Preschool–Grade 6

The Valley of Dry Bones

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God can make dry things live. His word and His Spirit give life, so we listen and obey.
Bible passage: Ezekiel 37:1–14. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." *Ezekiel 37:4 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a dry leaf, a dry bean or seed, a small stone, a dry stick, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, paper and pencils, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Can It Live? (5–10 minutes)

Hold up each thing one at a time: the dry leaf, the dry bean, the stone and the dry stick. Kids vote: thumbs up if it can live again, thumbs down if it can't. Talk about the bean: it looks dry and dead, but plant it with water and it grows. Then ask: *Could a valley full of very dry bones ever live again?* Say: "God asked a man that same question. Let's read what happened."

2. Bible story: The Valley of Dry Bones (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Ezekiel 37. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Who and where. The man telling this story is Ezekiel, a priest. The word of the LORD came to him while God's people were far from home, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar (Ezekiel 1:3). **Look up Ezekiel 37:1.** The hand of the LORD carried him "in the spirit of the LORD": God showed him this. **Look up Ezekiel 37:2.** The bones were very many, and very dry.

God's question. Look up Ezekiel 37:3. "Son of man, can these bones live?" **Son of man** is what God called Ezekiel. Ezekiel didn't guess; he said, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest" (You know).

Speak My word. Look up Ezekiel 37:4. To **prophesy** means to speak God's words. God promised breath, **sinews** (the strong cords that hold the body together), flesh and skin, "and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD" (37:5–6).

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Bone to his bone. Look up Ezekiel 37:7. Ezekiel did as he was commanded. There was a noise, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. Sinews, flesh and skin came upon them, "but there was no breath in them" (37:8).

The breath. Look up Ezekiel 37:9. God told Ezekiel to speak to the wind: "Come from the four winds, O breath." **Look up Ezekiel 37:10.** The breath came into them, they lived, and they stood up upon their feet, "an exceeding great army," a very, very big army.

What it meant. Look up Ezekiel 37:11. The bones were "the whole house of Israel," God's people. They felt dried up and said, "our hope is lost." God promised, "I will open your graves," to bring them up out of their graves, and to bring them into the land of Israel (37:12–13). **Look up Ezekiel 37:14.** "And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live." When God did it, they would know that the LORD had spoken it and done it.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Ezekiel answered, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest" (37:3). Why is that a good answer when we don't know?
2. Ezekiel did exactly what God said, even though talking to bones seems strange (37:7). Has God's word ever asked you to do something that seemed hard or strange?
3. The bones had sinews, flesh and skin, but no breath (37:8). What do you think that teaches us about what only God can give?
4. God's people said, "our hope is lost" (37:11). What would you say to a friend who feels that way?
5. God said, "shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live" (37:14). How does God's Spirit give people new life today?

Recall questions

1. What were the bones like? *(Very many, very dry, Ezekiel 37:2)*
2. What did Ezekiel say to the wind? *("Come from the four winds, O breath," 37:9)*
3. Who were the bones, God said? *(The whole house of Israel, 37:11)*

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4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **prophesy** means speak God's words, **upon** means to or over, **ye** means you, and **the word of the LORD** is what God says. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God made dry bones live. The Bible says we were like that too: 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Ephesians 2:1, KJV). **Quickened** means made alive. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5). God's Spirit gives life!"

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: read one short part of God's word every day, and do one thing it says.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Ezekiel 1:3: By which river did the word of the LORD come to Ezekiel? *(The river Chebar)*
2. Ezekiel 37:2: How many bones were there? *(Very many)*
3. Ezekiel 37:3: What did Ezekiel answer when God asked if the bones could live? *("O Lord GOD, thou knowest")*
4. Ezekiel 37:6: What would they know when they lived? *(That He is the LORD)*
5. Ezekiel 37:7: What two things happened as Ezekiel prophesied? *(A noise and a shaking)*
6. Ezekiel 37:8: What was still missing? *(Breath)*
7. Ezekiel 37:10: What did they become? *(An exceeding great army)*
8. Ezekiel 37:12: Where would God bring His people? *(Into the land of Israel)*

For more, use the **word search, crossword, maze or worksheet** (vbshq.com/bible-stories/dry-bones).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You can make dry things live. Help us listen to Your word and obey it, and thank You for Your Spirit that gives life. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks if this really happened: the Bible says God carried Ezekiel "in the spirit of the LORD" and showed him the valley (Ezekiel 37:1), and then God told him what it meant (37:11–14).
If a child is uneasy about bones: remind them the story ends with life. God is the One who gives breath and life.

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