

March 3, 2024 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

CURIOSITY (PRE-SERVICE)

An object lesson, experiment, or activity that sparks curiosity, encourages exploration, and gets kids thinking about the wonder of God.

- Welcome Question: What good news have you heard lately?
- STEM Activity: News, Good News, Best News!
- · Declaring God's Wonder



BELIEF (WORSHIP & BIBLE LESSON)

A deep and interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

- · Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder: Titus 3:5

FAITH (APPLICATION)

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own, emboldening their faith and fostering a deeper understanding of their place in God's kingdom.

- Discussion Questions for Younger Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time

IDENTITY (RESPONSE & CLOSING)

An interactive worship response activity that creates space for God to remind kids of these core truths: I am known, I am loved, I am led, and my life can tell of God's wonder.

- Responding in Worship: Dry Bones Directed Prayer
- Game: Dry Bones
- Blessing Your Kids





Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, worship playlists, activities, and more! WONDER@HOME (PDF)



FOR FIVESTONE KIDS 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 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 bring 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

EZEKIEL AND THE DRY BONES

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 (Pre-Service)

1ST & 2ND GRADE

Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker

Wonder Ink RESOURCES:

Before kids arrive, write the following question on a whiteboard: "What good news have you heard lately?"



As kids arrive ...

As kids arrive, welcome them by name and with a high five or fist bump. Show them the Welcome Question, encouraging them to share their answers with you and other kids. If you have younger kids, read the question for them.

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.

At your start time ...

When you're ready to get started, call on several volunteers to share their answers to the Welcome Question: **What good news have you heard lately?**

When someone has good news for us, we want to hear it! Today we're going to discover the good news God had for His people and how He went about sharing it with them. But before we dive in, it's time to be curious.

STEM Activity: News, Good News, Best News!

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

Wonder Ink RESOURCES:

Ahead of time, use scissors to poke a tiny hole in the bottom of each disposable coffee cup (1 per kid). (Just be sure not to return any prepped but unused cups to the church's kitchen or coffee station!) Cut string into 8' lengths, one for every two kids.

Have kids form pairs, and give each pair two paper clips, one 8' length of string, and two disposable coffee cups with holes in the bottom. Tell partners to each 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. (Be available to help younger kids as needed with the tying.) 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.

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.

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



Declaring God's Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES:

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 can be 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)



Belief (Worship & Bible Lesson)

1ST & 2ND GRADE

Large Group

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Connecting the Wonder Truth

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

God Has
God News for
His People

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!

In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story, ask questions, and simply be in awe of Him!

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? Give kids time and space to think about each question. Some kids may want to keep their answers between them and God, while others may want to share them out loud.

What would you say to thank Jesus if He walked in right now? Allow kids to answer freely.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid) **Wonder Ink RESOURCES:**

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!



Help kids find the verse in their Bibles. Then have kids pump one hand in the air and shout, "Woohoo!" after each sentence or phrase—because each holds good news!

For an optional discussion, gather kids to talk about 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?



Faith (Application)

1ST & 2ND GRADE

Small Group

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

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Divide your group into smaller groups based on age. If your group is already small, stay together for this time.

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)

Questions: Younger Kids

- 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!



Identity (Response & Closing)

1ST & 2ND GRADE

Small Group

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder

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Responding in Worship: Dry Bones Directed Prayer

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: 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.

GAME: DRY BONES, HEAR!

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Risen Elementary Spotify playlist (optional)

In this modified version of musical chairs, kids pretend to be lifeless skeletons who only come to life when the music is playing. Works well with the Ezekiel and the Dry Bones lesson!

Have you ever played Musical Chairs? Could someone explain how it works? Give one of the kids the chance to answer or do so yourself. This game is sort of like that, except there are no chairs. That's because in this game you'll pretend to be like the lifeless bones that came alive in Ezekiel 37!

Invite kids to spread out and lay down on the floor. When the music isn't playing, they must lie completely still. When I say, "Dry bones, hear!" and start the music, then you come to life. Get up! Do a walk. Do a dance. Do whatever you want, just so long as you keep moving. When the music is playing, you have to keep moving. Then, when the music stops, drop to the floor and lay perfectly still. The last person to stop moving is out!

Play continues, eliminating one player per round, until there is only one kid left. She wins!

Leader Tip: Consider using the Risen Elementary Spotify playlist for the music. If you want to strike a sillier tone, you could sing or whistle a recognizable jingle.

Make It Inclusive!

Tip for Including Kids with Unique Abilities

If there are kids in your group with physical restrictions, consider modifying the activity so that everyone may participate in the same way. For example, if you have a kid who is in a wheelchair, you might modify the activity by having all the kids sit in a chair when the music stops playing instead of lying on the floor.

God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones and say, "Hear the word of the LORD!" (Ezekiel 37:4). And they came to life. That's the power of good news from God! God has good news for us too.

Blessing Your Kids

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.



Leader Tip: If you bless kids individually, do so using their names. Ask their permission to place one hand on their head or shoulder. You'll have kids' full attention, and the blessing will have maximum impact.

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.

GAME 2: THE BLOB

In this modified version of Tag, every time a kid gets tagged, he gets incorporated into the Blob. The Blob grows and grows until all the kids are a part of it.

To start, we need someone to be Baby Blob. Allow one of the kids to volunteer or pick one to start the game. Baby Blob is trying to get you. If Baby Blob tags you, then you become a part of the Blob. You must hold onto one of Baby Blob's arms, and then the two of you continue hunting for others to get.

Leader Tip: Before this game begins, offer some guidelines for appropriate touch: tags should be gentle, on the arm, shoulder, or upper back. When someone gets tagged and must join the Blob, they should hold onto someone's arm, preferably between the elbow and the wrist.

Works well with the Jonah lesson!

As each new person is tagged, they too join the Blob by holding onto the arm of someone who is already a part of it. As the Blob grows, it will include more and more kids, but each will only be able to tag with one of her hands because she'll be using the other to hold onto the Blob.

Those of you who have not been caught by the Blob, your job is to stay away! But here's the catch: you have to crawl on your hands and knees. Alternatively, you can have students hop on one foot, crab walk, or do something similar. Adjust the difficulty as needed, depending on the age of your kids. Just be sure the kids who are trying to stay out of the Blob have their movement restricted in some way, because as the Blob grows, it'll become slower (and more hilarious) while catching the last remaining kids.

Make It Inclusive!

Tip for Including Kids with Unique Abilities

Encourage the group to creatively help kids with physical limitations or restrictions through the course—they could invent a "hover" mode to get them across the canyon in their wheelchair, or stand in a gauntlet to hold up the parachute, etc.

When Jonah tried to run away from God, he was swallowed by a huge fish. God has good news for the whole world, but Jonah did not want to bring God's message to the people of Nineveh. In the end, Jonah went to Nineveh and shared the good news. God has good news for the whole world—including us!

GAME 3: THE DISAPPEARING MAN

SUPPLIES: dry-erase marker, whiteboard

Before this game, draw a basic stick figure on the whiteboard. You will want to have a few details on the figure such as a face. The more parts there are to erase, the longer you can play the game!

Works well with the Lazarus lesson!

Invite kids to spread out so they have room to move. We're going to play a game called The Disappearing Man. The goal of this game is to guess the word on the board one letter at a time. Whenever someone guesses a letter incorrectly, we will erase one part of the man on the board and you will all lose the ability to use that part of your body. For example, I might erase the stick figure's right foot and say, "You lost your right foot," so you will all have to stand on your left foot. Or I might erase the figure's left eye and say, "You lost your left eye," so you will all have to keep that eye closed.

Near the stick figure on the whiteboard, add dashes to indicate the number of letters in the mystery word. Consider choosing words that relate to the Risen series, such as: *life*, *power*, *king*, *holy*, *mercy*, *saved*, *crucifixion*, and *resurrection*. On each kid's turn, she may guess a letter or attempt to guess the entire word. If she guesses the entire word, then everyone is raised back to life and regains full use of his body.

With each incorrectly guessed letter, you could progress this way:

- 1) You lost your right foot. Kids stand on their left foot.
- 2) You lost your left arm. Kids hold it behind their backs.
- 3) You lost your left eye. Kids close that eye.
- 4) You lost your other foot! Kids kneel.
- 5) You lost your other eye! Kids close both eyes.
- 6) All is lost! Kids lie down defeated.

If they make it to step six and still haven't guessed the word, then tell them what the word is. Kids are then "raised back to life" and can start another round with a different word and a new stick figure.

Make It Inclusive!

Tip for Including Kids with Unique Abilities

If there's a kid with physical restrictions that prevent him from participating, consider making him the scribe who fills in the letters of the word.

After Lazarus died, Jesus simply spoke, and Lazarus came back to life. Jesus has power over death!

GAME 4: DRAMATIC RUNWAY

SUPPLIES: masking tape (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Risen Elementary Spotify playlist

(optional)

Designate an area of your space as the "runway." Consider marking a runway with two strips of masking tape. Invite the kids to line up at one end of the runway.

Works well with the Triumphal Entry: Jesus Enters Jerusalem lesson!

In a moment, I'm going to invite you to walk the runway to the end, pose, turn, and walk back. But there's a twist! Each time you go on the runway, I'll give you specific instructions about how to move. For this first round, I want you to move as your favorite animal!

Leader Tip: To break the ice and increase engagement, you can go first!

Designate 1-3 kids (or adult leaders) to serve as judges. They can award a score for each runway performance from 1-10 by raising the appropriate number of fingers. Encourage them to be generous with their appraisals.

Make It Inclusive!

Tip for Including Kids with Unique Abilities

Modify instructions to accommodate kids with physical restrictions or invite them to serve as judges.

Kids take turns moving down the runway until everyone has the chance to go.

Each round of play has modified instructions.

Leader Tip: Consider playing upbeat worship music from the Risen Elementary Spotify playlist while the kids move down the runway.

Round 1: Move like your favorite animal!

Round 2: Give each kid a different physical challenge: hop on one foot, crawl, skip backyards, twirl, bunny hop, etc.

Round 3: Do your best victory dance!

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He didn't dance, and He didn't gloat. He could have entered Jerusalem however He wanted, but He came humbly by riding a donkey. The people would soon learn that Jesus is no normal king!

GAME 5: HIDDEN MESSAGE

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet per kid), white crayons (1 per kid), watercolor paints, watercolor brushes (1 per kid), cups of water

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Risen Elementary Spotify playlist

Works well with the Crucifixion and Resurrection lesson!

Leader Tip: Consider playing worship music from the Risen Elementary Spotify playlist while the kids work.

Prepare a sheet of paper by writing "Jesus is risen" on it in white crayon. Introduce this activity by holding this paper up for all to see.

What do you see here? Looks like nothing, right? What if I told you there was an important message hidden on this page?

Demonstrate the way to reveal the secret message by painting over it with watercolors. The paint won't stick to the white crayon, and the hidden message will be revealed.

Now each of you gets to make one of these hidden messages. Give each kid a sheet of paper and a white crayon. Have each kid write the message "Jesus is risen" on the paper. Then kids can exchange papers with someone else and paint them with watercolors to reveal the message.

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Instead of writing, younger kids could draw a simple picture, such as a cross, a heart, or a heart with a cross inside of it!

Finally, invite kids to write another message to take home and share with their siblings or parents. (Messages can also be revealed with colored pencils or markers.)

The colors represent all the different things we go through in life. Good things, bad things, beautiful things. We don't see Jesus the way His first followers did, but He is here with us! He promised to always be with us. As you go through all the different experiences of this life, if you pay attention, you'll discover all the ways He is there for you. Jesus is risen!

GAME 6: BUBBLE HOP

SUPPLIES: colored discs (can be cutouts of construction paper or drawn with chalk), scissors (prep only, optional)

Works well with any of Risen lessons!

The objective of Bubble Hop is to be the first player to reach the finish line by hopping on bubbles while demonstrating patience and waiting for the right opportunity to move forward. This game works best in an open space—outdoors or a large indoor area. Designate a start line and a finish line and distribute "bubbles" throughout the space. The bubbles can be circles of construction paper or drawn with chalk. Be sure there are multiples of several different colors. (For example, six red bubbles, six green bubbles, six blue bubbles, etc.)

Invite kids to gather at the start line. In a moment, we're going to have a race called Bubble Hop. The first person to the finish line wins, but you can only move by hopping from one bubble to the next. These circles on the ground are the bubbles. Once the race begins, I'll say a color, and then I'll either say "Hop" or "Pop." You'll want to listen very carefully, because if I say "Hop" then you are allowed to hop to that color. If I say "Pop," then that color is about to pop, and you need to get off it!

For example, if I say, "Green ... hop!" then you may hop to a green bubble, if there's one close enough to you. There may not always be a bubble you can reach. If I say, "Green ... pop!" then the green bubbles are about to pop. If you are standing on a green bubble, then you need to hop to a different one!

If a kid hops to the wrong color or fails to hop away from a bubble that is about to pop, then he's out. Sometimes there won't be a bubble of the appropriate color near enough to reach. That's OK! The point of this game is to help the kids practice patience—waiting attentively and listening carefully for the right moment to move. Note: No more than one kid may occupy the same bubble. The first kid to cross the finish line wins!

Leader Tip: Do a quick practice round to make sure everyone understands before starting the real game.

Make It Inclusive!

Tip for Including Kids with Unique Abilities

Pair kids up so that if one kid is unable to speak the phrase or run to the next teammate, his partner can.

Sometimes our faith feels like it's mostly about things that happened a long time ago. Or it feels like our faith is mostly promises about things that will happen a long time from now—which means there's a lot of watching and waiting. But Jesus wants us to have a relationship with Him right now! We can experience new life today.