



Who lives in the castle – a beautiful princess, a magical dragon or a terrible giant? Or is it a ruined tower with strange creatures lurking inside? The versatile Play Tower is ideal for retelling familiar stories and inspiring new ones that children can experiment with through small world play.

Tower play

Offer the Play Stone Tower as part of small world play to inspire children's imagination and enhance their language development. Combining different props will create a variety of story settings:

Traditional tales

Towers and castles feature in several fairytales:

- Rapunzel could live at the top of the tower – use lengths of wool to add long hair to an existing figure and surround her tower with stones, plants, moss and fir cones.
- Jack could find the tower at the top of the beanstalk with a fearsome giant inside – offer figures such as Yellow Door's wooden characters, alongside cotton wool balls for clouds and real dried beans.



Magical castle

Inspire fairyland stories with magical props:

- Create a tactile landscape using coloured rice, moss, artificial grass, textured fabric, colourful sand or green sprinkles.
- In addition to the tower, offer plenty of hiding places for magical creatures, such as foliage, flowers, toadstools, cones, log slices or a cave. Enhance the magical feel with Scenery Stones Fairy Tale Play or the Play Bridge.
- Include a selection of fairytale characters, mythical creatures and woodland animals, such as fairies, gnomes, unicorns, dragons, deer, rabbits and owls. You might like to use the Little Lands Fantasy Figures.

Royal castle

Create a castle fit for a king:

- Place the tower on top of a green small-world floor – you could use green felt, artificial grass or green dough rolled out.
- Create a pavement in front of the tower using flat stones or use blue glass beads to form a moat around the tower.
- Offer royal figures, knights and perhaps a dragon or two.
- Other props could include small plants or trees, pebbles, horse figures or mini flags.

Hilltop tower

Can an attacking medieval army enter the tower?

- Make a 'hill' using an upturned container with a large piece of green fabric over the top, and place the tower on top.
- Offer knight figures, some to guard the tower, others to attack it.
- Create mini medieval siege weapons, such as a small length of a log piece for a battering ram (add a corrugated cardboard door to the tower for the knights to knock down!), ladders made from sticks and rubber bands, and even a catapult made from lollypop sticks and rubber bands (simple designs are available online).



Tumbledown tower

Make the side of the tower with the crumbling wall more prominent to suggest a ruined castle:

- Place a plant (real or artificial) inside the tower and drape ivy over the sides (fixing in place with sticky pads if needed).
- As well as foliage, leaves, cones and moss, you might like to stick some bare twigs into dough and place them around the tower for dead trees.
- Who could be lurking inside the tower? You could use an ogre, a dragon, a wolf or a group of goblins. Or maybe some forgotten treasure is hidden inside waiting to be discovered.

Underwater kingdom

Take the storytelling underwater:

- Use the tower in real water, on blue fabric or in bubble foam (whisk two parts water with one part sensitive bubble bath using a handheld mixer until it forms stiff peaks).
- Add to the watery landscape with shells, pebbles, sand, plants or the Ocean Play Scenery Stones.
- Offer underwater creatures to explore the tower, such as mermaids and colourful fish – you could use the Fish Sensory Play Stones.

Open-ended play

Rather than focusing on a particular type of story, leave the options open with more generic characters:

- Surround the tower with natural features, such as moss, plants, pebbles and a stream made of blue glass beads or fabric. Alternatively, take the play outdoors by setting the tower up in a grassy area.
- Provide plain characters so the children can imagine them to be anything they choose – Little People Like Me are ideal.
- Add animal figures, such as woodland creatures, birds and butterflies – you might like to use Little Land Woodland and the Birds or Butterflies Sensory Play Stones.



Playful prepositions

As children play, take the opportunity to model positional language. Who is hiding *inside* the tower? Who is *on top* of the tower? What is *next* to the tower? Children could also play together telling each other where to place different characters to create a story scene.

Get talking – useful words

Inside, on top of, beside, next to, up, down, curved, smooth, stony, castle, tower, moat, royal, battle, ruined, crumbling.

Books about castles

Shhh! A Lift-the-flap Book by Sally Grindley

The Very Last Castle by Travis Jonker

Peep Inside the Castle by Anna Milbourne