



## PRE-K 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:** Jesus forgives our sins, saves us, and gives us new life. —from Titus 3:5

#### CURIOSITY

#### BELIEF

#### FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





## LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

### 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 these 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!



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

## LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

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### Welcome

**Slide: Series Welcome Loop**

#### As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

**Video: Countdown**

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

### Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat. Tac's head should be looking down, as if Tac is sad.

**Leader:** Tac, you look sad today. What's wrong?

**Tac the Cat:** (Sniffles) I just got some very bad news. My good friend is moving away.

**Leader:** Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that, Tac.

**Tac the Cat:** It makes me soooo sad and low. I don't want to do anything but just sit here and cry.

(Tac starts to cry.)

**Leader:** Well, I have some good news for you. Even though your friend is moving, you still have a lot of friends. Right, kids? Maybe we can tell you something to make you feel better.

**Tac the Cat:** That would be very nice, but I wonder what kinds of nice things my new friends could say to me to make me feel better.

(Allow the kids to respond. Encourage them to say nice things to make Tac feel better.)

**Leader:** That was so nice! We've all been sad at one time or another, and we can imagine how Tac must be feeling. Sometimes we need some good news to give us hope.

**Tac the Cat:** Thanks, kids! That did make me feel better and give me hope! I'm still sad about my friend leaving, but I know I still have other friends and I'll make new friends! And most of all—I always have God with me.

**Leader:** We're going to hear a story today from the Bible about a time when God sent a message to His people with some good news that brought hope!

**Tac the Cat:** That sounds great. I can't wait to hear it. I'm going to go say goodbye to my friend who's leaving right now. Bye!

**"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Has anyone ever given you a message or good news that made you feel better when you were sad?** Allow the kids to respond. **We all see and hear things that make us curious, and hearing good news can really help us! Do you ever stop to think about how God can give us hope even when we're sad? What good news do you think God has for us?** Allow the kids to respond. **We're going to learn more about that today!**

### **SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**

Today's Wonder Truth is: **GOD HAS GOOD NEWS FOR HIS PEOPLE.** Today, we are discovering the good news that God has for all His people. Say it with me!"

## **Declaring God's Wonder**

### **SLIDE: DECLARATION**

Encourage the kids to say these statements loudly and boldly and do the motions with you.

**"Let's say these words together!"**

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much;** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

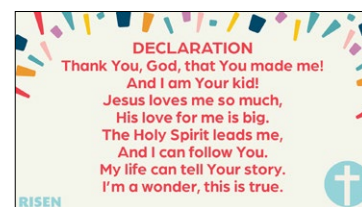
March like you're following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").



## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **"God, we can't wait to hear about the good news You have for us! May Your Holy Spirit help us learn from Your Word. Help us share Your good news with others. In Jesus' name, Amen."**

## Worship

**"Today, we have been learning that God has good news for His people. Let's sing and praise God together for His good news!"**

**WORSHIP VIDEOS: *Never Be, I Love You So Much***

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Ezekiel in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** (*Hands together then opening palms up, like opening a book.*)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (*Point to yourself.*)

**"Let's watch part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Ezekiel in the Bible."**

**VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY**

# GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, posterboard, marker, robe, white towels or sheets of construction paper

Ahead of time, write “Turn Back to God” on a posterboard. Ask the kids to stand up and help you tell the story by acting it out as you talk.

**“God wanted to bless the whole world through the Israelites. God chose the Israelites to be His special people and to follow Him. But ... the Israelites weren’t great at that second part.**

**Over and over again, they kept doing things that God did not like. It’s like they were fighting against God.** Have kids put their fists up and punch at the air, reminding them to be careful not to hit each other. **That made God sad.**

**So God sent prophets to warn the Israelites. A prophet is someone who shares messages from God. The prophets told the people, “Turn back to God! Stop doing wrong things!”** Ask someone to hold up the posterboard and walk around the room with it, showing the posterboard to the kids in the room.

**The posterboard says, “Turn back to God.” This is the message God gave His people through the prophets. Do you think the people listened?** Allow the kids to respond. **When the posterboard comes to you, put your hands over your ears and turn away from it!**

Encourage the person carrying the posterboard to walk around the room with it, and encourage kids to turn away from the posterboard. Then have the person holding the posterboard sit, and all the kids can turn back toward you for the rest of the story.

**The people didn’t want to listen to what God had to say through His prophets. And they didn’t do what God asked them to do. So after hundreds of years of warnings, God allowed surrounding nations to attack Israel. The Israelites were conquered and taken away from their land. Everyone walk to the other side of the room.** Encourage the kids to walk to the other side of the room.

**The Israelites were far away from home, and they felt very far from God. Some of them wondered if God still cared for them. Show how you would look if you were worried or sad.** Encourage the kids to make worried or sad faces.

**That’s how the Israelites felt. They were worried and sad. But God was still close, and He still cared for them. God had a special message for His people, and He sent that message through a prophet named Ezekiel.** Choose a volunteer to wear the robe and act out the part of Ezekiel as you tell about his vision.

**God gave 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.**

**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—God’s people—were like those bones. They had turned away from God and sinned, and now they lived as slaves, far away from home. Just like the dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision had no hope of ever becoming living, breathing humans again, there seemed to be no hope for the Israelites to experience a good relationship with God again and return to their homeland.

**Except ... God can do anything! God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones. Who did the bones represent?** Cup your ear and prompt kids to shout, “The Israelites!” **Yes! God told Ezekiel 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 [muscles and skin] to you. ... 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.** Encourage kids to shake their papers. **Then muscles and skin appeared on the bones until an army of bodies now stood in the valley.** Encourage kids to hold their papers above their heads with the outline of the person facing the front. **But the bodies weren’t alive. They had no breath.**

**God told Ezekiel to command living breath to enter the bodies so they could live again. And that’s what happened!** Encourage the kids to blow on the bone side of their papers.

**What had been dead, dry bones was now a living, breathing army of people!** Pause for kids to look around. Encourage them to hold up the people on their Dry Bones and People Sheet.

**God explained that, like those bones, the Israelites had no hope apart from God. But God promised to bring them back to their homeland and put His own Spirit—His saving breath of life—into them. Then they would know that God is the Lord, and they were 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 wants us to hear. Jesus died on the cross, but the Spirit of God raised Him back to life. God has power over death. What good news!**

**Although the Israelites turned away from God, He didn’t leave them. The same is true for us! Like the bones in Ezekiel’s vision, God will forgive us, bring us back to Him, and give us new life when we trust in Jesus. God has good news for His people!"**



## Connecting the Wonder Truth

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

### **SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**

"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 forgive His people and bring them back to Him. Ezekiel's vision also pointed to Jesus dying on the cross and coming back to life. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus brings new life to those who trust in Him. Today, His Spirit brings His followers life and hope!"

## Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for loving them enough to share good news that Jesus came to save us and gives us hope!

**"God, You're the best. Thank You for sending us good news about Your love and forgiveness. Thank You for giving us Jesus to save us, and the Holy Spirit to live inside us. Help us share Your good news with others this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. Speak with your own words, using this 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."