



Parent Guide for Sumer: Ingenious Innovators Lesson

- View the lesson video prior to showing it to your child and determine how you wish to use the content to support your teaching and cultural focus.
- Review the Activity Sheets to determine which enrichment projects fit your child's interest and development. You may want to print the sheet in advance and gather any necessary materials.
- While viewing the lesson with your child, pause the video to teach or ask questions.
- Below are a number of questions that may encourage your child's thinking, recalling, and application.

K-3rd grade Questions:

- Can you point to Mesopotamia on the map or globe?
- What is a ziggurat? *A: located at the center of the city, a tall structure with sloping sides and a temple at the top to worship the gods*
- The Sumerians are some of the first people to use the invention of the wheel.
 - * Why are wheels important? *A: Answers will vary, but any idea explaining how difficult and physically challenging it would be to move anything*
 - * How would our lives be different with no wheels? *A: Answers will vary, but slower travel, harder work, etc.*
- What other inventions did the Sumerians design? *A: Bricks, Irrigation Ditches, Yoke, Plow, Musical instrument, Sailboat, Writing*
- Before paper and pencils were available, how did people write down their ideas? What did the Sumerians use? *A: wet clay tablet as the paper and a stylus as the pencil*
- Tell me about their alphabet. *A: Student may not remember the term, cuneiform, but will be able to describe the "wedges."*
- What was one interesting thing you noticed about the Standard of Ur? *A: answers will vary*

4th-5th grade Questions:

Geography

- On which continent is Mesopotamia located? *A: west Asia*
- Which modern countries occupy the land of Mesopotamia today? *A: Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey and Syria*
- Name the two big rivers of Mesopotamia. *A: Tigris and Euphrates*
- Name two early biblical places or stories which occurred in Mesopotamia and which were mentioned in the video. *A: Garden of Eden and Tower of Babel*



4th-5th grade Questions (cont.):

Architecture

- What is a ziggurat? *A: located at the center of the city, a tall structure with sloping sides and a temple at the top to worship the gods*
- What was its purpose? *A: to worship the gods. The temple was on the very top of the ziggurat in order to be closer to the gods.*
- Are ziggurats unique to Mesopotamia? Where else can they be found? *A: Locations mentioned Mexico, Step Pyramid in Sardinia [Italy]*

Religion

- Describe the purpose of the votive figures in worship. *A: Sumerians thought the statues allowed them to continually offer prayers and pay attention to the gods—even when they weren't personally at the temple.*
- What did the Sumerians believe about gods? *A: answers will vary, but they had many gods and the gods controlled everything in their lives.*

Art

- Share one thing that you noticed about the Standard of Ur. *A: answers will vary.*
- In the **Standard of Ur** how did the Sumerians show the importance of certain people? *A: The king and nobility were shown larger in size than the other figures.*
- What are some of the materials that the artist used in **Ram in a Thicket**? *A: wood, gold leaf, shell, lapis lazuli*
- What part does the artist's natural resources play in the materials he/she selects? *A: Artists use what is around them to create a message they're burdened to share*

6th-9th Grade Questions:

Geography

- Using your knowledge of ecosystems, why was it advantageous for Sumerians to settle near a river? *A: Civilizations need water. Humans, plants, and animals benefit immensely from a steady water source.*
- What drawbacks did the Mesopotamians have in their natural resources? How did this influence their development of technology? *A: In some places, the land was wet and marshy. Wood and stone were not easily found. Because of this, the Sumerians developed mud bricks. These hardened clay bricks were the basis of their buildings.*
- What modern countries comprise Ancient Mesopotamia? *A: Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey and Syria*
- What two Biblical examples were referenced as taking place in Mesopotamia? *A: The Garden of Eden and the Tower of Babel*

Religion

- Describe the structure and purpose of a **ziggurat**. *A: The ziggurat was the center of city life. It was a tall structure designed to reach the heavens, where the Sumerians believed their gods lived. The temple was on the very top of the ziggurat in order to be closer to the gods. The ziggurat had 4 sloping sides that were made of mud bricks and staircases that went from terrace to terrace.*

Religion (cont.)

- Describe the supposed attributes of the gods. *A: Enlil was the god of earth, air, wind, and storms and Utu was the god of the sun. Sumerians thought the gods were responsible for everything in their lives, the good and the bad.*

Technology

- Choose an invention from the lesson *A: Wheel, Bricks, Irrigation Ditches, Yoke, Plow, Musical Instrument, Sailboat, Writing*
- Answer the following questions:
 - * What problem did this invention solve or aid in resolving?
 - * From what was this invention constructed?
 - * Upon what has the modern equivalent of the invention improved?

Art

- Describe the benefits of the **cylinder seal**. Why was it used? *A: Sumerians used cylinder seals instead of signatures to authorize a transaction. Also, like wax seals or stamps, the cylinder seal could be pressed into clay as a way of closing and protecting the privacy of a document. If the clay impression was broken, it would reveal that someone had been nosy and already looked into the document!*
- What is something interesting that you noticed about the Standard of Ur? *A: Answers will vary*
- In the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin, how did the Sumerians visually communicate the different roles of the people? *A: In Sumerian art the king and nobility were shown larger in size than the other figures.*
- What is the possible Biblical allusion to Ram in the Thicket? *A: God sending a ram to Abraham providing a sacrifice instead of Isaac.*
 - * Do you remember the size of the sculpture? What is your reaction to it? Do you like it? *A: around 17" and answers will vary.*