

# A Renewed Heart

Ezekiel 36:26,27

## **MEMORY VERSE**

EZEKIEL 36:26

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Several heart shapes cut out from poster board (various sizes, all smaller than and 8 1/2 "x 11" paper), crayons, and a paper with the scripture verse written on the bottom (one for each child).

Construction paper, scissors, a pen, and tape.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **Stony Heart Race**

Today, we are going to learn about stony hearts and brand new hearts. To get started, try a "Stony Heart Race"—the children will roll like boulders or stones. Divide the class into two groups of an equal number of children. If the numbers are not even, have the first child in one of the groups go a second time. Once the teams have been chosen, divide the children in half again and have one group on one side of the room and the other group on the other side of the room. When you say, "go," the first child will drop to the ground and roll across the class (like a boulder would roll) to the other side. Once at the other side, the first child in that group will roll back. Then the next child, etc. will go until all of the children have gone. Declare a winner.

The Bible says it's possible to have a stony heart—hardened like stone to the understanding of God's truth and love. But, those who embrace Jesus as Savior and Lord will receive a brand new heart—one softened to Him and willing to obey!

## LESSON TIME!

Though Israel would surely be judged for their stubbornness and rebellion; God looks, once more, way into the future to the day of Israel's full restoration. In His love and grace, God would one day give the people of Israel a new heart, a soft heart, once responsive to His love and willing to listen and obey. They would walk in His Spirit!

Today, God reaches out to us with grace we do not deserve—the promise of forgiveness, cleansing, and the promise that His Spirit will come and live inside us, giving us a new heart! **God will give us a brand new heart!**

We can note that the Lord said, “I will” 15 times in verses 24-38 of Ezekiel 36! In today's verses alone, He says, “I will” three times. The basis for God's blessing was not to be on the “I wills” (the determination and good intentions) of the people, but because God *willed* to bless them, despite their failures and sin. God would bless them for His name's sake (36:22, 32). And, when God says, “I will,” we can depend on it. God always keeps His promises!

The basis for God's blessing in our lives is always His grace, never our good deeds or efforts. Despite our weaknesses, failure, and disobedience, God is faithful to us, and His character and love for us remain consistent. He wants to do an amazing work in the lives of those who love Him for His name's sake—so that He might receive glory for the work He has done. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

### EZEKIEL 36:26

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Why is it important that God gives us a new heart? In Jeremiah 17:9 it says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Before we ask Jesus into our hearts as Lord and Savior, we might not care if we lie a little bit, use bad language, or be unkind to our brothers and sisters. We think those things are not a big deal because everyone else is doing it. But when we become Christians, a new heart—a softer heart—is the first thing God gives us. Our hearts become willing to not only listen to God’s Word but to obey it. We want to be kind those around us; we want to please God because we love Him and are thankful to Him. That’s the picture of a heart of flesh vs. a heart of stone. Flesh is alive; stone is dead. When we walk in fellowship with Jesus, allowing His Spirit to control, our hearts become alive to the things of God. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

## Getting a New Heart

You will need several heart shapes cut out from poster board (various sizes, all smaller than an 8 1/2 “x 11” paper), crayons, and a paper with the scripture verse written on the bottom (one for each child). Give each child a copy of the paper with the scripture verse. Explain, before we came to know Jesus, our hearts were like stone—hardened to the things of God. But when we come to Jesus, we receive a brand new heart. Ask the children to close their eyes (no peaking!). Your aid and you will quickly place the poster board hearts under the paper.

Ask the children to open their eyes and take a crayon (red is preferable); ask them to hold their paper down carefully and color over the paper. What do they see? Coloring should reveal the heart underneath. God wants to give each of us a brand new heart and replace that heart of stone.

## EZEKIEL 36:27

"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

In the Old Testament, men did not have the Holy Spirit in them; rather He came upon them to do specific things that the Lord wanted them to do. God's Holy Spirit came to rest on men for certain reasons at certain times. When Jesus came, He began to teach the disciples more about the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14-16). The Holy Spirit would now come to indwell them and empower them to live for God. In John 14:16, 17 Jesus states, "And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—"the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." The Holy Spirit would lead the new church in truth (John 16:13), help His people to pray (Romans 8:26), and teach them about God (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit comforts His people.

How wonderful it is that we have a helper right inside of us to help us to follow God's plans for our lives and to help us to live for Him. He helps us to make good, right, pure, and noble choices. The Holy Spirit enables us to do what we cannot do for ourselves. II Corinthians 5:17 reads: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

How blessed we are when we ask Jesus to come into our lives. He gives us His Spirit to help us. Our strength to live a life that pleases Him is no longer dependant on us—our good will and resolve; our strength is dependant on Him. God is glorified in our lives as the world can see, not what we are able to do, but what God by His Spirit and grace will enable us to do. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

## **Hidden Heart**

Use this game to work with the children on their memory verse. You will need construction paper, scissors, a pen, and tape. Cut out several small hearts out of the red construction paper. Write one or two words from today's memory verse on each heart. Before class, hide the hearts throughout the room. Then after all of the hearts are found, have the older ages see if they can put together the memory verse by taping the hearts in order on the chalkboard. For the younger ages, you can help out by showing the children where to tape and then read the memory verse to them.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow Jesus and to thank the Lord for a brand new heart and the gift of His Holy Spirit who helps us to live for Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.