

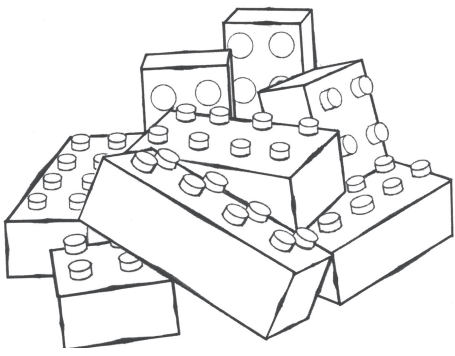
Building Faith Brick by Brick

An Imaginative Way to Explore the Bible with Children

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Basic Lesson Plan

Welcome the Group

- Shoes may be removed and lined up along the wall in the hallway. Some children with sensory issues may not wish to remove their shoes, so make shoe removal optional.
- Welcome each child into the room by an adult volunteer or leader.
- Provide nametags if you do not know all the participants. The use of names is so important. It also helps children to learn one another's names.
- Give a bowl/bucket, building mat, and a few figures to each child.
- Invite each child to fill his/her bowl/bucket with LEGO® bricks and encourage each to create freely while others arrive.
- Give a 2-minute notice before the focused group time begins.

Note: To avoid mix-ups with bowls, use a dry erase marker to label each bowl/bucket with the group member's name. After trying a number of different styles and shapes, the large, square popcorn buckets available at dollar stores seem to work the best.

Lay the Foundation

- Each lesson provides background information for both the leader and the group. Details about that lesson's story include authorship, placement in scripture, main characters, and modern day parallels.

Did You Know?

- This section offers additional background information to spark interest and provide a wider base of knowledge and context before sharing the story. As necessary, tailor the information to the particular age.

Pray

- Light the Christ candle and pocket the matches.
- Invite each person voluntarily into some form of prayer:
 - Write or draw prayers on brightly colored paper rectangles to build a brick prayer wall session by session.
 - Write or draw prayers on Etch-a-Sketches®.
 - Write or draw prayers on white boards.
 - Toss a LEGO® brick into a central bucket for each prayer offered during the circle gathering. These prayers can be guided or spontaneous.
 - Write prayers using magnetic letters placed on metal sheeting or baking trays.
 - Offer popcorn prayers: Children pop up to offer a short prayer when so moved.
 - Offer Post-It® prayers: Colorful self-adhesive notes can be stuck to the wall to build an ongoing prayer corner.

Share the Story

- Introduce the story by answering some or all of the following questions, as appropriate. Each lesson includes brief answers to most or all of these questions; you are always free to supplement this information from your own knowledge and research:
 - Where is this story found in the Bible?
 - What other stories can be found before and after this story?
 - Who wrote this story?
 - When did this story take place?
 - When was the story written?
 - Whom are we going to “meet” in this story?
 - Where did this story take place?
 - Where is this location in today’s world?
- Share the story by reading or retelling it.
- Show different images of the story to help spark imagination (art books, original LEGO® constructions, online image sites, etc.).

Respond to the Story

Ask Building Questions

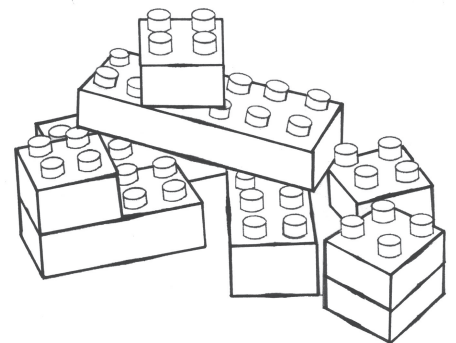
- Allow time for *Building Questions*, comments, and insights. We provide a robust list of questions for each lesson. This time of “wondering” typically serves as the most sacred part of the gathering; try not to rush through the reflections. At this point the interior life of the group often emerges in remarkable ways. This is where the bulk of the theological reflection can be heard and witnessed.
- The list of *Building Questions* is intentionally longer than needed for any given session so that the

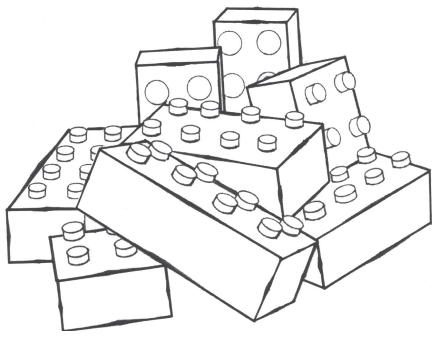
lessons can be repeated with the same group over time. This also allows for the leader to pick and choose which question fits best within the context.

- Set the expectation that something from the story must be constructed before any other creations can be made.
- Be available to answer questions, review the story, or help “stuck” children.

Suggest Blueprints

- *Building Faith Brick by Brick* is intended to be an open-ended theological reflection using LEGO® bricks. The need to specifically script a response should be avoided. However, if a child is having a difficult time focusing in on a response to the story, a few suggested idea starters have been offered, called *Blueprints*. The suggestions should only be introduced as needed. Reading *Blueprints* to the whole group could hinder the creative process, so keep them for “as needed” moments.
- Allow the suggested *Blueprints* to be simple words or concepts to spark ideas within the imagination of the child.





Jesus Enters Jerusalem

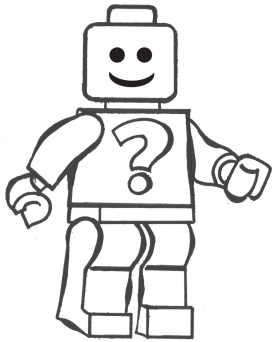
Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11;
Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19

Welcome the Group

Lay the Foundation

- *Where is this story found in the Bible?*
New Testament
- *What is its place in the Bible story?*
after Jesus healed two blind men; before Jesus cleared the temple of money changers
- *Who is the author?*
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- *Who are the main characters?*
Jesus, disciples, donkey, people of Jerusalem, and God
- *Where in the biblical world did it happen?*
Jerusalem
- *Where is this in today's world?*
Jerusalem

Find the full description of *Lay the Foundation* on page 15.



Did You Know?

- ✓ This part of scripture is often called “the triumphal entry.”
- ✓ This is the reason we celebrate Palm Sunday.
- ✓ Jesus fulfilled the words of the prophet Zechariah (9:9) by riding in on a donkey.
- ✓ Not everyone was glad to see Jesus.
- ✓ The word *hosanna* means “praise God.”

Pray

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna! Praise God now and forever. Amen.

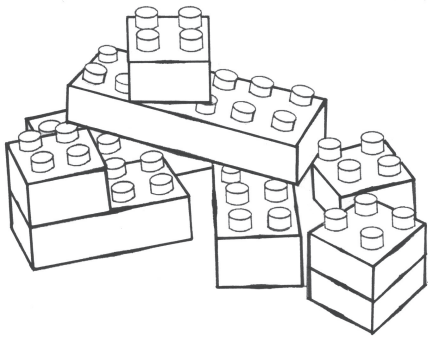
Suggested prayer methods are outlined on page 15.

Share the Story

Suggestions for storytelling are detailed on page 16.

Respond to the Story

Invite each member of the group to use bricks and figures to respond to the story. This can be done individually or in small groups. Suggestions for how to support this form of theological reflection can be found on page 16.



Ask Building Questions

- I wonder if it was ever hard for the disciples to trust Jesus?
- I wonder if it is hard for you to trust God?
- I wonder if you have been in a really large crowd?
- I wonder what it felt like to be in that Jerusalem crowd?
- I wonder if children were there?
- I wonder what words you would use to praise God?

Suggest Blueprints *(if needed)*

- Mount of Olives
- Jesus
- disciples
- donkey
- crowd
- parade
- palm branches
- clothing in the road
- God

Continue the Story

One way to deepen the learning experience and create a link between group learning and faith formation in the home is to have builders show their creations to the adults who pick them up after class.

For additional study and conversation at home, consider different ways to share the Bible verses as well as some of the *Building Questions*. Possible methods of communication are texts, social media, e-blasts, website posts, or take-home sheets.

Share Responses to the Story

Encourage each group member to share the creations they have made in response to the story. More details about sharing can be found on page 17.

Share a Snack

- party food
- parade food
- leaf/palm shaped cookies

