Preschool–Grade 6

The Valley of Dry Bones

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: God can make dry things live. When His word is spoken and His Spirit comes, there is life where there was no hope.
Bible passage: Ezekiel 37:1–14. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD." *Ezekiel 37:14 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Ezekiel 37:1–14 and Ezekiel 1:1–3. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Hopeless or Hopeful? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students point down if it feels hopeless, or up if there is still hope. 1) Your team is losing by 20 points at halftime. 2) A friend says, "Nobody likes me, and nothing will ever change." 3) A plant in the window looks brown and dry. 4) A family moves far from home and misses everyone. 5) You keep doing the same wrong thing and feel like you'll never change. Ask: *What makes the difference between hopeless and hopeful? Who decides?* Say: "Today God shows a man a valley that looked as hopeless as anything could."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

First, the setting: Ezekiel was a priest. The word of the LORD came to him in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar, far from Jerusalem, where God's people had been carried away (Ezekiel 1:3).
Read out loud: Ezekiel 37:1–14. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **in the spirit of the LORD** (37:1): God carried him and showed him this; a vision
- **Son of man** (37:3): what God calls Ezekiel all through the book; **thou knowest**: You know
- **prophesy** (37:4): speak God's words; **thus saith the Lord GOD** (37:5): this is what God says
- **sinews** (37:6): the strong cords that hold bones and muscles together
- **beheld** (37:8): looked; **lo**: look
- **the four winds** (37:9): every direction; **slain**: people who had been killed
- **exceeding great** (37:10): very, very great
- **the whole house of Israel** (37:11): all of God's people; **cut off for our parts**: cut off, with no future
- **performed it** (37:14): done it

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Talk it through: Notice three words in this chapter: **spirit** (37:1, 37:14), **breath** (37:5, 37:10) and **wind** (37:9). The breath came into the bones (37:10), and God promised, "shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live" (37:14). God's people said, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost" (37:11). God answered with a promise to open their graves, bring them up, and bring them into the land of Israel (37:12–13), so they would know He is the LORD.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. God asked, "can these bones live?" and Ezekiel said, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest" (37:3). Why is that a better answer than "yes" or "no"?
2. Ezekiel "prophesied as I was commanded" (37:7, 37:10), even to bones and to the wind. What does it look like to obey God's word when it seems strange or pointless?
3. The bodies were whole but there was "no breath in them" (37:8). What is the difference between looking right on the outside and having life on the inside?
4. "Our hope is lost" (37:11). When do people your age feel that way? What does this chapter say to them?
5. Read Ephesians 2:1. How is the valley a picture of what God does for us?
6. God said they would "know that I am the LORD" (37:6, 37:13, 37:14). What has God done in your life that showed you He is the LORD?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **prophesy** means speak God's words; **ye** means you; **performed it** means done it. Point out that 37:4 is the word and 37:14 is the Spirit: God's word was spoken, and God's Spirit gave life.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Ezekiel 37:4 this week; keep working on 37:14 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "God made a valley of dry bones live. Paul wrote about us: 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Ephesians 2:1, KJV). **Quickened** means made alive. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5). God still puts His Spirit in people, and they live."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Is there a "dry" place in my life where I feel hopeless?
2. What does God's word say about it? Find one verse.
3. Write a short prayer asking God to breathe new life into that place.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: when you feel "our hope is lost," read Ezekiel 37:14 out loud and pray.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You can make dry things live. Help us hear Your word and obey it, and fill us with Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks what the vision is about: God Himself explains it: "these bones are the whole house of Israel" (Ezekiel 37:11), and He promised to bring His people into their own land (37:12, 37:14). Stay with what the text says.

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