

Esther

Exile and Return Lesson 1

Lesson Objectives

- The students will state that God had a plan for Esther's life.
- The students will describe the result of Esther's courage.
- The students will plan one way to help their families this week.

Lesson Text

Esther 1-10

Scripture Memory Verse

For if you remain silent at this time...you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

Lesson Plan

Greeting and Registration

Preclass Activity: Precision Decisions

Welcome and Singing

Centers:

Bible Story: Fit for a Queen

Craft: Mordecai's Message

Scripture Memory: Just in Time

NOTE: Allow time for a snack.



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Esther

Precision Decisions

The students will preview today's lesson as they are introduced to the book of Esther.

Materials

For each student:

- pencil

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student

Preparation

Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page A.

Instructions

1. Greet the students as they arrive. Tell them that today's lesson is about how God used a young woman named Esther to save an entire nation of people. Today's Preclass Activity will give them some ideas about Esther's relationship to God and ways that she made sure to follow God's plan. It will also introduce them to basic information about the book of Esther.
2. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page A and pencils. Have the students work with a partner. Make sure each pair has a Bible.
3. Circulate among the students to offer help and encouragement. Make sure they write their names on their pages.

Teacher Tips

- Bring illustrated Bibles and/or maps of the region to show the students where the story of Esther took place.
- Let the students know how fortunate they are to learn about Esther.

Precision Decisions

Esther had to make some very important decisions in her life. As the queen, she was the only one who could save all the Jewish people from being completely destroyed. At first, Esther was afraid. She knew it could be very dangerous. But she prayed, fasted and got advice. Then she decided to be very brave. She risked her life—and God blessed her courage. Not only did Esther save her people, the Jews, she caused the destruction of the enemy and the protection of her family. Esther was a hero to her people.

Below are the names of some of the people in today's lesson. Match the scrambled name with the correct name:

manaH	Vashti
therEs	Esther
reXxe	Mordecai
Vishta	Haman
iacedroM	Xerxes

Open your Bible to the Old Testament book of Esther. Find the answer in the Bible; then look for it in the box below.

1. Who was Xerxes? (Esther 1:2) king
2. The king set a royal crown on Esther's head, and she became the queen. (Esther 2:17)
3. What was Esther's other name? (Esther 2:7)
Hadassah
4. What did Mordecai do for Esther? (Esther 2:7)
adopted her

adopted her	Hadassah
crown	king
	queen

Using your Bible, look up the answers to these questions about the book of Esther.

1. How many chapters are in the book of Esther? 10
2. What is the longest chapter in this book? 9
3. What is the shortest chapter in this book? 10
4. In what chapter does Esther become queen? 2
5. In what chapter does Haman get hanged? 7

Esther

Fit for a Queen

The students will learn the inspiring story of Esther as they consider the results of her courage.

Materials

For the teacher:

- crown
- a small bottle of perfume or soap
- a pair of sunglasses
- 2 envelopes
- an invitation
- a robe

Preparation

1. Read the Bible Story text to be familiar with this amazing story.
2. Practice presenting this story with enthusiasm.

Introducing the Bible Story

Open your Bible to Esther. Tell the students that today's lesson comes from the Old Testament book of Esther. Explain to the students that after God's kingdom was divided, the kings of other countries took God's people captive. They had to serve other kings and were not free as they had been before.

During this time of captivity, there was a young Jewish girl named Esther. Her parents died and she was adopted by her cousin Mordecai. Esther was also called Hadassah. They lived in Susa. In our Bible Story today, you will learn about how this young woman changed an entire nation—because God had a plan for her life.

Presenting the Bible Story

Choose one girl student to stand and be Vashti. Place the crown on her head. *The queen of Susa, whose name was Vashti, was removed from the throne because she showed disrespect for her husband the king. The king announced that he would give a banquet to find a new wife to be queen.*

Choose another girl student to stand and be Esther. Give her the perfume. *Esther went to the palace with all the other women to prepare to meet the king. She had to go through twelve months of beauty treatments before she could meet the king! Esther became the most popular woman of all who came to see the king.*

Mordecai came often to the palace to see how Esther was doing. The king was impressed with Esther more than anyone else. He gave a great banquet and made Esther the queen. Have Vashti give the crown to Esther.

Choose a boy to play the part of Mordecai. Give him the sunglasses to put on. *Mordecai overheard two men who were plotting to kill the king. Mordecai told Esther about their plot and she told the king. Have Mordecai whisper to Esther. The two men were hanged. Later on, the king honored Mordecai for saving his life.*

The king decided to promote his servant Haman. Haman did not like Mordecai because he knew that Mordecai was a Jew who worshiped the Lord. Mordecai did not bow down to Haman. Haman made a plan to destroy all the Jews in the land.

Give Mordecai the two envelopes for messages, and act out the following:

Mordecai came to the palace to give a message to Esther. He told her about Haman's plan to destroy all the Jews in the land. He told her to go and beg the king's mercy. Esther told Mordecai that there was a law which would have her killed for going to the king if she had not been invited.

"When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?'" (Esther 4:12-14) Mordecai wanted Esther to see that it was God's plan for her to be queen so that she could save her people.

Esther thought more about it, and sent a second message to Mordecai. "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16)

Choose a student to be King Xerxes, and place the robe on him. Give Esther the invitation and act out the following: *Esther risked her life by breaking the law and going to the king. The king showed mercy and let her*



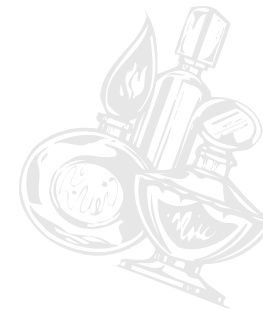
3rd and 4th Grades

Esther

approach him. He did not have her punished for breaking the law. Instead, he asked her what she wanted. Esther invited the king to a banquet and he accepted her invitation.

After the banquet, Esther invited the king and Haman to another banquet. At the second banquet, she begged the king to save her life and the lives of her people, the Jews. She told the king that there was a terrible plan to destroy all the Jews. The king was furious and wanted to know who would do such a terrible thing. Esther told him that Haman had made the plan to kill her people, the Jews.

The king had Haman hanged. He also sent out a royal announcement to the whole country to stop Haman's plan. The Jews were saved! The king decided instead to make Mordecai his most important official. And the Jews celebrated because they had been delivered from destruction.



Sharing with Others

Ask the students how they would have felt to be in Esther's position. Encourage the students that God has a plan for their lives. He has put someone in their lives just for them to share with. Encourage them to pray and ask advice about knowing how to share and who to share with. Close with a prayer for the students to see God's plan for their lives.

Teacher Tips

- Add to the costumes and include more students in the acting if your class permits.

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Esther

Mordecai's Message

The students will make a craft to remind them of Mordecai's important message to Esther.

Materials

For each student:

- 2 pieces of white paper, 8½" x 11"
- 2 brass fasteners
- scissors
- crayons or markers

For the teacher:

- hole punch
- scissors

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

NOTE: For a more realistic cover, reproduce Page B on heavy, colored paper.

Preparation

1. For each student, cut the two pieces of white paper into four equal pieces. Each student should have a total of eight pieces of paper. Punch two holes, two inches apart, in the top of each piece. See Figure A.
2. Make a sample craft.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *In this week's lesson, you are learning about an amazing young woman named Esther who saved her people. Even though Esther was a young Jewish girl from a family that was not rich or famous, God allowed her to become the queen! God used Esther's cousin Mordecai to persuade Esther that she could save her people. In your craft, you will make your own message pad that will remind you of Mordecai's life-saving message to Esther.*
2. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page B, crayons and scissors. Tell the students to decorate and cut out the front and back covers of their message pads from their copies of Reproducible Page B.

3. When they are finished, give them the eight pieces of white paper you prepared for them. Help them place the paper between the covers and secure with the brass fasteners, as shown in Figure B.

NOTE: For students who want to add extra sheets of paper, let them cut their own paper. Hole punch their sheets before they place it in the pad.

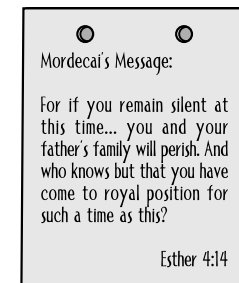
4. Make sure the students write their names on their message pads.

Conclusion

Ask the students how they can use their message pads. (Suggestions: homework; phone messages; Bible study; journal; etc.) Encourage them to think about Esther each time they write a note. Close with a prayer for the students to see God's plan for their lives.

Teacher Tips

- The white paper may be lined or plain. Recycle by using the back of old paper or computer paper.
- A stapler may be a substitute for the brass fasteners.
- Think of additional ways to decorate the pads.
- As an extra treat, give each student a special pencil.
- If you are handy on the computer, personalize the note paper by pre-printing "A Message from: _____" on each corner of the white paper; or have the students write this when they have finished.



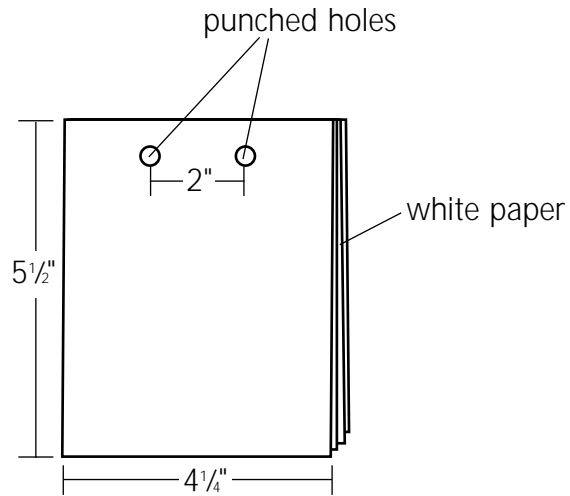


Figure A

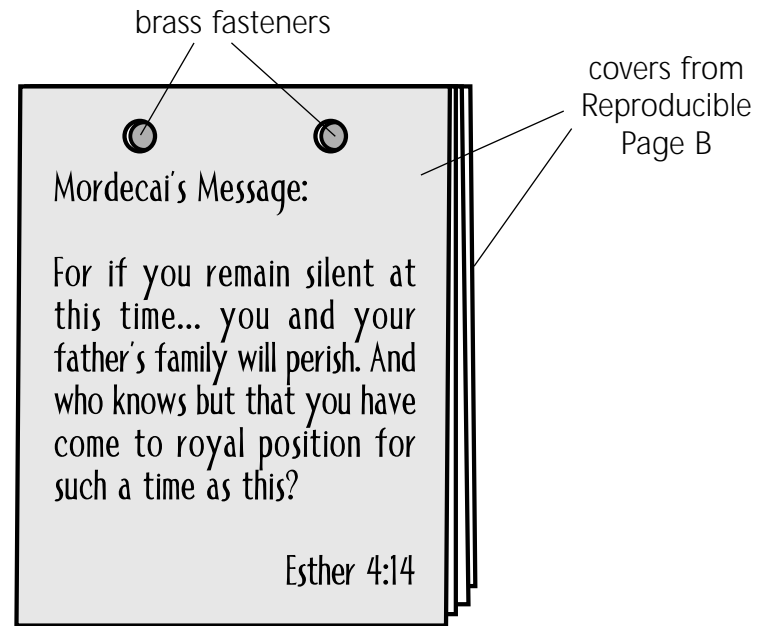


Figure B

Esther

Just in Time

The students will learn and memorize today's Scripture Memory Verse as they consider Esther's courageous love for her people and her family.

Scripture Memory Verse

For if you remain silent at this time...you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

Materials

For the teacher:

- potato

Preparation

1. Learn the Scripture Memory Verse by heart.
2. Practice leading this activity.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *In this week's lesson, you are learning about an amazing young woman named Esther who saved her people. Even though Esther was a young Jewish girl from a family that was not rich or famous, God allowed her to become the queen! God always has a plan to protect and save his people—if they will follow him. In our Scripture Memory Verse, we will hear the words that Mordecai spoke to Esther to help her see God's plan for her.*
2. Show the students the Scripture Memory Verse on the back of this Lesson Card. Read it to the students as they follow along silently. Do this three times. Ask them to say it with you three more times. Ask for volunteers to say it with you.
3. Tell the students: *In this verse, Esther's adoptive father, Mordecai, was telling her that just because she was the queen, it did not mean that she would be safe from the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai wanted her to see that God had allowed her to become the queen so that she could go to the king—the one who had the power to stop it.*

4. Show the students the potato you brought. Tell them that you are going to pass the potato and say the verse one word at a time. As each student takes the potato they say the next word, and so on. The students will continue passing until the entire verse has been said. Repeat this, passing the potato in the opposite direction.
5. Change this exercise by building the verse. You say the first word, and the student next to you says the first word and adds the second. The next student repeats the first two words and adds the third. This continues all the way around until the entire verse has been said.
6. Say the following unfinished verses to the students and have them finish each one for you:

For if you remain silent at this time...you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for _____? Esther 4:14

(such a time as this)

For if you remain silent at this time...you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that _____? Esther 4:14

(you have come to royal position for such a time as this)

For if you remain silent at this time..._____.
And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this? Esther 4:14

(you and your father's family will perish)

For if you _____.
And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this? Esther 4:14

(remain silent at this time...you and your father's family will perish)

Conclusion

Ask the students if they can think of something that God has allowed them to do that will help them to tell others about God. Close with a prayer for the students to see God's plan for their lives.

Teacher Tips

- The potato can be replaced with another similar object that is easy to hold, e.g. a sponge ball, tennis ball, etc.



3rd and 4th Grades

For if you remain silent at
this time...you and your
father's family will perish.
And who knows but that you
have come to royal position
for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

Lesson Objectives

- The students will state that God had a plan for Esther's life.
- The students will describe the result of Esther's courage.
- The students will plan one way to help their families this week.

Lesson Text

Esther 1-10

Scripture Memory Verse

For if you remain silent at this time...you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

Lesson Plan

Greeting and Registration

Preclass Activity: Special Delivery

Welcome and Singing

Centers:

Life Application: A Family Plan

Game: Queen of Hearts

Bible Skills: Exploring Esther

NOTE: Allow time for a snack.

Special Delivery

The students will review important ideas from this week's lesson as they consider the very special way that God delivered his people.

Materials

For each student:

- pencil
- Reproducible Pages:
- Page C, 1 copy for each student

Preparation

Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page C.

Instructions

1. Greet the students as they arrive. Tell them that during Preclass they will do an activity to review the events from this week's Bible Story about Esther.
2. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page C and pencils.
3. Have the students work with a partner. Make sure they have Bibles.
4. Circulate among the students to offer help and encouragement. Make sure they write their names on their pages.

Teacher Tips

- Have an adult assistant available to help struggling readers, or pair strong readers with those needing extra encouragement.

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n**A Family Plan**

The students will review this week's lesson as they think of ways that they can plan to help their families.

Materials

For the teacher:

- school book
- remote control device (for TV or VCR)
- plastic plate or cup
- small pillow
- telephone
- large shopping bag

Preparation

1. Place all of the materials in the shopping bag.
NOTE: If these items are not available, they can be replaced by pictures of them, mounted on paper or index cards.
2. Practice leading this activity with great energy and enthusiasm.

Reviewing the Bible Story

Open your Bible to Esther 1-10. *In your Bible Story this week, you learned about an amazing young woman named Esther. Who was Mordecai? (a cousin who adopted her) Where did they live? (Susa) Why did queen Vashti lose her royal position? (She disrespected her husband.) Who did the king choose to be the new queen? (Esther) Why did Haman hate Mordecai? (He would not bow down to Haman.) What was Haman's horrible plan? (destroy all the Jews) What did Esther do to save her people? (prayed; fasted; went before the king to beg for mercy) And God rescued Esther and her people. He hanged Haman and made Mordecai his chief official. God had a plan for Esther and her family. God has a plan for you and your family too!*

Life Application

Show the students the shopping bag you prepared. Tell them that inside are some household items that are common in most families. Explain that these are items that can be used by them to help their families. Encourage the students that they will think of ways to help their families the way Esther helped—and saved—her own!

Divide the students into pairs. Give each student one of the items in the bag. Tell them that they have a few minutes to think of a way (or ways) that they can use their item to help their family. Explain that the pillow stands for bed time; the book for school work; and the remote control device for television or VCR.

An example: Using the telephone, a student can help keep his brothers and sisters quiet the next time one of his parents is on the phone by playing quiet games with them or reading to them.

After a few minutes, have the students sit in a circle. Have them report to the group their plans to help their families. Encourage all of them for their ideas.

If time permits, give each pair a different object and repeat this activity.

Conclusion

Tell the students that even though their plans may not seem as exciting as Esther's, they can still have a tremendous effect on others. Encourage them to imagine someone becoming a disciple of Jesus—and going to heaven!—just because they first saw your example of thoughtfulness and respect with your parents and family! Close with a prayer for the students to carry out their Family Plans.

Teacher Tips

- Think of additional or alternative items to use in this activity.



Queen of Hearts

The students will review important ideas from this week's lesson as they play this fun card game.

Materials

For the teacher:

- 1 deck of regular playing cards
- 2 pencils

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 2 copies for the teacher

Preparation

1. Remove the four queens from the deck and set them aside.
2. Practice playing this game.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *In this week's lesson, you learned about an amazing young woman named Esther who saved her people. Even though Esther was a young Jewish girl from a family that was not rich or famous, God allowed her to become the queen! And not only did she become the queen, she used her royal position to help save her people. Esther had a heart for God's people. In our game today, we are going to think about ways that Esther showed her courage and love for her family and her people.*
2. Seat the students in a circle. Hold up the four queens from the deck. Tell them that for each one, they will tell something about Esther.
 - For the Queen of Spades, the students will describe one part of God's special plan for Esther's life;
 - For the Queen of Diamonds, the students will tell one way that God blessed Esther;
 - For the Queen of Clubs, the students will tell one way that Esther showed courage;
 - For the Queen of Hearts, the students will tell one way that Esther showed love to her family and her people.



3. Divide the students into two teams. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page D and the pencils to both teams. Mix all four queens into the deck and shuffle. Deal the cards equally among the two teams. Once each team has their cards, have them remove the queens, and prepare their answers by writing on their copy of Reproducible Page D. If a team does not receive any queens, then recollect the cards and re-deal until each team receives at least one.
4. When both teams are ready, have them give their answers. Using the Answer Guide on the back of this Lesson Card, accept all reasonable answers. Give two points for each correct answer.
5. Collect the cards, shuffle and deal them again. Play as many rounds as time permits. Encourage the students to use their Bibles to find their answers. Offer an extra point for any answer taken directly from the book of Esther.
6. At the end of the game, total the teams' points. Encourage both teams for their efforts.

Conclusion

Remind the students that Esther risked her life to save her people. Ask the students if they can think of a reason why they might be afraid to talk about God. Close with a prayer for the students to have courage to know God and help others.

Teacher Tips

- Think of additional card games for this activity. Encourage the students to play them as a post-class activity.

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If a team has:

They will:

Examples:

Queen of Spades

Describe one part of God's special plan for Esther's life.

- adopted by Mordecai
- chosen to be queen
- made the king change the plan to destroy the Jews

Queen of Diamonds

Tell one way that God blessed Esther.

- adopted by her cousin, Mordecai
- she became queen
- lived in the palace
- king loved her and wanted to give her whatever she wanted
- God used her to save his people

Queen of Clubs

Tell one way that Esther showed courage.

- married the king
- told the king about the plot to kill him
- went to the king when she was not invited (broke the law that could have had her killed)
- told the king in front of Haman that Haman was planning to destroy the Jews

Queen of Hearts

Tell one way that Esther showed love to her family and her people.

- obeyed Mordecai's request to go to the king
- prayed and fasted for three days
- risked her life to save her people

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Exploring Esther

The students will become familiar with the book of Esther as they complete this skills activity.

Materials

For each student:

- pencil

For the teacher:

- 5 pieces of poster board, 9" x 12"
- black marker

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for each student

Preparation

1. On each of the pieces of poster board, neatly print the chapter "titles" as they appear on the back of this Lesson Card.
2. Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page E.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *In this week's lesson, you learned about an amazing young woman named Esther who saved her people. Even though Esther was a young Jewish girl from a family that was not rich or famous, God allowed her to become the queen! And not only did she become the queen, she used her royal position to help save her people. Esther had a heart for God's people and God had a great plan for her. In today's activity, you are going to do a survey of the book of Esther.*
2. Tell the students to open their Bibles to the book of Esther. Have the students work with a partner or small group of three. Tell them that you want to ask some questions to get them familiar with the book of Esther.
3. Ask the students:
 - How many chapters are in the book of Esther? (10)
 - How many verses are in the first chapter? (22)
 - How many verses are in the last chapter? (3)
 - What are the first seven words of chapter 6? (That night the king could not sleep)

4. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page E and pencils. Tell the students that you are going to read five sets of chapter titles from the book Esther. The students will match the titles that you read to the chapter titles in their Bibles, and then write them on their pages.
5. Do the first one together. Read the title from the poster board for chapters one and two. Direct the students to the chapter titles listed in their Bibles. "Queen Vashti Deposed" and "Esther Made Queen." Show the students the poster board and have them write: Old Queen, New Queen in the first box on their pages.
6. Mixing up the order of the posters, read the next one to them. Have them look in their Bibles to try and guess which two chapters they describe. Remind them that the two chapters follow each other, i.e. 3 and 4, or 5 and 6, etc. After they guess, show them the poster and let them copy the words onto their pages.
7. Continue until all the titles have been guessed and written in.

Conclusion

Ask the students what is their favorite part of the lesson of Esther and why. Close with a prayer thanking God for Esther and for God's plan for our lives.

Teacher Tips

- Try to arrange for all the students to use a New International Version Bible for this activity.

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Chapters 1 and 2
Old Queen,
New Queen

Chapters 3 and 4
Horrible Haman,
Concerned
Cousin

Chapters 5 and 6
Esther's
Invitation,
Mordecai's
Recognition

Chapters 7 and 8
Haman Hanged,
Royal Rescue

Chapters 9 and 10
JEWbiliation!
MordechHIGH

Precision Decisions

Esther had to make some very important decisions in her life. As the queen, she was the only one who could save all the Jewish people from being completely destroyed. At first, Esther was afraid. She knew it could be very dangerous. But she prayed, fasted and got advice. Then she decided to be very brave. She risked her life—and God blessed her courage. Not only did Esther save her people, the Jews, she caused the destruction of the enemy and the protection of her family. Esther was a hero to her people.

Below are the names of some of the people in today's lesson. Match the scrambled name with the correct name:

manaH	Vashti
therEs	Esther
reXxse	Mordecai
Vishta	Haman
iacedroM	Xerxes

Using your Bible, look up the answers to these questions about the book of Esther.

- How many chapters are in the book of Esther? _____
- What is the longest chapter in this book? _____
- What is the shortest chapter in this book? _____
- In what chapter does Esther become queen? _____
- In what chapter does Haman get hanged? _____

Open your Bible to the Old Testament book of Esther. Find the answer in the Bible; then look for it in the box below.

- Who was Xerxes? (Esther 1:2) _____
- The king set a royal _____ on Esther's head, and she became the _____. (Esther 2:17)
- What was Esther's other name? (Esther 2:7)

- What did Mordecai do for Esther? (Esther 2:7)

adopted her	Hadassah
crown	king queen




Core/Craft

1 copy for each student (Optional - heavy, colored paper)

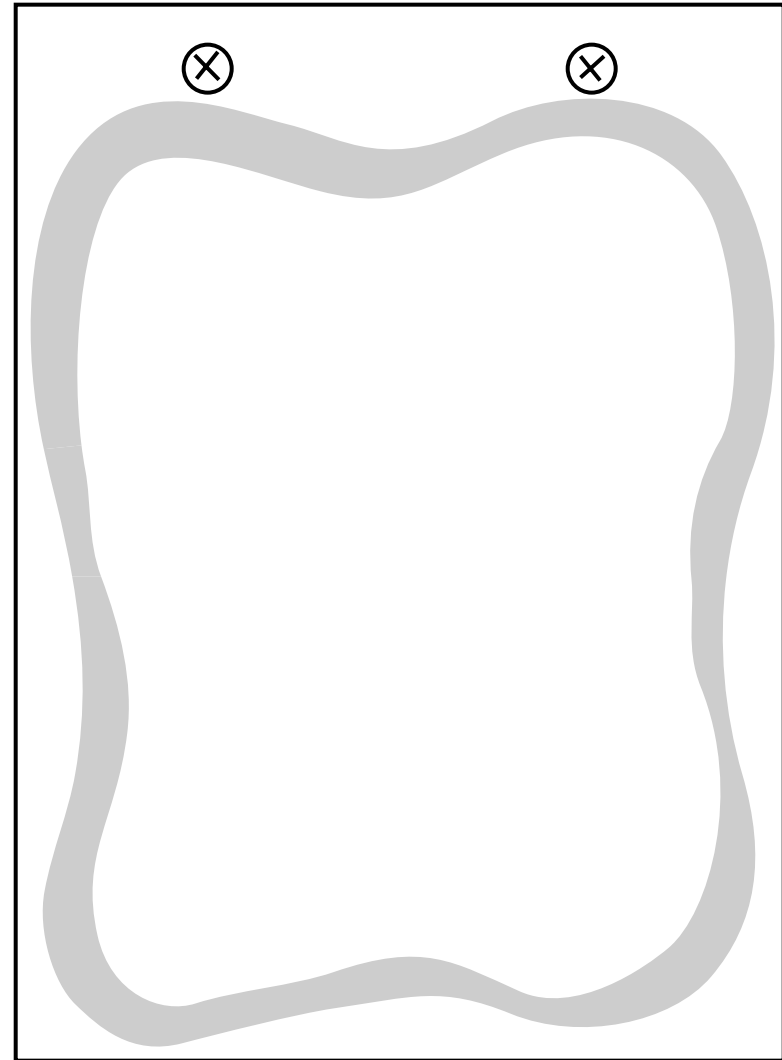
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Mordecai's Message:

For if you remain silent at this time... you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?



Esther 4:14





Special Delivery

Read this story of Esther. When you have finished, do the Special Delivery Challenge at the end.



Esther was a young Jewish girl who was adopted by her cousin **Mordecai**. They lived in Susa.

Because Vashti, the queen of Susa, showed **disrespect** for the king, she was removed from the throne. The king announced that he would find a new wife to be queen.

Esther went to the palace to prepare to meet the king. She had **twelve months** of beauty treatments! **Everyone** loved Esther, including the king. And she became queen.

One day, Mordecai overheard some men plotting to kill the king. Mordecai told Esther about their plot and she told the king. The men were hanged. Later on, the king honored Mordecai for saving his life.

The king's servant Haman did not like Mordecai, because Mordecai would **not bow down** to Haman. Haman made a plan to **destroy all the Jews** in the land. Mordecai came to the palace to tell Esther about the terrible plan. He told her that she should not think that just because she was queen she would be spared.

Esther and her maids, together with all the Jews in Susa, **prayed and fasted** for three days. Then Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet. She told the king that there was a terrible plan to destroy all the Jews, and begged him for mercy. The king was furious when he learned that Haman had done this.

Haman was hanged. The Jews were delivered, and Mordecai was chosen by the king to be his special and most important official.

Special Delivery Challenge

- Who adopted Esther? _____
- Why did Queen Vashti lose her royal position?

- How long were Esther's beauty treatments?

- Who loved Esther? _____
- Why did Haman hate Mordecai? _____
- What was Haman's horrible plan? _____
- What did Esther and her maids do for three days?

- How did Esther save her people from destruction?

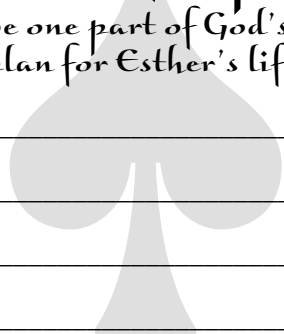


Supplement/Game

2 copies for the teacher

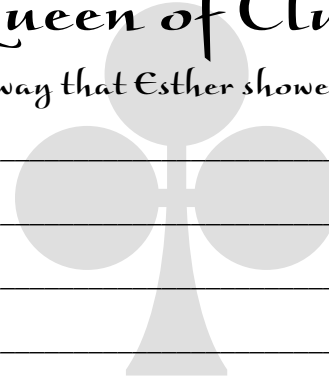
Queen of Spades

Describe one part of God's special plan for Esther's life.



Queen of Clubs

Tell one way that Esther showed courage.



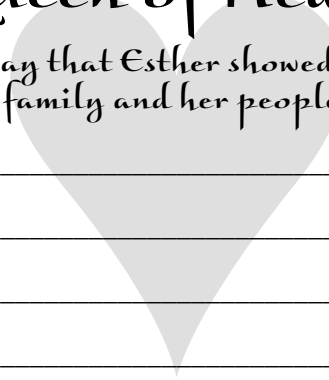
Queen of Diamonds

Tell one way that God blessed Esther.



Queen of Hearts

Tell one way that Esther showed love to her family and her people.





Exploring Esther



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 9 and 10



3rd and 4th Grades