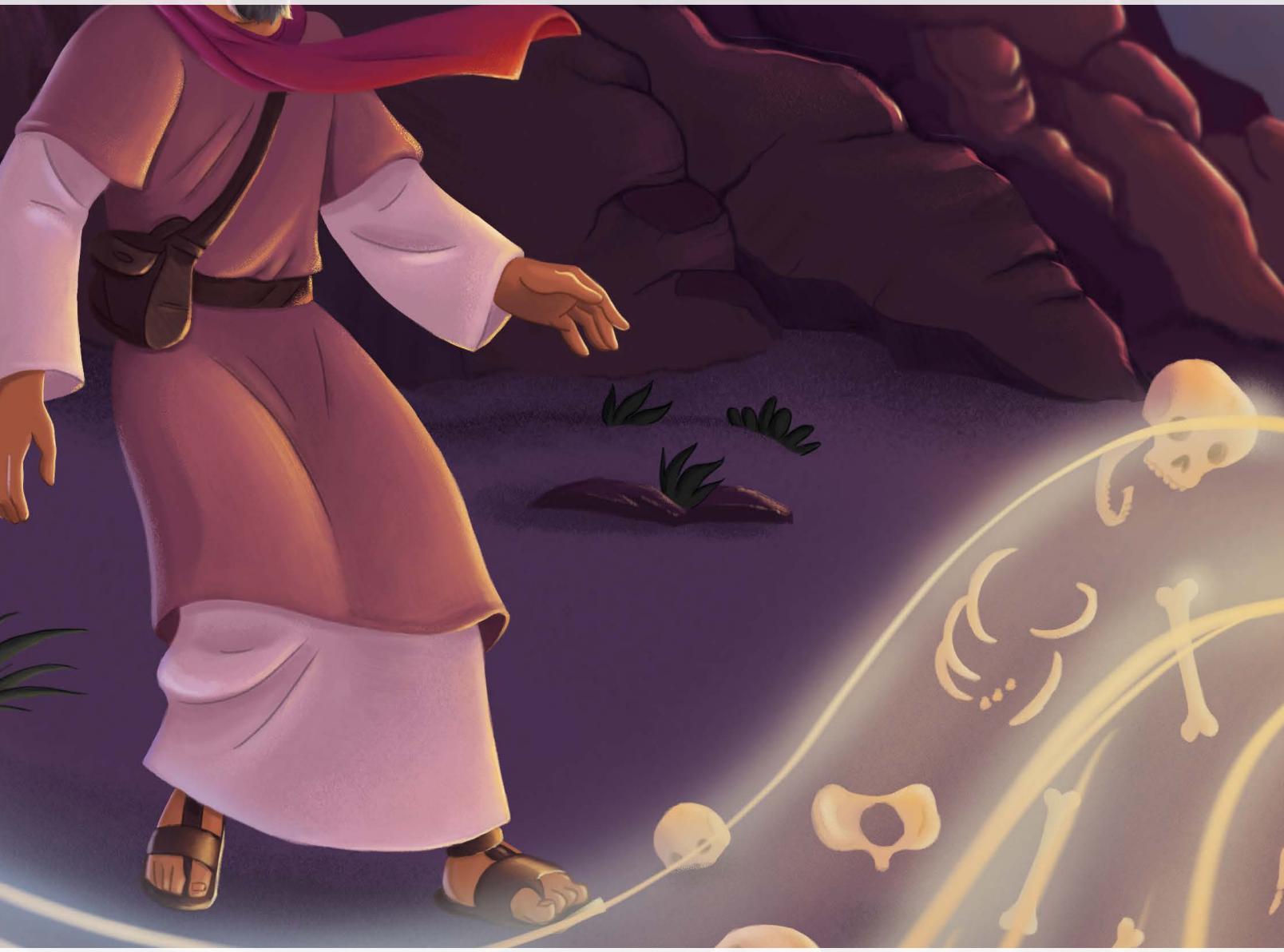


EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

EZEKIEL 37



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God breathed life into dead bones in front of Ezekiel. The apostle Paul said that we are dead in our sins, but God gives us new life in Him when we trust in Jesus. God will forever be the God of all people who trust in Jesus.

STORY POINT: God promised to restore the land to His people and be their God forever.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Have you ever had a lingering question or been in a difficult situation in which you knew only the Lord could truly answer or provide clarity? God presented an interesting question to the prophet Ezekiel amid a dire setting. The Spirit of God took Ezekiel to a valley of bones and asked him, “Son of man, can these bones live?” Ezekiel replied, “Lord God, only you know.” (Ezekiel 37:3).

God then instructed Ezekiel to speak to the bones, saying, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live” (Ezekiel 37:5). Ezekiel did as God said, and as the prophet was speaking, the bones began to rattle and reconfigure into human bodies. After that, God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath, commanding it to breathe life into the dead bodies. Ezekiel did as he was instructed, and the beings came to life.

Ezekiel’s prophecy was a picture of the people of Israel. They were like dead bones with no hope, but God would give them life. God would make the way for those dead in their sin to have life resurrected.

Then God had Ezekiel take two sticks—one for Israel and one for Judah. He told Ezekiel to take the sticks in front of all the people and join them to make one stick. Through this imagery, God was demonstrating how He was going to take the Israelites out of the nations where they were scattered and bring them into their own land. God was going to unite His people and give them one King to rule over them.

Ezekiel reminded the people of the promise God had made to David hundreds of years before. The new King would come from the family of David, and He would have the power to raise dead, sinful people to life.

Without Jesus, we are like the dead bones with no future hope. We are dead in our sins. But by faith in Jesus Christ, we are made alive (Ephesians 2:1-5). God’s promise to Ezekiel remains true: King Jesus will unite all who trust in Him, and through the Holy Spirit we will walk in His ways.

Thank God for the hope we have because of Jesus. Remind boys and girls of the new life Jesus gives to those who trust in Him. As you point boys and girls to the God who can make dead bones come to life, pray for each kid to understand that nothing is too difficult for God.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "New Life" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- plastic sandwich baggy, 1 per kid
- straws, 1 per kid
- paper plates, 1 per kid



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Ezekiel Gave Hope" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- play dough (optional)
- container filled with dry beans (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 5" Questions from Kids video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- note cards



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- plastic water bottle
- 1 cm round balls of aluminum foil, 15–20
- inflated balloon
- piece of wool

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Spell It Out" activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ Did you ever have anything you love break? What was it? Were you able to fix it? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “New Life” activity page.

| **SAY** “ Today, we will learn how the prophet Ezekiel gave the people of Judah living in Babylon hope through God's promise to bring them home and give them new life. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: FILL WITH BREATH

Provide each kid with a plastic sandwich baggy and a straw. Instruct kids to place their straw inside the baggy but with one end of the straw sticking out. Direct kids to seal their baggy shut with the straw sticking out. Tape may be needed to ensure the baggy remains sealed. Then lead kids to blow air through the straw into the baggy.

When the baggy is filled with air, guide kids to quickly remove the straw and seal the baggy completely shut. Provide each kid with a paper plate. Tell kids to place their baggy on the floor at one end of the room. Direct kids to wave their paper plate, creating “wind” to push their baggy across the room.

| **SAY** “ Today, we will learn how God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel to give His people hope. Even though they were like dry, dead bones, God would speak and breathe new life into them. **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER.** ”

OPTION 2: SPEAK, HEAR, LIVE



Assign each of the following words a motion: speak (hold hands around your mouth), hear (place one hand by your ear), live (raise both arms above your head). Invite kids to practice each of the motions for the words. Then call out each word in random order, directing kids to perform the appropriate motion. Add in other random words from time to time like “pray, walk, or love.” If kids perform the wrong action or do an action for a random word, they are out. Play as time allows, inviting kids to be the caller.

| **SAY** “ In our Bible story, we will see how God first spoke to dry bones, called the dry bones to hear the word of the Lord, and then caused breath to enter the dry bones so they would live. This is also what God does in the lives of those who trust in Jesus. God sends someone to speak and share the gospel, people hear and believe, and God causes them to be made alive in Christ. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY Welcome, kids! My name is [your name]. I look forward to sharing a story from the Bible with you. Did you bring your Bible with you? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let's open our Bibles to the book of Ezekiel. [Assist kids in finding Ezekiel in their Bible.]

Today, we will learn how the prophet Ezekiel gave God's people hope. While the people were captive in Babylon, God spoke through Ezekiel to share good news: **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Through this promise, God would also make the way for His people to have new life. We'll see how God is able to take dead, sinful people and give them new life in Jesus. Let's pray: 'Dear God, thank You for Your words that bring life. Please help us to hear and believe what You say so we might live through Jesus. Amen.'

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY **What is God like?** [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.** As we finish learning our big picture question and answer, we can remember that only a holy, good, and loving God can provide the way for people to be forgiven of their sin and be made new in Jesus. Through our story, we will learn how God is good and loving to give His people hope: God would bring them home, give their sinful hearts new life, and be their God forever.

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY At this point on our timeline, both Israel and Judah have been destroyed by foreign nations. The king of Assyria attacked Israel and took the people captive. Then over a hundred years later, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Judah and took the people captive in Babylon. But God loved His people and wanted to restore them. Long before Israel or Judah sinned against God, He had promised to send a Savior who would give people new hearts and new life. Today, we will see how God spoke through Ezekiel to remind the people of this hope.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Ezekiel 37. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Ezekiel Gave Hope.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

“Ezekiel was a priest and a prophet. While God’s people were captives in Babylon, God called Ezekiel to give them hope. The Spirit of God led the prophet Ezekiel to the middle of a valley full of bones. God said to him, ‘Ezekiel, can these bones live?’”

Ezekiel replied, “Only you know, LORD God.”

God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones and say, “Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

While Ezekiel was saying these words, he heard a rattling sound, and the bones came together into the shape of people. Then, muscle and skin grew over the bones. They looked like people, but they were not alive; they were not breathing.

God said to Ezekiel, “Say to the breath: ‘Come from the four winds and breathe into these dead people so they may live!’” Ezekiel did so, and the breath entered them, and they came alive!

God explained to Ezekiel that this was a picture of **the people of Israel**. They **were like dried up bones, without hope, but God would put His Spirit into them, and they would live and live in their own land**. God said, “I have spoken, and I will do it. This is the declaration of the LORD.”

Then God told Ezekiel to take two sticks and write “Israel” on one, and “Judah” on the other. God told Ezekiel to take the sticks in front of all the people and join them into one stick, and then to say, **“This is what God says: ‘I am going to bring all my people from the nations where they have gone. I will gather them and make them one nation again, and one king will rule over them, a descendant of King David. They will no longer worship idols, and they will follow my laws and obey Me. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My dwelling place will be with them.’** And when I make my home with them forever, all the nations will know that I make Israel holy.”

Christ Connection: God breathed life into dead bones in front of Ezekiel. The apostle Paul said that we are dead in our sins, but God gives us new life in Him when we trust in Jesus. God will forever be the God of all people who trust in Jesus. **”**

STORYTELLING TIPS

Make noise: Fill a container with dry beans and shake it when you share how Ezekiel heard a rattling sound.

Demonstrate it: Hold up two “sticks” made from play dough when you share how this is a picture of God’s people. Then join the two sticks together, showing how God will unite His people.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY Ezekiel was brought to a valley full of dry bones. God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones. What did God tell Ezekiel to say? Look at Ezekiel 37:4-6 **[Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:4-6 aloud.]** God told Ezekiel to tell the bones to hear the word of the Lord, that He would cause breath to enter them, and they would live. Only God can make something dead come alive. In Genesis, we learned how God formed Adam from the dust and breathed life into him. In our story, God breathed life into old, dried-up bones. This is a message of hope for all people because all people are dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1-2). We all need to hear the good news about Jesus to be forgiven and be made alive.

What other hope did Ezekiel give the people? Look at Ezekiel 37:21-22. **[Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:21-22 aloud.]** Ezekiel also gave the people hope because **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER.** One day, God would gather His people and unite them as one nation. This is also a picture of what God does for those who trust in Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, we become part of His family and we are all joined together through Jesus.

Ezekiel also reminded the people about God's promised Messiah. What did Ezekiel say about the Messiah? Look at Ezekiel 37:24. **[Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:24 aloud.]** The Messiah would come from the family of David and be their king. Then the people would follow God and His ways. In Jesus, the promised Messiah, we are made alive through the Spirit and have the power to follow God's commands.

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY God breathed life into dead bones in front of Ezekiel. The apostle Paul said that we are dead in our sins, but God gives us new life in Him when we trust in Jesus. God will forever be the God of all people who trust in Jesus. Have you trusted in Jesus for forgiveness of sins and new life?

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 15, Session 5" Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What does it mean to be raised to life again?
2. New life in Jesus means we want to follow His commands. How are you obeying His commands?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that many people in North Africa and the Middle East are Muslim or Jewish. Tell kids that these religions do not believe in Jesus as God's one and only Son sent to save people from sin.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

SAY Missionaries in North Africa and the Middle East have a heart for those who do not know Jesus. They desire to display God's love to others so they can know what God is like and how He loves them. Missionaries share the gospel to offer hope: though people are dead in their sins, by faith in Jesus they can be made alive! Romans 10:14 reminds us how people cannot believe in Jesus if they have never heard about Him. Just as Ezekiel shared God's words, missionaries go and share the good news of Jesus so people may hear and believe. 

Pray for missionaries serving in North Africa and the Middle East. Pray the people living in those areas will hear and believe the good news about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write each word of the Key Passage on individual note cards and hide them in the room. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

SAY God is good, and He promised to gather His people from all the places they had been scattered and reunite them. Every one who trusts in Jesus is united to Him and will live with Him forever. 

Challenge kids to gather the scattered note cards. Then lead kids to place the note cards in the correct order of the key passage.

Lead kids to sing "The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9)." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY Thank You, Lord, for Your love for us. Thank You for making the way for us to be made alive in Jesus and have the hope of living with You forever. Amen. 

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Ezekiel 37. Explain to the kids that the book of Ezekiel was written by the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was also a captive of Babylon. Tell kids that the book of Ezekiel is in the Major Prophets division of the Old Testament.

Consider pointing to Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Ezekiel 37:27 or have the kids follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY God promised to be with His people forever. When we trust in Jesus, we are promised life with God forever. Even now while we wait for Jesus to return, we have the promise of God's presence. Through the Holy Spirit, God indwells believers. No matter where we are or what we're doing, God is with Christians. One day, when Jesus returns, God will gather those who have trusted in Jesus and they will be with Him forever.

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| SAY What does it mean to be 'dead in sin'? How can people dead in sin be made alive?

Guide kids to discuss how sin separates people from God, and since all life comes from God, we have no life apart from Him. Share how life comes from the Spirit of God. Tell kids that when we hear and believe the gospel, the Spirit makes us alive in Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 10:17.)

| SAY How did this story remind us of God's faithfulness to His promises?

Share how God promised to bring His people home, and He did. Tell kids that 70 years after being taken to Babylon, God's people were allowed to go back to Jerusalem. Share how God also fulfilled His promise to send a perfect King to His people—Jesus. Remind kids that through faith in Jesus people will receive new life with God forever.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 2:4-8.)

| SAY Did this Bible story give you hope? How?

Answers will vary. Discuss how the Bible shares bad news: we are all sinners. But the Bible also shares good news and hope: people can be saved from their sin through faith in Jesus. Encourage kids to think about the hope we have because Jesus lived a perfect life for us and died in our place. Challenge kids to share the hope of the gospel with someone this week.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:5.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





LIVE

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: RATTLING FOIL

Fill a plastic water bottle with 15–20 small 1 cm round balls of aluminum foil. Take an inflated balloon and rub the sides of the water bottle, demonstrating how nothing happens to the aluminum foil. Then rub an inflated balloon on a piece of wool. Move the balloon along the sides of the water bottle and watch as the aluminum begins to "dance and rattle" in the bottle. Don't touch the bottle with the balloon. Invite kids to come and try the demonstration.

SAY **“**Today, we learned how the Lord showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones. When Ezekiel spoke God's words, Ezekiel heard a rattling sound, and the bones came together into the shape of people. They looked like people, but they were not alive; they were not breathing—similar to how the aluminum foil was moving, but it's not really alive. When God's breath, or His Spirit, entered the bones, they came alive. We can hear the gospel, but until we trust in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, we'll remain dead in our sins. **”**

OPTION 2: MADE ALIVE

 Write the following Bible references on a dry erase board: Ephesians 2:4-5; John 6:63; Colossians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:22. Form kids into four groups and assign each group a Bible reference. Direct kids to read their Scripture. Then discuss what they learned about being made alive from the verse. Invite kids to think about questions such as, "Why are we all dead in sin?" Who gives life?" "Can we do anything in our own efforts to make ourselves alive?" "How does God forgive us of our sins?"

SAY **“**In our story, we learned that **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER**. This was a future promise for His people. When we trust in Jesus, God promises new life. And that new life begins now. While we won't be without sin until Jesus returns, we can live in the new life God gives us through His Spirit. When we hear God's words, the Spirit gives us the power to obey, showing that we have been made alive in Jesus. **”**

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for the hope we have because of Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete "Spell It Out" on the activity page.