



Authorised Mess — EZEKIEL

Your details

Name: Diane Nicholson, Peter Nicholson, Rosalind Matty

Church: St Michael & All Angels Church, Westcliff on Sea, Essex

Bible book	Ezekiel
Theme of session	The focus is on Ezekiel 37:1–14 to understand that God breathes new life into every one of us.
Notes	We recommend that this session is not used around Holocaust Anniversary (end of Jan) and Halloween (end of Oct) because of the subject matter (dry bones/skeletons).

Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Balloon faces	Draw faces and hair on the balloons, then blow the balloons up.	Pink and cream balloons, black marker pens, balloon pump.	When air is breathed into the balloon, it inflates and moves around—like God did with the dry bones. All our faces are different.
Older participants	Paper shakers	Gather together strips of crepe paper of different colours, then tape to the end of the cane.	Small plant canes, long thin strips of crepe paper (mixed colours), sticky tape.	When shaken, the strips will make rustling noises like the wind blowing through the trees.
Girls	Flowers in gel	Add water to the crystals to make gel. Decorate pots, then add gel and fresh flowers.	Yoghurt pots; ribbon or stickers to decorate pots; fresh flowers; multi-coloured water-storing crystals (available from most florists).	To show that when we cut beautiful flowers that God has made they need moisture, and so do the crystals.



Authorised Mess — EZEKIEL

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Boys	Megaphones	Pre-cut the card to the right shape to make a cone. Decorate, then curl into a cone and tape.	Coloured card, sticky tape, stickers.	God has given us voices for speaking, but when he speaks to us we need to listen to him.
Food-based	Growing cress	Place the cotton wool in a plastic lid, moisten and then sprinkle with seeds. Take home to watch the seeds grow and then eat the cress.	Plastic lids, cress seeds, water, cotton wool.	To show that seeds are hard and dry but when given tender loving care, God makes them grow so that they can then be eaten.
Food-based	Bread rolls	Make bread rolls in different shapes.	Ready-made bread dough. Flour and dried yeast to show.	Dried yeast and flour look dead but when mixed with warm water, they make lovely rising dough for bread.
Explores global aspect of faith	Matchstick collage people	Dress the matchstick person and give it a face and hair.	A4 sheets of paper with outline of matchstick person; felt tip pens; wool and fabric scraps; PVA glue.	When God made us, we all needed the same bones; but when God had finished, every one of us was different.
Opens up great art	Ribbon banner	Get everyone to write their name on a ribbon and decorate. Attach the ribbons to the dowelling to create a banner.	Long piece of dowelling or garden cane; wide ribbon (5 cm) cut into 65-cm lengths (different colours); chunky felt tip pens; sticky tape.	Once the banner is completed and hung up, the ribbons will move with the slightest breath of air or a draught.



Authorised Mess — EZEKIEL

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Quiet	Paper puppets	Draw the face and hair, then join the limbs and head to the body using the split pins.	Cut-out arms, legs, bodies, heads with neck; split pins.	God made us needing all the parts of our bodies joined together.
Really messy	Valley paintings	Paint a picture of a valley, then add hills, a river, plants, birds and animals.	Large sheets of paper, paints, paint brushes, water.	God made the hills and valleys and everything that lives and grows in them.

Celebration suggestion

Using chairs and fabrics (sheets), set up the church or worship space so it looks like a valley. Then add to this: bones cut out of card; string puppets and shakers to use with the retelling of the story (see below); items that are both alive and dead.

Songs ideas

- ✿ 'Who put the colours in the rainbow?' by Paul Booth and Noel Rawsthorne.
- ✿ 'My God is so big'. For details, see <http://biblestudycharts.com>.
- ✿ 'All things bright and beautiful', from *Songs of Fellowship*, No. 14. For details, see www.eden.co.uk.

Bible background

The verses in Ezekiel 37:1–14 illustrate the promise of new life, and the nation of Israel restored both physically and spiritually as a vision of the future. The valley of dry bones represents the Jewish people in captivity, scattered and dead. The two pieces of wood (Ezekiel 37:15–17) demonstrate the eventual reunion of the divided nation of Israel, which happened after the death of Solomon. The scattered exiles of Israel and Judah would rise up from the 'graves' of exiles and one day be reunited in their homeland, and the Messiah would be their leader. This vision has not happened yet.



Authorised Mess — EZEKIEL

Ezekiel believed that he was speaking to the dead when he was preaching to the exiles, as they did not respond to his preaching. But the bones in the dry valley responded!

And just as God breathed life into the dead bones, he will bring life again to his spiritually dead people.

Retelling of the story

There was a man called Ezekiel, who was called a prophet because he gave people messages from God. God showed Ezekiel a valley with lots of dry bones in it. God said that the bones could live again. He told Ezekiel exactly what words to say to the dry bones, and Ezekiel did just as he was told. Then, as he spoke, there was a sound of rattling and rustling (*shake shakers*), and God gave the bones new muscles and tendons and new skin. In fact, he gave them everything they needed to come alive again—except breath! God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones again. Then he breathed into them (*make a blowing noise*) and the bones stood on their feet—and they began to sing and dance, and then they started marching because God had made them into a vast army of people. Wow! What an amazing God! He puts life and breath into everything that lives. And that includes you and me.

Meal suggestion

✿ Small slices of bone-shaped pizza (or equivalent!) with salad and ciabatta garlic bread.

Faith in Homes suggestion

- ✿ Encourage families to fly a kite together and talk about the power of the wind.
- ✿ Sing together!

Primary School RE idea

The ideas in this session may be useful with lessons on death and life.