

Mystery on the Mountain: Discovering Machu Picchu

Materials Needed:

- A globe or world map
- Pictures or a short, child-friendly video of Machu Picchu
- Building materials: LEGOs, wooden blocks, sugar cubes, or play-doh
- A sturdy base for building (like a piece of cardboard or a tray)
- Paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Optional: Small toy llamas or alpacas, green felt or paper for terraces, yarn for paths

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Point to Peru on a map.
- Say that Machu Picchu is an old city in the mountains built by the Inca people.
- Explain one cool thing about how Machu Picchu was built (like the stone walls or the farming steps).
- Build your own model of a part of Machu Picchu.

Lesson Plan

Part 1: Introduction - The Secret City (5-10 minutes)

- **Hook (Grab Attention):** "Have you ever heard of a secret city hidden high up in the clouds on a mountaintop? It was a real place, but it was 'lost' for a very, very long time, and almost no one knew it was there! Today, we're going to be explorers and detectives on a mission to find this mystery city."
- **State Objectives (Set the Goal):** "Our mission today has three parts. First, we'll find out *where* this city is. Second, we'll learn about the amazing people who built it. And third, we'll get to build our very own mountain city!"

Part 2: Body - The Explorer's Journey (20-25 minutes)

This part follows an 'I do, We do, You do' model.

Activity 1: Where in the World?

- **I do (I'll show you):** "Let's use our map! This mystery city is in a country called Peru, which is on a continent called South America. (*Point to Peru on the map*). It's built in a huge, spiky chain of mountains called the Andes Mountains. It was so high up, it was like living in the sky!"
- **We do (Let's do it together):** "Let's find South America together on the map. Good! Now, can we find the country of Peru? Let's trace the long Andes Mountains with our fingers. They go up, up, up!"
- **You do (You try it):** "Okay, explorer, it's your turn! Can you close your eyes, spin the globe (or

just look away), and then try to find Peru all by yourself?"

Activity 2: Who Built This Magical Place?

- **I do (I'll tell you):** (*Show pictures or a short video of Machu Picchu*). "The city is called Machu Picchu. It was built a long, long time ago by clever people called the Inca. They were amazing builders! They didn't have trucks or cranes. They cut giant stones so perfectly that they fit together like puzzle pieces, with no glue needed! They also built smart gardens on the side of the mountain called 'terraces.' These were like giant green steps that stopped the rain from washing away their food."
- **We do (Let's talk about it):** "Look at this picture. What do you see? (*Guide them to point out stone walls, mountains, houses, terraces*). Why do you think the stone puzzle walls were so strong? What kind of animals do you think lived up here with the Inca? (*Show a picture of a llama or alpaca*). Yes! Llamas! They were fluffy friends that helped carry things and gave the Inca warm wool for clothes."
- **You do (You draw it):** "Now it's your turn to be an artist. On your paper, draw what you think it would be like to live in Machu Picchu. Maybe you can draw yourself looking out a stone window, or petting a friendly llama on a green terrace!"

Activity 3: Become an Inca Builder!

- **I do (I'll show you how):** "The best way to learn about building is to build! I'm going to use these blocks to make some farming terraces. See how I stack them like big steps on the side of a pretend mountain?" (*Quickly model building a simple terrace structure*).
- **We do (Let's plan it):** "What should we build for our city? Should we make some strong stone houses? The big farming terraces? A special temple at the very top? What materials should we use? LEGOs for walls? Play-doh for mountains?"
- **You do (You build it):** "Okay, master builder, it's your turn! Use any of the materials to create your very own Machu Picchu. Make sure to include at least one of the amazing things we learned about, like the puzzle-piece walls or the terrace steps."

Part 3: Conclusion - Mission Accomplished! (5-10 minutes)

- **Show and Tell (Share Your Work):** "Wow, look at your amazing city! Tell me about what you built. What is your favorite part? Where are the terraces? Where would the llamas live?" This is a fun way to check what they remember.
- **Recap (Review What We Learned):** "Our mission was a success! Let's review the secret file.
 - What was the name of the secret city? (*Machu Picchu*)
 - What country is it in? (*Peru*)
 - Who were the amazing builders? (*The Inca*)
 - What were the special farming steps called? (*Terraces*)
- **Final Thought:** "You were a fantastic explorer and builder today! You discovered a real-life mystery on a mountain and learned how clever people from long ago lived and built amazing things."

Success Criteria

I'll know you learned a lot today if you can:

- Show me Peru on the map.

- Tell me one fact about the Inca or Machu Picchu.
- Explain what you created in your model.

Differentiation (Ways to Adapt the Lesson)

- **For Extra Support:**
 - Work side-by-side during the building activity, giving lots of help and ideas.
 - Provide a printout of Machu Picchu to color instead of drawing from scratch.
 - Focus on just two key ideas: "a city in the mountains" and "built by the Inca."
- **For an Extra Challenge:**
 - Challenge them to build a specific part of Machu Picchu, like the Temple of the Sun.
 - Ask "why" questions: "Why do you think they built the city so high up?"
 - Together, look up one more fun fact about the Inca, like their knotted-string messages called 'quipus,' and try to make one with yarn.