

References

Esther 7; 8;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 602–606



Memory Verse

“Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”
(Esther 4:14, NIV).



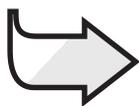
Objectives

The children will:

Know that we can be a part of God’s plan to save others.

Feel motivated to use our God-given talents to serve others.

Respond by using our talents to lead others to Jesus.



The Message

God leads us to opportunities to serve Him and His people.

Rescued!

Monthly Theme

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

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

At the second banquet Esther reveals her Jewish background to the king and pleads for the life of the Jews. When she identifies Haman as the instigator, the king has him taken out and hanged on the gallows Haman had built for Mordecai. Although the king cannot revoke the decree that calls for all the Jews to die, the king can and does issue another decree, giving the Jews the right to defend themselves. The Jews throughout the kingdom are saved. Jewish people still celebrate this incident today in a two-day festival called Purim.

This is a lesson about service.

Esther and Mordecai showed great courage in serving God, their king, and their people. They did the right thing at the right time. We, too, can serve our God by doing the right thing at the right time.

Teacher Enrichment

“Misled by the false statements of Haman, Xerxes was induced to issue a decree providing for the massacre of all the Jews. . . . Little did the king realize the far-reaching results that would have accompanied the complete carrying out of this decree. Satan himself, the hidden instigator of the scheme, was trying to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God” (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 600, 601).

“Mordecai was given the position of honor formerly occupied by Haman . . . and he sought to protect the welfare of Israel” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 602).

“The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus [Xerxes] against the Jews” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 605).

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>Create a Seal</i> B. <i>I Can Help</i>	wax or clay or play dough, paper, crayons or markers, documents with seals box, papers, pen
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> 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, royal cloaks, seal, low table, three quilts Bible, beanbag Bible, "golden" cup
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>God's Legs and Arms</i>	Bible
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Helping Coupons</i>	coupons (see p. 143), pencils, chalkboard or large sheet of paper, marker

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

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.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- wax or clay or play dough
- paper
- crayons/markers
- sample of documents with stamped seals (passport, notary seal, seal on a certificate, school transcripts, etc.)

A. Create a Seal

Say: **In past times when not everyone could write, people had a seal. Sometimes their seal had a design, or an animal, or their name. When they sent a letter, they sealed the envelope so the person receiving it would know that no one else had read it. Use these supplies to create your own seal.** Allow time to look at the completed seals and for the children to explain their design.

Debriefing

What were seals used for in Esther’s time? (to make laws) **What do you think seals might be used for today?** (birth certificates, school transcripts, wills, licenses, and other important documents) **What do you think about having your own seal? How might you use one?**

Say: **In Esther’s time when the king put his seal on a law or decree, it could not be changed. In our story today, the Jews faced serious trouble because of a law that had been sealed with the king’s signet ring. But thanks to the help of two people who were faithful to God, the king made another law that helped God’s people. Our message says:**



GOD LEADS US TO OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- box containing papers with traits written on them

B. I Can Help

Put papers with these traits (love, helpfulness, kindness, sharing, obedience, truth, prayer, listening, caring) into a box. Divide the children into groups. Have one group choose a piece of paper and then mime the trait listed on their paper to the other group(s). The group that guesses goes next. Be sure that each group gets a turn. Have adults assist as needed.

Say: **Each group will choose a piece of paper. Group one will mime the trait listed on their paper. Each trait is a way to serve others. The group that guesses the trait being mimed will get to go next.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Were you surprised that there were so many different ways to serve others? Is it always easy to know how to help people?** (sometimes it is not easy) **Esther was able to help her people when they were in trouble. She used the**

opportunity God gave her. God will also give us opportunities to help others if we are faithful to Him. Today's message says:



GOD LEADS US TO OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE.

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

- "We Are His Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 129)
- "Cross Over the Road" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 131)
- "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 133)
- "I Would Be True" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 117)
- "This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 134)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize the theme of service in the mission story. Say: **If we are willing and ask God, He will give us opportunities to serve Him.**



Offering

Say: **When we give our offerings, we serve God, and we make it possible for others to serve Him too.**



Prayer

Encourage the children to write or draw some way that they would like to serve God and others. In your prayer ask God to lead each child to opportunities to serve.

You Need:

- cloth from Lesson 5
- small squares of paper
- pins
- pencils

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- royal cloaks
- seal
- low table
- three quilts

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Esther, Mordecai, King, Haman, Harbona; the other children may alternate as courtiers or soldiers

Setting the Scene

Set the banquet table in front of the palace. Fold the quilts so that Esther, the king, and Haman can recline by the table. Remind the children of what has happened. Encourage them to listen carefully and act out the story.

Say: **Last week we learned that Esther dared to go to the king without being invited. The king stretched out his scepter and accepted her invitation to come and bring Haman to her banquet.**

He asked what she wanted. She asked him to come and bring Haman to another banquet the next day.

That night the king could not sleep. When reading through the court chronicles, he realized that Mordecai had not been rewarded for saving his life.

The king asked Haman how he should reward someone who had done him a great service. Haman, thinking the king wanted to honor him, suggested that the person should wear a royal robe and be led by a nobleman through the streets on the king's horse. The king asked Haman to do this for Mordecai. Haman was very angry. Now it is time for the second feast.

Read or tell the story.

King Xerxes and Haman were enjoying Esther's second banquet. *[All three*

recline around the table.] The king was curious. He wanted to know what Esther wanted, and why she was taking so long to tell him.

"Queen Esther," he said, "what is it that you want? You know you may have up to half my kingdom."

"My king, I hope you like me. If you care about me, please let me live. And let my people live too," she pleaded. *[Esther pleads before the king.]* "I have been told that we are all to be killed. If we were going to be sold as slaves, I would not have said anything. But we are going to be destroyed."

"What? Who has done this? Where is he?" the king shouted angrily. *[King jumps up.]*

"It is Haman, that man," said Esther pointing at Haman. *[Esther points at Haman.]*

Haman stopped eating. He was scared. He hadn't expected Esther to know. He could tell the king was very angry. The king had slammed down his glass and stomped out of the room. *[King goes off.]* Haman knew the king would kill him. He threw himself on Queen Esther to beg for mercy. *[Haman falls at Esther's feet.]* Just then the king walked back into the room. *[King enters.]*

"Haman!" he roared. "How dare you attack the queen? Especially while I am still here!" *[King makes angry motions.]*

As soon as the king said the words, the king's servants covered Haman's face and took him away. *[Two servants come and take Haman away.]*

One of the king's servants, Harbona, told the king *[comes forward and talks to the king]*, "Haman has built a hanging platform right in his own yard. He built it for Mordecai, who warned you about the plan to kill you."

"Hang Haman on it!" the king ordered.

King Xerxes then gave Queen Esther everything Haman owned. Esther finally told the king that Mordecai was her cousin, and the king sent for him. *[Send servant for Mordecai. Servant returns with Mordecai.]* The king gave Mordecai the ring that he had taken back from Haman. He put him in charge of Haman's house and land.

But Esther wasn't finished yet. She went back into the king's throne room and knelt before him. *[Kneel before the king.]* She begged him to stop Haman's plan. He held out his scepter to her, and Esther stood up.

"Please, my king, could you write another order to cancel Haman's orders?" she cried.

"I can't cancel it, because the orders have been sealed with my signet ring," he said. "Decide what you want done. Have Mordecai tell my secretaries what to write. After they are done, he can seal the orders with the ring I gave him."

Mordecai told the secretaries to write that Jews could fight back against anyone who tried to kill them. They could also take the property of anyone who tried to kill them. When the letters were all done, the king's special messengers hurried to deliver them throughout the kingdom. Mordecai left the palace wearing royal robes and a crown.

All the Jews in Susa shouted for joy about the new orders. Everywhere they were delivered, Jewish people celebrated. *[People look happy and appear to be celebrating.]* Some other people even became Jews.

From that day to this, Jews have celebrated the feast of Purim. For two days they celebrate to remember how Esther and Mordecai helped save them from death.

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you think Esther felt about going before the king without an**

invitation? How would you have felt?

Why was the king curious?

(Because Esther had invited him to two banquets.) **What did the king offer Esther at these banquets?** (Anything, up to half of his kingdom.)

Why couldn't the king cancel his order to have the Jews slain? (The law could not be changed once he had sealed it with his ring.)

What difference did the king's second decree make? (It allowed the Jews to defend themselves.)

What happened to Haman? to Mordecai?

If we are willing, God can use us to serve Him and His people. Let's say today's message together:



GOD LEADS US TO OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE.

Memory Verse

Write the memory verse where all may see it. Then read the verse aloud: **"Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).**

Do a beanbag toss. The children catch the beanbag and then say the next word of the memory verse, trying to keep it going without missing a beat. Remove or erase the first three words and repeat the activity. Continue removing words or phrases until the children can say the verse without help.

Bible Study

In advance, number and write the questions on slips of paper. Place the papers in a "golden" cup from the banquet table. Have twelve children each select a question, look up the reference, and be prepared to share the question and answer with the class. (Small class, some children take more than one question.)

You Need:

- Bible
- beanbag

You Need:

- Bible
- "golden" cup

1. How did the king respond to the news of what Haman had done? (Esther 7:7)
2. What did Haman try to do after the king learned of his plot? (Esther 7:7)
3. What happened to Haman? (Esther 7:9, 10)
4. What happened to Mordecai? (Esther 8:1, 2, 15; 10:3)
5. Esther made another request of the king. What was it? (Esther 8:5, 6)
6. What was the king's answer to Esther's second request? Why? (Esther 8:7, 8)
7. What did the king's new decree say? Who wrote it? (Esther 8:10, 11)
8. How did the Jews feel when the new decree went out? (Esther 8:16, 17)
9. What happened to the Jews? (Esther 9:1–3)

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think would have happened if Esther and Mordecai had not been willing to serve God and His people?**

Do you think that God would have found another way to save His people?

What happens to us when we take the opportunities to serve God and His people? (We grow and become better people. We learn to trust God more.)

Let's repeat our message for today:



GOD LEADS US TO OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:
• Bible

God's Legs and Arms

Have someone find and read Matthew 4:18–22 and Mark 2:13, 14.

Ask: **What happened to Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Levi?** (Jesus called them to be disciples.)

What did they do for work before they followed Jesus? (fished) **Afterward, what did they do?** (They preached about Jesus.) **What made them special?** (They were willing to follow Jesus.)

Jesus gives us the same invitation today. He wants us to serve Him and His people. Think about these situations and how you could serve Him. Allow time for discussion.

1. You are at the park. An older boy pushes a little girl off a swing and takes it for himself. How might you serve God and the little girl? (Comfort the girl;

take her to an adult; ask an adult for help.)

2. Your neighbor asks you to help him rake leaves. He will pay you well for your work. You agree. He says, "Good. Come at 9:00 Saturday morning and we can be done by noon." How might you serve God and His people as you respond?

3. You play soccer well. Some kids in your neighborhood want you to join their team. You really want to, but you know they play a lot of games on Sabbath. How might you serve God as you respond?

Debriefing

Say: **There are many different ways that we can serve God. What is the first step in finding opportunities to serve God and His people?** (the desire to serve)

When we say "I am willing to serve God," He leads us to opportunities.

And He will give us the courage to do what is right. Let's say today's message together:



GOD LEADS US TO OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Helping Coupons

In advance, make four copies of the coupon (see page 143) for each child. Have the children name and discuss different ways to serve God and His people. Make a list where all can see.

Say: **Here are four coupons. Think of people you would like to serve. Write a name on a coupon. Then choose something from the list that you can do. Complete the coupons and sign your name.** Adults assist as needed, but let the children sign their own name.

Debriefing

Ask: **To whom will you give your coupons, and what are you going to**

do? Allow time.

Are these the only things that you are going to do to serve people this week? Allow responses.

When we tell God that we are willing to serve Him and His people, He opens all kinds of opportunities. Let's say today's message:



GOD LEADS US TO OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE.

Closing

Have the children gather around, holding their coupons. Ask God to bless them as they give them away and to help them as they serve Him in the week ahead.

You Need:

- four coupons per child (see p. 143)
- pencils
- chalkboard or large sheet of paper
- marker

Rescued!

References

Esther 7; 8;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 602–606

Memory Verse

“Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”
(Esther 4:14, NIV).

The Message

God leads us to opportunities to serve Him and His people.

Have you ever wanted to know something and Mom or Dad says, “Wait a minute”? It feels as if you are going to burst with curiosity. That is probably how King Xerxes felt when he came to Esther’s second banquet.

King Xerxes and Haman were enjoying Esther’s second banquet. But the king was curious. He wanted to know what Esther wanted. And why was she taking so long to tell him?

“Queen Esther,” he said, “what is it that you want? You know you may have up to half my kingdom.”

“My king, if you truly care for me, please let me live. And let my people live too,” she pleaded. “I have been told that we are all to be killed. If we were to be sold as slaves, I would say nothing. But we are to be destroyed.”

“What? Who has done this? Where is he?” the king shouted angrily.

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and stormed from the room. Haman knew the king would kill him. So he threw himself on Queen Esther to beg for mercy. Just then the king walked back into the room.

“Haman!” he roared. “How dare you attack the queen? Especially while I am still here!”

As soon as the king said the words, the king’s servants rushed forward. They covered Haman’s face and took him away.

One of the king’s servants, Harbona, spoke to the king. “Haman has built a hanging platform in his own yard. He built it for Mordecai, the man who warned you about the plan to kill you.”

“Hang Haman on it!” the king ordered.

King Xerxes then gave Queen Esther everything Haman owned. Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. She explained how Mordecai had raised her. The king sent for Mordecai. He gave Mordecai the ring that he had taken back from Haman. That ring was a symbol of the power the king gave to Mordecai. Mordecai was now the king’s assistant.

Esther wasn’t finished with her work yet. She went back into the king’s throne room and knelt before him. The king held out his scepter to her again. Esther stood. She begged him to stop Haman’s plan.

“Please, my king, help us. Please do something to cancel Haman’s orders,” she cried.

“I can’t cancel that law, because it was sealed with my signet ring,” he said. “But I can do something. Have Mordecai tell my secretaries what to write. After they are done, he can seal the orders with the ring I gave him.”

Mordecai told the secretaries what to write. The Jews could fight back against anyone who tried to kill them. They could also take the property of anyone who tried. Soon the letters were done and



sealed with the king's seal. The king's special messengers rushed to deliver them throughout the land.

The Jews in Susa shouted for joy when they heard the new orders. Everywhere they were delivered, Jewish people celebrated. Some other people even became Jews.

From that day to this, Jews have celebrated the feast of Purim. For two days each year they celebrate. They remember how Esther and Mordecai served God; how they helped save God's people from death.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Share your lesson story with your family. Then sing some happy songs—the kind of songs the Jews may have sung when they celebrated. Ask your family to share an opportunity they have had to serve God and His people. Who are His people?
- Ask God to help you serve Him every day.

Sunday

- Help your mom by setting the table today.
- Ask her for an old piece of cloth. Cut it in a rectangle to represent a tablecloth. Write your memory verse on the cloth. Teach the verse to your family during worship.
- During family worship, see how many Bible stories you can name that are connected with food.
- Thank God for health and strength.

Monday

- During worship today, read Esther 7:9. How high was the gallows Haman built? Can you find something that is a similar height? Measure out that distance on the ground.
- With your parents, plan a happy surprise to serve someone who is not a close friend. Pray for your plan to serve.

Tuesday

- A good way to witness is to share a meal. During family worship, plan to invite someone to a meal. Invite someone who does not know Jesus well.

What can you do to help before the visit?

- Read Esther 5:1–3 and 7:1, 2 together. Look at a map of your country. If Xerxes had been king of your country, how much land would he have offered Esther?
- Pray for the rulers in your country.

Wednesday

- During worship, read Esther 6:1, 2. Start a family chronicle. Write in it each day for a week.
- Create a Mordecai award for bravery. Present the Mordecai award to someone you know and explain what it is for. Ask God to bless that person.

Thursday

- During worship, read and discuss Esther 3:10–12 and 8:8. Create a seal for your family. What special features do you want to include? Think of a family motto to go with the seal.
- Find out about seals and how they were used. How do people use seals today?
- Thank God for your family.

Friday

- During family worship, review the story of Esther from start to finish. Act out your favorite parts with your family. Ask other family members to name their favorite parts.
- Say your memory verse together. Tell what it means to you and your family.
- Before prayer, sing praises to God. Then thank God for the opportunities He gives you every day.