

Read: Ezekiel 37:1-14

The Holy Spirit Makes Us Alive by Faith

Ezekiel 37:5-6

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.... Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ellie was a fourth grader who worried about her friend, Izzy. Ellie noticed that Izzy hadn't been her usual self for the past few days. Izzy wasn't eating much food. She wasn't moving around as much as she usually did. In fact, Izzy hardly swam at all. Izzy was Ellie's goldfish. Ellie didn't know how to help or what to do. Izzy asked her mom for help, but her mom wasn't quite sure what to do either. What they worried about most was that Izzy the goldfish would stop eating and swimming all together. If Izzy went "belly up," there would be nothing that either of them could do to help.

Ezekiel was a prophet who was very concerned about his friends, the people of Israel. He was worried that these people had stopped listening to and learning from God's Word. It's like they had stopped eating the spiritual food that God was giving them. They were not worshiping or serving God anymore in their lives. It's like they had almost stopped believing all together.

Had the people of Israel gone "belly up?" God answered Ezekiel's concern for his people in a dream. In it, God showed Ezekiel a valley filled with dry bones. That's what the people of Israel looked like without God—a bunch of dead, dry bones! But God knew just what to do. He would send his Holy Spirit to bring the people back to life. God says, "Hear the Word of the Lord! Listen to the voice of the Living God! I will bring you back to life, and you will know that I am the Lord!"

Ellie and her mom finally figured out the problem with Izzy the fish: the aquarium's air pump stopped working. Izzy wasn't getting enough oxygen. Once mom fixed the problem, Izzy was right back to swimming again.

God fixes the problems of our faith. He does it through the wonderful work of his Holy Spirit. The amazing stories that we find in the Bible prove it—like a valley of dead bones coming back to life. When our faith is weak, our God breathes and brings us back to life. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for feeding our faith, forgiving our sins, and making us strong until we are with you forever in heaven!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Izzy the goldfish was sick, but Ellie and her mom found the problem. What was it?
- How does God fix our faith when it gets sick?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why was Ezekiel so worried about his people, Israel? What was wrong?
- Ezekiel did not have the power to bring dry bones back to life. Only God does. What truth does this teach us about where our faith in God comes from?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree or disagree. Sometimes we do a better job of feeding and caring for our pets than we do feeding and caring for our faith.
- Discuss as a family why it's important not to take the summer off from feeding your faith.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Holy Spirit, fill my heart with your power and bring my faith to life. Help me understand how important it is to study God's Word, so that my faith stays strong each day. Amen.

Hymn: CW 177:1,3,5 – Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, And make our hearts your place of rest;
Come with your grace and heav'nly aid, And fill the hearts which you have made.

Your light to ev'ry thought impart, And shed your love in ev'ry heart;
The weakness of our mortal state With deathless might invigorate.

Teach us to know the Father, Son, And you, from both, as Three in One
That we your name may ever bless And in our lives the truth confess.