

# Our Chief Cornerstone

Ephesians 2:19-22

## **MEMORY VERSE**

PSALM 118:22-23

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Enough building blocks to build a small tower.

Research on foundations and cornerstones through a local architect, engineer, builder or the library.

Small paper bowls (two for each child, with 1.5” holes pre-cut in the center of half), string or yarn (pre-cut into 2’ lengths), markers, and pipe cleaners or tongue depressors.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Who Needs a Cornerstone?**

You will need dominoes for this or other building blocks that are available. Perhaps wood scraps gleaned from a building site, cardboard boxes or milk cartons. There is a limited supply of cardboard blocks available in the Teacher’s Resource Room as well.

Building with blocks seems pretty elementary, but isn’t it fun to build a tall tower then knock it down? Let the kids build a tall tower on a base of four blocks, when the tower is tall, pull out one of the cornerstones...crash.

Explain to the children that if we try to build our lives on anything else other than Jesus we will come tumbling down just like the tower. Jesus has to be the foundation for our lives.

## LESSON TIME!

Have you ever traveled to a big city like San Francisco or Los Angeles? It is pretty fascinating to walk in the downtown areas where all of the giant buildings and skyscrapers are. Sometimes it is fun to try to imagine how they built all of those huge buildings. And how do they keep those buildings from falling over?

One of the interesting things about living in California is that every now and then we get an earthquake. And sometimes these earthquakes can be kind of scary. They might even do a lot of damage to buildings or a city. The same thing that keeps a building from falling is the same thing that keeps a building together whenever there is an earthquake. And what holds it together is its FOUNDATION. If a building does not have a good foundation then it will not be able to stand up and will especially fall down whenever the earth moves beneath it.

The Bible says that our lives are kind of like buildings that are being built by God. He is the builder. And like the skyscrapers, God wants to build our lives upon a firm foundation and that is on His Son, Jesus. In fact, the Bible says that **Jesus is our cornerstone**. This means that Jesus is the most important part of the foundation. In Bible times, the builder would set a cornerstone first and then build the rest of the foundation and the building all lined up to the cornerstone.

### EPHESIANS 2:19

**Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,**

In this part of Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, he is speaking to the Gentile believers and is encouraging them. Because they have been redeemed (saved) through Jesus Christ they are no longer foreigners or aliens. They are now members of God's family. The same is true for us when we receive Jesus as our savior; we become part of God's family.

Imagine that you are in a foreign land and you are all by yourself. You cannot even speak the language. You have no family, no one to talk to, and no one who cares about you. It is hard to imagine what life would be like without any kind of a family, let alone being all alone in another country.

Then imagine that a family asked you to come and live with them and become a part of their family. They did everything they could to make you feel welcomed and loved. That is how it is with Jesus. This world is a very mean, scary and foreign place to us. Then God invites us to become a part of His family. When we ask Jesus into our hearts we become members of God's family. We then receive all of the blessings of being His child.

## **EPHESIANS 2:20**

**Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,**

Paul goes on to describe the church as a great building where God dwells. In ancient building practices the "chief cornerstone" was carefully placed, this was crucial because the entire building was lined up with it.

We as believers (God's children) need to be correctly lined up with Jesus, our cornerstone. As part of God's family we are joined together with Jesus as parts of a beautiful and constantly growing temple or building **with Jesus as our cornerstone.**

There is a story that Jesus told about two different foundations. There was a foolish man that built a big beautiful house. The problem was that he built his house on a foundation of sand. When a big storm came the sand did not hold together very well and the house was destroyed.

Then there was a wise man that also built a house. The only difference was that he was very careful to build his house on a rock. When the same storm came his house was just fine.

What Jesus is saying is that it is very important what foundation we build our lives upon. We can choose to foolishly build our lives upon the shifting sands of this world or we can allow God to build our lives upon the solid rock of Jesus and His word. **Jesus is our cornerstone.**

## **What is a Cornerstone?**

If you know of any builders, architects or engineers you may want to invite them to your class just to share with your class for a few moments about foundations and cornerstones and how important they are to buildings (they may have to do some research). If they cannot be there in person, perhaps you can record what they say on tape or paper.

You could also do your own research at the library. Try to find a book that is very visual for your children as you explain the importance of a strong foundation.

Without a good foundation a building will not be able to stand. The Lord desires to build something beautiful in our lives and it can only be built on the proper foundation.

### **EPHESIANS 2:21**

**In whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,**

As God's children we are constantly becoming more like Jesus. With the help of His Holy Spirit we can become more and more like Him. And like the temple in the Old Testament our lives become a place where people can see the presence of God. We are different people because He lives in us. We will want to obey God.

We also have a big family because we are Christians. Did you know that you have brothers and sisters all over the world? In verse 21 Paul discusses the formation of the building. "In Christ the whole building is joined together." What Paul is saying is that God has skillfully fit each one of us together to do what He wants us to do.

### **EPHESIANS 2:22**

**In whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.**

Paul now discusses the function of the temple. God places individual believers into the structure, meaning that it is continually being built. "We are being built together." The goal of this building (individual Christians) is to become a dwelling place where God lives by His Spirit **with Jesus as our cornerstone.**

God wants to work in our lives individually to build the right foundation for our lives. He also works in all of us. As Christians in the church, which is all over the world, we work together to show God's love for a world that does not know Him.

## **Paper Bowl Birdhouses**

Use small paper bowls, two for each child. Cut a 1.5" hole in the bottom of one before class. Pre-cut string or yarn into 2' lengths (one per child).

Staple the bowls together with the insides facing each other. Poke a hole in the rim and put a string in the hole. Let the kids decorate. You may want to use pipe cleaners or tongue depressors just under the hole to complete your birdhouse.

As the kids are making these birdhouses discuss where different people and animals live. God's Spirit no longer dwells in the tabernacle or the temple, but He dwells in us if we are Christians.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of thankfulness that He has given us His Son, Jesus as our cornerstone. Also, if appropriate, have the children pray individually to ask the Lord to be their foundation and not to allow anything else in this world to take His place. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.