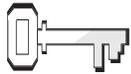


Esther's Banquet



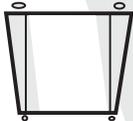
References

Esther 5; 6; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 602



Memory Verse

"In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6, NIV).



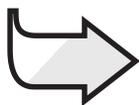
Objectives

The children will:

Know that some acts of service require courage that only God can give.

Feel the importance of being true to God at all times.

Respond by asking God for help to do what is right.



The Message

With God's help, I have the courage to do what is right.

Monthly Theme

People are attracted to God through the lives of His people.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Esther knows that going to the king without his invitation could result in her death. The king gives her permission to approach and accepts her invitation to a banquet with Haman. At that banquet she invites them to return for another the next day.

That night the king cannot sleep. Reading from his book of records, he discovers that Mordecai has not been rewarded for revealing an assassination plot. The king asks Haman how he should reward someone for a great service. Haman, thinking the king wants to honor him, suggests that the person should be led around the city wearing the king's robe and riding the king's horse. The horse should be led by a noble calling out, "This is the man the king wishes to honor." The king tells Haman to go and do this to Mordecai. Haman is very angry, and is even more determined to kill Mordecai and his people.

This is a lesson about service.

Esther served her people and her God by bravely going before the king without being invited. Mordecai was rewarded in an unusual way for his service to the king. Even so, God calls us to serve Him and His people by speaking bravely for what is right, by refusing to join others in doing wrong.

Teacher Enrichment

"Esther was a remarkably beautiful young woman whose tact and winsomeness brought her into royal favor. . . . Ahasuerus [Xerxes] gave her this rank in his 7th year, about the month of January, 478 B.C. . . . Four years later, in April, 474 B.C., the royal favorite, Haman, cast lots and then secured a royal decree authorizing the slaying of all Jews within the borders of the Persian Empire and the confiscation of their property. . . . In a supreme act of bravery equaled only by her infinite tact, Esther appealed to the king on behalf of her people, apparently for the first time revealing that she herself was Jewish. Upon Haman's execution, the king elevated Mordecai to Haman's former position, and in the month of June signed a decree prepared by Mordecai that, in effect, reversed Haman's decree. . . . Ever since, the Jews have celebrated this festival in honor of Esther and in commemoration of her spirit of bravery and devotion, which God used as the means of bringing deliverance to His people" (*The SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 341).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Activities	up to 10	A. <i>Faith Jump</i> B. <i>Trust Fall</i>	two adult helpers, blindfold, plank or board none
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> none pretty piece of fabric from Lesson 5, paper, pencils, pins
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, gold "scepter," royal cloaks, table and chairs Bible Bibles, six paper plates, cellophane tape
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Doing the Right Thing</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Being Courageous</i>	paper strips, cellophane tape, gold/silver foil, pencils

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week's memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- two adult helpers
- blindfold
- plank or board

A. Faith Jump

The plank or board must be wide enough for the child to stand on and strong enough to hold the child's weight. Ask for volunteers. Have them wait outside with a helper. Bring them in one by one. Blindfold the child and ask them to step up on the board. Instruct the adult helpers in advance to lift the board six inches (15 cm) from the floor. They should move the board from side to side as if it is being lifted high up in the air. When the child believes that the board is high in the air, ask them to jump off. Most will not jump. Help them off and untie the blindfold.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you think when I asked you to jump off the board? Did it take courage to jump? What did you think when you saw that the board was so close to the floor? Would you have jumped if you had known? Have you ever been in a situation where you needed a lot of courage? Our memory verse says: "In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6). What does that mean? Today we are going to talk about how God can give us courage to do what is right in every situation. Today's message says:**



WITH GOD'S HELP, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

Say that with me.

B. Trust Fall

Ask for volunteers. Have them wait outside with a helper. Bring them in one at a time. Ask them to stand at a certain place and on the count of three to fall straight back without bending their legs. Have an adult catch the child.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when I asked you to fall back? Would it have made a difference if you had been able to see the person behind you? Have you ever been in a situation where you needed a lot of courage? In our story today, we find that Esther needed a lot of courage. Our memory verse says: "In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6). What**

does that mean? God will give us courage to do what is right no matter what the situation. Today's message says:



WITH GOD'S HELP, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise **Any Time**



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

"I Will Make You Fishers of Men" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 135)

"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 90)

"A Little Talk With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 98)

"This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 134)

"Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 133)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize the theme of service, and that it is not always easy to stand up for what is right, but that God will give us the courage to do so, if we ask Him.



Offering

Say: **God asks us to serve Him in many different ways. One way of serving Him is to be faithful with our offerings.**



Prayer

Ask the children to write or draw something they are afraid of, or a problem they are facing. Pin their papers to the cloth behind the throne with the other prayer requests. Pray especially for courage to do what is right in difficult circumstances.

You Need:

- cloth (see Lesson 5)
- small squares of paper
- pencils
- pins

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- gold “scepter” (dowel or stick covered with gold foil)
- royal “cloaks”
- table and three chairs

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Esther, Mordecai, King, Haman. The remainder of the children can alternate as the king’s servants, the crowd when Haman leads Mordecai through the streets, and Haman’s family and friends.

Setting the Scene

Remind the children of the story so far: **Esther was chosen to be queen to replace Queen Vashti. On the advice of her cousin, Mordecai, she had not told anyone that she was a Jew. Haman was second only to the king. He disliked Mordecai because Mordecai refused to bow down to him. Haman persuaded the king to sign a law allowing him to have all the Jews killed. Mordecai appealed to Esther for help. Esther has promised to try to see the king.**

Read or tell the story.

After three days and nights of not eating or drinking, Esther dressed in her prettiest clothes and went to see the king. She walked to the door of his throne room and stood quietly. *[Have Esther walk and stand near the king.]* When King Xerxes saw her, he smiled and held out his gold scepter. *[King holds out scepter.]* Esther walked toward him and touched it. *[Esther walks forward and touches scepter.]*

“What can I do for you, Esther?” he asked. “I’ll give you up to half of my kingdom.”

“I’ve prepared a banquet for you and Haman today,” replied Esther. “Will you please come?”

“Of course! We’ll be there,” the king smiled.

Later, when Haman and the king were at her banquet *[sit around table]*, the king said to Esther, “What can I do for you, Queen Esther? Remember, I’ll give you up to half of my kingdom.”

“Come back tomorrow with Haman to another banquet,” Esther replied. “Then I will answer your question.”

Haman left for home feeling very happy. Not everyone was invited to dinner with the king and queen! Then he saw Mordecai sitting at the gate. *[Mordecai sits at “gate.”]* Mordecai did not bow. He did not even stand up when he saw Haman. Haman was very angry, but he said nothing.

When Haman arrived home, he bragged to his family and friends *[Haman struts around, looking very proud]*, “I have 10 sons. I have money and power. The king likes me. He gave me a great position. I’m the most important person in the palace after the king. I’m the only person Queen Esther invited to her banquet with the king. And she invited me back again tomorrow.”

Then he complained to them about Mordecai *[changes attitude, acts angry]*. “Everything would be perfect except for Mordecai!” he shouted. “He’s always sitting at the king’s gate. He refuses to honor me.”

“Why don’t you have him hanged?” someone suggested.

Haman liked that idea. So he had his workmen build a hanging platform where everyone could see it.

That night the king had trouble going to sleep. So he asked one of his servants to bring the court records to him to read. He read about the two guards who had planned to kill him. He read about Mordecai’s part in reporting those plans and saving the king from death.

"Did we reward Mordecai?" the king asked his servant.

"No, sir," said the servant. "We never did."

The next morning Haman came into the courtyard to ask for permission to hang Mordecai. *[Haman comes hurrying in.]* But before he could say anything, the king asked him, "What should be done to honor a man who has done a good thing?"

Haman thought the king was talking about him. So he said, "Give him a royal robe and a crown to wear. Let him ride through the streets on a royal horse. Have your servant announce, 'This is what the king does for a man he wants to honor.'"

"I like that, Haman," King Xerxes replied. "Do everything that you've said for Mordecai right away. Don't leave anything out." *[King dismisses Haman with a wave of his hand.]*

Haman had to do what the king asked. But he was so embarrassed and ashamed that he hid his face all the way home. When he got there, he told his friends and family what had happened.

"You're losing all your power to Mordecai," they said. "You can't win. You're going to be ruined." But before Haman had time to think and answer, the king's servants arrived and hurried him away to the second banquet Queen Esther had prepared. *[Servants come and hurry Haman away.]*

Next week we will find out what happened at that banquet.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

How do you think Esther felt when

she went to the king's court? How do you think she felt when Haman came to her banquet?

Why did Haman suggest the reward for the person who had pleased the king?

How do you think Mordecai felt about being led through the streets by a man he knew wanted to kill him?

Sometimes we face very tough situations. No matter what the situation, God will give us the courage to do what is right if we ask Him to. Let's say today's message together:



WITH GOD'S HELP, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

Memory Verse

Have the children repeat the verse and the actions several times until they know it.

You Need:

• Bible

In all your ways Cross hands above head. Bring arms down to the sides to make a big circle.

submit to him Point upward.

and he will make your paths straight. Put palms together, slowly push them away from you in a straight line.

Proverbs 3:6 Palms together, then open.

You Need:

- six paper plates
- Bibles
- cellophane tape

Bible Study

Tape the following questions on the bottom of the plates, one on each plate. Divide the children into six small groups or pairs. Make sure that nonreaders have help. Give each group a plate. If time allows, let the plates circulate from group to group.

Say: **Let's pretend these are some plates from Queen Esther's banquet. On the bottom of each is a question that will help us understand more about the story. Use your Bibles and prepare an answer to share with the class.**

Why did Esther ask Mordecai and the Jews to fast with her and her maids for three days and three nights? (Esther 4:16)

Why was it a brave thing for Queen Esther to go to see the king? (Esther 4:11)

Find two things that show that the king loved Queen Esther. (Esther 5:2, 3)

What happened one night when the king couldn't sleep? (Esther 6:1-3)

Why did Haman suggest that the person the king wanted to honor should

wear the king's robe and ride his horse? (Esther 6:6)

How did Haman feel after he had led Mordecai on horseback through Susa? (Esther 6:12)

Allow time for class discussion.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did Esther need to fast and pray for three days? What does this tell us to do when we are in difficulty?** (We need to take time to pray.)

The king rewarded Mordecai for protecting him. Should we always expect to be rewarded when we do what is right? (No.) **Why?**

When we do what is right, we are serving God. No matter what the situation we can always ask God to give us the courage to do what is right. It does not matter if we do not get a reward. What matters is that we serve God by doing what is right. Let's say today's message:



WITH GOD'S HELP, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

3

Applying the Lesson

Doing the Right Thing

Divide the children into small groups. Ask them to discuss what they would do in one or more of the following situations and report back to the rest of the class. The rest of the class can then say whether they agree with the suggested solution.

1. You see someone being mean to another child and bullying him. How can you stand up for what is right? Why will that take courage? Will God help you have the courage you need?

2. You are in a store with some friends, and they ask you to steal some candy. What do you do? How can you stand up for what is right? Why does it take courage to stand up to your friends? Who will help you?

3. You are walking past the house of an elderly woman and one of your friends suggests that you throw stones at her house. Will you do it? Why will it take courage to do what is right?

Debriefing

Ask: **Which scenario was the hardest?**

Why does it take courage to do what is right? What do we need to do every day to make sure that we make right choices? (Ask God to be with us and help us.) **Let's say our message together:**



WITH GOD'S HELP, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Being Courageous

Help each child make a scepter by rolling the paper strip into a thin tube. Tape it and cover it with gold or silver foil. The scepter can be decorated by creating lines with a pencil.

Divide the children into pairs. Say: **In your pairs share a time when you were afraid or you had a difficult decision to make. When you have shared your experience, your partner can respond by saying the message: With God's help, I have the courage to do what is right.** Allow time, then reverse roles.

Debriefing

Ask: **Did anyone come up with a situation where you felt that God could not help? We can be sure that God will help us no matter what the situation.**

Put your scepter where you can see it at home and share it with your family as you tell them about Esther. When you do not know what to do, remember Esther and ask God to help you. Let's say our message together:



WITH GOD'S HELP, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

You Need:

- paper strips—6 inches x 9 inches (15 cm x 20 cm)
- cellophane tape
- gold/silver foil
- pencils

Esther's Banquet

References

Esther 5; 6;
Prophets and Kings,
p. 602

Memory Verse

"In all your ways
submit to him, and
he will make your
paths straight"
(Proverbs 3:6, NIV).

The Message

With God's help, I
have the courage
to do what is right.

Have you ever been to a special dinner where everyone dressed in their best clothes? Esther planned a special dinner, a banquet, for the king and Haman.

After three days and nights of not eating and drinking, Esther dressed in her prettiest clothes. Then she went to see the king. She walked to the door of his throne room and stood quietly. When King Xerxes saw her, he smiled and held out his gold scepter. Esther walked toward him and touched it.

"What can I do for you, my queen?" he smiled. "I'll give you up to half of my kingdom."

"I've prepared a banquet for you and Haman today," replied Esther. "Will you please come?"

"Of course! We'll be there," he said to Esther.

Later when Haman and the king were at her banquet, the king asked Esther, "What can I do for you, Queen

Esther? Remember, I'll give you up to half of my kingdom."

"Come back tomorrow with Haman to another banquet," she replied. "I will answer your question then."

Haman left for home feeling very happy. Not everyone was

invited to dinner with the king and queen! Then he saw Mordecai sitting at the gate. Mordecai did not bow to him. He didn't even stand up when he saw Haman. Haman was very angry, but he said nothing.

When Haman arrived home, he bragged to his family and friends, "I have 10 sons. I have money and power. The king likes me. He gave me a great position. I'm the most important person in the palace after the king. I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to her banquet for the king. And she invited me back again tomorrow."

Then he complained to them about Mordecai. "Everything would be perfect except for him," he said. "He's always sitting at the king's gate. He refuses to honor me."

"Why don't you have him hanged?" someone suggested.

Haman liked that idea. So he had his workmen build a hanging platform.

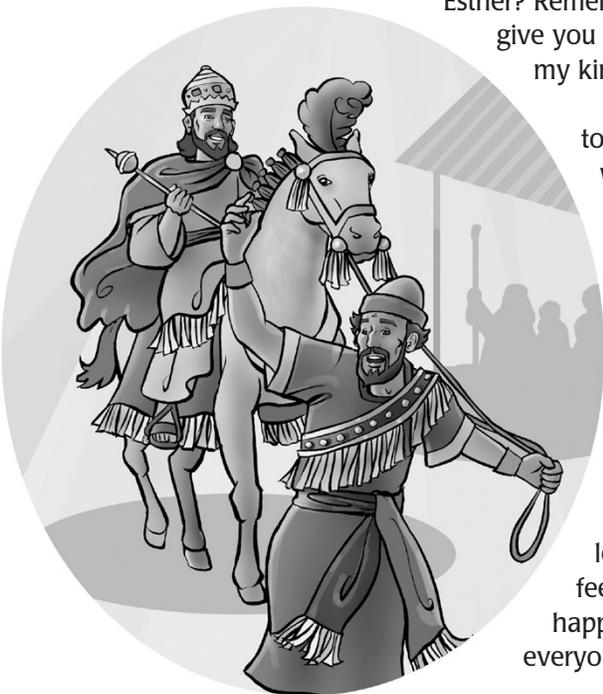
That night, the king had trouble going to sleep. So he asked one of his servants to bring the daily court record to him. He read about the two guards who had planned to kill him. Then he read about Mordecai's part in reporting those plans.

"Mordecai saved my life! Did we reward him?" the king asked his servant.

"No, sir," said the servant. "We never did."

The next morning Haman came before the king. He planned to ask for permission to hang Mordecai. But before he could say anything, the king asked him a question: "What should be done to honor a man who has done a good thing?"

Haman thought the king was talking about him. So he replied, "Give him a royal robe and crown to wear. Let him ride through the streets on a royal horse. Have your servant announce, 'This is what the king does for a man he wants to honor.'"



"I like that idea, Haman," King Xerxes replied. "Do everything that you've said for Mordecai right away. Don't leave anything out."

Haman had to do what the king asked. But he was so embarrassed and ashamed that he hid his face all the way home. When he got there, he told his friends and family what had happened.

"You're losing all your power to Mordecai," they said. "You can't win. You're going to be ruined." But before Haman had time to answer, the king's servants arrived. They hurried Haman away to the second banquet Queen Esther had prepared.

What would happen? What would Esther say? God would be with her. And God will be with you, too.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, read the lesson story and talk about other Bible stories in which someone did something brave. Think of words to describe Esther that begin with each letter of the word BRAVE. Examples: B—Beautiful, Brains, Banquet. R—Ready, Right.
- Thank God that He helps us make the right decisions.

Sunday

- For family worship, read and discuss Esther 5:1–5.
- Make a scepter by covering an empty tube or roll of stiff paper with bright paper. Write your memory verse on the scepter. Teach the memory verse to your family.
- During family worship, find a map and ask someone to help you measure the distance between two places if you go in a straight line. Now measure the distance if you follow the road. Which is longer? Ask God to keep you walking on the straight road.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss Esther 5:4–8.
- Ask if you can plan a Friday night banquet for the family. Help plan the food. Make name cards.
- Try to make up a poem using the words you thought of for the word BRAVE. Share the poem with your family during worship.
- Ask God to help you to be brave.

Tuesday

- Queen Esther and Mordecai were heroes. What did they do for their people?

- Draw a happy face next to each statement that tells something about a real hero.

- A hero is someone with big muscles.
- A hero is someone who might be scared but has the courage to do what is right.
- A hero is never afraid.
- A hero asks God to help him or her do what is right.

- Ask God to help you be a true hero.

Wednesday

- During worship today, read and discuss Esther 3:1–6. Find the word *prejudice* in a dictionary. Write the meaning here.

-
- In the lesson story, who was prejudiced? With your family, think of three ways to overcome prejudice.
 - Review the memory verse. Then pray that you will not be prejudiced.

Thursday

- For worship today, read and discuss Esther 6:1–10.
- Before worship, create a Queen Esther award. During worship, give the award to someone in your family who stood up for what is right.
- Review your memory verse together. Ask God to make your paths straight.

Friday

- Help your mother prepare and serve your family the banquet you planned on Monday. After eating, act out the lesson story together.
- Ask each person to tell about a time God helped them to make the right decision.
- Sing songs of praise. Then pray for those who are facing difficult situations.