



## ELEMENTARY SMALL 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 (NIRV)

### CURIOSITY

### BELIEF

### FAITH

- Pre-Service Connect and Curiosity Questions
- Welcome Question: What good news have you heard lately?
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Titus 3:5
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Dry Bones Directed Prayer



[Risen Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

### INVITATION

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

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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!

## Small Group

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Has Good News for His People

**SCRIPTURE:** Ezekiel 37

**WORD OF WONDER:** Titus 3:5

## Pre-Service (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small group 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

*Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

### While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

#### I’m curious ...

- What makes something “good news” instead of just “news”?
- What good news have you received from God?

## Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

**SUPPLIES:** whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: **“What good news have you heard lately?”**

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids to talk about their answers.

## Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

Distribute Bibles to all kids and encourage kids to find the passage in their Bibles by checking the table of contents or flipping directly to Ezekiel 37. Allow time for kids to use the table of contents in their Bibles to find the passage. Explain that this portion of the Bible is full of true stories about prophets who received messages from God and passed those messages on. And this message is good news!

Explain that since you'll be reading about a valley full of dry bones, you'd like kids to get their bones moving by standing up as we read. Read Ezekiel 37:3–14 to the kids as they follow along.

Then, discuss the following:

**"God shared good news with Ezekiel through a vision: dry bones coming back to life. God hadn't forgotten His people, and He was bringing them back to life in and with Him! God has good news for you too: Jesus can save us from our sin—the wrong things we say and do—so we can be with God as His kids forever! Jesus doesn't save us because of good things we've done. Rather, He saves us because He loves us and wants to give us new life in Him!"**

- **Today's story was a little crazy! What are you curious or wondering about right now?**
- **In God's big story, Ezekiel had a vision about dry bones coming to life. This vision has a special meaning. What do you think it is?**
- **God made a promise to His people in this passage. What's that promise?**
- **How did God keep His promise to His people?**
- **God made sure His people knew He hadn't forgotten them. How does God make sure you know He hasn't forgotten you?**
- **What's a promise God has made to you? Why can you trust Him to keep it?**
- **What would you say is the best news God has for you?**

**"The vision Ezekiel shared with God's people held good news: one day they'd be set free, have a home again, and God would put His very Spirit of life in them! God sent Jesus with good news for us too: we can be set free from sin, have a home in heaven, and be filled with God's Spirit, who gives us life! Let's thank God for sending Jesus and tell Him how we feel about His good news."**

## Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to share things they are praising God for and things they are praying for. Encourage kids to pray out loud for the praises and prayer requests their friends shared. Close your prayer time by thanking God for the good news that, because of Jesus, we can be God's kids forever!

## Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

Distribute Bibles to all kids and encourage kids to find the passage in their Bibles by checking the table of contents or flipping directly to Ezekiel 37. Allow time for kids to use the table of contents in their Bibles to find the passage. Explain that this portion of the Bible is full of true stories about prophets who received messages from God and passed those messages on. And this message is good news!

**Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.**

Explain that since you'll be reading about a valley full of dry bones, you'd like kids to get their bones moving by standing up and reading Ezekiel 37:1–2 aloud together. Next, read Ezekiel 37:3–13 to the kids as they follow along. Finally, invite them to read verse 14 together before sitting back down.

Then discuss the following:

- **God's people were in exile when Ezekiel talked to them. What does the word exile mean? How might it have felt to be in exile so far from home?**
- **How were the people of Israel like dry bones?**
- **God made a big promise to His people through Ezekiel's vision. What was the promise?**
- **This message God gave Ezekiel for God's people gave them hope for their future. Where in your life could you use some hope for your future?**
- **God had good news for His people then, and He has good news for us now. What is the best news God has for us now?**
- **How does this news impact your life? How does it impact the lives of your family and friends?**

"God shared good news with Ezekiel through a vision: dry bones coming back to life. God hadn't forgotten His people, and He was bringing them back to life in and with Him! God has good news for you too: Jesus can save us from our sin—the wrong things we say and do—so we can be with God as His kids forever! Jesus doesn't save us because of good things we've done. Rather, He saves us because He loves us and wants to give us new life in Him!"

- **Why is Jesus' love good news for you?**
- **What would you say to thank Jesus if He walked in right now?**

**\*\*\*Have kids turn to their RBKids Notes Page and invite them to fill in the questions and spaces. Talk through each section with them, engaging in conversation about their answers. Instruct them to use the bottom "Small Group" section to write any thoughts, prayers, or questions from today that they want to talk to their parents about when they get home.**

"Ezekiel's vision was packed with good news: God's people would one day be set free, have a home again, and God would put His very Spirit of life in them! Jesus' coming brought us good news too: we can be set free from sin, have a home in heaven, and be filled with God's Spirit, who gives us life. Let's thank God for the good news we have in Jesus and pray for our friends too."

## Prayer Time: Older Kids

Ask kids to move away from one another to minimize distractions and to then thank God for the good news He gave His people and the good news He gives us through Jesus. Ask them to also pray for the needs of their families and friends.

## 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 (NirV)

### Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

**"Today's Word of Wonder is Titus 3:5. In it, we discover that Jesus can save us by washing away our sins. Let's celebrate by reading the Word of Wonder together and pausing to "Woo-hoo!" all the good news in it!"**

Put the Word of Wonder Slide on the screen and help kids find the verse in their Bibles. Then have kids pump one hand in the air and shout, "Woo-hoo!" after each sentence or phrase—because each holds good news!

Discuss these questions:

- **What are the ways this verse is good news for God's people today?**
- **Which part of this verse sounds like especially good news to you?**

### Word of Wonder Activity

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid), scrap paper (optional), pencils (optional)

Have kids form pairs and open their Bibles to Titus 3:5. Explain that you'll ask partners to take turns spelling out a key word from the verse—the word of their choosing—on their partners' backs by writing letters using their index finger. Partners will attempt to identify the word. Each time the guesser successfully identifies a word, she will read the verse out loud or recite it from memory, emphasizing the word she just identified. Tell kids the guesser and the tracer get one point each when a word is correctly identified, and the guesser gets 10 for reading the sentence in which the word appears. If she recites the verse from memory, she receives 500 points. Consider giving each pair a pencil and scrap paper to keep track of their score.

An alternative to spelling words on a partner's back is spelling them on the palm of a partner's hand. Or words can be traced in the air with partners facing each other. The latter option requires kids to write letters backwards—an added element of fun!

After playing several rounds, ask kids to report their scores. Declare the kid with the highest score to be the Intergalactic Pointer Finger Speller Champion. (And, no, there are no prizes or college scholarships for that!)

**Leader Tip:** For Younger Kids. Encourage kids who are uncertain spellers to look at their Bibles to pick out a word from the verse and spell it as they see it on the page.

## Large Group!

### Responding in Worship: Dry Bones Directed Prayer

Ask kids to call out good news they'd like to receive. Help them know what you're looking for by sharing first. For instance, maybe you'd like to get a call saying someone bought you a house, or maybe the good news would be an old friend is coming for a visit.

After calling on a few volunteers, continue.

**"We all love getting good news. Today we discovered that God had good news for His people back in Ezekiel's day, and He has good news for us today. Our good news is that Jesus came to save us and to wipe away our sins—the wrong things we do that separate us from God. Through Jesus we can be God's kids forever, and we can have new life. Amazing news indeed!**

**But part of this good news is that we also get to follow Jesus—to do what He tells us to do, to live as He wants us to live. That's when our "dry bones" get up and begin to become truly alive.**

Ask kids to spread out a bit and to pray with you as together you ask God how He'd like you to use different bones in your bodies to serve Him. As you pray, allow time for kids to move and reflect, listening for whatever God might have to say to them.

**Leader Tip:** God speaks in many ways! Encourage kids not to overthink as they listen to God. They can simply ask Him to speak and then notice the thoughts and feelings they have as they listen. God knows them better than anyone else and wants to share with them in ways they will understand. Assure kids that it's OK if they don't hear anything specific from God—He loves them and is with them!

**God, thank You for Your power and might. You alone can give us new life—thank You for this good news! We're listening as we ask You how You'd have us honor and serve You.**

**Touch your knees and, if you can, kneel. Tell God that you honor and love Him. Listen for what He might say to you in response.** Pause as kids talk to God and listen quietly. Take this time to pray as well.

**Now touch your head. Ask God how you might honor Him with your thoughts. What would He have you think about—or not think about—from today on?** Pause as you and the kids pray quietly.

**Touch your feet. Where might God send you?** Pause for a few moments of silent prayer.

**Touch your fingers. What work might God have for you to do?** Again, pause as kids pray.

**Now place your hands over your heart. It's not a bone, but it pumps life to every part of your body and keeps you moving. If you want your whole heart to belong to God, tell Him. Ask Him to move you closer to Him.** Pause as kids pray quietly.

**Thank You for hearing us, God. We give you our "dry bones," knowing You alone can give them new life! Thank You for this good news! In Jesus' name, Amen."**

**\*\*Older Kids - finish your Notes Page if you didn't have time earlier!**