

Esther Became Queen

1

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 1–4

MAIN POINT: Esther became queen.

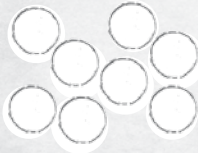
KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

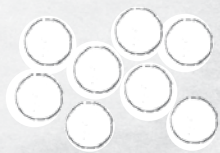
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Babylonian captivity had ended while Cyrus was king of Persia. Some of God's people—now referred to as 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 whom Ahasuerus had chosen to be his queen. The former queen had defied the king and was promptly replaced. Esther did not reveal to the king that she was a Jew.

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 about Mordecai's defiance, but instead of just punishing Mordecai, he planned to kill all the Jews in the kingdom.

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. Esther could be killed for approaching the king without permission. But Esther was willing to take the chance and explain her people's plight.

Remind preschoolers that the survival of God's people was essential to God's plan. God's plan all along was to send the Messiah through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan opposed God's plan, but God was in control. He was working out a plan to use Esther to rescue His people and make the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.



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Esther Became Queen

Esther 1–4

Some of God’s people lived in Persia, and some of the people had gone home to Judah to rebuild God’s temple. A new **king** took over Persia. His name was **Ahasuerus (uh haz yoo EHR uhs)**. Ahasuerus was looking for a queen. He **chose Esther to be queen. Esther lived in Persia with her cousin Mordecai (MAWR duh kigh). Esther was** very beautiful, and she was a **Jew—one of God’s people. But Esther did not tell the king that she was a Jew.**

One day, Mordecai heard about an evil plan. Haman, one of the king’s helpers, wanted to kill all the Jews. Mordecai was upset! He was a Jew, and his friends and family members were Jews. Mordecai did not want them all to be killed. **Mordecai and all the Jews cried.**

Esther heard that all the Jews were upset. She **sent a message to Mordecai. “What’s wrong?” she asked. Mordecai told Esther about Haman’s evil plan.**

“Help us!” Mordecai said. “You are the queen. Ask the king to stop Haman. Ask him to save the Jewish people.”

Esther was afraid. No one was allowed to go to the king unless the king called for that person first. **If someone went to the king without permission, that person could be killed! But Esther also knew that sometimes the king held out his scepter; that meant the person would be allowed to live.**

Mordecai said, “Esther, you are a Jew. If you do not stop Haman, he will kill you too. Maybe this is why you are the queen.” Maybe God made Esther queen so she could save her people!

Esther asked Mordecai and the Jewish people to meet together to pray for help. They also fasted; they did not eat or drink for three days. After three days, Esther planned to go to the king. She was going to try to save the Jews no matter what.

Christ Connection: God's plan was to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan might have stopped God, but God was in control. 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.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Esther chose to approach the king even if it meant dying. Jesus also faced trouble on earth; He can help us when we suffer. (Heb. 2:18) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Esther Became Queen

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 1–4

MAIN POINT: Esther became queen.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.

Welcome time

- “God Keeps His Promises” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Where’s Esther?” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Lead preschoolers to find and circle Esther among all the other beautiful women.

SAY • The new king of Persia was looking for a queen, and he chose one of God’s people to be his new queen.

Queen Esther was a Jew, but she did not tell the king that she was one of God’s people. God made Esther queen for a special reason. Listen to today’s Bible story to find out what that special reason was.

Play “cry” tag

Choose a preschooler to be *It*. *It* chases the other children in the group, trying to tag them. When a preschooler is tagged, he must pretend to cry until another child who has not been tagged tags him. Choose another preschooler to be *It* and play again.



SAY • In today’s Bible story, a man named Mordecai heard about an evil plan to hurt God’s people. Mordecai was upset! Mordecai and all the Jewish people cried, but God had a plan to use Mordecai’s cousin, Esther, to rescue them. Listen to today’s Bible story to find out more.

Draw crowns on mirrors

Provide non-breaking hand mirrors and colorful dry erase markers for preschoolers. Invite a preschooler to use a marker to draw a crown on the mirror. Help a younger preschooler get started by drawing a crown outline on the mirror for him and guiding him to decorate the crown. Show preschoolers how to hold the mirror at an angle so they appear to be wearing the crown.

SAY • Some of God’s people lived in Persia. A new king took over Persia. His name was Ahasuerus (uh haz yoo EHR uhs). Ahasuerus was looking for a queen. He chose Esther to be queen. Esther was very beautiful, and she was a Jew—one of God’s people. God planned to use Esther in an important way.

- non-breaking hand mirrors
- dry erase markers
- paper towels

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to bow or curtsy before moving to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Esther Became Queen

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 1–4

MAIN POINT: Esther became queen.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.

Introduce the Bible story

- toy or paper crown

Invite preschoolers to take turns wearing the crown and sharing what they would do as a king or queen.

SAY • In today’s Bible story, the king of Persia chose Esther, one of God’s people, to be his queen. God made Esther queen for a special reason. Let’s find out why.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- bookmark
- Bible
- “Esther Became Queen” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Esther 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is God’s very own words. Everything in the Bible happened in real life, including today’s Bible story from the Book of Esther.

Show the Bible story video “Esther Became Queen,” or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • Haman wanted to kill God’s people! Mordecai asked Esther to help her people. Could this be the reason **Esther became queen?** We will find out if Esther was able to save her people in our next Bible story, but do you have a guess about what happened?

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who made an evil plan to kill all the Jews? (*Haman*)
2. What did Mordecai ask Esther to do? (*ask the king to stop Haman*)
3. Why was Esther afraid to go to the king? (*If she went to the king without permission, Esther could be killed.*)
4. What did Esther ask the Jewish people to do? (*to pray and to not eat or drink for three days*)
5. What did Esther decide to do to help her people? (*go to the king*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question is, *Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.* God promised to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham’s family. Haman’s evil plan might have kept God from keeping His promise, but God is always in control. By saving the Jews through Queen Esther, God made the way for Jesus to come into the world.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Lamentations 3:22-23. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “Great, Great, Great.”

SAY • God is faithful. *Faithful* means trustworthy. God always does what He says He will do. God showed His faithfulness to His people by making a way for them to be rescued from Haman’s evil plan.

• Key Passage Poster
• “Great, Great, Great” song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: Esther Became Queen

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 1–4

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KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22–23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.



- paper
- crayons or markers
- non-breaking hand mirrors (optional)

Draw self-portraits

Invite preschoolers to draw pictures of themselves. Consider providing hand mirrors so they may look at their faces as they draw. As preschoolers work, talk about the things that make each of them unique. Ask preschoolers to think of words that describe themselves or tell what they like to do. Write those words on their self-portraits.

SAY • Esther became queen because God planned for her to save His people. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world. God has a plan for you, too. His plan for you is part of His plan for the whole world—to show how great He is by rescuing people from sin through Jesus.

Dress up

Provide plastic crowns, tiaras, and costume jewelry. Gather jewel-toned fabrics and adult-sized clothing to serve as “royal” clothes. Invite preschoolers to dress up as kings and queens. Explain that Esther wore special clothes because she was the queen. Encourage preschoolers to look at their reflection in a mirror.

SAY • God’s plan was to send the Messiah into the world

through Abraham's family. **Esther became queen** so God could use her to rescue His people. Haman's evil plan might have stopped God, but God was in control. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.

Dot names

Write the names *Esther* and *Jesus* in large letters on separate sheets of paper for each preschooler. Show preschoolers how to use dot markers or daubers to cover the letters.

SAY • **Esther became queen.** God planned for Esther to rescue His people. God was going to send His Son, Jesus, into the world through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan might have stopped God, but God was in control. By saving the Jews, God made the way for Jesus to come into the world.

- paper
- markers
- dot markers or daubers

Option: Write preschoolers' names on another sheet of paper for them to dot their own name.

Make finger puppets

Print a "Bible Story Finger Puppets" printable for each child. You may print the black and white version for preschoolers to color their own puppets. Assist preschoolers in cutting out the finger puppets. Fit the puppets to a preschooler's fingers and secure with tape. Lead preschoolers to play out the story with their puppets.

SAY • Haman had an evil plan, but God had a good plan. God planned to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan might have stopped God, but God was in control. **Esther became queen** as part of God's plan. By saving the Jews through Esther, God made the way for Jesus to come into the world. Jesus saves everyone who puts their trust in Him!

- "Bible Story Finger Puppets" printable
- scissors
- tape
- markers or crayons (optional)

Tip: Keep the finger puppets in a safe place to use again next week.

- large sheet of paper
- markers
- stickers

Option: Share prayer requests with preschool parents via text, email, or mail.

Make a prayer calendar

Draw six lines on a large sheet of paper to create seven sections. Write a day of the week in each section. Point to each day of the week and lead preschoolers to say the day of the week with you.

Invite preschoolers to think of things they can pray for on each day of the week. Prompt preschoolers with suggestions, such as “Pray that you will grow up to be men and women who love and follow God,” “Pray that God will help you to do the right thing even when it is hard,” or “Pray that you will one day turn from your sin and follow Jesus.”

Write a prayer request for each day of the week. You may also choose to draw a picture to illustrate the prayer. Allow preschoolers to use markers and stickers to decorate the completed prayer calendar.

SAY • Esther became queen for a reason—to speak up for God’s people. Esther asked Mordecai and the Jewish people to meet together to pray. After one, two, three days [*count three days on the prayer calendar*], Esther planned to go to the king. Sometimes you may have to speak up for what is right even if it is hard. You can ask God to help you, and He will. God uses people to work out His good plan.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve a snack. As preschoolers eat, remind them that while the Jewish people prayed to God for help, they also did not eat or drink for three days. Explain that this is called a *fast*. After the three days, Esther planned to go to the king. She was going to try to save the Jews no matter what.

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of what they would like to do when they grow up. Remind preschoolers that **Esther became queen** because God planned it. Explain that God has a plan for each person's life, and each person is part of God's plan for the whole world. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for Your good plan. You planned to send Your Son, Jesus, into the world to save sinners like us. You even plan to use sinners like us to do Your plan. Help us to follow You and to do what You want us to do no matter what. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*