

2015

Esther VBS

Family Time

Day 1

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33

Bible Point: God gives us what we need, so...trust God!!

Opening Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Welcome to VBS:** Have family members say names, Ecclesias/hometowns (if necessary) and tell about their family (# siblings, names, pets, etc)
- **Name Tags/Costumes:** Hand out a pillowcase costume and belt to each child. Make sure every child has a name tag pouch necklace.
- **Welcome children to Shushan:** Explain to the children that we are ‘traveling’ back to Bible times to the land of Persia where the children of Israel were living in captivity. Because the children of Israel had disobeyed God and served idols instead of following him, they had been taken as captives away from their homes into a strange land. Now, many years later, the children of Israel are STILL in captivity in a strange land, and King Ahasuerus – who did not know God – was the king of the land. This week, we’ll journey every day to the palace of Shushan to visit Esther, who did love and seek God!
- **Introduction to Tribes:** We have divided the group into ‘tribes’ and given each group the name of a tribe of Israel. Tell them that a tribe shows who you are related to, like a last name, and that their tribe is like their family here **in the wilderness**. If you know anything about this **tribe** (or person) in the Bible, share it with the children. See extra sheet for ideas.
- **Daily Bible Point:** Each day this week, we will get to visit Esther. Esther faced some exciting times and also some very scary times, and she’s going to tell us all about them! Esther was a good example of trusting God and seeking God first, and because she did God provided everything that she needed. Like Esther, we want to always remember to put God first in our life and we can trust that He will provide us with everything that we need, too! **God gives us what we need, so...trust God!!**

- **Bible Story:** Esther Becomes Queen - Introduce the Bible story for the day (on next page). They will be visiting Esther and talking about it with her so you only need to touch on it at an appropriate level for your group.
- **Memory Verse:** Hand out bracelets and help children put them on. Have kids say the memory verse together as a group several times. Ask the kids what they think this verse means. Talk to the children about how Esther could have spent a lot of time worrying about what to wear to impress the king. But she knew it was more important to trust God first. She was beautiful in God's sight because of this (1 Pet. 3:3), and so God would provide whatever she needed.
- **Hand out Persian Gold:** Talk about how the Israelites didn't have their own kind of money, because they were in captivity. Tell the children that you have Persian Gold for them to use when they visit the Palace of Shushan to do crafts and have snacks. Give each child 3 coins to put in their name tag pouch.
- **Schedule:** Share the schedule with your **tribe**. Show them what activities they will be doing, and in what order. Review the list of what will be available in the Palace of Shushan and help the children figure out what they want to do.

Esther Becomes Queen – Esther 1-2

CHAPTER 1

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia),

2 in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel,

3 that in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants-- the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces being before him--

4 when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days in all.

5 And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

6 There were white and blue linen curtains fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; and the couches were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble.

7 And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the generosity of the king.

8 In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

9 Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold.

12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command brought by his eunuchs; therefore the king was furious, and his anger burned within him.

13 Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this was the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice,

14 those closest to him being Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, and who ranked highest in the kingdom):

15 "What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus brought to her by the eunuchs?"

16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

17 "For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.'

18 "This very day the noble ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus there will be excessive contempt and wrath.

19 "If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.

20 "When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small."

21 And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan.

22 Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

CHAPTER 2

1 After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

2 Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king;

3 "and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them.

4 "Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

5 In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

6 Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

7 And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

8 So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women.

9 Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.

10 Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.

11 And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

12 Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

13 Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace.

14 In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.

15 Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.

16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

17 The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

18 Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.

19 When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate.

20 Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

21 In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

22 So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name.

23 And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

Day 1

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33

Bible Point: God gives us what we need, so...trust God!!

Closing Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Wrap-up:** Ask children what they liked in the Palace today. Ask what they did in Shushan the Palace. Ask them what they learned from Esther. If no one brings it up, remind them that **God gives us what we need, so...trust God!!**
- **Memory Verse:** Have the kids say the verse as a group, then individually.
- **Object Lesson: Flowers (Leis/Flower Sticker/pressed flower bookmark)**
 - **Show** the children the flower.
 - **Remind** the children of the memory verse. Read (or summarize the context) Matthew 6:28-33: *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
 - **Explain** how this is like Esther.... Just like the beautiful lily of the field that God designed the beautiful raiment for, Esther did not have to worry about what she was going to wear because she knew that God would provide everything that she needed.
 - **Relate.** We also must put seeking God first in our lives, and we can trust in God to provide for us everything that we need, too.
 - **Ask.** Talk to the children about God providing for us, and ask them if they can think of a time that God has provided for them, or a time when they have to trust that God will provide for them.

- Collect the flowers and tell the children that you have one for each of them to take home after Celebration Time.
- **God Sightings:** Introduce the idea of God sightings. Ask kids if they remember what a “God sighting” is from last year. Remind them that although God doesn’t usually do the great miracles for us that He did in Bible times, God is still working in our lives today. Ask what things in their lives show them that God is with us. Give some examples, such as specific blessings, kind actions and words from others, or answered prayers. Tell them to think about examples and we will write them down tomorrow.
- **Return items to the basket:** Collect up the coin pouches, sashes, costumes and put them in the basket along with the blanket, etc
- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse or ask questions about the Bible Story.

Day 2

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Psalm 56:3

Bible Point: God is with us, so...trust God!!

Opening Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Welcome to VBS:** Ask family members what they remember from yesterday's time in the palace. Review yesterday's memory verse.
- **Name Tags/Costumes:** Hand out a pillowcase costume and belt to each child. Also give each child his/her name tag pouch.
- **Daily Bible Point: God is with us, so...trust God!!** Tell the children that they are going to visit Esther again today and learn about another problem she faces in Shushan. Esther had to really trust God with every new problem she faced, but even though she was faced with scary problems she knew that God was always there with her.
- **Bible Story:** Haman's Wicked Plan - Introduce the Bible Story for the day (on next page). They will be visiting Esther and talking about it with him so you only need to touch on it at an appropriate level for your group.
- **Memory Verse:** Hand out bracelets and help children put them on. Have kids say Memory Verse together as a group several times. Help them think about how wonderful it is we can trust in God when we are afraid. Esther had much to be afraid of when Haman announced his wicked plan, but she knew she could trust God!
- **God Sightings:** Ask tribe members how they have seen God in their lives. Using single words or short phrases, write a few on the footprint stickers in your folder. Leave them in your basket and they will be added to the map.
- **Schedule:** Share the schedule with your tribe and give each tribe member 3 gold pieces to put in the name tag pouch.
- **Mission in the Persian Palace:** Help the children apply the lesson of the day when they are in the Palace. Remind them that God is with us and takes care of us when we are afraid. We should also try to help others if they are afraid or need help. Give them a mission to help someone while they are in the Palace today.
- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse.

Haman's Wicked Decree – Esther 3-4

CHAPTER 3

1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.

2 And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.

3 Then the king's servants who were within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?"

4 Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath.

6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus-- the people of Mordecai.

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.

9 "If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king's treasuries."

10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

11 And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

12 Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded-- to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring.

13 And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.

14 A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day.

15 The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

CHAPTER 4

1 When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry.

2 He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them.

5 Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was.

6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king's gate.

7 And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

8 He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people.

- 9 So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.
- 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:
- 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."
- 12 So they told Mordecai Esther's words.
- 13 Then Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews.
- 14 "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
- 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai:
- 16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"
- 17 So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

Day 2

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Psalm 56:3

Bible Point: God is with us, so...trust God!!

Closing Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Wrap-up:** Ask children what they liked in the palace today. Ask what they did in Shushan the Palace. Ask them what they learned from Esther. If no one brings it up, remind them that **God is with us, so...trust God!!**
- **Memory Verse:** Have the kids say it as a group, then individually.
- **Object Lesson: Pinwheel (God is with us, even when we can't see Him)**
 - **Show** the children how the wind moves the pinwheel. Talk to the children about how we can't see the wind, but we know that the wind is there because we can see it blowing the pinwheel.
 - **Remind** the children of the memory verse. When we are afraid or when we have a scary problem, we can always trust that God is there with us.
 - **Explain** that Esther could not see God, but when she was afraid she could trust that God was there with her.
 - **Relate.** Sometimes we may feel like Esther. We can't see God, but we can see God working in our life and can trust that God is there with us.
 - **Ask** the children if they can think of a time when they were afraid. Ask them if knowing that God is there with them can help them to not be as afraid.
 - Collect the pinwheels and tell the children that you have one for each of them to take home after Celebration Time.
- **God Sightings:** Remind tribe members to be looking for God sightings when they go home today.
- **Return items to the basket:** Collect up the coin pouches, Sashes, Costumes and put them in the basket along with the blanket, etc

- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse or ask questions about the Bible Story.

Day 3

***“The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.”
Psalm 62:7b***

Bible Point: God gives us strength, so...trust God!!

Opening Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Welcome to VBS:** Ask family members what they remember from yesterday's journey in the palace. Review previous memory verses.
- **Name Tags/Costumes:** Hand out a pillowcase costume and belt to each child. Also give each child his/her nametag pouch.
- **Daily Bible Point: God gives us strength, so...trust God!!** Tell the children that today we are going to learn about a time that Esther needed to trust God to give her strength! She needed to be able to rely on God's strength to go to King Ahasuerus and to prepare to speak with him about Haman's wicked plan!
- **Bible Story:** Esther Prepares to Reveal Haman's Wicked Plan - Introduce the Bible Story for the day (on next page). They will be visiting Esther and talking about it with her so you only need to touch on it at an appropriate level for your group.
- **Memory Verse:** Hand out bracelets and help children put them on. Have kids say Memory Verse together as a group several times. Talk to the children about the memory verse. Describe how strong a rock is, and draw a parallel to the story of the wise and foolish builders. The wise man built on a rock, and the foolish built on the sand. If we trust in God, God is always strong and can give us strength even when there are stormy or bad things happening in our life. But if we trust in ourselves or anything but God to give us strength, it is like building our house on the sand.
- **God Sightings:** Ask **tribe** members how they have seen God in their lives. Using single words or short phrases, write them on the footprint stickers. Leave them in your basket.
- **Schedule:** Share the schedule with your tribe and give each tribe member 3 gold coins.
- **Mission in the palace:** Tell them their mission in Shushan the Palace today is to thank the shop keepers for making us feel welcome in their camp.
- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse.

Esther Prepares to Reveal Haman's Wicked Plan: Esther 5-6

CHAPTER 5

1 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.

2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

3 And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you-- up to half the kingdom!"

4 So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

7 Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request is this:

8 "If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

9 So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

11 Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

12 Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.

13 "Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

CHAPTER 6

1 That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

3 Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

7 And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,

8 "let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head.

9 "Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!' "

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Day 3

***“The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.”
Psalm 62:7b***

Bible Point: God gives us strength, so...trust God!!

Closing Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Wrap-up:** Ask children what they liked in the palace today. Ask what they did in Shushan. Ask them what they learned from Esther. If no one brings it up, remind them that **God gives us strength, so...trust God!!**
- **Memory Verse:** Have the kids say it as a group, then individually. Ask the children how these words make them feel?
- **Object Lesson: A Gemstone (God is the rock of our strength)**
 - **Show** the children the gemstones. Ask the children what words they might use to describe the rock (strong, hard etc) Demonstrate how the rock is hard – how it can't be bent or broken in your hands. Perhaps compare it to other objects that are bendable or breakable (cloth, paper etc).
 - **Remind** them about the memory verse. Talk to them about how God is our strength, and that He is our refuge and protects us.
 - **Explain** that Esther had to do some very hard and scary things, but she could trust in God to be her strength.
 - **Relate.** Sometimes we may feel like Esther, we may have to do things that are very hard to do. But we can trust that we can do all things through God or through Christ who gives us strength!
 - **Ask** the children if they can think of a time when they had to do something that they felt was too hard. Have them talk about how they can remember that God is with us and protects us and gives us strength to do what is right.
 - Collect the rocks and tell the children that you have one for each of them to take home after Celebration Time.
- **God Sightings:** Remind tribe members to be looking for God sightings when they go home today.

- **Return items to the basket:** Collect up the coin pouches, Sashes, Costumes and put them in the basket along with the blanket, etc
- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point; see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse or ask questions about the Bible Story.

Day 4

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” Psalm 27:1

Bible Point: God saves us, so...trust God!!

Opening Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Welcome to VBS:** Ask family members what they remember from yesterday's journey in the Palace. Review previous memory verses.
- **Name Tags/Costumes:** Hand out a pillowcase costume and belt to each child. Also give each child his/her name tag pouch.
- **Daily Bible Point: God saves us, so...trust God!!** Today we are going to have another exciting day learning about how God was with Esther and his people. When we visit Esther today, we'll learn about what happened when Esther told Ahasuerus of Haman's wicked plan!
- **Bible Story:** God's People are Saved - Introduce the Bible Story for the day (on next page). They will be visiting Esther and talking about it with her so you only need to touch on it at an appropriate level for your group.
- **Memory Verse:** Hand out bracelets and help children put them on. Have kids say Memory Verse together as a group several times. Talk to the children about the contrast between light and darkness, and how God uses darkness to describe bad things: sin and sadness and death. But God uses light to describe good things: Himself, truth, and life. The memory verse reminds us that when there are bad things around us, we can always remember that God is with us too!
- **God Sightings:** Ask **tribe** members how they have seen God in their lives. Using single words or short phrases, write them on the footprint stickers in your folder. Leave them in your basket.
- **Schedule:** Share the schedule with your tribe and give each tribe member 3 gold coins.
- **Mission in Shushan the Palace:** Remind **tribe** members of today's Bible point. Tell them their mission in the Israelite Camp today is to invite shop keepers to sing praise to God with us in the closing celebration.

- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse.

God's People are Saved – Esther Chapters 7-8

CHAPTER 7

1 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.

2 And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

3 Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.

4 "For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."

5 So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.

8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?" As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman." Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

CHAPTER 8

1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her.

2 So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews.

4 And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king,

5 and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

6 "For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.

8 "You yourselves write a decree for the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a letter which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

9 So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

10 And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.

11 By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives-- to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions,

12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

13 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

15 So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

16 The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.

17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Day 4

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” Psalm 27:1

Bible Point: God saves us, so...trust God!!

Closing Family Time(remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Wrap-up:** Ask children what they liked in the Palace today. Ask what they did in the palace. Ask them what they learned from Esther. If no one brings it up, remind them about how **God saves us, so ...trust God!!**
- **Memory Verse:** Have the kids say it as a group, then individually.
- **Object Lesson: Glow stick (The Lord is our light and salvation)**
 - **Show.** Hold up the glow sticks (don't crack them!) and ask the kids if they know what they are and what they could use them for.
 - **Remind** the children about the memory verse. Explain to them how darkness represents bad things, but light represents life and salvation. Talk to them about how when it is dark, they can crack the glowstick to give them light.
 - **Explain.** Esther was surrounded by a lot of terrible things, but God was always there in the darkness giving her light and in the end God also provided salvation for Esther and all of His people.
 - **Relate.** Sometimes we might be surrounded by terrible things, like Esther, but we can think of the glow stick shining brightly when it is dark and remember that God is our light and our salvation in the darkness!
 - **Ask** the children if they can think of a time when they may feel surrounded by bad things? Ask them what they can do to help themselves remember that God is a light with them even when they are surrounded by darkness?
 - Tell the children that you have a glowstick for each of them to take home after Celebration Time.
- **God Sightings:** Remind **tribe** members to be looking for God sightings when they go home today.

- **Return items to the basket:** Collect up the coin pouches, Sashes and Costumes and put them in the basket along with the blanket, etc
- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse or ask questions about the Bible Story.
- **Remind the children to come to the performance and dinner tonight.**

Day 5

***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”
Proverbs 3:5-6***

Bible Point: God guides, so...trust God!!

Opening Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Welcome to VBS:** Ask family members what they remember from yesterday's journey in the palace. Review previous memory verses.
- **Name Tags/Costumes:** Hand out a pillowcase costume and belt to each child. Also give each child his/her name tag pouch.
- **Daily Bible Point: God guides, so...trust God!!** This is our last day with our friend, Esther. In the palace, you will get to celebrate God's deliverance with Esther and Mordecai! God watched over and guided Esther and His people from the beginning, and now they celebrate His salvation from wicked Haman's plan!
- **Bible Story:** - Introduce the Bible Story for the day, God's People Celebrate (on next page). They will be visiting Esther and talking about it with her so you only need to touch on it at an appropriate level for your group.
- **Memory Verse:** Hand out bracelets and help children put them on. Have kids say Memory Verse together as a group several times. Ask kids what they think this verse means. Talk to the children about how we don't always know what to do or what tomorrow will bring – whether it is something happy or sad. But this verse is telling us that when we trust God – He will direct our path. That means that even though we don't know what will happen tomorrow, God does! So we can trust God, because we know He has a plan for our life - just like He had a plan for Esther!
- **God Sightings:** Ask **tribe** members how they have seen God in their lives. Using single words or short phrases, write them on the footprint stickers in your folder. Leave them in your basket.
- **Schedule:** Share the schedule with your **tribe** and give each **tribe** member 3 gold coins.

- **Mission in Shushan the Palace:** Tell them their mission in the palace today is to say thank you to one of people.
- **If extra time:** Go back to the Bible point, see if any of the kids remember it. If you have more time to fill, have kids take turns reciting the memory verse.

CHAPTER 9

1 Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, the time came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them.

2 The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people.

3 And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

4 For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent.

5 Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

6 And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men.

7 Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha--

10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews-- they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

11 On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king.

12 And the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done."

13 Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

14 So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15 And the Jews who were in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

16 The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

17 This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth day of the month they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

18 But the Jews who were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar with gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus,

21 to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,

22 as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them,

24 because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that is, the lot), to consume them and destroy them;

25 but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letter that this wicked plot which Haman had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,

27 the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who should join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written instructions and according to the prescribed time,

28 that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

30 And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

31 to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting.

32 So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written

CHAPTER 10

1 And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea.

2 Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.

Day 5

***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”
Proverbs 3:5-6***

Bible Point: God guides, so...trust God!!

Closing Family Time (remember it is only 15 minutes!!):

- **Wrap-up:** Ask children what they liked in the Palace today. Ask what they did in Shushan the Palace. Ask them what they learned from Esther. If no one brings it up, remind them about how **God guides us, so ...trust God!!**
- **Memory Verse:** Have the kids say it as a group, then individually.
- **Object Lesson: Compass (God directs our paths)**
 - **Show** them how the compass always points north. Talk to the children about how people use compasses to show them which direction they should go.
 - **Remind** the children of their memory verse, and how God directs our paths when we trust in Him.
 - **Explain** how every day Esther did not know what would happen next. She did not know what would happen when she had to leave Mordecai to go to the king's palace. She did not know that she would be chosen to be queen. She did not know what would happen when she heard of Haman's wicked plan. She did not know what would happen when she went in to the palace to speak with Ahasuerus, and she did not know what would happen when she told Ahasuerus of Haman's plan. But all along God was with her and He guided her every step of the way.
 - **Relate.** Sometimes we feel like Esther. We may feel that we don't know what will happen next in our lives. But God has promised that if we trust Him, He is always with us and will direct what happens in our life.
 - **Ask.** Talk to the children about God guiding us, and ask them if they can think of a time that God has guided them.

- Collect the compasses and tell the children that you have one for each of them to take home after Celebration Time.
- **God Sightings:** Remind **tribe** members to keep looking for God sightings, even after VBS is over.
- **Return items to the basket:** Collect up the Sashes, Costumes and put them in the basket along with the blanket, etc.
- **If extra time:** Review today's memory verse or ask questions about Bible Story.