



ESTHER SAVES THE DAY

God's Incredible Plan • U9# 2 1st-3rd Grade • Mar. 22, 2026

Concept

God is sovereign (in control, with unlimited authority).

Goal

Students will learn that God has a role for them to play in His incredible plan when they have a relationship with him.

Passage

Esther 3:7-9; 4:1-17

Key Verse: "You might keep quiet at this time. Then someone else will help and save the Jews... And who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this." Esther 4:14 (NCV)

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Grandpa's Box, Starr Meade</i> <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Black garbage bag</i> • 10 costume items* (teaching team provides) • <i>1 small ball</i> • <i>CD player</i> • CD including a song the kids are familiar with <p>Optional Games:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robes, scepter, crowns (minimum 2 each) 	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paper lunch bags, 1/student</i> • <i>Small paper plates, 1/student</i> • <i>Hair colored yarn</i> • Markers • Eye masks, 1/child • Small feathers; jewels; curling ribbon; felt; yarn • Glue sticks • Pictures of mask ideas

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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"Esther tells the story of a plot to exterminate the entire Jewish nation in the days of the Persian king, Ahasuerus (Xerxes), and how it was thwarted. It also explains the origin of the Jewish Feast of Purim . . . The writer is unknown, but his nationalism and accurate knowledge of Persian ways make it likely that he was a Jew who lived in Persia before the empire fell to Greece.

"Although the book does not mention God by name, it speaks plainly of his overruling in the affairs of men, and his unfailing care for his people."
[1]

"When a Persian king signed a decree, it became one of 'the laws of the Persians and the Medes' (Esther 1:19). This phrase describes the ironclad nature of the laws that governed the Persian Empire. Once a law was issued, it could not be changed or revoked—not even by the king himself. Thus, Ahasuerus could not revoke the decree calling for the Jews to be destroyed, which he had allowed Haman to make (Esther 3:7-15). However, he could and did authorize Mordecai the Jew to write a counter-decree (Esther 8:11).

"An understanding of customs during Esther's time increases our appreciation of the amazing way in which God has worked behind the scenes of the most powerful human governments to protect His people. Be reassured that our all-powerful God is still at work in our behalf today."
[2]

God is sovereign. He is in control of all of human history. Yet, God's sovereignty is inextricably linked with man's free agency. Hence, as Christians, we can have lives that are significant. What we do has eternal impact on others.

[1] Alexander, David, Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible, Lion Publishing, 1973, p. 313.

[2] Children's Ministry Resource Bible, 1993, Thomas Nelson Publishers, p. 587.

Activity Stations

- **Craft – Puppets (to be used for the Lesson)**
 - **Instructions:** Let students pick which person they want to make a puppet of (Mordecai, King Xerxes, Esther, and Haman). Make faces, hair, etc., on the paper plates and tape the plate to the bottom of the paper bag (or staple) to make a flap for a puppet.
 - **Note:** While making the puppets, choose four students to be puppeteers. Instruct the puppeteers to repeat the lines the narrator quotes their puppet as saying.
- **Reading**
 - **Instructions:** Read chapter 26, “Every Little Detail,” page 167, Grandpa’s Box and discuss the concept that God cares about and even “ordains” some little tiny details.
- **Craft – Masquerade Masks**
 - **Instructions:** The celebration of Purim in the Jewish community includes a masquerade party. Have children make a mask to wear in the Masquerade game. Use provided pictures for ideas and provided materials to create a mask.
- **Mission Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

We have spent this year studying God’s Incredible Plan. God created the world and all the people in it. We’ve learned about Abraham and how, through him, God created His chosen people—the Jews. We’ve also learned that God brought these people to Israel, the Promised Land. He used Moses and Joshua to guide the people into this land. He then appointed Judges like Gideon and kings like David to guide the people and to remind them to follow the one true God. Sometimes the people remembered and followed God and sometimes they didn’t. But God was always faithful. God had always promised that through the Jewish people the whole world would be blessed. Do you remember how God planned to bless the whole world?

Good News

What is God’s Incredible Plan anyway? (Get kids’ ideas.) God promised that someday Jesus would be born into a Jewish family, die on a cross to pay for the sins of all the people who had ever been and would ever be born. Why did God plan that? (So that anyone who believes in Jesus and asks for His forgiveness can live with God forever in heaven after they die.) Jesus died for everyone even you and me! This week we are going to learn about someone who wanted to wipe out the Jewish people from the face of the earth. If he had been successful Jesus couldn’t have come from a Jewish family and God would not have been able to keep His promise. But God is so big and powerful that He would never let that happen.

As you watch the puppet show, see if you can figure out how God kept His promise to work through the Jewish people.

Drama -- Puppet Show, "Queen Esther Saves the Day," performed by teachers and 4 students

Instructions: Assemble the students as audience, except for 4 students who will hold the puppets. Give the students the instructions to yell BOO! when the name "Haman" is said. Instruct puppeteers to repeat the lines the narrator quotes their puppet as saying. Have one teacher with them to help them keep up with the script and say their lines. One teacher will be the narrator. The other teachers will lead the audience as they repeat the "audience" lines.

Queen Esther Saves the Day

Narrator: We are going to learn a true story from the Bible that happened a long, long time ago. The Jewish people have a holiday every year called Purim so they will remember this story. When the Jewish teacher reads this story the audience yells as loud as they can when the name Haman is spoken. So, I want you to do the same thing. Let's practice once. There was a man named Haman. Okay, now we're ready. Remember to listen for the name Haman so you can yell loudly. When I flash the lights you are to stop and keep quiet the rest of the time. As you listen to the story, try to figure out why the audience makes noise when Haman is spoken. In the great kingdom of Persia, there was a king named Xerxes. He had married a beautiful, young Jewish woman named Esther and made her his queen. In this great country there were many Jews who were slaves to the Persians. King Xerxes did not know that Queen Esther was a Jew or she probably would have been a slave instead of a queen. Say "hello" to Queen Esther and King Xerxes.

Audience: "Hello, Queen Esther and King Xerxes."

Narrator: Queen Esther had a cousin named Mordecai. He loved God and always tried to do things God's way. Say "hello" to Mordecai.

Audience: "Hello, Mordecai."

Narrator: There was one man, named Haman, and the king liked him better than all his other royal officials. Whenever Haman walked out of the king's palace, all the servants and officials had to bow low, with their faces to the ground. Haman thought he was more important than anyone else on earth. Say "hello" to Haman.

Audience: "Hello, Haman."

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Narrator: There was one man who refused to bow down to Haman; it was Mordecai. The royal officials told Mordecai to bow to Haman but Mordecai said, "I will not."

Mordecai: I will not.

Narrator: Mordecai did not want to bow and pretend that someone else was more important than God. Of course, this made Haman very angry. When he found out that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman grew to hate not only Mordecai, but all the Jews. Haman decided that he would figure out a way to kill them. Haman told the king that the Jews wouldn't obey his laws. Haman asked the king to make a rule that all the Jews be killed. The king said, "Do whatever you want with the Jews."

Xerxes: Do whatever you want with the Jews.

Narrator: Mordecai found out about Haman's plan to kill all the Jews. He told Esther about it. He said, "Esther, you must go to the king and beg for your peoples' lives."

Mordecai: You must go to the king and beg for your people's lives.

Narrator: Esther was afraid. If she went to talk to the king before he asked for her, he might kill her. Esther said, "I am afraid the king will kill me if I go to see him without permission."

Esther: I am afraid the king will kill me if I go to see him without permission.

Narrator: Mordecai told Esther not to forget that she was a Jew. She would be killed too if the king found out that she was a Jew. Mordecai said, "You might keep quiet at this time. Then someone else will help and save the Jews... And who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this."

Mordecai: "You might keep quiet at this time. Then someone else will help and save the Jews... And who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this."

Narrator: Esther was very frightened but she decided to trust God to save her people. She asked Mordecai to have all the Jews pray for her. She went to the king and he was not angry. He told her to ask him anything and he would do it. Esther asked the King to come and bring Haman to a fancy dinner she would make for them. When they came, the king asked her again to tell him what she wanted. She said, "Please don't kill me and my people."

Learning Activity #1 Continued

Esther: Please don't kill me and my people.

Narrator: The king said, "Who wants to kill you?"

Xerxes: Who wants to kill you?

Narrator: Esther pointed to Haman and said, "He does!"

Esther: He does!

Narrator: The king was so angry that he ordered Haman to be killed. Haman was killed that very day. King Xerxes also made a new law that the Jews would be allowed to defend themselves against those who tried to kill them. The Jews were not destroyed! To this very day, each year Jewish people have a holiday called Purim to celebrate the brave thing that Queen Esther did. So God kept His promise to work through the Jews.

The End

Debrief

So did anyone figure out why the children want to make so much noise when Haman's name is spoken? (Take some suggestions.) The children want to erase his name from the story just like he wanted to erase the Jewish people from the earth. If you can't hear his name it is like he never existed.

Let's all gather together and talk about the importance of Esther's decision to talk to King Xerxes about Haman's plan to kill the Jews. Everyone grab a Bible.

So, how did God keep His promise to work through the Jews? What do you think would have happened to the Jews if Esther had not agreed to talk to the king? (Get kids' ideas.) We don't know exactly how, but we do know that God will do what He has said He will do. Even when it looked as though all the Jewish people were going to be killed, God made sure that didn't happen. Turn to the book of Esther, chapter 4, verse 14.

Our Bible verse for today teaches that God would find a way to save the Jews even if Esther decided she didn't want to go to the king. When her Cousin Mordecai learned about Haman's plan to kill all the Jews, he said to her, "You might keep quiet at this time. Then someone else will help and save the Jews... And who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). Mordecai believed that God wanted to work through Esther to save the Jewish people.

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group

Lesson Continued

God has a plan, His Incredible Plan, and He will make it happen no matter what. God wants to use us to accomplish His plan. We have the chance in this life to do things that will last forever. If Esther had not helped with God's plan He would have found another way and we would never have heard of Esther. We would be learning about someone else right now. But Esther did say yes to God. So she had the privilege to have God work through her in a way that she would never have guessed. And all the Jewish people were saved when it looked hopeless.

Transition

Let's get into small groups to talk about the choices we have and to pray.

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

- If you know Jesus how did you learn about Him? How did you get to know Him?
- Have you ever thought God wanted you to do something, but you decided not to do it? What happened?
- Have you ever done something you thought God wanted you to do? What happened?
- Have you ever considered the role you can play in God's Incredible Plan? Do you think it's something God has in mind for you? How do you think you would know?
- Do you have friends who don't know about Jesus? How do you think your friends will learn about Jesus?
- Have you ever told anyone about Jesus? What happened?

Let's pray now and thank God that what He has promised, He will make sure happens. If you have a relationship with God, you can ask God to strengthen you to do His will, so like Esther we can play an important role in God's Incredible Plan.

Transition

The Purim celebration includes the reading of the book of Esther, singing songs and a masquerade. Let's celebrate Purim by playing a masquerade game. Everyone get the masks you made when you came in.

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group

Game - Don't You Look Ridiculous?

Instructions: Have the students put on their masks and sit in a circle. Place the garbage bag in the center of the circle. Start to pass the ball around the circle while you play some music (maybe an old VBS song). When the song is stopped the student who has the ball must, without looking, grab a piece of clothing out of the garbage bag, put it on and return to the circle. Continue until the garbage bag is empty. Depending on the amount of time you have, repeat the entire game. This should be a fun, hilarious activity. Ham it up and enjoy it with the kids.

Activity#4 Games

We've got some more "king themed" games to play.

King, May We?

Supplies: a Chair

Instructions: Have children line up along a wall. Choose one child to be King, and have them sit on a "throne" (chair) at the opposite side of the room. The children take turns saying "King, may we ___?" (E.g. take 3 giant steps, take 5 baby steps, take 4 frog hops forward). The King may grant the request by saying, "You may," and the children move in that manner. The King may also alter the allowed movement by replying, for example, "No you may not, but you may take 6 steps backwards." A third option is that the King may allow only some children to move forward by responding with criteria like, "If you are wearing blue, you may." If the child calling out the request forget to say "King, may I?", the teacher sends him back to the starting line. The first child to reach the throne and tag the King is the winner, and he or she becomes the next king. [1]

King Says

Supplies: none

Instructions: Have a leader be King and stand in front of the children. The King commands children to do different actions. Children must only obey the commands given that begin with the words, "King says." If the King says, "King says touch your nose," then children must touch their nose. If the command is given, however, without saying "King says," any child that does that action is out. Continue play until only one child is left and allow that person to be the King in the next game. [1]

Dress Like a King Relay

Supplies: crowns, robes, scepters (one set per team)

Instructions: Divide children into 2 teams and have each team make a single file line. When the teacher says "Go!" the first person from each team runs to the other side of the room (to their pile), puts on the crown and robe, and carries the scepter back to her team. Next, she takes off the items and gives them to the next person on her team. That person puts the items on, runs to the opposite side of the room, removes the items, and runs back to tag the next player. Play continues until all children have raced and returned to the starting line. The first team to get all their members through the relay is the winner. [1]

[1] Game from: The Biggest Story Curriculum, Book 2: History, pp 126-127