

Breath of Hope

Focus Scripture
Ezekiel 37:1-14

PURPOSE To experience the new life that God gives.

Lesson Preparation

- ❑ Read Ezekiel 37:1-14 and the biblical background for March 29.
- ❑ Set up worship table with a purple cloth, bible, votive candle, offering basket and Unit 5 logo.
- ❑ Bring several items which are affected by the wind such as pinwheels, balloons, wind chimes, etc., and a paper cup. (See *Introducing the Theme*.)
Prepare an adult body outline: tape several sheets of newsprint together. Trace around an adult and cut out. Carefully roll up the body and tie with a colourful ribbon. Make many construction

paper bones – copy the *Beginner Teacher's Resource Sheet* onto several sheets of construction paper. Bring masking tape and a bible marked at the book of Ezekiel.

- ❑ Choose the option(s) you wish to use for Integrating the Theme and bring the necessary materials.
- ❑ Bring Lenten Cross Calendar, stamp pad, a cloth and nail polish remover (to clean fingers).
- ❑ Check the birthday list.
- ❑ Give thanks to God for times in your life when you felt a sense of hopelessness and God breathed new life into the circumstance.

1

Opening

Welcome each of the children by name and tell them how glad you are to see them.

Light the candle saying, "We light this candle to remind us that God is always with us."

Acknowledge birthdays and receive the offering,

Prayer: (*Invite children to repeat each line.*)

Dear God,
We know you are with us
even when we cannot see you.
Breathe new life into us. Amen.



2

Introducing the Theme

Exploring Mysterious, Powerful Breath

Choose 1-2 items that are affected by moving air and invite the children to study each one stationary and then see what happens when they blow on/in each item.

1. **Wind Chimes:** Bring a wind chime from home or prepare a simple wind chime from the resource sheet. Invite the children to experiment with what happens when they add a tiny bit of wind, more wind and strong blowing.
2. **Balloons:** Place a plastic or paper cup and several balloons on the table and ask the children about how they might lift the cup with a balloon. (*Solution:* put the balloon into the cup and blow it up until the balloon is pushing against the side of the cup. Hold

on to the neck of the balloon and lift - cup will lift too.) Encourage the children to share things they could do with an inflated balloon. Do some of these actions (include releasing air from balloon by letting it go so it will be propelled across the room).

3. **Pinwheels:** Prepare a simple pinwheel (see pinwheel pattern below.). Encourage the children to do the same exercises as they did with the wind chimes.



3



Exploring the Theme

(Sit together in a semicircle and place the rolled paper body in front of you.) This is a story that comes from the first part of the Bible, the Hebrew scriptures. *(Show the passage in the Bible.)* Our story is about the prophet Ezekiel. *(Have a child help you gently take off the ribbon and unroll the paper. Tape the head and feet down so it will not roll up again.)*

A prophet is a very wise person who explains God's wishes to the people. Let's pretend that this is the prophet Ezekiel. *(Have 2-3 children draw his face and then tape him up on the wall. Stand beside him as you begin the story.)*

Ezekiel lived a long, long time ago. He lived with people who had been forced out of their homes and off their land because of war. They went through a lot of suffering and felt very sad. They never felt like singing. Ezekiel tried to help the people by encouraging them to remember that God was still with them. One day Ezekiel had a very special dream or vision. This is how Ezekiel tells his dream:

Dream: The Valley of the Dry Bones

Hi! My name is Ezekiel and a long time ago I was taken prisoner and sent far away from my home, but I knew that God would take care of me. One day I had a very special dream or vision. I was standing in a valley where the ground was covered with old bones. *(Scatter paper bones on floor.)* They were all around me and they looked very, very dry. Everything felt sad and dead. Then God spoke to me. This is what I heard God saying, "I am going to blow my breath into these bones and bring them back to life again."

Suddenly, I heard a noise and the bones began to join together. Then God called the winds to blow from all direction: north, south, east, west. *(Encourage the children to blow on the bones.)* The winds came and they blew and blew *(blow again)* until all the bones became full bodies, and all the bodies began to move and the people came to life again. *(Pick up the bones.)* Then God spoke to me and said, "Ezekiel, the people of Israel are just like these dry bones. *(Hold up bones.)* They think they are dried up without any hope, and without any future. But I am going to bring them back to their own land. I have not forgotten them. I love my people. Go and tell them that."

So, that's what I did. I hurried back to my people and I told them what God had said to me in my

dream. Their sadness started to go away. They began to feel hopeful again. They knew that God was still with us.

Activity: Acting Out the Story

Act out the story again. Have some of the children lie down on the floor and be the dry bones. Some others are the winds from the 4 directions. Call each wind group: "Winds of God, blow from the north, (south, east, west). Breathe into these dry bones, and bring them back to life." While the winds make loud blowing noises, the children on the floor slowly come back up and start to move around. *(Have the bones and the wind trade places and act it out again.)*

What did Ezekiel's dream help the people to remember? (e.g. that God was still with them; God cared for them; etc.)

Sing:

God Asks Us to Trust (tune: Jesus loves me)

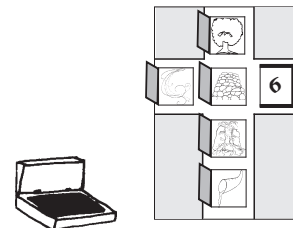
God asks us to trust each day,
trust that God will show the way,
we must have the faith to say,
God is with us every day.

Yes, God is with us.
Yes, God is with us.
Yes, God is with us,
God's with us every day.

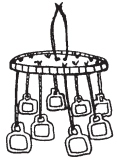
Finish by proclaiming, "God blows new life into all of us!"

Lenten Cross Ritual

(Ask a volunteer to open the fifth door.) Today on the fifth Sunday of Lent. We have the symbol of the wind to remind us that God is with us even though we cannot see God - just like the wind. God can blow new life into even the most hopeless situation. *(Invite the children to add their fingerprints to show the movement of the wind.)*



4



Integrating the Theme

Option A: Wind Chimes

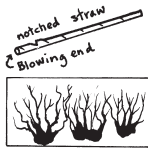
Materials: see the list of supplies for the option you choose from the “Wind Chimes” resource sheet.

Follow the directions on the resource sheet and help the children make one of the suggested chimes. Explain to the children that the movement of the wind gives “new life” to these objects, much like the wind gave new life to the bones in Ezekiel’s dream.

Option B: Blow Paint

Materials: art paper, straws with a notch cut out near the top, smocks, several colours of liquid tempera paint, CD player, soft music.

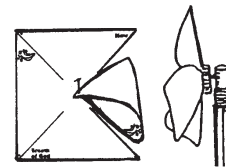
As music plays in the background put a spoonful of paint on a sheet of art paper and invite the children to gently blow through a notched straw at the puddle of paint and see what their wind creates. Add 1-2 more colours if they wish. (Note: cutting a small notch in the straw will prevent young children from accidentally sucking up the paint.)



Option C: Pinwheel

Materials: new, unsharpened pencils with erasers; straight pins; crayons

Make pinwheels using instructions on the “Pinwheel” resource sheet.



5

Closing

Sing:

God Help Us Learn (tune: Kum Ba Yah)

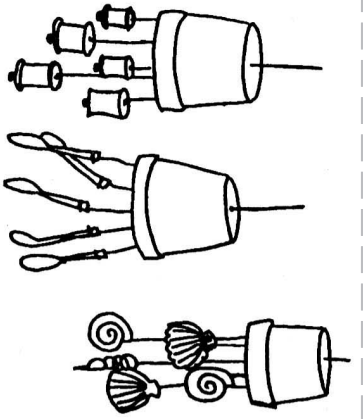
We try our best, God, help us learn.
We try our best, God, help us learn.
We try our best, God, help us learn.
O Jesus, help us learn.

Other verses:

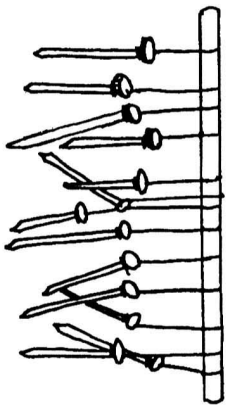
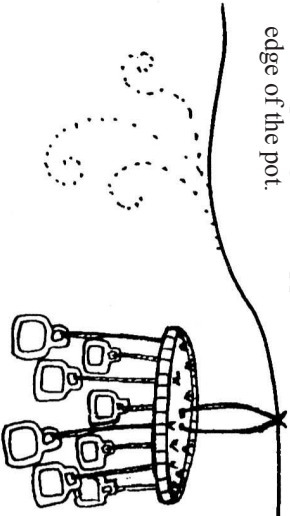
- We trust your word, God, help us learn...
- We share our thoughts, God, help us learn...
- Guide our choices, God, help us learn...
- Blow new life in us, help us learn...

Wind Chimes

Hang a wind chime in the front of an open window, or on a patio, or from the branch of a tree, you will hear tinkling sounds every time a breeze blows through it.

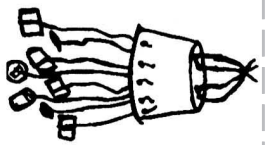


1. Use a clay or plastic flower pot with a hole in the bottom.
2. Thread one end of a string through an empty spool and tie the string securely around it.
3. Now push the opposite end of the string through the hole in the bottom of the pot from the inside, out. This will be the hanger for your chime.
4. Cut several strings about eight inches (20cm) long and several more about ten inches (25cm) long.
5. Tie, tape, or glue a shell, spool, plastic spoon or old cutlery to one end of each string.
6. Then tape or glue the opposite end of each string to the inside edge of the pot.

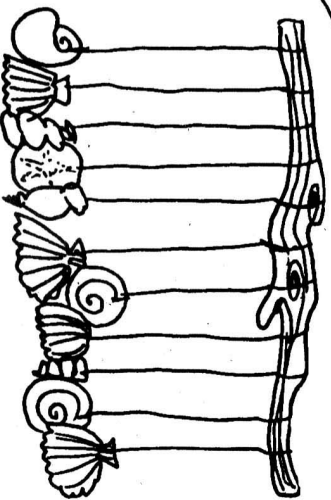


1. Tie nylon thread around the top of each of several nails.
2. Hang the nails along the dowel or stick. Tie them close together so that they will bang against each other when they move. Tape strings in place so they won't slide.
3. Tie one long piece of twine to the ends of the dowel for a hanger.

*God's spirit is with us
... remember this
when you hear
your wind chimes.*

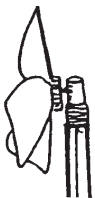
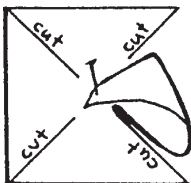
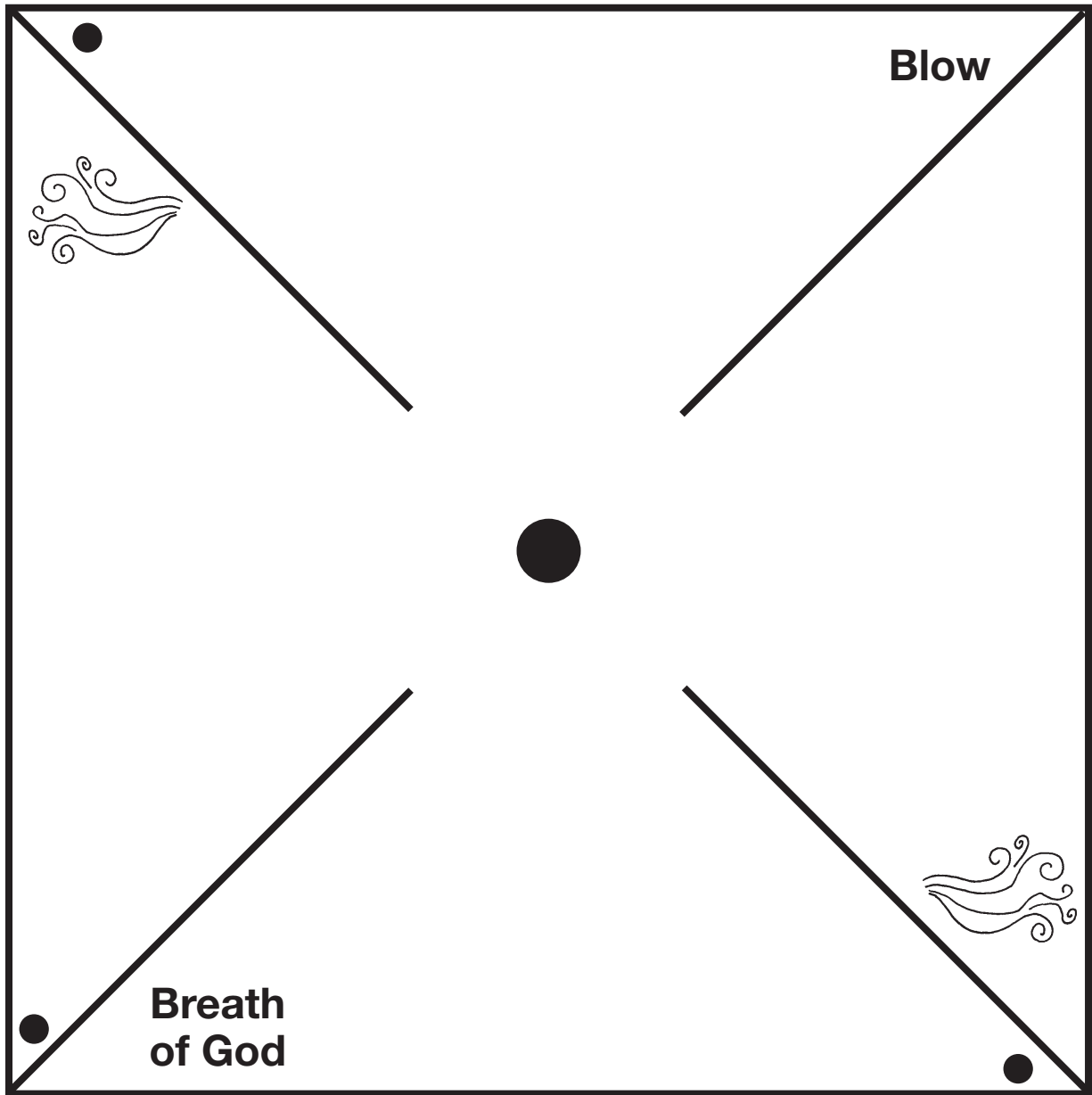


1. Poke 4 holes in the bottom of a plastic food container and thread string through the 4 holes and tie the ends together, for hanger.
2. Poke holes along the top edge and tie a 10" (25cm) piece of string through each one.
3. Tape a hard plastic lid or empty pill container to the end of each string. *Hint:* Make all holes with a pin and then enlarge with a pencil or nail.



1. Cut the twine or thread into equal lengths (one for each shell).
2. The pieces should be long enough to tie around the driftwood with eight inches (20cm) or so left over.
3. Tie or tape the shell to one end of each piece of twine.
4. Loop the other end of each piece of twine around the driftwood and tie a knot. Measure carefully so that each shell hangs the same distance from the driftwood.

Pinwheel



Instructions for making pinwheels:

1. Read the words “Blow, Breath of God” to the children and then encourage them to color the 2 wind pictures. Then turn the paper over and color the back side with a variety of colors.
2. Stick the pin up through one small circle as shown, then through each of the other points as they are bent in too. Then stick the pin through the large central circle.
3. Place a button behind the pinwheel, curved side toward the pinwheel. Push the pin through the button and into the eraser on the pencil.

