



OLD TESTAMENT: ESTHER

lesson 32

BIG IDEA

Esther, an Israelite, is selected to be Xerxes the Persian king’s wife. She finds out from her cousin Mordecai that there is a plot to kill all the Israelites. Esther finds a way to speak to the king about the plot and she is able to save her people.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 8

KEY VERSES

Book of Esther

• PREPARATION & MATERIALS •

BIBLE LESSON

- Bible
- Cast: TL wearing baseball cap, Bear wearing bear ears.
- *Experience Mission will provide a baseball cap and bear ears.*

GAME - RATTLESNAKE

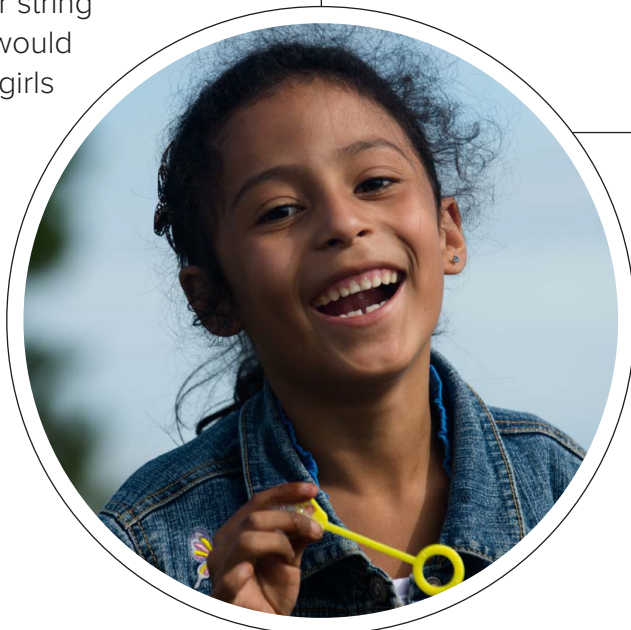
- blindfold
- noise maker (i.e. can with pebbles)

CRAFT - NECKLACES AND BRACELETS

- A variety of beads in a suitable size for little hands
- Strong stiff beading wire or string
- Try to provide beads that would appeal to boys as well as girls

WORKSHEETS

- Photocopies of Coloring Sheet (1 per child)



EM PROVIDES

- scissors
- hole punches
- staplers

Psalm 8

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!



(extend hands to sides)

You have set your glory in the heavens.



(extend hands high)

Through the praise of children and infants you have



("stop" hand)

established a stronghold against your enemies,

To silence the foe and the avenger.



(index finger over lips)

(wiggle fingers both hands)

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,



The moon and the stars which you have set in place,



(point to moon and stars)

What is mankind that you are mindful of them,



(shrug shoulders)

Human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the angels



(flat hand at waist)

And crowned them with glory and honor.



(make crown with hands)

You have made them rulers over the works of your

hands;



(open hands)

You put everything under their feet:



(stomp feet)

All flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,



(hands like claws)

The birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim

the paths of the seas.



(hands together wiggle like fish)

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!



(arms up as if cheering)



OLD TESTAMENT: ESTHER

BIBLE LESSON • SKIT

lesson 32

STAGING

TL wears baseball cap. Bear wears bear ears.

SCRIPT

TL and Bear (enter stage)

TL Hi Bear. I was wondering if you enjoy spy stories?

Bear Ohhh, I love spy stories. I love to spy!

TL How about stories with lots of different characters like a villain, a foolish king, a beautiful girl and a wise old man.

Bear Characters with big personalities make for a great story.

TL How about a story with tricks, traps and twisted plots?

Bear Thrilling!

TL How about fear and love and betrayal and dramatic tension.

Bear Fantastic! Do you know a story that has all of those things? If you do, I'd sure like to hear it.

TL I do happen to have a story to tell you that comes right from the bible, and it does contain all those elements.

Bear Let's hear it.

TL This story takes place when the people of Judah were still by the Persians. The Persian King, Xerxes, was foolish and had a bad temper. He decided he was unhappy with his wife, Queen Vishti, so he sent her away and began to search for a new queen. He wanted to find the most beautiful woman in his kingdom. So he commanded that all the beautiful women be brought to the royal city to undergo a full year of special beauty treatments. Then Xerxes would choose the one he liked best.

One of the girls was named Esther, and she was from Judah. She had been living with her cousin, Mordecai because her parents had died. When all the women were presented to Xerxes he liked Esther best and chose her to be his new queen. He did not know that she was



OLD TESTAMENT: ESTHER

BIBLE LESSON • SKIT (CONT. 2)

lesson 32

Jewish.

That same year Mordecai got a job in the palace. One day he happened to overhear two of the palace guards plotting to kill the king! He told Ester about it and she told the king. The two guards were arrested and put to death. The king even recorded the event in his official records.

About five years later a man named Haman became very powerful in the kingdom. He could do whatever he pleased and everybody had to show respect to him. When he road around the city the people would bow down to him, everyone except Mordecai that is. Haman noticed this man was not bowing, so he did some searching and found out the man was Mordecai and he was a Jew. He hated the Jews and wanted revenge on Mordecai so he came up with a trap. He went to King Xerxes and was able to persuaded him that all the Jews were unlawful and should be destroyed. The king rarely spent time outside his palace so he simply believed Haman and made a decree. "On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all the Jews will be put to death."

Bear What?! All of the Jews? They didn't do anything wrong. What a terrible villain that Haman guy is!

TL News spread quickly and when Mordecai found out he wept and tore his clothes. Esther sent a servant to find out what was wrong with Mordecai so Mordecai showed the decree to the servant, "Give this to Esther. Tell her to beg the king to have mercy on her people."

Poor Esther was in a difficult situation. She knew that anyone who approached the king without permission would be killed, unless the king held out his scepter. But Mordecai warned her, "Don't think you are safer than the rest of the Jews. If you keep quiet, you too will be killed. But maybe you became queen for just such a time as this."

So Ester said, "Have all the Jews fast and pray for three days and nights. Then I will go to the king. If I must die, then I will die." So three days later Esther dressed in her robes as queen and entered the throne room. The king saw her standing there, she was very beautiful and his heart was filled with love, so he held out his golden scepter to her. "What do you wish, Queen Esther? It shall be given to you, even half of my kingdom."

Ester did not ask for what she wanted right away, she was very wise and careful. "If it pleases the king, I have come to ask you and Haman to come to dinner with me." The king agreed and that evening King Xerxes and Haman had dinner with the queen.

While they were eating the king asked again, "Is there anything you want, Queen Esther? I will give you whatever you want."



OLD TESTAMENT: ESTHER

BIBLE LESSON • SKIT (CONT. 3)

lesson 32

Esther replied, “My wish is that the king and Haman come eat with me again tomorrow.” Haman left the palace in a very good mood. But then he saw Mordecai who again didn’t bow down to him, and he became furious and made plans to have Mordecai killed the next day.

That night the king had trouble sleeping so he called his servants to bring the official records and read them aloud to him. When they got to the part about how Mordecai had saved the king’s life five years earlier by warning of a murder plot, the king stopped the reading and asked, “What was done to thank Mordecai?”

The servant replied, “Nothing at all.” Just then Haman walked in ready to ask the king to hang his enemy, Mordecai.

Bear No way. What a twist! The king wants to reward Mordecai and Haman wants to kill him. Oh the tension! What happens next?

TL Before he could make his request the king said, “There is someone I want to honor. What should I do for this man?”

Haman was so prideful that he thought the king wanted to honor him. So he said, “Dress the man in your royal robes and have your highest nobleman lead him through the city square on your horse shouting, ‘This is the man the king delights to honor!’”

The king said, “That’s a good plan, Haman. Now hurry and get my robe and horse and give these to Mordecai the Jew. Do everything for him that you have suggested.” So Haman had to give Mordecai the honors he expected for himself! He was full of anger and shame, and he still had to attend the dinner with the king and queen that evening.

Bear Hah! Serves him right!

TL At the dinner that evening King Xerxes again asked Queen Esther, “What is it you want? Tell me and you shall have it – even up to half my kingdom.”

Esther answered, “My people and I are about to be destroyed! Please save us!”

Xerxes was shocked and said, “Who would dare to do such a thing?”

“Our enemy is Haman,” Esther replied. Haman was terrified. The king was so angry that he had Haman hung on the gallows that had been built for Mordecai. The king couldn’t change the law about killing the Jews, so instead he gave a new decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves. So the thirteenth day of the twelfth month became a time of joy rather than sorrow. The Jews had a feast of thanksgiving for God’s mercy in saving them from their enemies. They kept this tradition every year and it is still kept today by some Jewish people. It



OLD TESTAMENT: ESTHER

BIBLE LESSON • SKIT (CONT. 4)

lesson 32

is called the feast of Purim, and every year at the feast they read the story of Esther.

Bear That is such a great story: spy, villains, royalty, laws, murder plots, truth and justice. It doesn't get better than that. And the best part is, it's true! It amazes me that all the stories you told me come right from the bible. It's so obvious that God was behind the scenes protecting the Israelites.

TL It is thrilling, isn't it. God is so big, so powerful, so perfect and so right. It boggles the mind sometimes. And Bear, the stories I've told you are just half of the stories in the bible and only part of God's plan for the world. He is preparing the world for a very special person who would be born in a tiny town and would become the Savior of the world. His name would be Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was King Xerxes' character? Was he wise? Easily persuaded? Involved in the lives of the people in his kingdom?
- What was Mordecai's character?
- What was Haman's character?
- How did Mordecai save the king's life?
- Why did Haman plot against the Jews and Mordecai?
- How did Haman's plot turn against him?
- What did Esther and the Jewish people do before she approached the king?
- How what did the king do save the lives of the Jews?



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CRAFT & GAME

lesson 32

• GAME •

OBJECTIVE: RATTLESNAKE

Kids take turns trying to catch the snake while blindfolded.

MATERIALS BROUGHT BY TEAM

- blindfold
- noise maker (i.e. can with pebbles)

INSTRUCTIONS

The group sits down in a circle.

One person is chosen to be "it". Blindfold the youth and spin them in circles.

Hand one other person in the circle something that they shake to make noise (e.g. maraca, bottle of pebbles, tambourine). It works best if you have something that is hard to pass on without making noise.

The students really have to pay attention. Once the youth blindfolded is done spinning, the leader will call out "rattlesnake"

Whoever has the shaker must give one shake and then pass the shaker off to someone else. The shaker will continue to be passed around the circle. The youth leader should continue to call rattlesnake more often until the blindfolded youth can catch the rattlesnake.

Whoever was caught will be the next one blindfolded.



OLD TESTAMENT: ESTHER

CRAFT & GAME

lesson 32

• NECKLACES AND BRACELETS •

OBJECTIVE

Kids will make necklaces and bracelets with various beads

MATERIALS BROUGHT BY TEAM

- A variety of beads in a suitable size for little hands
- Strong stiff beading wire or string
- Try to provide beads that would appeal to boys as well as girls

MATERIALS PROVIDED BY EM

- Scissors, hole punches, staplers

DIRECTIONS

- Allow the kids to create necklaces and bracelets out of beads
- Provide a few examples to spur on creativity
- Boys may not want to make necklaces or bracelets for themselves, but they could make some to give away.



