead if you prefer. Be aware that smaller groups allow more people the opportunity to share.

As your teacher, I'd like to share several of the symbols on my brick. I won't share all of them, but I will say there are several that are important to me. Then I'll open up a discussion so someone else in our group can share some of their symbols.



As the teacher, this is a good time for you to go first. You can select your symbols in advance. Be sure to include your reason(s) for choosing them as part of your belief system. Explain why these are your foundational beliefs and give your young people reasons why they should make them theirs as well. When you are finished, open up the floor for others to share their beliefs publicly. This can be intimidating since it is such a deep topic, but it's also an opportunity for them to deepen their faith and to explore what their personal belief system is at the moment. This can help you as a teacher to know where to direct your teaching in the future, too.

I'd like for you to take your brick home with you today. It can be inconvenient, to be sure! But our beliefs sometimes do seem inconvenient. Is that inconvenience enough to have us forget or set aside our beliefs? If we do, what do we have left? Please place this somewhere in your room where you'll be reminded of it during the week. I'm also inviting you to make this part of your prayer time this week. Ask God to reveal himself to you and to aid you in establishing beliefs that are true and that are things you can live out in practical ways.

SUMMARY

The people at the Tower of Babel chose a different belief system than God. They chose to establish their own system, to reach the skies with their grand achievement of constructing the biggest and best structure on the whole earth. They were going to be number one. That same desire shows itself in many ways today. We looked at components that are foundational to several major belief systems. We even identified the ones we are choosing for ourselves. We created our own symbols for these on a single brick. But we're not going to use these bricks to build a tower to the skies—no! They are the building blocks for what we believe and how we will live. Take this with you and ask God to continue to guide you in constructing a temple together with him instead of laboring without him.

Trusting God's Heart

(BASED ON GENESIS 11:1-9)

When God tells us to do something, no matter how much it goes against our own way, we are to obey. Even if we can't understand or see God's hand in something He's telling us to do, we can trust God's heart—His character. Because the bottom line of God's character is love, we can trust his plans for us because everything He does is for our ultimate good. We're much better off trusting God's heart than trusting our own.

Most people have heard the story of the Tower of Babel. It's actually a very short story in the Bible. You might have some things about this story that stand out in your memory, but they actually might not be in the Bible. Many elements have been added over the years as this story has been told and retold. Let's read it for ourselves from the Bible, and then consider a few questions after we've read through it.

Genesis 11:1—"Now the whole world had one language and a common speech."

QUESTIONS

- How would life be different today if everyone spoke the same language?
- What language(s) do you know?
- What language(s) would you like to know?
- When has language been a limiting factor for you?

Genesis 11:2—"As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there."

QUESTIONS

- Why did they choose to settle in this location?
- If they had settled in the mountains, wouldn't that have been higher for their tower?
- Would you prefer living in the mountains or on the plains? Why?
- Do you prefer living in a city, the suburbs, or the countryside? Why?

Genesis 11:3-4 says, "They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'"

QUESTIONS

- Why did the people living right after the Flood want to build a tower that reached to the heavens?
- Why do people build skyscrapers today?
- What does it mean "to make a name for ourselves"?

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handout of the lyrics to the song "Trust His Heart"
- A pen or pencil for each person to mark the lyrics they like best
- Handout of 1-week of Proverbs (See "Proverbs Week" at the end of this PDF.)

- Who wants to "make a name" for themselves today?
- Why wouldn't the people want to be scattered?
- What does any of this have to do with God?

Genesis 11:5–7 says, "But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.'"

QUESTIONS

- Why did the Lord check on the people?
- Was God intimidated by what the people were doing?
- Do you think the building was primitive or more advanced than large buildings we see constructed today?
- Why didn't God just destroy these people?
- What was accomplished by confusing the languages?

Genesis 11:8–9 reads, "So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth."

QUESTIONS

- Why did the people abandon their goal to "make a name for themselves"?
- What name did they make for themselves?
- Was God mean for confusing their language?
- How are we impacted today because of their choices long ago?
- How can God overcome the separateness different languages create?
- What was God's purpose in scattering humans over the entire earth?



Prepare in advance to have the song "Trust His Heart" (we like the Babbie Mason rendering of this) ready to show on YouTube. Print out a copy of the lyrics in advance and give each Youth Sabbath School participant a copy of the lyrics and something with which they can write (pen or pencil). Ask them to meditate on the lyrics as they listen to the song, noting phrases that catch their attention. After they have listened to the song and meditated on it, ask the following questions.

QUESTIONS

- What line or phrase caught your attention in this song?
- What line or phrase have you experienced yourself?
- What line or phrase is problematic for you?
- What's an example of when you didn't see God's plan for you?
- Are you able to trust God's heart? Why or why not?
- When are you most in need of trusting God's heart?

You can expect there to be times when God's instructions challenge you beyond your understanding. At those times, instead of rationalizing your own ideas, follow what God has already said. That's when your trust/faith in God guides you. This demonstrates the value of being in an ongoing relationship with God—to trust and follow God, especially when you don't know everything.

Talk My Language

(BASED ON GENESIS 11:1-9)

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

Many Americans know only one language. Perhaps because of the acceptance of the English language in so many parts of the world, most Americans feel no need to learn any other language. Since the United States is a country of immigrants, many people who speak other languages besides English currently live in the United States.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Mobile phones for a texting activity
- Access to the book *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman

If you have a job that requires two languages, you're likely to be fluent in those two languages, but not necessarily in any other language. Some people seem to have a talent for learning languages easily. They may speak five, eight, or even ten different languages. Don't be surprised if they end up working for the United Nations or some other entity that needs multilingual people.

Why are there so many languages? Scientists would likely explain it as geographical differences—people in different parts of the world developed their own language based on the people around them. As tribes enlarged or conquered other groups, they also spread their language. That's why the Bible was written in Hebrew in Old Testament times, but in Greek in New Testament times because the Greeks were purposely spreading their Greek culture—including their Greek language—wherever they conquered others.

Bible readers would likely explain the high number of languages as a result of God's actions at the Tower of Babel thousands of years ago. We can read about this in Genesis 11:1-9. In verses 7-9 (NIV) it reads, "God said, 'Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.' So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel (confused)—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth."

It's only natural that people who speak the same language will congregate together. And people who congregate together tend to perpetuate their same language because they continue to communicate with that language.

Language separates humans from other animals and species. It's not that animals don't communicate, but their communication is so much more limited than humans. People can put together an infinite string of letters and sounds that make sense, whereas animals can be trained to respond to a single word or a short phrase through repetition and

conditioning. If you think a new way of saying the same thing to an animal, they may not understand you; however, humans can understand something even if it is paraphrased.

I could also tell you a story about an animal from five years ago, and since you're humans you could follow that message. An animal wouldn't register what I'm saying, though, since an animal lives only in the present.

Perhaps you've even purposely given a dog a mixed message by using negative words at the same time as using a positive and affirming tone of voice and actions. For example, you may have warmly and affectionately said to a dog while you were petting it, "You are the worst and craziest and most hopeless dog in the whole world, and I can't imagine anyone ever wanting to have you as a pet." Hearing your tone of voice and feeling affirmed by the way you were petting it, the dog may have easily wagged its tail thinking what you were saying was all positive, even though your words were really negative.

In the 1960s, researcher Albert Mehrabian reported on two different studies about the relationship between verbal and non-verbal messages among humans. In one of his studies he suggested that 60% of communication is facial and 40% is vocal. This means if you talk to someone on the phone, you're only getting the 40% of vocal communication, but are lacking the 60% of seeing their face as they speak. That's why video calls communicate much more than just talking on the phone—you've added the facial communication as well. And this is why texting can be so limiting and why it often results in miscommunication—you only get words, with no facial or verbal communication.

Mehrabian's second study suggested that only 7% of communication is our words, while the other 93% is split between body language (55%) and tone of voice (38%). This is primarily helpful when they don't all match up. That's when we tend to pick up more cues from body language and tone of voice than from just the words we hear. When a person objects by repeating the words they said, we sometimes respond, "It wasn't what you said, it was how you said it."

When you're talking to someone who speaks a different language than you, body language and tone of voice can only go so far. You will need words as well as sentence structure in order to communicate. And that's why the Tower of Babel project screeched to a halt.

Communication within the same language is challenging enough! Trying to communicate when you speak different languages seems nearly impossible. Even translators struggle because communicating a message from one language to another is much more than just a word-for-word exercise. Good translators (written) and interpreters (spoken) are able to communicate the message thought-by-thought rather than awkwardly trying to communicate in what turns out to be a stilted word-for-word manner.

So let's consider communication when people supposedly speak the same language, whether that is American English (America's version of English), Spanish, or some other shared language. We'll keep this limited to American English for now.

Some people make a distinction between people who are visually oriented in comparison to those who are auditory (sound) learners or kinesthetic (touch) learners. Educators are trained to be sensitive to this when it comes to learning styles, but it also applies to the words we choose to communicate. For example:

- A visual learner might say, "I see what you're saying."
- An auditory learner might say, "I hear what you're saying."

- A kinesthetic learner might say, "I feel what you're saying."

But that's not all. Sometimes words themselves can have more than one meaning, and this may be true no matter what our nonverbal communication is.

ACTIVITY

Try texting someone the following message right now, and ask them what they think it means: "Look at the dog with one eye."



After people have texted someone the message, ask them what they think it might mean. Get their feedback. Obviously it could mean looking at the dog while using only one of your eyes. Or, it could just as easily mean looking at the dog who has only one eye. Someone might even think of looking at a dog who somehow found one eye somewhere. See if there are any responses to the email message. Some other examples you could text or just use with those in the class include "He fed her cat food" or "We saw her duck." For more possibilities, try a simple sentence with multiple possible meanings, such as: "I saw a man on a hill with a telescope." This could mean:

- There's a man on a hill, and I'm watching him with my telescope.
- I see a man on a hill, and he has a telescope.
- I see a man on a hill, and there's a telescope on the hill.

Two more possibilities that are rather outlandish include:

- I'm the one on the hill; I'm looking at a man who is using a telescope.
- A man is on a hill, and I'm sawing him with a telescope.

QUESTIONS

- Are you more likely to think what others think, or is your perspective often different than others?
- How easily can you see more than one perspective?
- How do you respond when you aren't sure what a person actually means?
- How often do others misunderstand you?
- Do your friends people find it easy to understand you or hard to understand you?
- What happens when you apply these questions to God's messages to you?

In the 1990s, a guy named Gary Chapman presented the idea of five different love languages. This isn't just about romantic love, but love in general. While he started with communicating love between husbands and wives, he has expanded this to include parents and children as well as human relationships in general. We can apply this to our relationship with God and God's relationship with us.

Chapman's point is that while we might speak the same language, such as English, there are some ways that register love more strongly than others. We tend to communicate love in the "love language" we prefer, but that doesn't mean that it registers much with another person unless that is also their love language. Some people might have more than one love language, but the point is this: If you want to communicate love to someone (whether it's

romantic love or just regular love), you need to communicate it in their love language, not just yours.

Would you like to know what the five different love languages are? As I describe them, you might be able to identify which one resonates with you. As I said before, you might identify with more than one. Here they are:

1. **Words of Affirmation:** These are positive statements such as, "You're really good at that!" or "I like how you're true to your word," or "You look fabulous in that outfit!" Too often we leave these unsaid, or perhaps we fear it will give a person an inflated ego. These words cost nothing in terms of money, but require thought and expression.
2. **Quality Time:** This is spending time focused on the person or on what you're doing together. Simply being together, but not being focused on the person, doesn't really count. It can be a short time, but it must be focused, and not distracted by other things. It's making memories together and truly being present for the person.
3. **Physical Touch:** Don't confuse this with sexual touch. This is simply a literal point of contact such as a pat on the back, a high five or fist bump, a short foot rub, an arm around the shoulder for a few moments, or even a tap or light punch to the arm.
4. **Receiving Gifts:** When it comes to this, don't think big or expensive; this has more to do with a physical, tangible item that registers thoughtfulness. For example, a single wildflower picked just for the person could count more to them than a dozen roses delivered by a florist. A hand-drawn picture easily counts more than an expensive painting. The idea of "this is for you" matters more than how much you spent.
5. **Acts of Service:** This means not just being there, but doing something! It doesn't have to be something large or grandiose. What matters is that you help the person, whether it's by doing the dishes, carrying a load a short way, running an errand, or assisting with some sort of task. It's practical help that registers as an act of service.

Which of these five love languages count the most to you?



Ask for feedback and see if anyone needs help understanding or needs more examples of the languages. Be sure to keep this broader than just romantic love, although be clear it does apply to that as well. You also have the option of printing out sheets about each of the five love languages and having the participants add examples to them themselves. Doing this could expand their repertoire for communicating with the different people in their lives, but also help them understand which love language to use and when so they are communicating in the way each person will understand.

When we communicate love to those we care about, we naturally do it in a love language that matters to us. What we need to do is communicate our love in a love language that that person understands. Giving someone words of affirmation doesn't register if their love language is acts of service. Instead of saying, "I think you're the best at this," we should join them in cleaning up the mess they made. If physical touch is their love language, you could give them a friendly slap on the back rather than giving them the gift of half of your candy bar.

If you'd like to take a simple test on the five languages to find out exactly what yours are, you can do so for free online. Just Google "Discover your love language."

While Gary Chapman wrote about these five different love languages just a few decades ago, God already has communicated his love to us in all of these five love languages. You might hear others talk about the ones that matter to them, but your love language might be different. Can you think of examples of how God has communicated his love to you through the love language that counts most to you?

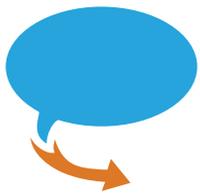


You can use the rest of the five love languages printouts or make a second set for people to brainstorm ways God communicates his love to us. Here's an example for each just to get you started.

- Words of Affirmation: Isaiah 43:1; 1 John 3:1–3
- Quality Time: Sabbath; Matthew 11:28–30
- Physical Touch: John 14:23; Psalm 27:10
- Receiving Gifts: James 1:17; Ephesians 4:8
- Acts of Service: 1 Corinthians 12:6–7; Deuteronomy 31:8

SUMMARY:

At the Tower of Babel, the loss of communication immediately ended the unfinished project. People naturally joined into groups who spoke the same language as them. Today we depend on interpreters to help people who speak different languages. And even within a given language, there are many nuances, styles, and ways in which we communicate or miscommunicate. People who are able to communicate in the same language in a way that really connects are able to form stronger and more meaningful relationships. The same is true in our communication with God. When we talk the same language, it makes all the difference in the world.



Application ideas for living out this lesson this week

Let this spark your ideas to move from talk to action by living out the lesson in practical ways in your life this week.

The following three applications relate to the corresponding three Bible Study Guides above.

- A. Take your brick home with you and place it in a spot where you will see it multiple times during the week. That might be on your dresser, in your bathroom, or in some other spot. When you see it, let that spur you to offer a quick prayer, asking God to guide you in your beliefs and how you practice them. At some point during the week, perhaps during your private devotional time, reflect on the symbols you drew on your brick. Revisit these and what they represent. As you meditate, ask God about the best foundational beliefs for you. Ask God what is true, and to reveal that to you.

In addition to prayer, spend some time in Scripture to receive God's messages that already reveal what is true. Then ask for God's Spirit to make this understandable and livable for you today. And then put your beliefs into practice.

- B. Obeying God's instruction by following God's heart. When you are uncertain about whether or not to follow what God has already told you to do, take three steps and go through it with your head, your heart, and your hands.

Head: Consider how your decision now will affect your life one week, one month, and one year from right now. Pray for God's power for you and for him to help you to follow God's instructions for you. If you aren't sure what God's instructions for you are, pray for clarity and start reading Scripture. Reflect on the story from the Tower of Babel as evidence that following God's instructions is better than making decisions apart from God or against God's instructions.

Heart: It's easy to rationalize what we already want to do. That only hardens our hearts. Keep track of how soft or hard (1–10) your heart is when it comes to your sensitivity to following God's heart. You can chart this on a 1-page sheet (see the handout "God's Directions for Me" at the end of this PDF or create your own system to record this).

Hands: Choose God's directions each day this coming week. Use the handout "God's Directions for Me" at the end of this PDF or create your own system on your smartphone. If you'd like a starter for God's directions for you, choose one chapter out of Proverbs for a quick variety of instructions from God for wise living. Identify the day of the month and turn to that chapter in Proverbs (e.g. read Proverbs chapter 12 if it is the 12th day of the month). Read the chapter for that day and record God's instructions for you. Then commit to putting it into practice with God's power.

- C. After identifying your love language preference(s), communicate that to at least three different people this week:

1. Someone in your family
2. One of your friends
3. Your Youth Sabbath School leader

Then ask them what their preferred love language is. If you're able to do this early in the week, find some way to communicate your love/interest/care for them sometime this week in the love language that makes sense to them. Share the love!



Youth leader tip for the week

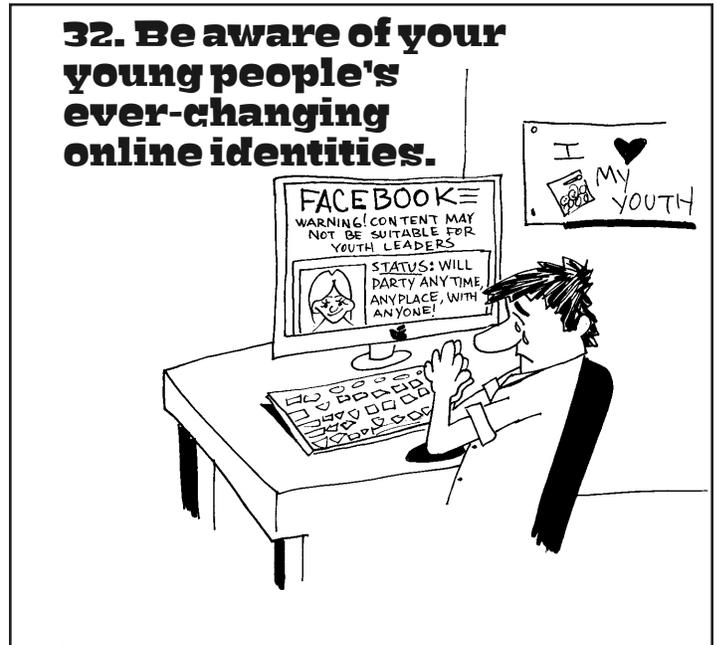
This bonus is just for you as the youth leader—a quick

tip and an illustration to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this, or you may have learned it through trial and error, or maybe you just need a reminder of something you already know. Here's a way to get it with a quick infusion.

A BIT MORE

You don't need to stalk your young people, but it makes sense to be on their social media feeds, whether that's with Instagram,

Snapchat, or whatever platform they are using. This provides a clue about what they are thinking or what they want to project about themselves at this time. This can give you plenty of prayer material, whether it's praise or petition. Expect for a young person's identity to go through many experimental phases, without knowing how long any one phase will last. See if a person's online identity matches who they are at Sabbath School or whether they are living a double life—that dreaded hypocrisy young people are so sensitive about in others.



Teen Q & A

Here's a question from a teen and a response from a youth pastor. This might be a question your teens are asking. Use the response to springboard your discussion with your Youth Sabbath School participants.

Question: I've grown up in an Adventist home, but I don't really love Jesus, even though I do want to go to heaven. When I do something wrong, I'm not usually sorry I did it. That seems wrong, but that's just my reality. What can I do?

Answer: Growing up in an Adventist home has some major advantages. But it doesn't guarantee your personal choices or circumstances, nor does it guarantee that you will love Jesus.

You also mentioned that your motivation for wanting to love Jesus is selfish—so you can go to heaven. I realize that most of our motivations can be traced back to selfishness. I agree that a desire to go to heaven can be selfish. Did you realize, though, that heaven is all about Jesus? And if you aren't into Jesus, going to heaven will be more like hell than heaven. Jesus wouldn't put you through that kind of eternal torment.

Your current experience might be the double life Paul describes in Romans 7: "I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate" (verse 15, NLT).*

"When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway" (verse 19, NLT).

"Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?" (verse 24, NLT).

"In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin" (verse 25, NLT).

So what's a person to do? Paul provides the answer as his letter spills into Romans 8: "There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus" (verse 1, NLT).

To "belong to Christ Jesus" means trusting Him instead of our natural sinfulness. Read all of Romans 8 to build up your hope. It ends with the promise that nothing is able to separate us from God's love. Maybe you need to start thinking about God's love for you, rather than your love for God.

It's natural to want to live forever; that's how God created us. But God also created us to be with him, and you're just not feeling that. Maybe it's time for you to discover Jesus for yourself rather than the Jesus you've heard others talk about. Unless you know Jesus for yourself, your desire to be with somebody else's friend might not be that strong.

Jesus told a story that might also relate to you. Two people owed money to the same person: one owed 500 pieces of silver, and the other owed 50. Neither could repay their debt, so the creditor forgave them both. Now, who will love the creditor more?

Of course, the one who's been forgiven more. Jesus said, "Your heart will be where your treasure is" (Matthew 6:21, NCV).† So start investing, putting your treasure in Jesus, and your love for Him will grow. Your treasure is your time, your money, your friendships, and your out-of-school activities. Here are two ideas for investing in Jesus:

1. Dust off your Bible and start praying through the stories about Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Pray or meditate on what it would've been like to be in the places of different people in the story.
2. Do something for somebody else, especially those who can't pay you back or who don't even know you did it. Try doing at least one thing each week.

Ask somebody you look up to as a potential spiritual mentor if they will help you with this. Offer to contact them once a month for the next three months to help you evaluate this process. And ask them what they have done to make their love for Jesus real and personal.

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Tracy Wood, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director

Vandeon Griffin, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

Armando Miranda, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

Steve Case, Editor

AdventSource, Publisher

Your Kingdom

*Written by Werner Carrasco
Performed by Allison Padilla*

To be in your Kingdom,
To sit by your throne
My heart must be broken,
Remove every stone

To be in your presence
To linger with you
I must see the world
With the Love that you do

CHORUS

Because your Kingdom
Is never a place,
A mansion or city,
It's greater than that,
To walk with you, Lord
To be by your side
I must see the world,
With the Love that you do

Your home is within me,
My home within You
Your Kingdom is Love
Your castle is Truth

The hungry and hopeless
Together we'll meet
I must see the world
As you also see me

5 Love Languages

by Gary Chapman

Words of Affirmation

Positive statements such as, “You’re really good at that” or “I like how you’re true to your word” or “You look fabulous in that outfit!” Too often we leave these unsaid, or perhaps we fear a person will get an inflated ego. The words cost nothing in terms of money, but require thought and expression.

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God's Directions for Me

For each day, include a Proverb for that day of the month
(For example, for the 12th day of the month, choose a proverb from Proverbs chapter 12)

<p>Sunday</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>	<p>Monday</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>	<p>Tuesday</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>	<p>Wednesday</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>	<p>Thursday</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>	<p>Friday</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>	<p>Sabbath</p> <p>Prov. ___:___</p> <p># Today ___</p>
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Put a number for each day, 1-10 for your heart's condition to God: 1 = super soft to 10 = super hard