

UNIT 15 | SESSION 5

EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

EZEKIEL 37



CHRIST CONNECTION: God made the dry bones alive again, and He gives us new life when we trust in Jesus. God will always be with everyone who believes in Jesus.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

KEY PASSAGE: The LORD is good to everyone. Psalm 145:9

STORY POINT: God promised His people they would return home.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Have you ever had a lingering question or been in a difficult situation in which you knew only the Lord could truly answer or provide clarity? God presents an interesting question to Ezekiel amid a dire setting. The Spirit of God took the prophet Ezekiel to a valley of bones and asked him, “Son of man, can these bones live?” Ezekiel replied, “Lord God, only you know.” (Ezekiel 37:3).

God then instructed Ezekiel to speak to the bones, saying, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live” (Ezekiel 37:5). Ezekiel did as God said, and as he was speaking, the bones began to rattle and reconfigure into the human bodies they once were. After that, God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath, commanding the breath to breathe life into the dead bodies. Ezekiel did as he was instructed, and the beings came to life.

Ezekiel’s prophecy was a picture of the people of Israel. They were like dead bones with no hope, but God would give them life. God would make the way for those dead in their sin to have resurrection life.

Then God had Ezekiel take two sticks, one for Israel, and one for Judah. He told Ezekiel to take the sticks in front of all the people and join them to make one stick. Through this imagery, God was demonstrating how He was going to take the Israelites out of the nations where they had gone and bring them into their own land. God was going to unite His people and give them one king to rule over them.

Ezekiel reminded the people of the promise God had made to David hundreds of years before. The new King would come from the family of David, and He would have power to raise dead, sinful people to life.

Without Jesus, we are like the dead bones with no future hope. We are dead in our sins. But by faith in Jesus Christ, we are made alive (Ephesians 2:1-5). God’s promise to Ezekiel remains true: King Jesus will unite all who trust in Him, and through the Holy Spirit we will walk in His ways.

Thank God for the hope we have because of Jesus. Remind boys and girls of the new life Jesus gives to those who trust in Him. As you point boys and girls to the God who can make dead bones come to life, pray for each child to understand that nothing is too difficult for God.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30–40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Find the bones

- Big Picture Question Poster
- plastic bin
- sensory filler (craft pom-poms, shredded paper, dried rice, or other filler)
- cotton swabs



LIVE

Make key passage phrase motions

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Circle Living Things" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- "Ezekiel Gave Hope" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- toy bone

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- toy bone



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Paint with straws

- plastic tablecloths
- painting smocks
- heavyweight paper
- washable liquid watercolor paints or washable paints diluted with water
- eye droppers or pipettes
- disposable straws, 1 per child
- shallow trays
- paper towels



LOVE

Assemble a puzzle

- Bible Story Picture Poster, 1 per 3 or 4 children or small group
- "Story Picture Puzzle" printable, 1 per 3 or 4 children or small group

Make a snack

- pretzel sticks
- miniature marshmallows
- paper plates



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

FIND THE BONES

Display the Big Picture Question Poster within easy view of preschoolers. Place cotton swabs in a bin filled with sensory filler. Invite preschoolers to find the cotton swab “bones” in the bin. Consider drawing different shapes on sheets of paper such as triangles, squares, diamonds, and rectangles. Guide boys and girls to use the bones to make the shapes. Review the big picture question as children create.

SAY “ Today we will hear a story from the Bible about a time when the prophet Ezekiel saw piles of bones come to life. God wanted to send a special message of hope to His people who were living as servants in a different land. **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** ”





LEARN the Bible Story

1 SING A SONG



Lead preschoolers to sing and do motions to the familiar kid’s song, “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.” Each time you sing, omit one word and simply touch the body part rather than singing the name. Continue until you omit singing all of the different body parts.

SAY “In the song we sang, we pointed to different parts of our bodies that are made up of bones. Bones are very important parts of our bodies. In today’s Bible story, we will learn that even though God’s people felt sad because they were away from home, **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** He used bones to show the prophet Ezekiel the message He wanted to share with them.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Ezekiel 37. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

SAY “One day, God took a man named Ezekiel to a place full of dry bones. God asked Ezekiel, “Can these bones be alive again?”

Ezekiel said, “Only you know, God.”

God told Ezekiel to talk to the bones and say, “Listen to what God says! I will make you alive, and you will know I am God.”

Ezekiel talked and the bones started to make a noise. They came together to look like people. They got muscles and skin, but they weren’t alive yet.

God told Ezekiel to ask the breath to come and make the people alive. When Ezekiel did, the breath came, and the people became alive!

God told Ezekiel that the bones were like His people who felt sad and without hope. God promised to give them life again.

Then God told Ezekiel to take two sticks. He wrote Israel on one and Judah on the other. God told Ezekiel to show the people how God would make the two sticks into one. God said, “I will bring all My people together and take care of them. They will follow Me, and I will be their God.”

Christ Connection: God made the dry bones alive again, and He gives us new life when we trust in Jesus. God will always be with everyone who believes in Jesus.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Encourage the preschoolers to gather and sit in a large circle. Display a new toy bone, similar to a dog toy. Guide children to pass the bone while worship music plays. Stop the music unexpectedly and ask a question of the child holding the bone, such as, Where did God take Ezekiel? What did God ask Ezekiel? What did God tell Ezekiel to tell the bones? What did the bones do when Ezekiel talked to them? What did the bones do after they got breath? What did God promise for His people who were sad and without hope? What did God promise His people? Continue play as time allows.

SAY “ God made the dry bones alive again. God gives us new life when we trust in Jesus. God promises to always be with us when we follow Him. **What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.** ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

The LORD is good to everyone,
Everyone, everyone.
The LORD is good to everyone,
Psalm 145:9

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while passing a toy dog bone in a circle.

SAY “ The Lord, God, is good to everyone! He used the bones and sticks to show Ezekiel that He would bring His people together and would take care of them. **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for prophets like Ezekiel who wrote down God’s words so we could read them in the Bible.





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PLAY A MUSIC GAME

Invite preschoolers to move around the room as music plays. When the music stops, encourage boys and girls to lie quietly on the floor. Start the music again and lead preschoolers to “come to life,” and move around the room again. Continue playing as time and interest allow.

SAY “God gave new life to dry bones when He breathed life into them. God told Ezekiel that His people were like dry bones, living in a different land with no hope. God promised that He would give them new life. **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** This was a message of hope and love for God’s people. When we disobey God, we are like the dry bones. God made the dry bones alive again, and He gives us new life when we trust in Jesus. God will always be with everyone who believes in Jesus.”

2 ASSEMBLE A PUZZLE

Display the Bible Story Picture Poster at table groups. Print and cut apart “Story Picture Puzzle” printable, one for each table group. Invite boys and girls to assemble the puzzles. As the pictures are completed, review the Bible story the picture represents. Encourage preschoolers to complete each puzzle at least one time.

SAY “Each of your puzzles needed to be put back together, just like the dry bones were put back together and given life. Even though it may have seemed hard at first, you were able to assemble the puzzles and see the bigger picture. God’s people found themselves in a place without hope because of their sin, but **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** God promises everyone who confesses their sin and trusts in Jesus will be saved from their sin.”

3 MAKE A SNACK

Print and post the an Allergy Alert, noting you will be using pretzel sticks and miniature marshmallows. Consider providing an alternative such as toothpicks if preschoolers cannot have pretzel sticks. Give each child a paper plate with several pretzel sticks and miniature marshmallows on it. Demonstrate how to place a marshmallow on each end of a pretzel stick to make a “bone.” Invite preschoolers to make different shapes with their bones before they eat them.

SAY “How do you think Ezekiel felt when he saw piles of bones come back to life? [Allow responses.] God used dry bones to show His people that even though they felt hopeless, He was still with them and promised to take care of them. God breathed new life into the bones, and they came alive. **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** God promises that people who confess their sin and believe in Jesus will live forever with Him.”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 MAKE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE MOTIONS

Place the Key Passage Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Assist as needed with motions and call-and-repeat phrases. Say the key passage in different voices. Encourage preschoolers to use quiet, slow voices to represent the dry bones, and then say the key passage with excitement to represent dry bones coming to life.

SAY “ Even though God’s people had sinned and were living as servants in a different land, God still cared for them. He did not leave them, and **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** God promised to give His people new life again. God is good and kind. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Sing the following song to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”:

The desert is very hot,
Very hot, very hot.
The desert is very hot,
In Northern Africa.

Missions teams help people,
Help people, help people.
Missions teams help people,
Learn about Jesus.

SAY “ A desert is a dry place where there is a lot of sand. Have you ever been to a place with a lot of sand? [Allow responses.] A missionary named Vera teaches people called the “Desert Dwellers” about Jesus. [Lead a prayer.] ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ God made the dry bones alive again, and He gives us new life when we trust in Jesus. God will always be with everyone who believes in Jesus. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 PLAY A FOLLOWING GAME



Greet the children in group time. Tell the children that God’s people were divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. Explain to children that in our story today, God will choose to bring all His people together and take care of them if they will follow Him. Choose a child to be the leader and instruct him to demonstrate simple movements that others should follow. Play the follow-the-leader game for several rounds choosing various children to be the leader. God tells us to obey His rules and listen to Him. Ask the children to listen to the story to find out what God told Ezekiel to do.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Ezekiel 37. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

- God took Ezekiel to a place full of dry bones and asked if they could be alive again.
- Ezekiel said, “Only you know, God.”
- God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones, and they came together with muscles and skin. But they weren’t alive yet.
- God told Ezekiel to ask the breath to make them alive, and the people became alive.
- God explained that the bones were like His sad, hopeless people, but He promised to give them life again and bring them together as one.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

The LORD is good to everyone,
Everyone, everyone.
The LORD is good to everyone,
Psalm 145:9

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while pretending to arrive and wave hello to friends.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for always being faithful. Pray for leaders who will be faithful to God’s commands.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 DRAW YOUR HOME

Give each child a sheet of paper and crayons or washable markers. Encourage preschoolers to draw a picture of their homes on the paper. Invite them to include as many details as they can. Once preschoolers finish drawing, lead them to talk about their pictures with their friends. (Note: Be sensitive to preschoolers' home situations and living conditions.)

SAY “ Because God’s people continued to sin, they were taken to a new land where they lived as servants. Because God loved and cared for His people, **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** God loves and cares for each of us too. When we confess our sin and believe in God’s Son, Jesus, we are given new life. Just like Ezekiel gave hope to God’s people, we have hope because God sent Jesus to rescue us from sin. ”

7 PAINT WITH STRAWS

Provide each child with a painting smock. Place a sheet of heavyweight paper in a shallow tray. Use an eye dropper or pipette to make several drops of liquid paint onto the heavyweight paper. Invite a preschooler to use a straw to gently blow the drops of paint around on the paper. When finished, set aside to dry. Consider covering the tables in plastic tablecloths to help with cleanup. Make sure preschoolers have their own straws and do not share.

SAY “ You used your breath to make the paint on your paper move and make amazing designs. God showed Ezekiel a picture of hope for His people when God’s breath entered the dry bones and they came to life. God made the dry bones alive again, and He gives us new life when we trust in Jesus. God will always be with everyone who believes in Jesus. ”

8 PLAY TRUE OR NOT TRUE

Invite preschoolers to stand up if the statement you say is true or really happened in the Bible story. Invite preschoolers to stay seated if the statement you say is not true or did not happen in the Bible story. Use some of the following statements or create your own: God took Ezekiel to a valley of dry bones. The dry bones came back to life. God promised to give His people new life. God promised His people they would return home. God gave the bones medicine to come back to life. Ezekiel did not believe God’s message. God told Ezekiel He would not take care of His people. God said His people should not have hope.

SAY “ God’s people were living as servants in a distant land and had no hope. God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones, and then the bones came to life! God told Ezekiel that just like the dry bones, He would give new life to His people. **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE THEY WOULD RETURN HOME.** ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR PRESCHOOLERS

While preschoolers might not be ready to respond to the gospel, use this guide to help young minds begin to grasp big truths about Jesus and the kingdom of God.



Ask: "Who is in charge at home? Who is in charge over the whole world?" Explain that God made everything! He is King over everything, and He is in charge.



Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell preschoolers that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin makes God sad.



Explain that God must punish sin. He loves us, and He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus came to take away the punishment for sin.



Ask: "Do you like presents?" Explain that Jesus gives us the best present. He never did anything wrong, but He was punished in our place. Jesus wants to take away our sin because He loves us.

Pray that God will save your preschoolers. As you faithfully teach the Bible, you are planting gospel seeds in children's hearts. Ask God to grow the preschoolers into children who love and trust in Jesus.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

The Gospel Project is designed to help your preschoolers **LEARN** the gospel story of Scripture, **LOVE** the Author and Subject of that gospel story, and then to **LIVE** out their part in this ongoing gospel story.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

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