



UNIT 18 | SESSION 1 | FEBRUARY 1-2, 2020

4th-5th Lesson

Esther Saved Her People

Bible Passage: Esther

Story Point: God made Esther a queen to protect His people.

Key Passage: “The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” 1 Peter 5:10

Christ Connection: God had a plan for Esther to rescue His people. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

**KID CONNECT:
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:
20 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Babylonian captivity ended when Cyrus, the king of Persia, took over Babylon and let God’s people go home. Some of God’s people—now called Jews (people from Judah)—traveled back to Judah to rebuild the temple, the city, and their lives. Others, however, stayed in Persia where life among the pagans was relatively comfortable.

The king of Persia was now Ahasuerus (uh haz yoo EHR uhs), also known by his Greek name, Xerxes (ZUHRK seez). Esther was a young Jewish girl who became queen of Persia. The former queen had defied the king and was promptly replaced.

Esther had been an orphan, so her cousin Mordecai adopted her. Mordecai kept in touch with Esther while she lived in the palace. One day, the king gave Haman the Agagite a very important position in the kingdom. The king even commanded the people to bow down to Haman. But Mordecai refused.

Haman was a descendant of Agag, king of the Amalekites. The nations of Israel and Amalek did not get along. Haman was angry, but instead of just punishing Mordecai, he planned to kill all the Jews in the kingdom.

In today's Bible story, Mordecai turned to Esther for help. After all, she was in a position of power, and the Jews were her people. The stakes were high, but Esther approached the king and explained her people's plight. Review the details in Esther 7.

Note how Esther described Haman: "The adversary and enemy is this evil Haman" (Esth. 7:6). We too have an adversary—the Devil. He prowls around like a lion, seeking people to devour. (1 Pet. 5:8) He loves nothing more than to destroy believers and hinder the work of God. Satan thought he had succeeded when Jesus died on the cross, but God—working frequently behind the scenes—raised Jesus from the dead and defeated Satan once and for all. (See Heb. 2:14-15.)

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO/OUTRO MUSIC)

Greet each kid as he or she arrives and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to discuss a time when they helped someone else. How did kids feel afterward? How did the other person react? Has helping someone ever been difficult or scary?

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

LARGE GROUP GAME

(SFX: GAME INTRO MUSIC, SFX: FUN MUSIC)

A FEAST FIT FOR A KING...OR BABY

(5 Pairs of Baby Food, 10 Plastic Spoons, 2 Blindfolds, 2 Chairs, Table, Allergy Alert)

SAY • Hey guys! Welcome back to KidCity! I need 4 volunteers for our game - 2 kids and 2 Small Group Leaders...who maybe are a little hungry. Yep! You're going to be eating some food, Small Group Leaders, but not just any food. *reveal jars on the table without showing what kinds they are* Baby food! Who's up for the challenge? *Choose 2 kids and 2 SGL's. If you have to, convince them!*

Ok! Give a round of applause to our hungry Small Group Leaders! This game is called A Feast Fit for a King...or Baby. We will be learning about an actual feast for a king in our Bible story so this is a perfect game! Here's how it works. I will blindfold the 2 Small Group Leaders and then our 2 kids will feed them one spoonful of the same type of baby food. Whichever SGL can guess out loud what kind of food it is first, gets a point. Then we will move on to a new flavor of baby food. The first team to get 3 points wins! Make sense? I hope you're hungry. Let's play A Feast Fit for a King...or Baby!

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: THIS LITTLE LIGHT, VIDEO: GOD IS ON THE MOVE)

SAY • Let's worship God!

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(CG: IMAGES OF GAMES)

(No Supplies)

SAY • Hey guys! Raise your hand if you like video games. Me too! Raise your hand if you like board games...also known these days as tabletop games. Nice! Well, I love games and gaming. I'm not the best at them but that doesn't stop me from playing them. One of my favorite things to do in games is build stuff. Who can tell me some video games where you build stuff?

Take responses from the kids. Most likely some of them will mention these but if they don't, you can bring them up.

Yes, in Minecraft you build. That whole game revolves around building things, actually. What else? Yes, you build in Fortnite. You can build walls and stairs and floors.

Does anyone know any *board* games where you build things? In Jenga, you build a tall tower while trying not to knock it down. How about Settlers of Catan? You use resources like lumber, brick and wool to build roads and houses.

I love all of these games! But you know what? Each one requires that I have some sort of plan...or blueprint *before* I actually start building. The better my plan, the better my building will be.

And you know what? That reminds me of God; He always has a plan! I want to share a Bible story with you about a dangerous situation. In this story, God had a plan to protect His people.

GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY • The Israelites went back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. When the Israelites stopped rebuilding, God sent the prophet Zechariah to talk to them. God told Zechariah His plan for

the Israelites, and Zechariah reminded the Israelites of God's good plan for them. Zechariah reminded the Israelites to return to God. Many years went by between Zechariah and the story we will hear today. A group of God's people stayed in Persia while the temple was being rebuilt in Judah. Persia started to become a dangerous place for the Jewish people, but God had a plan to protect His people. Check it out.

WATCH THE BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: ESTHER SAVED HER PEOPLE, CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT, QUESTION 1, CG: QUESTION 2)

(Bible)

Show the Bible story video "Esther Saved Her People."

SAY • Can you imagine being in Esther's shoes? She showed a lot of bravery in approaching the king. She could have been killed. Do you remember who helped Esther understand what she needed to do? Mordecai told Esther what Haman had planned. When Esther wasn't sure what to do, Mordecai encouraged her to take a step of faith. Mordecai also fasted with Esther. Mordecai helped Esther understand that God made Esther a queen to protect His people.

Mordecai was a loyal friend and relative who helped Esther make the right decision. When Esther became queen of Persia, she did not know what her future would hold. But God had a plan for Esther and for His people. Esther was in a hard situation, but she had faith in God. Even when she wasn't sure what God's plan was, she trusted Him.

QUESTION 1: What does this story teach us about God?

SAY • When Esther became queen of Persia, she did not know what her future would hold. But God had a plan for Esther and for His people. Esther was in a hard situation, but she had faith in God. Even when she wasn't sure what God's plan was, she trusted Him. God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

QUESTION 1: How did Mordecai help Esther?

SAY • Mordecai told Esther what Haman had planned. When Esther wasn't sure what to do, Mordecai encouraged her to take a step of faith. Mordecai also prayed and fasted with Esther. Mordecai helped Esther understand that God made Esther a queen to protect His people. Mordecai was a loyal friend and relative who helped Esther make the right decision.

KEY PASSAGE

(CG: KEY PASSAGE)

(Bible)

Show the key passage slide. Lead the kids to read 1 Peter 5:10 together.

SAY • This verse describes God as “the God of all grace.” God shows us favor and love we do not deserve. God does not promise that we will never suffer, but He does promise to restore us and heal us. The Jews would have died at the hands of Haman, but God protected them through Esther’s bravery. God showed them grace and kindness by keeping them safe from Haman’s evil plan.

CHRIST CONNECTION

(CG: CHRIST CONNECTION)

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

SAY • God had a plan for Esther to rescue His people. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.

God was in control over Haman’s evil plan to destroy the Jews. Like Haman, Satan wants to destroy followers of Jesus. He thought he had won when Jesus died on the cross, but God raised Jesus from the dead and defeated Satan once and for all.

PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

Bible Passage: Esther

Story Point: God made Esther a queen to protect His people.

Key Passage: “The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” 1 Peter 5:10

Christ Connection: God had a plan for Esther to rescue His people. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

(Bibles, Paper, Clipboards, 1-2 per group, Pens)

Instruct kids to sit in a circle. If your group is large, form two or more groups. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Peter 5:10. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Give one player in the circle a clipboard, paper, and a pen. When you say “go,” the first player will write the first word of the key passage on the paper, pass the clipboard and pen to the next player who writes the next word, and so on around the circle until kids write the entire key passage and reference. Play additional rounds as time permits.

PRAYER

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, acknowledging that God has a plan for our lives. Praise Him for sending Jesus and pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in how we can live for God's glory.

DISCUSSION

(Bibles)

SAY • The Jews would have died at the hands of Haman, but God protected them through Esther's bravery. God showed them grace and kindness by keeping them safe from Haman's evil plan.

- Do you think God is involved in everything or do some things just happen by chance?
- How might God's involvement in everything change your reaction to things that happen?

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to the Book of Esther. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Esther 2:10-11. Explain that the story of Esther took place in Persia, where many Jews were scattered. After the Babylonian exile, some Jews returned to Jerusalem, but some—like Esther and Mordecai—remained in Persia.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Esther 2:10-11 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

- How was Esther able to save her people?
Guide kids to recall that Esther, a Jew, was chosen to be the queen of Persia. The king did not know she was a Jew, and Esther rose to a position where she could ask the king to protect her people. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 1:26-28.)
- How does Esther remind us of Jesus?
Lead kids to recognize that God raised up Esther to save His people. Mordecai urged Esther to take action, and she was willing to face death. In a greater way, God sent Jesus at just the right time and Jesus willingly died on the cross to save us because He loves us. Jesus rose from the dead. One day, He will come back to rule as King forever. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:5-8.)
- How can you be part of God's plan?
Prompt kids to discuss ways they are uniquely gifted to serve and help others. Talk about how God has a purpose for our lives now—right where we are—to advance the gospel. We might not know God's exact plan, but we can help others and faithfully share with them the good news about Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 138:8.)

THE PLAN

(Paper, 1 per kid)

This game will help the kids understand that, while they may not initially understand God's plan, they can trust that His plan is good because He is good. Choose a volunteer and quietly assign her a task involving the rest of the class. Consider these tasks:

- Organize kids by the color of their clothing.
- Without speaking, guide the class to make paper airplanes.
- Group kids based on style or color of shoe.
- Line up kids in alphabetical order by their first name.

Allow time for the volunteer to arrange the rest of the kids. When she finishes, challenge the class to figure out what the plan was. Emphasize that God has a plan for our lives, but His plan does not always seem obvious.

SAY • In our Bible story today, we see that God made Esther a queen to protect His people. Esther did not realize that at first. One day, we will understand God's plans and see that everything He did was for His glory and our good.

MY COMMUNITY MAP: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

(“Community Map” printable, 1 per kid, Yarn, 3-4 per kid, Colored Pencils, Markers, Tape)

Distribute the community maps printable, colored pencils, markers, and small pieces of yarn. Ask kids to tape pieces of yarn from the house to the other locations on the map. Remind kids that God wants to use them wherever they go. As time allows, let them color their maps.

SAY • As you color your map and place your yarn from your house to the other places you go, think about the people you see each week. Do some of these people know about Jesus? Are there some people that need to know about Jesus and His love for them? God wants all people to love Him and God wants to use you to tell others about Him.

REFLECTION

(Journal Page, 1 per kid, Pencils)

Ask the kids the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

If time allows, have kids complete the Journal Page provided with this session.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS

(Older Kids Activity Page, 1 per kid)

Hand each 4th-5th grade kid an Older Kids Activity Page and encourage them to do it at home with their family this week.

OPTIONAL TAKE HOME:
(Preteen Learner Guide Option)

For 5th Graders that would like some additional God Time this week.

