

God Saved His People Through Esther

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 5–10

MAIN POINT: God used Esther to save His people.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

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

2

SMALL GROUP OPENING (15–20 MINUTES) **PAGE 110** **LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (10–15 MINUTES) **PAGE 112** **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES** (20–25 MINUTES) **PAGE 114**



Leader BIBLE STUDY

During the time of Queen Esther—more than 450 years before Jesus was born—the Jewish people were scattered around the Persian Empire. The Book of Esther tells the unlikely story of a young Jewish woman who, as the queen of the Persian Empire, saved her people.

After Esther was chosen as the queen of Persia, she received news that an evil man named Haman had a plan to kill all of the Jews. The Book of Esther is the only book in the Bible that never mentions God by name, but God clearly worked through Esther and her cousin Mordecai to save the Jewish people. Mordecai even suggested to Esther that God's hand was in the situation: "Who knows, perhaps you

have come to your royal position for such a time as this” (Esth. 4:14).

Build the tension of the story as you teach. Point out that if Haman was successful in killing all the Jews, his evil plan would put God’s promises in jeopardy. God had promised to bless the world through Abraham’s family and to send a King from the line of David who would rule forever.

Esther had a choice to make. She could do nothing and face destruction (Esth. 4:13-14), or she could risk her life by approaching the king to plead for the protection of the Jews. Esther and the Jewish people prayed and fasted for three days before Esther went to the king.

Esther was welcomed by the king, who offered to give her anything she wanted—up to half of the kingdom. Esther told the king of Haman’s plot against her people. The king ordered that Haman be killed instead!

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



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

God Saved His People Through Esther

Esther 5–10

God's people in Persia were in trouble. One of their enemies, a man named Haman, made a plan to kill all of them. But Esther the **queen** was going to try to help them. Esther was also a Jew. So **Esther and the Jews prayed and asked God for help. On the third day, Esther went to see the king.**

Esther saw the king sitting on his throne. **Esther was afraid. No one was supposed to go to the king unless he asked for them.** Esther came closer, and the king held out his golden scepter. This meant that Esther was allowed to come to him. **Esther** walked toward the king and **touched the tip of the scepter.**

“What do you want, Queen Esther?” the king said. “I will give you anything, up to half of my kingdom.”

Esther said, **“I have prepared a feast. Would you and Haman come eat with me today?”**

“Yes,” said the king. So the king and his helper Haman went to Esther's feast. After they ate, the king said, “What do you want, Queen Esther? I will give you anything, up to half of my kingdom.”

Esther said, **“Will you and Haman come to my feast tomorrow?”**

“Yes,” said the king.

The next day, the king and Haman went to Esther's feast. After they ate, the king said, **“What do you want, Queen Esther? I will give you anything, up to half of my kingdom.”**

Esther said, **“I am a Jew, and there is a plan to kill me and my people.”**

The king asked, “Who is planning to hurt you?”

“This evil enemy, Haman!” Esther said.

The king was angry. He ordered for Haman to be punished. Then he made a law to keep the Jewish people safe from their enemies.

Christ Connection: Haman had an evil plan to kill the Jews, but God was in control. God used Esther in His plan to rescue His people. When Jesus came to earth, His enemies killed Him. But Jesus did not stay dead. After Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the dead. Jesus has power over evil.



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

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Esther trusted God to keep His promise to hear her when she called for help. (Ps. 17:6) Jesus is God's answer to our call to be rescued from sin. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: God Saved His People Through Esther

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 5–10

MAIN POINT: God used Esther to save His people.

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

- “What’s on Your Plate?” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to draw on the plate what they would like to eat at a feast.

SAY • In today’s Bible story, Esther prepared two feasts. She invited the king and Haman to her feasts. The king was so happy with Esther that he said he would give her anything, up to half of his kingdom. Remember last week’s Bible story? What do you think Esther asked the king for?

Make invitations



- construction paper
- scissors
- markers or crayons

Explain to preschoolers that they will make invitations to invite friends to church. Provide a half-sheet of construction paper and markers or crayons. Show preschoolers how to fold the paper in half to create an invitation. Invite them to

draw a picture on the front of the card. Transcribe a message from a preschooler on the inside of his card. Mail the finished cards to preschoolers who have not been to church in a while or to prospective families.

SAY • Our friends will be so happy to get your invitations!

In today's Bible story, Esther invited the king and Haman to a feast. Haman wanted to hurt God's people. Why would Esther invite him to her feast? Listen to our Bible story to find out why.

Retell last week's Bible story

Print and prepare the "Bible Story Finger Puppets." Retell last week's Bible story, "Esther Became Queen," using the puppets. Wear the finger puppets yourself or select preschoolers to wear them as you tell the story.

SAY • Today we will hear the end of this story. What do you think happened? Was Esther able to save God's people from the evil Haman? Did Haman stop God's plan to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham's family? Can anyone stop God's plan?

- "Bible Story Finger Puppets" printable
- scissors
- tape

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. As preschoolers move to Bible study, ask them the big picture question and lead them to respond with the answer.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: God Saved His People Through Esther

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 5–10

MAIN POINT: God used Esther to save His people.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

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

Introduce the Bible story

- toy scepter

Option: If a toy scepter is unavailable, place a foam ball at the end of a cardboard tube and cover it with shiny paper.

Invite preschoolers to touch the end of the toy scepter.

SAY • During Esther’s time, if someone went to the king without permission, that person could be killed! But sometimes the king held out his scepter; that meant the person would be allowed to live. Let’s find out if the king held out his scepter for Esther.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- bookmark
- Bible
- “God Saved His People Through Esther” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Esther 5 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is to be treasured more than every other book. The Bible is God’s words, and all God’s words are true. Today’s Bible story comes from Esther.

Show the Bible story video “God Saved His People Through Esther,” 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 had an evil plan, but God was in control.

God used Esther to save His people. When Jesus came to earth, His enemies killed Him. But Jesus did

not stay dead. After Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the dead. Jesus has power over evil.

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

1. What did the king do when Esther came to see him? (*held out his scepter*)
2. What did the king say he would give Esther? (*anything, up to half his kingdom*)
3. Whom did Esther invite to both her feasts? (*the king and Haman*)
4. What did the king do when he found out Haman was planning to hurt Esther's people? (*punished Haman and made a law to keep the Jewish people safe*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Who can answer our big picture question? ***Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.***

God had promised to bless the whole world through Abraham's family and to send a King who would rule forever. If Haman's plan had worked, all the people from Abraham's family would be gone, but God kept His promise and stopped Haman's plan.

• 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 merciful and faithful. God showed mercy to His people by rescuing them from Haman's evil plan.

• Key Passage Poster
• "Great, Great, Great" song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: God Saved His People Through Esther

BIBLE PASSAGE: Esther 5–10

MAIN POINT: God used Esther to save His people.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

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



• noisemakers (optional)

Option: Consider telling last week's story as well.

Drown out Haman's name

Retell the Bible story. Encourage preschoolers to listen for Haman's name. When they hear it, they should shout, stomp, and make as much noise as possible to drown his name out.

SAY • God used Esther to save His people. Jewish people today still celebrate how God used Esther every year during a holiday called *Purim*. They read the story of Esther and make noise to drown out Haman's name. Sadly, the Jewish people do not believe that God rescued them from Haman so He could send His Son, Jesus, to rescue them from sin. Let's pray for the Jewish people to believe that Jesus is the Messiah who died on the cross and rose from the dead.

Roll out the red carpet

Roll out a long sheet of red paper on the floor. Set a chair at one end of the paper to serve as a throne. Choose a preschooler to be *king*. Place a toy crown on his head and a toy scepter in the *king's* hand. Lead him to sit on the "throne." Form a line at the other end of the red paper. Invite preschoolers to move across the paper to the *king*

- large sheet of red paper
- toy scepter
- toy crown

one by one, based on the instructions you give them. Suggestions include walking with baby steps, walking with giant steps, marching, hopping like a frog, and so forth. The *king* will hold out his scepter. When a preschooler touches the scepter, she may move to the back of the line. Choose another preschooler to be *king* and play again.

SAY • God used Esther to save His people. Haman had an evil plan to kill the Jews, but God was in control. When Jesus came to earth, His enemies killed Him. But Jesus did not stay dead. After Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the dead. Jesus has power over evil.

Answer “Who am I?”

Say the following statements and invite preschoolers to guess the person. When a preschooler knows the answer, she should remain quiet and touch her nose.

- I was chosen to be the queen of Persia. Who am I? (*Esther*)
- I wanted to hurt the Jews. Who am I? (*Haman*)
- My cousin became the queen of Persia. Who am I? (*Mordecai*)
- I held out my scepter so Esther could talk to me. Who am I? (*the king*)
- We prayed and fasted for three days for Esther. Who are we? (*the Jews*)
- I kept My promise to My people and saved them through Queen Esther. Who am I? (*God*)
- My enemies killed Me, but I did not stay dead. I came back to life to save sinners. (*Jesus*)

SAY • God used Esther to save her people. Haman had an evil plan to kill the Jews, but God was in control.



God used Esther in His plan to rescue His people. When Jesus came to earth, His enemies killed Him. But Jesus did not stay dead. After Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the dead. This was God's plan all along. No evil plan can stop God's good plan.

Host a Bible times feast

- Allergy Alert download
- tablecloth
- paper plates
- napkins
- Bible times food (cheese, pita bread, raisins, grapes, figs, honey, olives)

Cover a table with a nice tablecloth. Set out festive paper plates and napkins. Serve bite-sized pieces of foods such as cheese, pita bread, raisins, grapes, figs, honey, and olives. Encourage preschoolers to try the foods, but do not force a preschooler to eat something he does not want to eat.

SAY • At her second feast, Esther told the king that Haman planned to kill her and her people. The king punished Haman and made a law to keep the Jewish people safe. **God used Esther to save His people.**

Divide things in half

- counting manipulatives
- bins, 3

Set out an even number of various counting items such as counting bears, blocks, pom-poms, and so forth. Place the counting items in a bin. Provide two empty bins. Show preschoolers how to divide the items in half by alternating putting one item in each bin. When the items have been divided, lead a preschooler to count how many items are in each bin to see if they are equal. Invite a preschooler to repeat the process with a different number of items.

SAY • The king told Esther that he would give her anything, up to half his kingdom. Esther only wanted her people to be safe. **God used Esther to save His people.** Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to save people from sin.

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.

For snack, serve the foods used in the Bible times feast activity. Talk about how Esther was afraid to go to the king, but she did anyway. Sometimes we might be afraid to do things God asks us to do, but God does not leave us to do them on our own. He is always with us. God gave Esther favor with the king, and **God used Esther to save His people.**

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

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She 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 themselves praying. Remind preschoolers that we can ask God to help us when we are afraid. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, no evil plan can stop Your good plan. Thank You for sending Jesus to earth. Thank You that when Jesus' enemies killed Him, He did not stay dead. He rose from the dead. Help us to remember that Jesus has power over evil. 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.

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