



Use Week of:

Unit 15 • Session 6

Ezekiel Gave Hope

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Ezekiel 37

STORY POINT: God planned to bring His people home.

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How did God plan to fix what sin broke?
God planned to send Jesus.

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LEADER Bible Study

Ezekiel had a tough job: ministering to people who had rejected God and suffered the consequences. The exiled people of Judah were eager to blame God for their circumstances. “It’s not fair!” they argued. (See Ezek. 18:25.)

Ezekiel told the people that they were at fault for their exile; their faithlessness had provoked God’s wrath. The people were getting what they deserved. “I take no pleasure in anyone’s death,” God said. “So repent and live!” (Ezek. 18:32).

God gave Ezekiel a vision. In this vision, God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones. The bones represented Israel. Ezekiel prophesied that God would put tendons, flesh, and skin on the bones. He would put breath in them so they would come to life.

Ezekiel encouraged the exiles. Apart from God, they were dead. But God was offering them life. He would restore their future. “My dwelling place will be with them,” God said. “I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Ezek. 37:27).

We too are dead in our sin. (Eph. 2:1) Sin separates us from God because He is holy. We are apart from God’s presence. But God does not delight in our death. He is patient and wants us to repent and live!

Hundreds of years after Ezekiel died, God’s presence came to His people through Jesus Christ, Immanuel—meaning, “God with us.” Jesus is the source of life; He offers us living water. (John 4:10,14) If we do not drink of it, we will be like the dry bones. No life will be in us.

Jesus changes that. He brings life to the spiritually dead. God saves us by grace, making us alive with Christ through the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 2:4-5)

The BIBLE Story

Ezekiel Gave Hope

Ezekiel 37

Ezekiel was with God's people when they were taken as prisoners to Babylon. God gave Ezekiel a vision. In this vision, God took Ezekiel to a valley. The valley was filled with old, dry bones. Ezekiel walked through the valley. God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones come to life?"

Ezekiel said, "God, only You know if these bones can come to life."

God said, "Talk to these bones for Me. Say, 'Dry bones, hear what God says: I will give you breath, and you will come to life. I will give you a body. Then you will know that I am God.'" Ezekiel began talking to the bones. All of a sudden, there was a rattling noise. The bones were moving and coming together like God had said.

God said, "Talk to the breath for Me. Say, 'This is what God says: Breath, come into these bones! Make them alive!'" Ezekiel talked to the breath, and the breath went into the bones.

The bones came to life, and a big army stood up in front of Ezekiel.

God said, "My people are like these bones. They think they are dried up. They do not think they have a future. I want you to talk to My people for Me." God told Ezekiel what to say to the people of



Israel. “Say: I am going to bring My people back to the land of Israel. I will give them life in their own land, and they will know that I am God.”

Then God told Ezekiel to pick up two sticks. The first stick was for the people of Judah, and the second stick was for the people of Israel. Ezekiel held the two sticks together in one hand so they were like one stick. God said He was going to bring Judah and Israel back together. They would not be two separate nations anymore. They would be one nation again.

God’s people were also going to get a new king! This new king would be like a shepherd. **God promised that His people would go home to their land, and they would never be taken away again. “I will be with them,” God said. “I will be their God, and they will be My people.”**

Christ Connection: When we disobey God, we are like the dead bones God showed Ezekiel. But God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Act it out:** Walk among the seated preschoolers as you tell the story, inviting them to stand as you describe the bones coming to life. Invite the children to take a deep breath at the appropriate time. Encourage them to follow you to another area of the room as you describe God’s promise to bring His people home.
- **Pause for effect:** Grab listeners’ attention by pausing strategically between each section of God’s words.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Ezekiel Gave Hope

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ezekiel 37

STORY POINT: God planned to bring His people home.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.

Welcome time

- “Come, Thou Fount” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Find the Differences” activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to look at the two pictures and circle the differences in the bottom picture.

SAY • In our Bible story today, God gave His prophet Ezekiel a vision. In this vision, God took Ezekiel to a valley. The valley was filled with old, dry bones. Can you guess from the picture what happened next? We will find out in today’s Bible story.

LOW PREP

Tip: Be sensitive to children with physical limitations.

Exercise your body

Lead preschoolers through various exercises, talking about which parts of the body you are using. You may run in place to get hearts pumping, do push-ups to work arm muscles, do jumping jacks to work leg muscles, and so forth. Ask preschoolers to point to the place on the body where they feel the exercise working. Finish with stretches and deep breaths.

SAY • Our bodies are made up of lots of parts like bones, muscles, hearts, lungs, and brains. All of the parts work together, so we should take care of our whole body to stay healthy. Do you think a skeleton—that’s the bones in your body—could stand up by itself? God asked a prophet named Ezekiel a similar question in our Bible story today. Let’s listen to find out if bones can come to life.

Interpret signs

Print and cut apart the “Symbols” printable. Show preschoolers one image at a time and ask what each symbol means.

- “Symbols” printable, 1 per group
- scissors (adult use)

SAY • People use symbols to represent things. Knowing what symbols like this skull and crossbones mean is important. The skull and crossbones means something is deadly. Other symbols represent happier things, like a heart for *love* or a peace sign for *peace*. The walk symbol on a crosswalk sign lets us know it is safe to cross the street. We think of a king when we see a crown, and we think of Jesus when we see a cross. God showed a prophet named Ezekiel a vision. Just like symbols give us messages, God sometimes uses visions to give us His special messages. Listen to our Bible story today to learn more!

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to march like an army as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Ezekiel 37 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today's Bible story from the Book of Ezekiel may be hard to believe, but we know this story is true since it is in the Bible, and the Bible is God's Word!

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline.

Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Ezekiel Gave Hope" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • Can you imagine how Ezekiel felt watching all those old bones come to life as a big army? It might sound scary, but this vision gave God's people hope. They thought life was over now that they were prisoners in Babylon, but **God planned to bring His people home**. When we disobey God, we are like the dead bones God showed Ezekiel. But God sent Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 2 Chronicles 7:14. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud.

SAY • God used Ezekiel to remind His people that He would forgive them and give them life in their own land, just like our key passage promises! When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Sing the key passage song, “If My People,” and the theme song, “Come, Thou Fount.”

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “If My People” song
- “Come, Thou Fount” song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Let’s answer our big picture question. *How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.* God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

SAY • Let’s watch a video about a championship game. Stand and cheer when you see the Eagles play! Show the “10:12 Sports (Part 3)” missions video.

SAY • Coach Sean and his team won the final game, but they know that trusting in Jesus is better than winning a game. Jesus gives us life so we can be with God forever.

- “10:12 Sports (Part 3)” missions video

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

Tip: If you are unfamiliar with the tune, look it up online before the session.

Sing “Dem Bones”

Teach children a version of the song “Dem Bones,” pointing to the body parts named:

“Ezekiel connected dem dry bones,
Ezekiel connected dem dry bones,
Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones,
Now hear the Word of the Lord.

Foot bone connected to the leg bone.
Leg bone connected to the knee bone.
Knee bone connected to the thigh bone.
Thigh bone connected to the back bone.
Back bone connected to the neck bone.
Neck bone connected to the head bone.
Now hear the Word of the Lord.

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Now hear the Word of the Lord.”

SAY • When we disobey God, we are like the dead bones God showed Ezekiel. But God wanted His people to know that He would give them new life. **God planned to bring His people home.** God gave us

Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Dig for bones

Before the session, gather clean, plastic dog bones or spray paint small edible dog bones white. Cover a table and the floor below with plastic tablecloths. Place a large plastic bin filled with a couple inches of sand on the table. Hide the bones in the sand. Place small sand toys in the bin for preschoolers to use as they dig for the bones.

- large plastic bin
- clean plastic dog bones
- small edible dog bones (optional)
- white spray paint (optional)
- plastic tablecloths, 2
- play sand
- sand toys

SAY • Was it fun to find the bones in the sand? God showed Ezekiel a whole valley full of dry bones. Ezekiel watched the bones put on flesh and come to life. When we disobey God, we are like the dead bones God showed Ezekiel. *But* God wanted His people to know that He would give them new life. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.*** God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Bring it back together

Provide simple body or map puzzles. If none are available, print and cut apart images from the Internet or extra copies of the Bible story picture. Help children work the puzzles.

- body or map puzzles
- Bible Story Picture Poster, extra copies (optional)
- scissors (adult use) (optional)

SAY • Our puzzles looked like broken pictures before we started. But you brought all the pieces back together into one picture! God showed Ezekiel that He could bring dry bones back together into a living body. God also promised to bring the people of Judah and Israel back together into one nation. **God planned**

to bring His people home. When we disobey God, we are like the dead bones God showed Ezekiel. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.*** God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Look at fossils

· picture books about fossils

Tip: Make sure books support the Biblical view of creation.

Check out picture books about fossils from the local library. Allow children to look at the bones pictured in the books. Ask if the depicted animals can come back to life.

SAY • God asked Ezekiel, “Can these bones come to life?” Ezekiel said, “God, only You know if these bones can come to life.” God showed Ezekiel that He could bring dry bones back together into a living body. When we disobey God, we are like the dead bones God showed Ezekiel. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.*** God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.



Decorate champion awards

· “Champion Award” printable, 1 per child
· markers or crayons
· stickers

Give each child a “Champion Award.” Invite the children to decorate their awards with markers or crayons and stickers.

SAY • We are sinners. We disobey God and do wrong things, but God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. But when we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He makes us champions because He is the only true Champion. Jesus gives us life so we can be with God forever. That’s far better than winning a game!

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve string cheese for snack. Invite preschoolers to tear and arrange their string cheese to look like bones before eating. God gave Ezekiel a vision of dry bones coming to life to show that **God planned to bring His people home**. When we sin, we are like those dry bones, but God gave us Jesus to take away our sin. When we turn from sin and trust Jesus, He gives us life so we can be with God forever.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What did Ezekiel see in the vision? (*a valley filled with old, dry bones*)
2. What happened when Ezekiel spoke God's words to the bones? (*They came to life.*)
3. Who are the dead bones like? (*God's people, us*)
4. What did God promise His people? (*to bring them home forever and to be with them*)
5. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- string cheese (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "If My People" song
- "Come, Thou Fount" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers