



LESSON 43

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: We are here to fulfill God's purpose, even if it means sacrifice.

Bible Character(s): Esther

Scripture Reference: Esther 2-7



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, please read through Esther 2-7.

We are going to focus on God's plan and purpose for Esther's life and the sacrifice required of Esther to fulfill His plan. God used Esther to deliver the Israelites from death. This physical deliverance is a picture of what Jesus does for us. He saved us from our sin through His sacrificial death on the cross. Are you being obedient to God so that He can use you to fulfill His purpose? Are you willing to sacrifice your desires to follow Christ? Spend some time in prayer, and ask God to show you how to be more obedient to Him.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Foil Crown

Roll of aluminum foil

Give each camper a piece of aluminum foil and help him/her mold or cut it into the shape of a crown. (It will be glued to an 8.5x11 piece of paper in the next activity, so keep that in mind when determining size.) You may need to remind campers that they aren't working to be judged on making the best crown, but they're using their God given gifts (creativity, sense of humor, imagination, etc) to create something unique.



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

*Take your cabin flag to Big Group.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will learn how God delivered the Israelites from death through Esther's obedience. And we'll also learn that Jesus delivers us from death through His work on the cross.



SMALL GROUP TIME - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? What did the Safety Instructor learn about what God has for him? (God has a plan; we need to trust in His plan and purpose; it might cost us something to trust God.) What was one thing that stood out to you from Big Group?

In our lesson last week, we learned about Nehemiah. What happened in Jerusalem? (Allow responses.) The walls and gate were destroyed. What did Nehemiah do? He prayed to God and asked for help. He needed to ask the king for permission to rebuild the wall. Why was Nehemiah afraid? (Allow responses.) The king had already denied the Israelites once before when they asked to rebuild the wall, and Nehemiah was afraid he would be denied. Nehemiah depended on God, through prayer, to lead him. The king gave Nehemiah permission to rebuild the wall. Nehemiah worked hard at the task God gave him to do.

This week we are going to begin studying from a new book, the book of Esther. Has anyone ever been given a big job to do? (Allow responses.) God had an important job for Esther, and we are going to learn about that task today.

Esther was a beautiful woman who grew up as an orphan. Her cousin Mordecai raised her in Persia. The king of Persia was Xerxes. His queen's name was Vashti. One day, Xerxes told Vashti to come meet his friends, but she refused to come. Xerxes got so mad at her that he would not let her be queen anymore. Xerxes decided that he would find another queen. He sent men out to find the prettiest girls in the kingdom. Esther was beautiful, and she was brought in to meet the king along with many other girls. Let's read the Bible to see what happens, beginning in Esther 2 [NLT].

Esther 2:12, 15b-17

12 Before each young woman was taken to the king..., she was given the prescribed twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh, followed by six months with special perfumes and ointments... she (Esther) was admired by everyone who saw her.

16 Esther was taken to King Xerxes at the royal palace in early winter of the seventh year of his reign. 17 And the king loved Esther more than any of the other young women. He was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen instead of Vashti.

Making of a Queen



The purpose is to see how God prepared Esther to be used by Him.

Supplies:

Worksheet – blank side (1 per camper)

Markers/crayons

Scissors

Foil crown from plug in time

Campers will draw a big oval on the paper and will then draw and color a face, hair, and makeup, to show Esther preparing to meet the king. When their Esther drawing is complete, have them tape or glue the foil crowns (from the plug in activity) to Esther's head.

Tie It Together



Esther had to go through one year of beauty treatments before she even met the king! She did not even know if the king would like her when he saw her. Before she was taken to the palace, Esther experienced pain in her life. Her parents died and she was raised by her cousin. She lived in a country that did not like Jewish people. When she was taken to the palace, she was separated from her cousin and she lived with people she did not know. She couldn't have known God's purpose for her and yet she trusted in the Lord. Do you ever wonder why you experience difficult things? (Allow responses.) Sometimes we do not know why we go through hard times, but God knows. He is completely in control and He has a plan for your life, just like He had a plan for Esther's life. God can use all the difficult times in our lives to fulfill His plan. We can trust God.

The problem with Esther being a queen was that she was an Israelite, or a Jew. Jews were not liked in Persia. Sometimes they were killed, so Mordecai told Esther not to tell anyone that she was a Jew. He did not want her to be killed.

Let's continue reading the Bible in Esther.

Esther 2:20

20 Esther continued to keep her family background and nationality a secret. She was still following Mordecai's directions, just as she did when she lived in his home.

One very powerful man who worked for King Xerxes was a man named Haman. Haman hated the Jews. One day, Haman walked past Mordecai who did not bow to Haman like the other people who were standing around. Haman got very mad. He knew that Mordecai was a Jew, but instead of killing just Mordecai, he decided to have all the Jews killed. So Haman met with King Xerxes.

Act It Out



The purpose is for the campers to act out the story to better understand what occurred.

Supplies

Script (1 copy per actor – secretaries can share 1 copy)
Plastic ring for Xerxes (1 per bin)
Small ball of Play-Doh for secretaries (1 per bin – sealed in ziploc bag)
Piece of paper to act as the decree
Piece of paper for Mordecai
Piece of paper for Esther

Choose an actor to play each of the following roles:

Haman
King Xerxes
Secretary (2)
Mordecai
Esther
Teacher (you!)

Give each actor a copy of the script (secretaries can share) and have the campers act out the story.

Esther 3:8-11 & Esther 4:13-17 Script [Read aloud only what is bold]

Teacher: **Then Haman approached King Xerxes and said,**

Haman: [Haman walks up to King Xerxes and says] **There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their laws are different from those of any other people, and they refuse to obey the laws of the king. So it is not in the king's interest to let them live. If it pleases the king, issue a decree that they be destroyed, and I will give 10,000 large sacks of silver to the government administrators to be deposited in the royal treasury.**

Teacher: **The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing his signet ring from his finger and giving it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.**

King Xerxes: [Remove ring from finger and give it to Haman.] **The money and the people are both yours to do with as you see fit.**

Teacher: **So on April 17 the king's secretaries were summoned [Xerxes motions for the secretaries to come over], and a decree was written exactly as Haman dictated.**

Two secretaries: [Pretend to write the decree on a piece of paper. Fold the paper and put the piece of Play-Doh on it. Then take the king's ring and smoosh it into the Play-Doh to create the "seal."]

Teacher: **As the news of this decree spread over the provinces, Mordecai and all of the Jews began to weep.**

Mordecai: [Begin to weep.]

Teacher: **Mordecai sent a message to Esther telling her of what Haman had done with the king's permission and urged her to go to the king to beg for mercy for her people. At first Esther is afraid**

because anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is killed, unless the king holds out his gold scepter. Let's continue the story to see what happens.

Mordecai: [Pretending to write, but reading out loud.] Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this.

Esther: [Pretending to write, but reading out loud.] "... though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die."

Teacher: Esther decided to risk her life by going before the king to plead for the lives of the Jews. Esther trusted God and listened to Mordecai when he said, "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?" (vs. 14) She knew that she could trust God and that He had a purpose for her, even if that meant losing her life.

*Teachers, please put the Play-Doh back in the bag when finished with it to keep it from drying out.

Obey and Sacrifice



The purpose is to show how we can obey and sacrifice with a good attitude so that God can use us to fulfill His purpose.

Supplies:

Teacher's Guide (2 per bin)

"How You Obey" cards (1 set per bin)

Read a situation and Bible verse(s) to the campers. Give the two corresponding "How You Obey" cards to two different campers to read out loud and let the class choose which response is the better way to handle that situation.

Tie It Together



Sometimes it is easy to obey and sacrifice. Often when we obey and sacrifice we end up with something good, but there are also times when it is hard to obey or embarrassing to obey and trust God. We might lose a friend or have to sacrifice something. We might not even know why we had to sacrifice something. But God wants us to trust Him, whether we have to sacrifice something or not. We can depend on God and trust in His plan always. Esther did not understand God's purpose and she did not know how God was going to use her. He used her to save her people, the Israelites. Esther chose to trust and obey God. When we choose to obey, we need to choose to have a good attitude and trust that this is what God wants for us.

Let's read the Bible to see what happened when Esther went to the king.

Esther 7:3-7 [NLT]

3 Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. 4 For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king."

5 "Who would do such a thing?" King Xerxes demanded. "Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?"

6 Esther replied, "This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy." Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen. 7 Then the king jumped to his feet in a rage and went out into the palace garden.

King Xerxes ordered Haman to be killed. Esther's courage to trust God saved her people from being killed. We also need to be saved from death. Let's take a look at why we need to be saved.

Royal Steps



The purpose is to show that the Jews needed deliverance from physical harm just as we need deliverance from our sin.

Supplies:

Worksheet – "Royal Steps" side (1 per camper)

Teacher's Guide – "Royal Steps" side (2 per bin)

Have the campers write on their worksheet as you talk through each step with them. The scroll represents the message delivered by Haman's men that all the Jewish people were to be killed. The heart represents the willing heart of Esther and the perfect heart of Jesus. The crown represents Queen Esther and our King who is Jesus.

- Step 1** **Jews needed to be saved from Haman.** (Put on the Jewish scroll.)
- Step 2** **We need to be saved from our sin and delivered from death.** (Put on our scroll.)
- Step 3** **Esther trusted and obeyed God with a good attitude and was willing to sacrifice her life so that the Jews could live.** (Put on the Jewish heart.)
- Step 4** **Jesus trusted and obeyed God (His Father) with a good attitude and sacrificed His life so we can live eternally.** (Put on our heart.)
- Step 5** **God used Esther to save the Jews and fulfill His purpose.** (Put on the Jewish crown.)
- Step 6** **God uses Jesus to deliver us from our sin and save us from death through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, which fulfills God's purpose.** (Put on our crown.)

Tie It Together



The book of Esther describes the Jewish people in great danger. Haman wanted to kill them. They needed to be saved from those who were trying to destroy them. God placed Esther as queen so that He could use her to save the Jews. Did you know that you and I need to be saved from death? We need to be saved just like the Jews needed to be rescued in our story, because of our sin. God sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and to die on the cross. Jesus sacrificed His life so that we would not have to die. When we believe that Jesus died for us, He delivers us from our sin and gives us eternal life with Him. That is faith in Jesus Christ.

Prayer Time

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to help you trust in His purpose for us, even if it means sacrifice.



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