

New Life From Dry Bones

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Pentecost

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Memory Verse: Ezekiel 37:5 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.'

The Children's Sermon

If you listen to the words we use in our worship today – in the Bible readings, in the sermon, and in today's hymns, you will hear a lot of talk about breathing life into people. Today is called Pentecost. It comes roughly 50 days after our Easter, but back in Bible times, it was 50 days after the Passover. It was a holiday for the Jewish people long before it became a Christian holiday. But something very special happened one particular Pentecost many years ago, just after Jesus rose from the dead. On this particular Pentecost, God took advantage of the fact that many Jews were gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of Jewish Pentecost. They weren't dead like the bones in our Ezekiel story, but even so, God came to them and breathed new life into them and changed them. God took a group of rattled and confused followers of Jesus, He breathed His Spirit into them and they were brought alive in a new sense. They were filled with energy. They had new insight. They understood each other in a new and different way. They bonded together and began something that today we call the Church. That's why today, we call Pentecost the birthday of the Church.

Now, let's dive a bit deeper into this Pentecost sermon and imagine what it might have felt like to be there on that special day. Picture this: you're sitting in a room with your

friends, maybe feeling a little scared or unsure about what's going to happen next. Suddenly, a sound like a strong wind fills the room, and something amazing happens. It's as if the air itself is alive, and you feel a warmth and energy you've never felt before. This is the Holy Spirit coming to be with you, just as Jesus promised.

This Pentecost sermon reminds us that the Holy Spirit didn't just come to those people long ago; the Holy Spirit is still with us today, breathing life into us, making us feel brave when we're scared, and helping us understand how much God loves us. It's like having a best friend who is always there, guiding us and cheering us on.

Remember, I told you I had two stories to tell you. I think most of you probably know the second story. It is not from the Bible, but it is a good story all the same. It is the story of Pinocchio. Who can tell us something about Pinocchio?

Yes, Pinocchio was a puppet. He was nothing but a few sticks of dry wood screwed together. He was like a pile of dry bones. But after a long series of adventures, which bring him closer to his father, the puppet maker, life is breathed into this puppet and he becomes a real boy. As a real boy, he can love his Father and serve his Father like he couldn't do when he was a puppet.

In our Pentecost sermon today, we learn that just like Pinocchio, we can also be filled with life and purpose. Sometimes, we might feel a little bit like those dry bones or like Pinocchio before he became a real boy. We might feel lonely, scared, or unsure of ourselves. But just as God breathed life into those dry bones and just as Pinocchio was brought to life, God breathes life into us through the Holy Spirit. This makes us alive in a whole new way, ready to love, serve, and follow God.

Let's imagine ourselves as lifeless puppets. Our Heavenly Father is looking down on us and he is breathing life into us. Once again, God will make dry bones walk on this earth to serve and love the Lord. More than that, these dry bones will run, skip, jump, and dance for the Lord. Let's see you move your bones with new life from the Lord.

This Pentecost sermon is a reminder that God's love and the Holy Spirit can change everything. When we feel like we're just a pile of dry bones, God's love can make us feel alive again. It's like when you're playing outside on a sunny day, running around without a care in the world. That joy, that energy, that's a little bit like what the Holy Spirit brings to our lives.

In conclusion, our Pentecost sermon today teaches us about the amazing power of God's love and the Holy Spirit. Just like the disciples long ago, we are given new life and energy to do great things. And just like Pinocchio, we are transformed from wooden puppets into real, loving children of God. So, let's go out into the world, filled with the Holy Spirit, ready to spread love, joy, and kindness everywhere we go. Remember, with God's love in our hearts, we can do anything. Happy Pentecost, everyone! Let's celebrate the birthday of the Church and the new life we've been given.

Bible Memory Verse

Ezekiel 37:5 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.'

You Will Need:

- Dry pasta (bones)
- Construction paper
- Glue

-Markers

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and set up a work area for each child.
- Cut construction paper into large rectangles, one per child, to serve as the 'valley' backdrop.

Do This:

1. Have the children read Ezekiel 37:1-14 together, focusing on the key verse. Discuss what it means for God to bring life to what was once dead.
2. Instruct the children to use the dry pasta to create a skeleton on their construction paper 'valley'. They can glue the pasta pieces down to form the shape of bones coming together.
3. Once the skeletons are complete, have the children use markers to draw the rest of the scene around their skeletons, imagining the valley of dry bones coming to life. Encourage them to write the memory verse on their artwork.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Dry Bones Template (cardboard or thick paper cutouts of bones)
- Markers or Paints
- A large piece of fabric or a parachute
- "Valley of Dry Bones" Scene Poster (optional, for visual aid)
- Bible or Printed Scripture Passage (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

Get Ready:

- Cut out bone shapes from cardboard or thick paper ahead of time.

- Set up a "valley" area in your classroom using the large fabric or parachute on the floor.
- If using, place the "Valley of Dry Bones" scene poster where all the children can see it.
- Have the Bible passage ready to read, or print out copies of Ezekiel 37:1-14 for each child.

Do this:

1. **Introduction and Reading**: Start by explaining the story of Ezekiel 37:1-14, emphasizing the power of God to bring life to what is lifeless. Read the passage aloud together.
2. **Bone Decoration**: Hand out the dry bone cutouts to the children and let them decorate their own set of bones with markers or paints. As they work, encourage them to think about what the bones represent and how God promises to bring life and hope to even the most hopeless situations.
3. **Recreating the Valley**: Once the bones are decorated, have the children place their bones on the large fabric or parachute, spreading them out to mimic the valley of dry bones. This interactive part helps them visualize the scene from the scripture.
4. **Bringing the Bones to Life**: Gather the children around the "valley" and have them gently shake the fabric or parachute together, making the bones "come to life" as they move. As they do this, explain how God's spirit breathes life into us, reviving and renewing us just like the dry bones.
5. **Reflection and Prayer**: After the activity, gather the children for a moment of reflection. Ask them how they felt seeing the bones come together and move, drawing parallels to how God's spirit works within us. Close with a prayer, asking God to breathe life into any "dry bones" situations in their lives, reminding them of His power to renew and restore.

Snack Activity: Valley of Dry Bones Snack Mix

You'll Need:

- Pretzel sticks (bones)
- White chocolate (to symbolize the flesh coming upon the bones)
- Mini marshmallows (to represent the breath of life)
- A microwave-safe bowl
- Wax paper
- A spoon

Get Ready: Lay out a large piece of wax paper on a flat surface. This is where you'll let your snack mix cool.

Do this:

1. Place the white chocolate in the microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 30-second intervals, stirring in between, until fully melted. Be careful not to burn the chocolate.
2. Once the chocolate is melted, gently stir in the pretzel sticks until they are fully coated. This represents the bones being covered with flesh, as in Ezekiel 37:1-14.
3. Using the spoon, scoop out small clusters of the chocolate-coated pretzels and place them on the wax paper. Before the chocolate hardens, stick mini marshmallows onto the clusters. These marshmallows symbolize the breath of life entering the bones.
4. Allow the snack mix to cool and harden. Once it's set, you can share it with the class as you discuss the story of the Valley of Dry Bones and its significance in understanding God's power to bring life to what was dead.

Game Activity: Valley of Dry Bones Relay

You'll Need:

- A large open space, preferably outdoors
- Chalk or tape to mark start/end lines and the 'valley' area
- Printed images or drawings of bones
- Printed images or drawings of the four winds (North, South, East, West)
- A Bible or printed excerpt of Ezekiel 37:1-14

Get Ready: Before the activity, read Ezekiel 37:1-14 with the children to set the context. Explain how Ezekiel was shown a valley of dry bones and how God brought them to life through His word and spirit. Then, prepare the playing area by marking a start line and an end line about 20 feet apart. Between these lines, mark a 'valley' area where the game will take place. Scatter the bone images in the valley area. Place the wind images at the four corners outside the valley area.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into four teams, each representing one of the four winds mentioned in Ezekiel 37:9-10 (North, South, East, West). Each team stands at their corresponding wind corner.
2. At your signal, the first player from each team races into the valley to collect a bone image and then races back to tag the next player in line. The process repeats until all the bones are collected.
3. Once all bones are collected, teams work together to 'assemble' the bones into a human shape at their corner. The first team to correctly assemble their skeleton and recite a verse from Ezekiel 37:1-14 wins.
4. Conclude with a discussion about how the game relates to the scripture, emphasizing God's power to bring life and hope to seemingly hopeless situations.

Craft Activity: Breath of Life: The Valley of Dry Bones

You'll Need:

- A large piece of construction paper (preferably light blue or white)
- Cotton balls or white tissue paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Printed or drawn bones (enough to make a skeleton)
- A printed copy of Ezekiel 37:1-14

Get Ready: Before the class, print or draw several bones on paper and cut them out.

You may also want to have a sample craft to show the children what they are aiming to create.

Do this:

1. Read Ezekiel 37:1-14 together as a class. Discuss the meaning of the passage, focusing on the power of God to bring life to what was dead and the promise of the Holy Spirit.
2. Give each child a piece of construction paper as their 'valley' background. Have them color or decorate it as they wish, using markers or crayons.
3. Next, instruct the children to arrange the cut-out bones on their paper to form a skeleton. Once they are satisfied with their layout, they can glue the bones in place.
4. Use cotton balls or torn pieces of white tissue paper to create 'breath' or 'wind' coming from the edges of the paper towards the skeleton. This represents the breath of God bringing life to the dry bones.

5. As they work, encourage the children to think about what the 'dry bones' in their lives might be and how God can bring new life and hope to those situations.
6. Once everyone has finished, gather the children to share their creations and reflect on the lesson of the Valley of Dry Bones, emphasizing the theme of renewal and the power of God's Spirit.

Prayer Activity: Breath of Life: A Pentecost

You'll Need:

- A large, clear jar or vase
- Dry bones (can use chicken bones cleaned and dried, or plastic bones from a craft store)
- Red, orange, and yellow tissue paper
- Small LED tealight candles

Get Ready: Gather all materials and set up a comfortable space for the activity where all children can sit in a circle. Cut the tissue paper into flame shapes beforehand.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Ezekiel 37:1-14 together as a group. Discuss the meaning of the passage, focusing on the power of God to bring life and the Holy Spirit's role as the breath of life.
2. Have each child write a prayer on a piece of the tissue paper, asking for the Holy Spirit to bring new life into specific areas of their life, their family, or the world.
3. Place the dry bones into the jar or vase. Then, carefully insert the LED tealight candles among the bones. Have the children come up one by one to place their 'flame' prayers into the jar, symbolizing the Holy Spirit's power to bring life and hope.

4. Once all prayers are added, turn off the lights and light the LED candles. Reflect quietly for a few moments on the image of the dry bones surrounded by flames, representing the Pentecost fire. Conclude with a group prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit to fill each participant and their loved ones with new life, just as He did in the Valley of Dry Bones.