



UNIT 15 | SESSION 6 | NOVEMBER 23-24, 2019

## 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Lesson

# Ezekiel Gave Hope

**Bible Passage:** Ezekiel 37

**Story Point:** God planned to bring His people home and give them new life.

**Key Passage:** “If my people, who bear my name, humble themselves, pray and seek my face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

**Big Picture Question:** How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.

**KID CONNECT:  
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:  
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:  
20 MINUTES**

## 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 breath in the bones 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! Jesus is the source of life and 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)

## KID CONNECT

### WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO MUSIC)

*Play* intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about what they hope for and what it means to have hope.

SAY • Sometimes we use the word *hope* as though it just means to wish for something or want something. In the Bible, hope is more certain. Today, we will learn more about the kind of hope we have in God.

## LARGE GROUP

### COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

*Show* the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

### LARGE GROUP GAME

(SFX: GAME INTRO MUSIC, VIDEO: GAME RANDOMIZER)

#### ONE HAND, TWO HANDS, NONE

(no supplies needed)

SAY • Have everybody stand up. Instruct that they will have to choose either One Hand (in the air), Two Hands (in the air) or None. Then tell the Tech to start the randomizer (on the screen). The game will randomly decide which one of the 3 choices wins. Everyone that chose the correct one stays in the game and the other 2 sit down (basically knocking out 2 thirds each round). Then play it again with those still in. Play continues over and over until one kid wins.

*NOTE: Be sure that they don't cheat! Some of the kids will try to switch their choice at the last second.*

*Also, when you get down to the final 5-8 kids, bring them up to the front so everyone can see what they choose etc...*

### WORSHIP

(VIDEO: THE RIVER, VIDEO: ONCE AND FOR ALL)

SAY • Let's worship God!

## INTRODUCE THE SESSION & GIANT TIMELINE

**(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)**

**(Bible)**

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY • The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues people through His Son, Jesus.

We have been learning that God's people had been disobeying for a long, long time. A few good kings were not enough to get the people back on track. God warned the people of Judah over and over, but they refused to listen.

Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God, even when everything felt hopeless. God had a plan. Judah ignored God's prophets and was captured. But God's plan was still happening. Today we will learn about the prophet Ezekiel, and the message God gave Judah through him. Our story is called "Ezekiel Gave Hope."

## TELL THE BIBLE STORY

**(CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT, CG: QUESTION 1, CG: QUESTION 2)**

**(Bible)**

Tell the Bible story using the script below.

SAY • God had allowed the Babylonians to take over Judah. Now God's people were living in Babylon as slaves. Ezekiel the prophet had been taken with God's people to Babylon. Even in captivity, God gave Ezekiel visions so he could tell God's people about the future. One day, God gave Ezekiel a vision. God led Ezekiel through a valley filled with old, dry bones. God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones come to life?"

Ezekiel replied, "Lord God, only You know the answer to that question."

God said, "Speak to these bones for Me. Say, 'This is what God says: I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am God.'" Ezekiel spoke to the bones. Suddenly, there was a noise—a rattling sound. The bones were coming together: bones to bones, tendons to bones, flesh over bones, and skin over flesh. But there was no breath in the bones.

God said, "Speak to the breath for Me. Say, 'This is what God says: Breath, come into these bones so that they may live!'" Ezekiel did what God said, and the breath entered the bones. They came to life, and a vast army stood before Ezekiel.

God said to Ezekiel, "These bones are like My people of Israel. I want you to speak to them for Me." God told Ezekiel to say, "This is what God says: I am going to bring My people back to the land of Israel. I will put My Spirit in you, and you will live."

Then another message came to Ezekiel. God told Ezekiel to hold two sticks together in one hand so they would become one single stick. The first stick represented the

kingdom of Judah, and the second stick represented the kingdom of Israel. God explained that His people would be one nation. They would have a new king to rule over them and guide them. God said, “My people will live forever in the land I gave to their ancestors.”

God would make a covenant of peace with His people forever. “I will be with them,” God said. “I will be their God, and they will be My people. Then everyone will know that I am the Lord.”

## QUESTION 1: What does this story teach us about God?

SAY • God takes no pleasure in anyone’s death. He called the people to repent and live. God gives life to people who are dead in sin. He is holy and wants to be with His people. He is patient and generous.

## QUESTION 2: What was God’s plan for the future of His people?

SAY • God communicated the message He wanted Ezekiel to share with the people of Judah. He was clear in His message to Ezekiel: God planned to bring His people home and give them new life.

## CHRIST CONNECTION

**Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.**

SAY • Apart from Jesus, we are like the dry bones Ezekiel saw. God showed Ezekiel His power to bring people back to life. We see God’s power through His son, Jesus. Jesus died on a cross to save us. God brought Jesus back to life too! Jesus gives us a life with Him that will never end.

## BIG PICTURE QUESTION

**(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)**

SAY • Let’s remember the big picture question we’ve been focusing on. *How did God plan to fix what sin broke?* Can anyone tell me? [Allow responses.] That is just right. *Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.* That means that, even though God knew people would sin against Him, He chose to create the world and each of us anyway. He loves to show love and had a plan all along to show us the greatest love ever through Jesus.

## KEY PASSAGE

**(CG: KEY PASSAGE)**

**(Bible)**

Show the key passage slide. Open Bible and lead the kids to read together 2 Chronicles 7:14.

SAY • This key passage comes from a promise God made to His people a long time ago.

But this key passage is for us too. God has promised to save everyone who trusts in Jesus. When we do, God forgives our sin and the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. Then, through His power, God begins to heal us of the brokenness sin causes. Someday Jesus will return and undo all the sad things caused by sin.

## BAPTISM ANNOUNCEMENT!

**SAY** • Before we head to small groups, I want to let everyone know that this weekend we are having baptisms. Baptism is a celebration when a person shares that they have decided to follow Jesus. Do we have any kids in here getting baptized today? (*If so, celebrate with kids*) I want to encourage everyone to go outside and cheer on all our friends getting baptized today right after service.

## PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

### SMALL GROUP

**Bible Passage:** Ezekiel 37

**Story Point:** God planned to bring His people home and give them new life.

**Key Passage:** “If my people, who bear my name, humble themselves, pray and seek my face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

**Big Picture Question:** How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.

## DISCUSSION

(Bible - 3-4 per group)

**SAY** • God wants to be in a relationship with us. He wants us to turn from our sin and find true life in Him. Life with God brings forgiveness and healing.

- How can a person know if he or she is a Christian?
- In what ways does God change us when we trust Him?

**Distribute Bibles.** Guide kids to open their Bibles to Ezekiel 37. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Ezekiel 37:11-14. Emphasize that Ezekiel gave hope to God’s people in Babylon. God planned to bring His people home and give them new life.

**Choose** another volunteer to read aloud Ezekiel 37:11-14 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. How do you think God’s people felt when they were taken to Babylon?

*Invite kids to share how God’s people—taken far from their homes—probably felt*

*scared, sorry, or alone. Emphasize God's grace in giving His people a message of hope through Ezekiel. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 31:23-24.)*

2. Does this story change how you think of God's discipline of His people?

*Remind kids that even though discipline is hard, God uses discipline to teach us and change us. God does not abandon His people. He is with us and does everything for His glory and our good. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 94:12-14.)*

3. What does it mean to be dead in sin? How can people dead in sin come to life?

*Guide kids to discuss how sin separates people from God. Life comes from hearing and believing the Word of God, which tells us the good news that Jesus died for our sins. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 10:17.)*

## KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

**(“Key Passage Phrase” printable– 1 per group, scissors – 1 per group, Bibles)**

Cut the key passage printable to separate the phrases. Instruct kids to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Then mix up the phrases and challenge kids to put them in order. When kids finish, allow volunteers who have memorized the key passage to recite it from memory.

## NOISY ORCHESTRA

**(unsharpened pencils or popsicle sticks– 6-8 per group)**

Explain to the group that they are now an orchestra. Assign each kid one of three sounds: hum, click (tap pencils or popsicle sticks together), blow. Instruct the “hummers” to sit at one side of the group, the “clickers” to sit in the center, and the “blowers” to sit to the other side. Then demonstrate hand motions you will make. Begin with your hands together near your waist. That means kids should make their noises quietly.

As you raise your hands up and apart, kids should increase their volume. Bring your hands back down and together to quiet the noise. Raise them up again before holding your hands in fists to signal kids to stop the noise.

SAY • God showed Ezekiel a vision to tell how God planned to bring His people home and give them new life. God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones. At first, Ezekiel heard a rattling sound as the bones in the valley came together. [*Conduct the “hummers” to hum quietly.*]

Then God sent breath into the bones. [*Conduct the “blowers” to blow gently.*] The breath entered the bones, and they came to life.

Ezekiel also had a vision of two sticks coming together. [*Conduct the “clickers” to tap their pencils quietly. Finally, conduct everyone to increase in volume and then make fists to end the noise.*]

Without Jesus we are like dry bones, but God has the power to give us life. This is good news we can share with everyone we meet.

## REFLECTION AND PRAYER

(Journal Page - 1 per kid, pencils)

Ask the kids the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Who can I tell about this story?

Make time for prayer requests and pray for your group. If time allows, have kids to complete the Journal Page provided with this session.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: BONES WORKSHEET

(“Identifying Bones” printable - 1 per kid, “Identifying Bones” answer sheet - 1 per group, pencils)

Distribute the Identifying Bones worksheet to your kids if you have additional time.

Answers: provided in the answer sheet in your bin.

## CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS

(Activity Page - 1 per kid)

Send home the Activity Page and encourage kids to complete it with their family.