

# 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, candle, offering basket and Unit 5 logo.
- ☐ If not going for a spring walk, decorate the room with signs of new life (e.g. a budding branch, some spring flowers, pictures of flowers, plants, butterflies, baby animals, etc.).
- ☐ Bring Bible marked at Ezekiel 37:1-14, teaching picture "Ezekiel the Prophet" (#78), balloons, and some plastic glasses. Practice blowing across a glass or bottle for good wind sound.
- ☐ Bring Lenten Cross Calendar, stamp pad and damp paper towels.
- ☐ Choose the option(s) you wish to use for Integrating the Theme and bring the necessary materials.
- ☐ Check the birthday list.
- ☐ Think about areas of your life which are experiencing new life this spring.

## 1

### Opening

**Welcome** each child by name, and tell them how glad you are to see them.

**Lenten Candle:** Invite a child to light the candle and think of a way to help spread God's love during Lent.

**Sing:**

**The Lenten Song** (tune: Jesus Loves Me)

This is now the season of Lent,  
a time to be sorry, a time to repent.  
Jesus showed us how to live, love each other and  
forgive.



**Acknowledge birthdays and receive the offering,**

**Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for the new life that comes in spring, thank you for all the new life that you bring. Help us love and care for others, showing new life that comes from living your way. Amen.

## 2

### Introducing the Theme

#### Option A: Spring Walk

Take a short walk outside, asking the children to look for signs of new life (e.g. snow melting, new grass growing, buds on trees, spring bulbs blooming, dandelions appearing, insects and birds, etc.). When you return to the classroom invite the children to help you list all the signs that were seen. Invite them to discuss how they feel about springtime. Explain that people often feel God near when they see new things beginning to grow again after the winter.

#### Option B: Signs of Spring

Display "signs of new life" (including spring pictures) in the room. Invite the children to walk around, looking at and touching the different things. Share which are their favourite signs of spring and how they feel during springtime. Explain that people often feel God near when they see new things beginning to grow again after the winter.



# 3

## Exploring the Theme

Today's story is about Ezekiel, a prophet, who lived about 500 years before Jesus was born. A book about his experiences is found near the middle of the Bible. *(Open the Bible to Ezekiel.)*

### Story: Ezekiel's Dream

There had been so much sadness and suffering among the people of Israel. So many had lost their hope and trust in God. They could no longer sing. They did not feel that God listened to their prayers anymore. They felt that their life was over, that they may as well be dead.



Once these people had been a happy, strong nation. Their king had been David and then David's son Solomon. Their country was a good, peaceful place. These kings had listened carefully to the prophets, knowing that God gave messages through them. But as the years went by other kings no longer listened to the prophets' messages. Many people stopped worshipping God. Soon wars began and the kingdom started to fall apart. For many years different prophets kept warning everyone that disaster would come if they didn't return to living as God wanted, but no one seemed to care.

Then disaster struck. A powerful nation attacked their country. Jerusalem was captured and a beautiful temple was destroyed. Many Israelites were forced out of their homes and off their lands and taken away as prisoners. One of those taken away to Babylon was a young man named Ezekiel. *(Show teaching picture "Ezekiel the Prophet.")*

Living in exile in a foreign country, the people felt hopeless and miserable. They felt they would never see their homeland again. Ezekiel heard God's call to be a prophet. He tried to help people remember that God was still with them. One day Ezekiel had a very special dream. This is what he saw. *(Invite the children to close their eyes and imagine what Ezekiel saw.)*



### Ezekiel's Dream: The Valley of the Dry Bones

In my dream I was standing in a valley and the ground was covered with old dry bones. I couldn't see anything but sand and bones. Everything felt very sad and dead. Then God said to me, "I am going to blow breath into these bones and bring them back to life again." *(Create wind sound by blowing across the top of a glass or bottle.)* Suddenly I heard a rustling noise. I looked around me. Everywhere I looked bones were beginning to move! *(Blow)* Then the bones began to join together. Something incredible was happening right in front of my eyes!

Then God called the winds to blow from the four directions: from the north *(blow)*, from the south *(blow)*, from the east *(blow)*, from the west *(blow)*. The winds filled the valley with a rushing sound. *(Blow)* They blew over those dry bones until all the bones had become full whole bodies again. As I watched in amazement the bodies began to move and dance for joy! The people had come to life again. *(Invite the children to open their eyes again.)*

Ezekiel told the people that they were like those bones, all dried up without any hope. But God was going to breathe new life into them. Ezekiel's dream was a sign that God had not forgotten them. They could trust God's promise that one day soon God would help them find new life back in their own land.

### Activity: Life-Giving Breath/Balloons

Give each child a balloon and invite them to look at it and feel it. Now ask them to blow air into the balloon. How is it different? What could you do with the balloon now? Air changes the balloon and gives it strength and power. God was giving strength and power to the people.



### Poem:

#### God's Spirit

We can't see the wind  
but we know it's there  
'cause it rustles the leaves  
and blows our hair.  
God's spirit is with us,  
we know that's true,  
and people can see it  
in the things that we do.

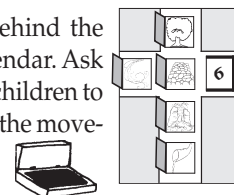
### Activity: Acting Out the Story

Invite some children to lie on the floor, pretending to be dead bones. Invite others to be the winds from the 4 directions. Have them blow towards the "bones." (Use plastic glasses for the "wind" if you wish.) Encourage "bones" to gradually come to life and dance around the room.

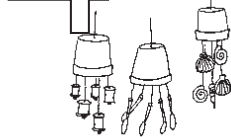
### Sing: "Dry Bones" (at end of the lesson)

### Activity: Lenten Cross Calendar

Briefly review the symbols behind the first 4 doors of the Lenten Calendar. Ask a child to open door #5. Invite children to add their fingerprints to show the movement of the wind.



4



## Integrating the Theme

### Option A: Wind Chimes

**In advance:** Choose an idea from the “Wind Chimes” resource below. Bring necessary supplies.

Follow the directions on the resource and help the children make one of the suggested wind chimes. When we hear them chime it can remind us that God’s Spirit is with us too.



### Option B: New Life Painting

**Materials:** pastel-coloured construction paper, bare twigs, painting shirts, meat trays, several colours of tempera paint (including black), damp sponges, ice cream pail of soapy water, towels for clean up

**In advance:** Fill some of the meat trays with thick black tempera paint, and the remainder with damp sponges sprinkled with bright-coloured powdered tempera paint. Make a sample picture.

Hand out pastel construction paper and twigs. Show children how to dip twigs into the black paint on the meat trays and transfer the outline of the twig to their papers by pressing the twig onto the paper, starting at the bottom and moving up. Bare-branched trees look as if they are dead during winter time, yet produce new growth each spring. Invite them to transform their dead-looking branches into blooming ones by pressing their fingertips onto sponges of coloured paint, then along the branch outlines to form coloured blossoms.

### Option C: New Life Crossword Puzzle

**Materials:** pens or pencils

**In advance:** Make copies of the “New Life Crossword Puzzle” resource sheet.

Hand out copies of the puzzle. Help the children decipher the picture clues and fill in the crossword puzzle.



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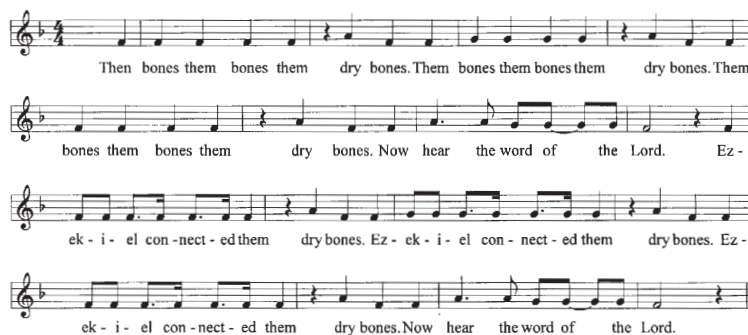
## Closing

**Sing:**

**Spirit, Be Our Breath of Life** (tune: Michael Row the Boat Ashore)

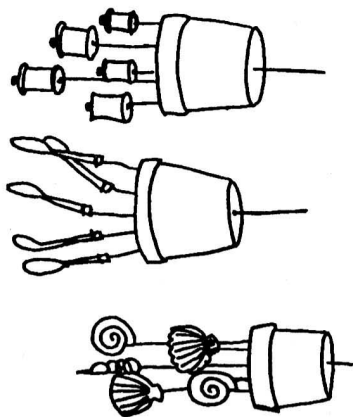
1. Spirit, be our breath of life, Alleluia...
2. Spirit, be our wind of change, Alleluia...
3. Spirit, be our fire that warms, Alleluia...
4. Spirit, help us share our gifts, Alleluia...
5. Spirit, help us live God’s love, Alleluia...

### Dry BONES

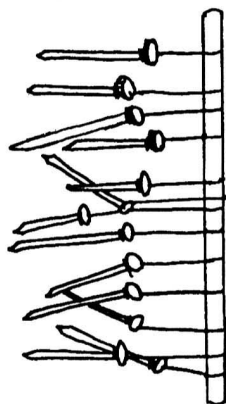
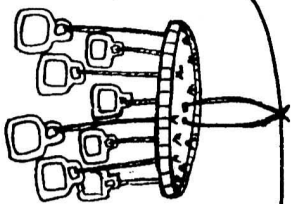


## Wind Chimes

*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.*

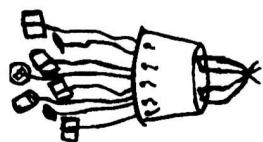


1. Use a clay or plastic flower pot with a hole in the bottom.
2. Thread one end of a string through an empty spool and tie the string securely around it.
3. Now push the opposite end of the string through the hole in the bottom of the pot from the inside, out. This will be the hanger for your chime.
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.

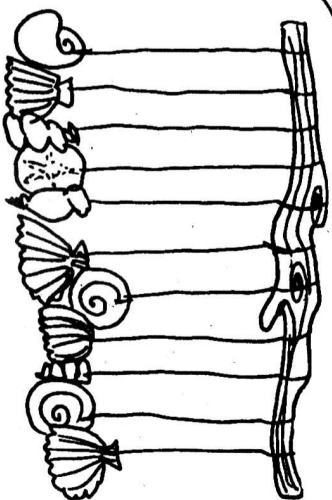


1. Tie the nylon thread around the top of each of several nails.
2. Hang the nails along the dowel or stick. Tie them close together so that they will bang against each other when they move. Tape strings in place so they won't slide.
3. Tie one long piece of twine to the ends of the dowel for a hanger.

*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.

# New Life Crossword Puzzle

The following words are symbols of new life and words from today's story. Using the picture clues, fill in the words in the appropriate spaces.

