



May 14, 2017

Dear Teacher,

This week we look at the life of Esther. A very interesting book of the Bible primarily because God is never mentioned in it. However, we see in the story that God cares and provides for His people just as He promised. Esther is the heroine who at the right time intercedes for her people. Esther foreshadows in some ways another Rescuer that is to come. This Rescuer is Jesus! He comes on behalf of His people, at the very risk of losing His life which happens only to save His people from their destruction!

We encourage all classrooms to engage with the story from the options provided in class. Teachers, tell the story using any of the provided helps (Vos, Jesus Story Book Bible, Gospel Story Book Bible or printed Handout). If you would like, read the selected Scripture passages aloud in class, discuss or explain what the passages mean, and use the questions below to help guide the discussion. Also, use time in class to teach the Scripture Memory and the Catechism Questions.

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Return:* Queen Esther

Lesson Objective: To communicate to children that God always keeps His promises despite circumstances and even our inability to trust Him. God wants us to trust Him and obey His commands.

Scripture: Esther 1-10

Story: Vos Children's Bible, Chapter 107-108 (Pages 249-257)

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God's people lived far away from home.
- Esther was a Jew, who was quite beautiful, and lived in the city of Susa with her cousin Mordecai.
- Esther became queen to King Xerxes. Xerxes ruled a very large kingdom and was very powerful.
- Mordecai saved Xerxes from an assassination plot. For this Xerxes was grateful.
- Haman was a servant of King Xerxes, but Haman hated Mordecai and the Jewish people.
- Haman devised a plot to kill all the Jewish people.
- Queen Esther, however, went before the king to save the lives of her people, the Jews.
- King Xerxes was angry that Haman wanted to kill Esther and all the Jewish people. Xerxes had Haman executed for his evil plot.
- Xerxes from that day forward protected the Jewish people throughout his kingdom.

9:30am Sunday Schedule

For the Sunday Schedule, please see "Sunday Schedule for Preschool" found in Handbook on the teacher's table.

Cherub Church

- Kindergarten/5's – 9:35-10:00 (Classroom's: 162, 163, 121, 123, 124)
- 3's/4's – 10:05-10:30 (Classroom's: 166, 165, 164)

Craft: Esther's Crown

Supplies: Crown, white strip, jewels, stickers, glue, crayons/markers, stapler

Instructions:

1. Decorate crown with jewels and stickers and color if desired
2. Staple crown to white strip
3. Staple white strip ends together to fit child's head



Snack

11am Sunday Schedule

Craft: Esther's Scepter

Supplies: Gold star, sticker, straw, ribbon, tape, crayons/markers

Instructions:

1. Place sticker in center of star
2. Tape ribbon to back of star
3. Tape straw to back of star and secure with staple
4. Color star if desired



Story: *Return:* Queen Esther

1. **PRAY** for your time and any requests the children may have.
2. **ASK** Boys and girls, today we read a story in the Bible about a beautiful queen. Her name was Esther, and you know a book of the Bible is named after her. Do you know what's interesting about the book of Esther? [Allow children to guess] God is not mentioned in the book, but we still see Him present caring for His people just like He promised! Let's find out more...
3. **TELL** the Story. Use the Vos Children's Bible, the Jesus Storybook Bible, the Beginner's Bible, or the story below to aid in telling the story.
4. **REVIEW** the questions to help children understand the story.

Questions for Review

Scripture Memory (Nehemiah 1:5)

Catechism Questions (1-17)

Hymn of the Month: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Free Play

Questions for Review

Questions for Younger Children:

- What was the name of king in our story today? What was the name of the queen?
- Who was Esther's cousin?
- What did Mordecai do that made Haman so mad?
- What did Haman want to do to Mordecai and all the Jewish people?
- What did Esther do to save her people?
- How did Xerxes react when he found out that Haman wanted to kill Esther?

Questions for Older Children:

- What does the story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about God's faithfulness?

Scripture Memory for May:

O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments. (Nehemiah 1:5)

Catechism Questions:

- Question 1 – Who made you? *God*
- Question 2 – What else did God make? *God made all things.*
- Question 3 – Why did God make you and all things? *For his own glory.*
- Question 4 – How can you glorify God? *By loving him and doing what he commands.*
- Question 5 – Why are you to glorify God? *Because he made me and takes care of me.*
- Question 6 – Is there more than one true God? *No. There is only one true God.*
- Question 7 – In how many persons does this One God exist? *In three persons.*
- Question 8 – Who are they? *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*
- Question 9 – What is God? *God is a Spirit and does not have a body like men.*
- Question 10 – Where is God? *God is everywhere.*
- Question 11 - Can you see God? *No; I cannot see God, but He can always see me.*
- Question 12 – Does God know all things? *Yes. Nothing can be hidden from God.*
- Question 13 – Can God do all things? *Yes. God can do all His holy will.*
- Question 14 – Where do you learn how to love and obey God? *In the Bible alone.*
- Question 15 – Who wrote the Bible? *Chosen men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit.*
- Question 16 – Who were our first parents? *Adam and Eve.*
- Question 17 – How did God create man? *God created man, male and female, in His own image.*

Story

Transition

Boys and girls, today we read a story in the Bible about a beautiful queen. Her name was Esther, and you know a book of the Bible is named after her. Do you know what's interesting about the book of Esther? [Allow children to guess] God is not mentioned in the book, but we still see Him present caring for His people just like He promised! Let's find out more...

A Powerful King

In the book of Esther, in our Bible, we read about a very powerful king that lived long ago. His kingdom stretched for thousands and thousands of miles. He ruled over many, many people and all of them feared the king. The king's name was Xerxes [**pronunciation:** ex-sir-sees]. King Xerxes ruled from the city of Susa. One day Xerxes decided to

throw a large party. The party lasted for six months! People from all over the kingdom came to Susa to enjoy lots of food, drink, and celebrating. The party was very entertaining, and then King Xerxes made a foolish decision. As Xerxes was having this grand party, the queen was hosting one for all the women in the kingdom. It was a beautiful party too. King Xerxes commanded that the servants bring the queen out in front of all his guests with her crown on. King Xerxes wanted to show his guests how beautiful the queen was. The queen, however, was shy and humble. She did not want to be paraded around. The queen refused to come to the king and this made King Xerxes mad! The king was upset and asked his advisors and friends what he should do. They told him to get rid of the queen because she was disobedient and a bad example. So Xerxes did just that!

A Beautiful Young Girl

Soon after, Xerxes remembered he no longer had a queen. Xerxes wanted a queen, and not just any queen but a beautiful one. Xerxes had his servants search the kingdom for the most beautiful young women who were not married. They were to be brought to His palace so King Xerxes could choose a queen and wife. The servants gathered women from all over the kingdom and brought them to the king's palace. King Xerxes could choose any of these beautiful women to be queen. But he chose only one special woman and her name was Esther. The Bible tells us Esther was very beautiful. And she was also an Israelite. But no one, even King Xerxes, knew that Esther was an Israelite. When she was young she lost her mother and father, so her older cousin Mordecai adopted her and treated her just like he would his own daughter. Mordecai and Esther lived in the city of Susa. There were Israelites who were taken away from Jerusalem a long time ago by King Nebuchadnezzar and now some of them lived in Susa.

The Bible tells us that anyone who met Esther liked her, but especially the king. The king liked her so much, he made Esther queen! Then the king gave a great banquet for Esther. He invited all his important men and royal officers. He announced a holiday in all the empire. And he was generous and gave everyone a gift.

Mordecai Discovers an Evil Plan

One day Mordecai, Esther's cousin, was sitting at the king's gate. This was where people talked and discussed what was happening in the city, kingdom and world. You would gather the news and hear about the latest events. As Mordecai was at the gate he heard two of the king's officers talking. They were angry with King Xerxes and wanted to kill him. Mordecai overheard their plan and went quickly to Esther. He told Esther the plan and Queen Esther told King Xerxes. Queen Esther told Xerxes that Mordecai had discovered the evil plan. Xerxes found out that the plan was true and had the two officers punished. King Xerxes was thankful for Mordecai discovering the evil plan. Xerxes had his officials record all that happened so that he would not forget.

Wicked Haman

There was a man named Haman who lived in the city of Susa. One day King Xerxes gave Haman a new rank that was higher than all the important men in the kingdom. All the royal officers at the king's gate would bow down and kneel before Haman. They had to because the king said so, but Mordecai would not bow down! Then the royal officers at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why don't you obey the king's command?" And they said this to him every day. But Mordecai paid no attention to them, so they told Haman about it. They wanted to see if Haman would accept Mordecai's behavior because Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman would walk by he noticed that Mordecai did not bow down. This made Haman very mad. Haman came up with a very evil plan to kill not just Mordecai but all the Jewish people in the whole kingdom (for younger audiences, you can insert "get rid of the Jewish people.")

A few months passed and Haman went to King Xerxes and said, "There is a certain group of people in all the areas of your kingdom. They are scattered among the other people. They keep themselves separate. Their way of life is different from those of all the other people. And they do not obey the king's laws. It is not right for you to allow them to continue living in your kingdom. If it pleases the king, let an order be given to destroy those people. I will pay for it to happen!" King Xerxes thought this was a good idea, so he made Haman's plan into law. Haman wanted

to get rid of all the Jewish people throughout Xerxes's kingdom. That very day Haman was the enemy of God's people, the Jews.

Messengers were sent throughout the kingdom with orders to carry out King Xerxes commands. The order was to destroy, kill and get rid of all the Jews. All of this was to be done in one single day. Everyone was told about this order so that they would be ready for that day.

Mordecai's Sadness

Mordecai and all the Jews in the city of Susa heard about the king's orders. They were very sad. They cried aloud in the streets and near the king's palace. They dressed in rough clothing and covered themselves with ashes. Many also stopped eating and drinking to show how sad they were. Esther had heard something was wrong, so she sent a messenger to Mordecai to find out what was wrong. Mordecai told the messenger everything. Mordecai told the messenger to tell Esther to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy for the Jewish people. Remember, King Xerxes did not know that Esther was a Jew. But there was a rule that Esther knew about. No one could go to the king unless the king invited them into his throne room. As much as Esther wanted to go and beg the king, she could not unless the king invited her. If she went to the king uninvited, Queen Esther could risk losing her life. Queen Esther had not seen the king for thirty days.

Esther sent a message back to Mordecai with all these things. Mordecai sent word back to Esther: "Just because you live in the king's palace, don't think that out of all the Jews you alone will escape...Who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this." Esther sent one last message to Mordecai; it said, "Gather together, fast and pray for three days. I will go to the king for the sake of our people."

Esther's Plan to Save Her People

On the third day Esther went to see the king. She stood in the entrance to his throne room, and when Xerxes saw Esther he told her to come to him. King Xerxes asked Esther, "What is it, Queen Esther? What do you want to ask me? I will give you as much as half of my kingdom." Esther answered, "My king, if it pleases you, come today with Haman to a banquet. I have prepared it for you." Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly so we may do what Esther asks."

So, the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared for them. As they were enjoying the banquet, the king said to Esther, "Now, Esther, what are you asking for? I will give it to you. What is it you want? I will give you as much as half of my kingdom." Esther answered, "My king, if it pleases you, come with Haman tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for you. Then I will answer your question about what I want."

Haman's Plans Against Mordecai

Haman left the king's palace that day happy and content. Then he saw Mordecai at the king's gate. And he saw that Mordecai did not stand up nor did he tremble with fear before him. So, Haman became very angry with Mordecai. But he controlled his anger and went home.

Then Haman called his friends and his wife together. He told them about all the ways the king had honored him. "And that's not all," Haman said. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to come with the king to the banquet she gave. And tomorrow also the queen has asked me to be her guest with the king. But all this does not make me happy. I'm not happy as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate." Then Haman's wife and all his friends said, "Have a platform built to hang someone. Build it 75 feet high. And in the morning, ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go to the banquet with the king and be happy." Haman liked this suggestion. So, he ordered the platform to be built.

The Final Banquet

King Xerxes and Haman went in to eat with Queen Esther the next day. As the banquet began, the king said to Esther again, "What are you asking for? I will give it to you. What is it you want? I will give you as much as half of my kingdom." Then Queen Esther answered, "My king, I hope you are pleased with me. If it pleases you, let me live. This is what I ask. And let my people live, too. This is what I want. I ask this because my people and I have been sold to be destroyed. We are to be killed and completely wiped out."

King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he? Who has done such a thing?" And Esther said, "A man who is against us! Our enemy is this wicked Haman!"

Then Haman was filled with fear before the king and queen. The king was very angry. He got up, left the banquet and went out into the palace garden. But Haman stayed inside to beg Queen Esther to save his life. He could see that the king had already decided to kill him. The king came back from the palace garden to the banquet hall. And he saw Haman falling on the couch where Esther was lying. The king said, "Will he even attack the queen while I am in the house?" As soon as the king said that, servants came in and covered Haman's face. The servants took Haman to the gallows, the same gallows Haman built for Mordecai, and hung him there. Then the king was no longer angry.

From that day forward King Xerxes protected and cared for Esther and God's people against their enemies!