



ELEMENTARY LARGE GROUP

LESSON 1

EZEKIEL AND THE DRY BONES

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Has Good News for His People

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 37

GOD'S BIG STORY: God shows Ezekiel a vision reassuring the prophet that God still had good news for His people—He would bring them back to Him and put His own Spirit of life in them.

WORD OF WONDER: He saved us. It wasn't because of the good things we had done. It was because of his mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. —Titus 3:5 (NIV)

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What good news have you heard lately?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- STEM Activity: News, Good News, Best News!
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: Titus 3:5

One of the great things about social media is witnessing others' good news. Marriage proposals, pregnancy announcements, and gender reveals are so fun to watch. The joy in the moments is palpable through the screen, sometimes for people we don't even know personally!

Good news energizes and reminds us that there is still good happening in our broken world.

Take a moment to read Ezekiel 37:1–14. In this passage, the prophet Ezekiel embodies the power of the Lord. Before God spoke to him, Ezekiel knew the power of the Lord was upon him, even though he was in a faraway, unknown place surrounded by dry, silent bones. When you walk in unfamiliar territory, God still has good news for you. He walks alongside you up every hill and mountain and through every valley. You never walk alone.

Through you, He also brings good news of hope restored to others. God has good news for His people through His people. Your testimony of God's good news can help others navigate their personal valleys.

- Have you ever experienced good news amid a personal trial?
- Where have you seen hope restored because of God's good news?
- Who needs to hear of God's good news in your life?

With God's power, Ezekiel spoke life into the dry bones. But guess what? The same power lives inside you. You can speak life into situations that seem helpless. You can celebrate the good news of hope restored.

—Kathie Phillips

Senior Director of Next Gen Ministry

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Ezekiel was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. Because God's people were in danger of judgment, Ezekiel was called to do unusual things like eating a scroll and lying on his side for over a year to get the people's attention.

WHAT?

Ezekiel had many visions related to God's judgment and restoration. Ezekiel prophesied about God's restoration after the exile. He proclaims that God would send His Spirit to make a way for Israel to actually follow God's commands (Ezekiel 36:24–32).

WHERE?

Ezekiel received the vision about the dry bones when he and the Israelites were exiled to Babylon. This prophecy came during the 70-year exile when the Israelites felt like all hope was gone. But through Ezekiel's vision, God shares an image of new life!

WHEN?

Babylon chipped away at the nation of Judah over a few years, but the final defeat of Jerusalem and exile to Babylon came in 586 BC. King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Solomon's temple along with the city. The people were in exile for 70 years.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

The vision in Ezekiel 37 shares God's plan to restore Israel but also points toward the death and bodily resurrection of Jesus. His victory will bring new life to those who trust in Him, and His Spirit brings His followers life and joy!

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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WONDER TRUTH: God Has Good News for His People

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WORD OF WONDER: Titus 3:5

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

Leader Tip: When you greet kids with enthusiasm, you become the rarest of adults in those kids' lives: a grown-up who sees and listens to them. So let kids know you're delighted they've arrived.

Welcome Question

Consider using a **30 or 2:00 Countdown** to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

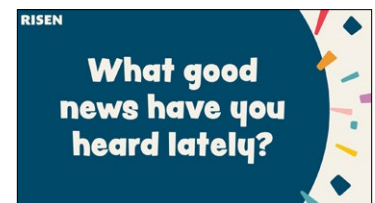
At Your Start Time...

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin:

"Welcome to RBKids!! I'm so excited to worship and learn with you today! It's time for Small Group to begin! Talk about this question together with your leader!"

Walk around to small groups to hear and engage with their answers.



Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! It's time to start our worship time! I'm excited to hear and learn more about our stories that we just read! As we prepare to worship, everyone stand on your feet and let's say these words together!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

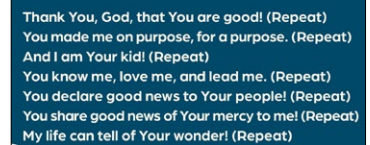
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You declare good news to Your people! (Kids repeat.)

You share good news of Your mercy to me! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You declare good news to Your people! (Repeat)
You share good news of Your mercy to me! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)

RISEN

STEM Activity: News, Good News, Best News!

SUPPLIES: disposable coffee cups (2 per SG), 8' lengths of string (1 per 2 SG), scissors (prep only), paper clips (1 per kid)

SLIDE: News, Good News, Best News!

Ahead of time, use scissors to poke a tiny hole in the bottom of each disposable coffee cup (1 per kid). Cut string into 8' lengths, one for each SG. Push one end of the string through the bottom of their cups and tie the string to a paper clip inside the cup, thus connecting their cups with the string.

Invite two volunteers to come up to the front. Demonstrate how when the string is taut, one kid can speak into her cup and her partner will be able to hear her voice in the other cup, as long as it's tucked over an ear.

Explain that this works because sound waves travel along the tight string between the two cups, and the cup held by the person listening amplifies the sound. Ask partners to take turns sharing news—a pretend weather report or a tidbit about a new movie or book or something they did this week. Next, have partners share good news—something they know about God. Then have partners share the best news—that Jesus saved us, and we can be His friends forever.



"We'll give each small group a set so you can try later! Good news is always welcome, and today we'll hear some good news God had for His people. You've just delivered good news using the world's lowest-tech telephones. God delivered good news in an unusual way too—but His people were happy to hear it. And God has some good news for you that you'll be happy to hear."

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HAS GOOD NEWS FOR HIS PEOPLE.**"



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words and these words as a guide if needed: **"God, You've never stopped sharing good news with Your people—thank You! Help us listen with open ears and eager hearts. Through Your Holy Spirit, lead us closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen."**

This is an opportunity to quiet hearts and invite the Holy Spirit to lead, teach, and reveal God's love to each kid (and you!).

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you! Remember that some kids may have no idea why we worship or what we are doing!

"God is so faithful and good! He keeps His promises and shows us endless love! Let's sing these songs together as a way to celebrate and thank God!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Jesus is Peace, Say It Again

Leader Tip!

Consider walking through the meaning of the new song of this series. Show the kids the moves of the chorus so they feel comfortable jumping right in!

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE SLIDE

"Let's start by watching part of God's big story. Afterward, we'll watch and experience more of the story!"

VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY



LESSON 1 EZEKIEL AND THE DRY BONES

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: posterboard (1 sheet), black marker (prep only), large sticky note, red marker, robe, coloring utensils, clipboards or tables (optional)

Before write the word **Israelites** with a black marker in the center of the posterboard Write the word **Us** in the center of the large sticky note.

"God chose the Israelites to be His special people. Draw a red heart around the word **Israelites** on the posterboard. **God wanted to bless the whole world through the Israelites. He also chose the Israelites to be an example of what life with God was like, so other people would see and choose to worship and follow God too.**

But the Israelites weren't great at that second part. Lay posterboard down. **Over and over again, they messed up and chose a life without God. They followed false gods, worshiped terrible idols, and ignored God's command to love others.**

So God sent prophets to warn the Israelites. Hold posterboard up again. **The prophets said, "Turn back to God and remember His commands! You are the example of what life with Him is all about! If you keep sinning, God won't protect you from the nations who want to harm you. Turn back to Him!"**

But the Israelite leaders rarely listened to the prophets. Lay posterboard down. **And after hundreds of years of warnings, the Israelites were conquered and sent away from their land.**

Move to the opposite side of your teaching area. **Far away from their homes, in exile in the land of Babylon, the Israelites must have felt lost and alone. Did God care about them anymore? Could they still turn to Him? Were they still God's special people? The answer was ... yes! God still spoke through prophets to the Israelites, and one prophet in particular was sent to share some good news.**

Put on the robe and "become" Ezekiel. **God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision—a special picture from God's Spirit—to share with the Israelites. In this vision, God brought Ezekiel to a valley filled with dry bones. Hmm ... I'm going to need a valley full of bones. Think you can help me out?** Pause for kids to shout their answer.

Leader Tip: Consider choosing a kid to play the part of Ezekiel. Put the robe on him and encourage him to act out Ezekiel's actions and repeat Ezekiel's words after you.

Much better! God asked Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezekiel 37:3, NIV).

Leader Tip: Son of man is not a particular title in Ezekiel, unlike the way it refers to Jesus in the Gospels. In Aramaic and Hebrew, the expression simply means, "man, human."

The Israelites were like those bones—they had turned away from God, sinned, failed to be the example He asked, and now lived far away from home as slaves. There seemed no hope of being restored ... like there was no hope that dry bones could ever become living, breathing humans again.

Except ... God can do anything. So Ezekiel replied, “LORD and King, you are the only one who knows” (Ezekiel 37:3, NIV). God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones—who did the bones represent again? Cup ear and prompt kids to shout, “The Israelites!” Yes! Ezekiel was to speak to the bones and share this message from God: “I will put breath in you. Then you will come to life again. I will attach tendons to you. I will put flesh on you. I will cover you with skin. Then you will know that I am the LORD” (Ezekiel 37:5–6, NIV).

As Ezekiel spoke, the dry bones in his vision began to rattle and come together. Then tendons and flesh and skin appeared on the bones until an army of bodies now stood in the valley. But the bodies weren’t alive. They had no breath.

God told Ezekiel to speak again and tell living breath to enter the bodies so that they could live again. And that’s what happened! What had been dead, dry bones was now a living, breathing army of people! Look around! Pause for kids to look around.

God explained that, like those bones, the Israelites had no hope away from God. But God promised to bring them back and put His own Spirit—His breath of life—into them. Then they would know what God had done, that God is Lord, and they are His people. Ask kids to sit.

Ezekiel’s vision was for the Israelite people, but it also helps us understand the good news that God desires us to share with others. Jesus died a horrible death on the cross, but the Spirit of God raised Him back to life. God has power over death ... what good news!

Hold up the Israelites posterboard. Although the Israelites turned away from God, He didn’t abandon them. The same is true for us! Place the sticky note with the word *Us* on it over the word *Israelites*. Like the bones in Ezekiel’s vision, God can forgive us, bring us back to Him, and restore us to new life in Jesus. God has good news for His people!"

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD HAS GOOD NEWS FOR HIS PEOPLE**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Today in God's big story, Ezekiel's vision revealed God's plan to restore Israel and bring them back to Him. Ezekiel's vision also pointed toward the death and resurrection of Jesus. One day, Jesus' victory would bring new life to those who trust in Him. Today, His Spirit brings His followers life and joy!"



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There are no motions to this video. Kids should still stand and leaders should model worship like they would in adult service. Please refer to the Worship Posture Tutorial on the resource page before leading.

WORSHIP VIDEO: Famous For



Blessing Your Kids

As you close Large Group Worship Time, speak this blessing over your kids. Use your own words, with these below as a guide if needed:

Blessing: Today, may God give you joy as the good news God has for His people lifts your heart and brings you peace. May you hold Jesus close, loving Him so much, just as He loves you.

Dismiss kids back into their small groups, instructing them to continue reflecting on what God is teaching them as they finish this last activity.

AUDIO: Play quiet music from the Risen Elementary Spotify Playlist in the background.

Leave the Responding in Worship Slide up.