

Esther Saved Her People

Bible Story: Esther

Key Passage: ¹⁰ And 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

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

Bottom Line: God has a role for me to play in His plan.

Christ Connection: *God was in control over Haman's evil plan to destroy the Jews. Like Haman, Satan wants to ruin God's plan and 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. All who believe in Jesus are rescued from sin and death.*

LARGE GROUP: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways.

Say This:

In any project, it's important to have a plan. Did you know that God has a plan too? Since the beginning of time, God planned to rescue His people from sin. Even before God created us He knew that we would sin and be in desperate need of a Rescuer. There is nothing that can stop God's plan from happening.

As we listen to our Bible story, it's useful to have a big picture question to help us understand how the individual story fits in to the overall story of the Bible. Today's let's try to ask the question: who is in control of everything? Think about this question as you listen to the story. I have a Bible story for us today that tells us more and can help us answer this question. Do you want to hear it? Great! Let's get started.

Play Video

Long before our story took place, God made a promise to Abraham. God chose Abraham to become the father of a great nation, the nation of Israel. God promised that through Abraham's family God would bless the entire world. For hundreds of years the Israelites battled against sin. Sometimes they followed God, but most of the time they were unfaithful to Him. Eventually, God disciplined the people by exiling them Babylon. God promised after 70 years in captivity the Israelites would finally return to their home. We've learned that the captives came home and the temple was rebuilt. But not all of God's people returned to Israel. Some stayed in the nation of Persia.

We often think of queens as powerful women who live in the lap of luxury, surrounded by riches and nice things. However, becoming queen in Persia may not have been a luxurious or nice prospect for Esther. She would have been forced to become queen whether or not she wanted to marry the king. Esther's life likely would have been much easier if the king never decided to bring her in as a possible queen. But God made Esther a queen to protect His people.

The Jews needed someone to speak for them-to rescue them. Approaching the king without being called in could have led to Esther's death. Although she was afraid, she was willing to do

whatever it took to protect her people. God's plan was to send Jesus through the family of Judah. God cannot be caught by surprise, and His plans cannot be stopped. By saving His people from death, God made His own name great throughout the land of Persia.

Next Steps

As we continue our journey through the Bible, it is important to always remember that we are studying the bible so that we will grow to love, follow, and obey Jesus. We aren't just learning to know things. We are learning so that we will do things that honor God. What your next step?

You can talk about this in your group, but begin to think about it now:

- Believe- believe that you are a sinner who needs a Savior and Jesus is your Savior because He died for you and rose again.
- Get baptized- show your faith by getting dipped back in the water and raised out of the water.
- Read your Bible and pray- read your Bible and pray every day so that you get to know God personally
- Serve others- serve others at home, at school, and at church.

If you need help identifying and taking your next step please talk to you small group leader or me. Pray, ask God to show you your next step and then take it.

Christ connection

Esther's life reminds us of Jesus, who was also willing to die to save God's people according to God's plan-and He really did die! Do you remember our big picture question? **Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.**

God was not surprised by Haman's plot against the Jews. God was in control over Haman's evil plan to destroy the Jews. Like Haman, Satan wants to ruin God's plan and 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. All who believe in Jesus are rescued from sin and death.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 40 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Bible Review and Skills

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Esther 2. Explain that the Book of Esther is in the Old Testament, which means the events in the book happened before Jesus came to earth.

We do not know exactly who wrote this book, but it was someone who had access to historical

documents and cared about the Jewish people and their lives- perhaps Esther's cousin Mordecai.

What You Say: “ 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. The Persians had conquered the Babylonians, who had conquered Assyria.

Choose a volunteer to read Esther 2:10-11.

2. Discussion Questions:

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

- What secret did Esther keep from the king? (*She was a Jew, Est 2:10*)
- Why was Mordecai upset? (*He learned that Haman planned to kill all the Jews, Est 4:1-3*)
- What could have happened to Esther as a result of her going before the king uninvited? (*She could have been put to death, Est 4:11*)
- Why do you think Esther was willing to die to save her people? *Help the kids see that Esther understood that she had been made queen for this reason. She understood that God was working through her life and spent days fasting and praying about this issue. God gave her courage to stand up for her people.*
- Esther spoke up for her people. Who speak up for us today? *Explain that when we believe Jesus is our savior, He speaks to God the Father on our behalf. When we are joined to Jesus, He gives us His perfect righteousness and obedience (Hebrews 7:25)*
- How can you speak up for a friend in need? *Guide kids to think about situations where they may see people being mistreated, such as bullying at school. Remind them that God has commanded us to treat everyone with love and to protect those in need. Brainstorm things they could say to help others.*
- 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. (1 Corinthians 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 for them. In a greater way, God sent Jesus at just the right time and Jesus willingly died on the cross to save sinners. Jesus rose from the dead. One day, He will come back to rule as King forever. Philippians 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 in their neighborhood, church and community. 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. (Psalm 138:8)*

Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster, balloon

- **What You Do:**
Ask kids to say the Memory Verse with you 1 time.

- Blow up the balloon. As you are blowing the balloon and tying it, ask kids to form a circle.
- You are going to toss the balloon in the air and kids need to keep it in the air as you say the memory verse.
- Each bounce of the balloon is one word.
- Variation: See if you can say the whole memory verse while the balloon is in the air.

What You Say: “ Have you ever gone through something really difficult and you weren’t sure if you would ever get through it? Our memory verse reminds us that God will restore us and strengthen us. God knows that we are weak, but our weaknesses point us back to our need for Jesus. When life is hard we know that we can’t do anything apart from God.

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Journal page (1 for each kid), markers/crayons, Bibles

What You Do:

- Distribute journal pages and pencils.
- Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:
- **What do we learn about following God from today’s passage?**
- **What is one thing that God is teaching you right now?**
- **Where is one area that you would like to be closer to God?**
- **What is your next step to keep loving, following and obeying Jesus? (Believe, Baptism)**
- When your kids identify their next steps, take note and circle back to them so that you can help them and give them/their parents resources to help them take their next step.
- As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas and write in your small group journal.

What You Say: God, You are good and trustworthy. We confess that we do not always understand Your plans. We do not always want to follow You. Help us remember that Your plans are for Your glory and our good. You are in control of all things. Give us power to obey You by faith. We love You. Amen

As adults arrive to pick up, tell kids to recite the memory verse to them.