

Esther VBS

Script

DAY 1

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

Family Time Reading: Esther chapters 1 and 2

Points to remember for Day 1 Lessons:

- Ahasuerus scheduled a Feast for nobility lasted 180 days in the third year of his reign.
- Then he had a feast for the common man within the palace
- It was the 7th day of the feast with the common people when the king was drunk that he commanded Vashti be brought to him that he might show off her beauty.
- There was a 3 year gap between Vashti's rebellion and the virgins being gathered for the king because the King was at war – he lost the war and returned home.
- Esther was raised by Mordecai because her mother and father were dead.
- Mordecai checked on Esther at the house of women every day.
- Esther spent 1 year purifying herself with ointment – myrrh and sweet odors
- Myrrh not only smells nice, it makes the skin soft and smooth and sweet odors were used to help with ill smells (like deodorant)
- Esther required nothing to go in unto the king

Characters of Day 1

- Esther
- Mordecai
- Hegai – keeper of the maidens

Décor

- King's palace
 - White, green and blue hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings
 - Pillars of marble
 - Beds of gold and silver

- Red/blue and white and black marble
- Vessels of gold
- Wine bottles filled with grape juice
- Decree about Vashti on canvas to hang up
 - See Esther 1:19-22 –
- House of women (on the stage)
 - Sign above the doors to the main hall entrance that says “House of Women”
 - Bottles of ointment of myrrh and sweet odors
 - Incense burning
 - Pillows to lay on
 - Carpets

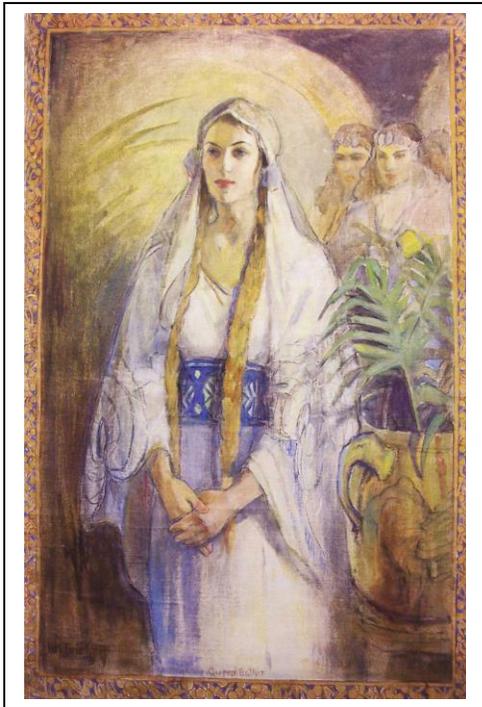
Extra Props

- Frankincense and myrrh
- Fan
- balloon

Background:

Esther has already been selected as one of the fair virgins and is in the King’s palace waiting to be called by King Ahasuerus. She is nervous, but also very confident that God is directing her path. She knows she has been put in this position for a reason and she wants very much to please her God and also her Uncle. Esther is dressed in beautiful clothes, fit for a Persian Queen.

Costume picture ideas (Costume to be made by Belinda, God willing):



Esther will be seated, praying on her knees on a pillow in the house of the women when the children enter and a couple of other young maidens will be sitting on pillows around the same area. (Note in the family leader outline for this day that the leaders must remind the kids when they enter where Esther is, they are entering property owned by the King of Persia, so they must be quiet and respectful)

Hegai, keeper of the maidens will be standing outside the House of Women when the Families approach.

Hegai: Well hello there! My name is Hegai, keeper of the king's maidens. May I help you with something?

Wait for family leader to tell you that they are here to visit with Esther.

Hegai: Oh! How lovely! I believe we may be able to permit a short visit. Let me just make sure that she is willing to accept visitors. Can you wait here a moment?

Hegai disappears into the house of Maidens and Esther appears out of the entrance shortly after

Esther: “Oh hello there! I was told I may have guests visit me today! I heard you are here visiting from a land called Livonia, MI is that right? (wait for the kids to answer) Well that is wonderful! You know King Ahasuerus has had beautiful feasts in this land where people have come from all over to celebrate his kingdom! Have you ever been to a grand feast?

Well why don't you all come in and have a seat and be comfortable. I'm so glad to have visitors today! I don't have many visitors, except my uncle of course! I was raised by my uncle, Mordecai. You may get to meet him today too. He has come to visit me here every day since I've been here.
(knock knock knock)

Hegai: Esther, your uncle is here to see you. May he come in?

Esther: Of course! We were just talking about him! *(Mordecai appears behind Hegai)*

Uncle! We were just talking about you! Your ears must be tingling!

Mordecai: Oh my dear! *(hugging Esther tightly)* How are you? Are you well!?
(Mordecai steps back and looks Esther up and down as if he hasn't seen her in months)

Esther Oh Uncle! You act as if you haven't seen me in a year! Yes, yes! I am well, just like yesterday and the day before that and the day before that! I am treated like royalty here! I can't imagine anything I could need or want, except to be home again. *(Esther slightly hangs her head, but quickly looks back up and smiles)*

Mordecai: I know my dear, chin up, this is where God has called you. You must trust in him always and never be scared. Keep your faith strong!

Esther: Yes uncle. You have taught me that very well and without God guiding my life I know I would not have the strength to go on.

Mordecai: That's a good girl (*giving her a hug*). Now I must be on my way, I have my duties at the gate of the city. God be with you my dear!

Esther: And also with you Uncle. Goodbye!

Mordecai: (*Turning quickly*) Goodbye, if the Lord wills I will return tomorrow!
(*Mordecai quickly leaves the area*)

Esther: Well, now you have met my uncle (*laughing*) He has been so wonderful to me. You see, this isn't where I have always lived. Up until about a year ago, I lived with my uncle, Mordecai in his house. Do you all have Uncles? (wait for kids to answer) Well, I lived with him because my mother and father died long ago. Anyway, it's sort of a long story how I ended up here.....would you like to hear it?

(*learning in and speaking in a much lower voice*) Well, I must speak quietly of it. You see, King Ahasuerus was married to Queen Vashti, have you ever heard of her? Well do you know what she did? King Ahasuerus had set great feasts and there were people from all over who came to them. One evening, the queen had a feast of her own with all the maidens of the land while the king's feast was going on. Later in the evening, after the king had been drinking some wine, he wanted the queen to come to his feast so he could show how beautiful she was. So he sent his servants to get her. Apparently she wasn't very pleased that he wanted to show her off and she didn't want to leave her own party, so she said 'No'! Can you believe that! Can you imagine saying no to an order that a King gave? What would happen to you if you said 'No' to one of your parents? You would probably get into a lot of trouble huh? Well the King asked the princes of the land what they thought he should do to the queen since she did not obey him. The princes said that they were afraid that all women would start to behave like Vashti and stop doing the jobs they were supposed to do. So they told the king he should take the crown from her head and take away all her things and give it all to another woman to become queen.

That's where the story begins to include me. After the queen was taken off the throne, the king's servants went out into the land and gathered all of the young girls together and began to get them ready to meet the king. The king is now going to choose one of the young ladies to be his wife. So for the past year, this is where I have been, preparing to meet the king. Have you ever met the ruler of a land? What is your ruler called? Is he a King? *(wait for kids to answer)* Well, I have to say I've been a little nervous – do you think you would be?

(Picking up the bottles of myrrh and frankincense) Here are some of the oils I have been using to prepare to meet the king. This is myrrh – it smells delightful – it's really good for making the skin soft smooth! Then there is frankincense – we use this to help cover up bad smells – kind of like deodorant! Here, go ahead and pass it around and smell it. What do you think? You can even put someone if you would like.

So this is what I have been doing for about a year now – praying and waiting for my turn to meet the king. Did you know praying is how we communicate with God. When are some times that you pray? *(wait for kids to give answers – encourage elaboration)*.

Those are all really good answers. God tells us we should never ever be afraid and we should always pray to him and look for the direction he wants us to go in. You all seem like a very smart group. Do you have any sayings or scriptures that will help you to remember that we can trust in God to help us? *(if they don't do it on their own, encourage kids to recite the memory verse for the day – memory verse for this day should line up with the theme of "Trust in The Lord")*.

Very good! I'll have to remember that one! That's one you should always remember too! So praying is how we speak to God – but how does God speak to us? That's right!! God speaks to us through the scriptures. You know there was a famous king, named David who wrote lots of Psalms to God. Some of them he wrote when he was very sad and some he wrote when he was very happy. We should be the same way, praying to God in times of trouble and times that are good!

Another way of saying that you trust in God is to say that you have faith. Do you know what faith is? Faith is seeing something without actually seeing it.

There are actually a lot of things that we have faith in every day did you know that? For example if I turn the lights off and the room goes totally dark, what will happen when I turn the lights back on? Right the room won't be dark anymore. That is actually faith – you have faith and you believe that the light bulb will work and light up the room again right? You can't actually see the wires that hook up switch to the light bulb. Why do you believe that the room won't be dark anymore? Because you have probably used a light switch before right? And you know that when the light switch goes up, the light will turn on. You can see the light, but you can't see how it works.

What about things that you can't see. Like how about this fan. Can you see the air that is being blown from the fan? No, you can't – but can you can after I put this balloon in front of it can't you? You can't see the air, but you know it's there because you can feel it and then you can test it by putting a balloon in front of it. That is kind of how our faith works. Sometimes it's not so easy to have faith isn't it?

Did you know God also promises that he will always give us everything that we need – can you think of an example in the Bible of a group of people who had to rely on their faith that God would provide them all they needed to survive?

(Answers: Israelites – manna and quail, Elisha with the raven providing food for him)

God will always give us everything we need if we trust in Him and always put Him first

Loud knocking sound and Hegai enters the room.

Hegai: Esther my dear, it is time, the king has summoned you to come before him. Each of the maidens is given anything she needs in order to be ready to present herself before the king. What may I get for you Esther?

Esther: Oh, Hegai thank you. You have been so kind to me. But I do not need anything to go before the king. For I know that The Lord God is with me and He has given me everything I need.

Hegai: Yes my dear, of course. You have maintained such a beautiful faith in your god the entire time you have been here. I will let you say your goodbyes to your visitors. Good bye everyone. I hope you enjoy your time here in Persia. It is a beautiful city!

Hegai turns and exits to the back stair way

Esther: Well, my time has come. This is the time that I have been preparing for. My uncle has told me that God has chosen me for a purpose. I'm not quite sure what it is yet. But I know He will show me. Will you say a prayer with me before you go?

Dear Glorious God in Heaven, I am so thankful to be called your daughter and I am so thankful that you have given me these friends today. I know that each and every one of us has a purpose in your plan. Please help us to have faith and to trust that you are in control and we pray that your will be done. Please help us to strengthen our faith as we face trials and troubles. Amen.

Thank you for visiting with me today friends! I hope that you will come back to visit me soon. If you do, I will tell you all about my visit with the king! Good bye!

DAY 2

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

Family Time reading: Esther 3 and 4

Points to remember for Day 2 lessons – Esther shares her experience of being chosen by the king and moving from the house of maidens into the palace.

- While she is telling the children, chamberlains come and inform her of the Jews how they are all weeping and fasting and covering themselves with sackcloth
- Esther is very distraught and calls for Hatach, the King's chamberlain and asks him to send clothing for Mordecai to change into
- Hatach returns with the clothes and says Mordecai will not receive them – also brings a copy of the decree of Haman and tells her all that happened to Mordecai
- Esther sends message back with Hatach that she can not appeal to the king or she will be killed because he did not summon her
- Hatach delivers the message and then returns telling Esther not to think of herself – that if the Jews perish, so will she
- Esther gives command that all her maidens will fast and so should all the Jews and she will do as Mordecai says

Characters of Day 2

- Esther
- Chamberlain 1
- Chamberlain 2
- Hatach

Décor

- Similar to yesterday - Esther's Quarters

Extra Props:

Folded up clothes

Scroll with Haman's decree written on it.

Esther meets the families outside her chambers and warmly greets them. Esther now has a queens crown upon her head.

Esther: Hello there! I am so glad to see you! I have so much to tell you, please come inside and sit down!

Does anyone notice anything different about me today?

That's right! I'm wearing a crown! The king selected me to be his Queen and I am now to live in the palace! Isn't that amazing! I don't know what god has in store, but I am certain He has plan that I am not aware of yet!

Knock knock knock – the queens chamberlains all appear in the door way of her chamber.

Esther: Yes, come in.

Chamberlain 1: My queen, I am afraid we have some very troubling news.

Chamberlain 2: It is your uncle, he has been seen in the King's gate, crying and wearing sackcloth and ashes. He is in deep distress.

Chamberlain 1: Yes queen, and it is not only your uncle. We have enquired and have found that all of your people throughout all of the provinces of the land are weeping and fasting also wearing sackcloth and ashes. Something is very wrong.

Esther: Oh, this is terrible. I must find out what is wrong. Please, send me Hatach, the King's chamberlain. I must get a message to my uncle at once!

Chamberlain 1: Yes your majesty. *(both chamberlains bow and exit quickly and Hatach appears immediately after they are gone)*

Hatach: *(bowing upon entering)* You have summoned me your majesty.

Esther: Yes Hatach, I have a message you must deliver to my uncle, Mordecai at once. Please, give him these garments to change into so that he is no longer wearing sackcloth and ask him to please tell me why he is mourning and fasting. Hurry Hatach, its very important.

Hatach: Yes your majesty. *(bowing again and exiting quickly)*

Esther: My goodness, it must be something very terrible for all of God's people to be mourning and fasting. Do you know what it means to fast?

That's right. Fasting is where you don't eat or drink for a period of time so that you can focus on prayer. That is only done at times where something very serious has happened. Oh, I hope Hatach returns soon.

(Just as Esther finishes her sentence, Hatach returns with the garments and a scroll in his hands)

Esther: Hatach, I thought I told you to give those garments to my uncle.

Hatach: Yes your majesty, but he refused them. And he also told me some very distressing news. Haman, the son of Hamadatha was promoted to be above all the princes. The King commanded that all the kings servants and those in the gate bow to Haman, but your uncle would not! The king's servants told your uncle that he really should be bowing to Haman or he would get in trouble. But Mordecai wouldn't listen.

Esther: Well, of course he wouldn't, the law strickly forbids bowing or worshipping anyone or anything outside of God.

Hatach: Well, the kings servants didn't like that much, so they told Haman. Funny thing is – Haman hadn't even noticed that your uncle was not bowing to him until that moment! Well, he noticed the next day.

When he walked through the gate, he watched to see if your uncle would bow down and of course he didn't. So Haman was not happy! He went home and thought up plan to have not only your uncle destroyed but ALL of your people! Here, your uncle gave this to me for you to read. (*hands Esther the scroll in his hands*).

Esther: (*unrolling the document and quickly scanning it*) This was sealed with the king's signet ring – the king approved this? I can't bear to read this out loud. (*handing it off to the family leader*) Can you please read this for me?

Family Leader: Read's the scroll aloud:

By Order of the King

To every lieutenant, and to every governor that is over every province and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof and to every people after their language;
in the name of

King Ahasuerus

I hereby declare that you shall destroy, kill and cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women,
in one day, on
the thirteenth day of the twelfth month Adar,
and take the spoil of them for a prey.

Esther: This is terrible! That means that in (*counting and looking up as if thinking hard*) in less than a year, my people will be destroyed!

Hatach: Yes in deed, that is what this means. And your uncle requests that you go unto the King and ask him to save your people.

Esther: Me? Go to the King? But the king hasn't asked me to see him for the last 30 days! I can't just walk into his chamber and start talking to him! Don't you realize that there is a law that says if someone goes into the king's presence without being summoned, he or she will be put to DEATH. The only way I could survive something like that is if the king held out his golden scepter to me – what if I went there and he didn't hold out his scepter! I would be put to death! Please tell that to my uncle. I'm not sure if he has any idea what he is asking.

Hatach: Yes your majesty. (*bowing he leaves quickly*)

Esther: Wow – I never thought anything like this would happen. In less than a year, my people could be destroyed. Do you think maybe this is why I have been put in this position? To save my people? Me? I can't imagine going in unto the king – this would certainly mean death. But maybe the king would extend his scepter to me and I could tell him everything – but what would I say? I don't know if the king even knows that I am a Jewess. Maybe he agrees with Haman? Maybe he supports his evil plot. No no....that couldn't be.

Hatach: (*entering swiftly*) Your majesty I have returned with further word from your uncle.

Esther: Yes yes, tell me what he said.

Hatach: Here is the message from your uncle: (*reading from a piece of paper*) My dear Esther. While what I am asking you to do is not easy, remember that if the Jews are killed – you too will be killed by Haman and his men. However, God will not allow his people to be utterly destroyed. He will find a different way to deliver them from this evil. But you and all your household will die. Maybe this is why God has brought you to this place.

Esther: *(biting her nails and looking nervous she suddenly straightens)* Thank you Hatach. Return to my uncle and tell him this: Go and gather together all the Jews that live in Shushan and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for 3 days. I and my maidens will also fast. And I will go in to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I die, I die.

Hatach: Yes madam. *(he bows and turns to leave).*

Esther: *(turning to the children)* Oh I am so glad you are all here. What do you think you would do if you were me? If you were told to stand up for what you believe and something bad could happen to you if you did that, would you do it? *(wait for answers from the kids)*

This is a time where I must show my faith in God. I know that no matter what happens, it is God's will. I must not be scared. No matter what, I know he using this situation to better His plan.

I just thought of something to demonstrate when it might not be as easy to have faith. Can I have a volunteer?

(Do the faith fall example – stand right behind the child and have them lean back onto you, have them repeat this and each time you allow them to fall further before catching them. They should develop a trust or a faith that you will be there.

Maybe bring up the verse 1 Cor. 10:13 There hath no temptation taken hold of you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful; He will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that which ye are able to bear, but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

So what we learn from that is even though we may not see God, we know that he is always there and we must trust Him and by going through trials, we develop more and more faith that God is with us.

Thank you all for being with me today. I'm so glad you were here to help strengthen me. That is why God brings us together in groups of believers, to help strengthen one another. Will you pray with me before you leave?

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for all that you give to us. We thank you for the friends that you give us to help us through trials. We thank you for giving us opportunities to show our trust in you. Please help us when we are weak and scared. Help us to always remember you are there. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Well, I am going to go to the king tonight. If he will see me, then I will be here tomorrow to tell you all about it. Good bye children!

DAY 3

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

Family Time reading: Esther 5 and 6

- Points to remember for Day 3 lessons
- Esther went to the king as Mordecai requested
- When the king saw her, she found favor in his sight and he held out his scepter to her and he said "What is your request? It shall be given to you – up to half the kingdom!"
- She then invited the king and Haman to a banquet that evening which she prepared for him.
- At the banquet the queen invited Haman and the king to yet another banquet the following evening.
- After the banquet was over Haman was so delighted he went out joyful in the streets until he saw Mordecai in the king's gate and he was reminded of his hatred of him.
- (maybe on this day have an act in the market place with Haman and Zeresh and their encounter about Mordecai and the gallows?)
- This night the king cannot sleep – have a servant come in and tell Esther about how the king called for the oracles to be brought in and read about Mordecai

Characters of Day 3

- Esther
- Chamberlain 1
- Chamberlain 2
- Hatach

Décor

- Similar to yesterday - Esther's Quarters

The groups are met outside the doors to the main hall today by Hatach and they are escorted into Esther's chambers

Hatach Hello there children! How are you all today? I have a feeling Esther will be most delighted to see you today. She has some amazing things to share with you! Come this way.

Approaching the door to Esther's chambers

Hatach Queen Esther, your friends are here once more to visit with you.

Esther Oh am I so thankful to our God to be able to see you all again! (*hugging several of them*)

I have so much to tell you – won't you please come into my chambers and we can speak in private.

I can't describe to you what going to the king felt like! My heart was thumping so hard! Have any of you ever been in a situation where you were so scared you felt like your heart was going to pound out of your chest?

Well, that is how I felt yesterday! I went in to the king and remember how I told you that if the king did not extend his scepter to me that it would mean I would be killed? Well he DID extend his scepter to me. Actually I think he was quite happy that I went in to see him. He said that no matter what I asked of him he would give it to me, even if I asked him to give me half of the kingdom!! Can you imagine someone offering half of their kingdom to you? Well, That would be like if you came to me and said you had a favor to ask of me and I said "No problem – I will give you anything, even if it means half of everything I own – you can have one of my cars and the half of the clothes in my closet...." That would be pretty crazy huh?

Then, I told him that I wanted him and Haman to join me at a banquet that evening. I think the King was pretty surprised that I risked my life just to ask him if he would come to dinner with Haman. So of course he was very curious to know WHY I wanted him to come to dinner. But I didn't say anything about what had happened with the Jews or Mordecai or anything! I just asked them to come to dinner! So they did! I had my servants help

me prepare a huge feast with meat and vegetables and wine and we had a wonderful time!

So of course before dinner was over, the king really wanted to know what it was I wanted to ask of him and again he offered half of the kingdom to me! So you know what I told him? Well, I didn't think that was quite the right time to tell him about everything that is going on, so I invited him and Haman to ANOTHER feast that is going to happen tonight!

You should have seen the look on Haman's face!! He was so excited! He went parading around the whole city. But I heard later that when he saw Mordecai in the city, he wasn't too happy because my uncle is still very distraught about what Haman has decreed. He is still fasting and mourning and of course will not worship Haman. It sounds like Haman went off home in quite a huff.

What kind of man do you think Haman is? (selfish, mean, evil)

I know that God has a plan and I must push forward through this. Sometimes we know that God is with us, but we have a hard time finding the strength to keep trying to do what is right. Have you ever found that? Have you ever been in a situation where you know what the right thing is, but you don't have the strength to make the right decision?

How do you think we can find the strength to make good decisions?

Two servants rush into Esther's chambers and immediately bow.

Servant 1 Queen Esther we are so sorry to disturb you, may we have a word with you?

Esther Oh, its not a problem. But please, I have nothing to hide from my dear friends here, what is it you want to tell me?

Servants look at each other nervously and proceed.

Servant 2 Well, we thought you would like to know, we heard that after your banquet last night, the king had a terrible time trying to sleep.

Servant 1 That's right, so he commanded that I bring him the book of the records of the chronicles and asked that I read them to him. And it was found that

Mordecai, your uncle, had once uncovered a secret plot to kill the king. There were two eunuchs here in the palace who did not like the king and had devised a wicked plan.

Servant 2 For some reason, either the King was never told about the uncovered plot or he forgot about it. So he asked us what had been done for Mordecai because he saved the king's life.

Servant 1 None of the king's servants could remember anything that had been done for him. So then, for some reason, Haman was just outside the king's door

Servant 2 Yeah – why was he there anyway?

Servant 1 I don't know, but he told Haman to come into his room and without telling Haman what we had talked about, he asked Haman what should be done for a man who the king wants to honor.

Servant 2 Silly Haman, I really think that he thought the king wanted to honor HIM! You know what he said – he said that the king should put royal robes on him and give him the king's horse to ride on and put the king's crown on his head and that the man should be paraded around the city so that everyone could see the king wanted to honor him!

Servant 1 So guess where Haman is now!? He is parading your uncle, Mordecai around the city on the king's horse! Haman HATES Mordecai!

Servant 2 Yes maam and that's not all! Haman has also built gallows where he plans to hang Mordecai tonight!

Esther Oh my! So much is happening so quickly! I am so glad I have my trust in God to give me strength to get through this banquet tonight because I am sure going to need it. Thank you, you can go now.

Servants bow and exit.

Esther Wow! Can you believe all of this. I am starting to really see why God has put me here. I had no idea my uncle had saved the king's life once. That's amazing. That happened so long ago and he is just now being recognized for it. And that terrible man Haman – he plans to kill my uncle and then the king asks him to parade my uncle around declaring how much the king

loves him!! I'm sorry, but its hard not to find that just a little bit funny don't you think? Wow, I wish I could see that! Hahahahaha!

Well, I really must get going moving planning my banquet for this evening. Tonight I am going to expose Haman's wicked plot to the king. I don't know what the king will say though. Surely there is no way the king will support such an evil deed – the Jews are very supportive of his kingdom and there are so many of them. He has never hated the Jews. Surely he will not allow Haman to follow through with such a terrible thing. Oh, there is so much on my mind. I must pray. Will you pray with me again?

Dear God in Heaven, creator of all life, I am so thankful that you have called me to help your people. Please Father, give me the strength I need to be useful in your plan and purpose. Please give me the right words to say at the right time so that your glory will shine through this terrible plan. Thank you for giving me these friends to strengthen my faith. Please help us all to continue to grow together and to help each other every day. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hatach enters Queen Esther's chambers

Hatach Dear Queen, the chamberlains are here to begin the banquet preparations and need your guidance to ensure everything is exactly how you like it.

Esther Yes, I will be right there. Thank you again friends. I hope that you will return tomorrow so I can tell you all about what happens at the banquet! Good bye!!

DAY 4

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

Family Time reading: Esther 7 and 8

Points to remember for Day 4 lessons

- Chapter 7 begins with the second banquet
- King asks Esther once more what is her request and it will be given to the half of the kingdom
- Esther does not hesitate – she goes right into telling the king that she and her people have been sold to be servants and killed
- The king is astonished at this message and wants to know who could do such an evil thing
- Esther reveals it is Haman
- The king leaves the banquet to go somewhere to think
- Haman, fears for his life and throws himself at Esther's feet begging for mercy
- King returns to find Haman at his wife's feet begging and has his head covered
- A Servant informs the king that Haman had gallows made for Mordecai to hang and the king orders Haman hang on the same gallows
- The king's ring was given to Mordecai
-

Activity: Today the children will experience what a real king's banquet would have been like. There will be a table set with gold cups and plates on a fine table cloth with candles and a grand setting. Have them all gather around the table, sitting at their place.

- Have letters written to the provinces and have the kids write their name in the blank and then show them how a signet ring works with dripped wax and then use the ring to make the stamp

Characters of Day 4

- Esther

- Hatach
- Mordecai

Extra Props

- black hood that would have covered Haman's head
- Papers that have "By Order of the King" at the top and the rest blank so the kids can write the rest of the letter
- Large poster board with letter example for the kids to copy
- Wax to seal the letters
- Matches to melt the wax
- Signet ring to demonstrate how to stamp a letter with a seal
- 20 sharpened pencils for the kids
- Basket to put completed, sealed letters in

Décor

Esther's quarters done up with a banquet feast table

Children enter the main hall and no one is there to greet them – the main hall doors are open so they can walk right in and they find Esther praying in her chambers.

Esther Oh hello my friends! It is so wonderful to see you! I have so much to share with you! Please come in! Today I have asked the chamberlains to set my chambers up to resemble a grand king's feast so that you can see what it would be like! Come in and please sit down!

This is very similar to the banquet I attended last night with King Ahasuerus and Haman. Everything was set up to perfection and the King and Haman were quite impressed. I wish so much you could have been there. Would you like me to tell you what happened?

Well, Haman had just returned from escorting my uncle all around the kingdom on the King's horse, when the chamberlains were sent to bring him to the palace for our grand feast. The banquet was set up much like this one. Kings eat off of plates of gold and drink out of cups of gold! Isn't that neat? What kind of plates do you eat off of? Do you have banquets set up like this ever?

Sadly for Haman this banquet probably didn't go quite as he had thought it would.....we didn't even hardly have time to sit and enjoy our surroundings before the king once again said "What is thy petition, queen Esther and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? And it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom". I could not hold back my emotions any longer! The time had come. I had to expose wicked Haman for the scoundrel that he was!! So it all just came tumbling out of my mouth. I told the king everything! The king had no idea what Haman had done! He was so shocked they he couldn't even stay in the room. He stormed out of the banquet. And Haman was so scared – he ran to me, begging at my feet and while he was begging, The king returned! And if he wasn't already fiercely angry with Haman, when he saw him begging at my feet, he was REALLY angry!! The chamberlains ran over to Haman and covered his face with a cloth, similar to this (*show a black hood that is sized to go over someone's head*). Then Harbonah, one of the king's chamberlains told the king about the gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai and the king ordered that Haman be hanged on them instead! It was quite an intense scene!

Does anyone know what happened after that? The king took back his ring that he had given to Haman and gave it to my uncle – it looks something similar to this ring (*show the kids the signet ring*) and he gave Haman's house to my Uncle!

But you know what I realized – Haman was dead, but the letter he sent out, commanding that my people be destroyed was not dead. Anything that is signed and sealed by the king's ring cannot be reversed. So once again, I asked the king that if I found favor in his eyes that he please do something to change the decree that Haman had sent out. So he told me I could have the scribes write a letter and send it to everyone in all the lands that are around us to tell them that the Jews were not to be killed, but their lives are to be spared. So that is what I am doing today!

Scribes! Please bring in the papers. I thought you could all be my scribes – can you be my scribes? I would like if you can please copy what is written up on this poster board onto your paper. And I have wax and a signet ring

that we can seal it with and send it out at once. Can you help me with that? Wonderful, lets get started! The letter will read: (on a poster board) *(poster board will be propped up so that the kids can copy what is written on it)*

By Order of the King

To every lieutenant, and to every governor that is over every province and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof and to every people after their language;
in the name of

King Ahasuerus

I hereby declare that the Jews shall gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women and to take the spoil of them for a prey in one day on
the thirteenth day of the twelfth month Adar,

Esther Once everyone is finished, we can then seal the letters and give them to the chamberlains to deliver to all the lands.

As each child finishes, have them come over and drip the wax and seal their letter and put into a basket. Once all the letters are sealed Esther calls the chamberlains in.

Hatach! Hatach! The letters are complete, can you please take these and deliver them to our post servants have them ride on mules and camels quickly so that our message can spread that my people have been saved!

Hatach Yes, my queen! I will do this at once. Good job children, thank you for helping the queen! You have done a great service to the children of God!

Hatach leaves quickly once all the letters are collected.

Esther Wow, isn't this all so amazing! I never could have imagined that God would have such a wonderful plan for me!

Mordecai enters Esther's chambers dressed in blue and white garments and a gold crown upon his head.

Esther Uncle! You look wonderful!!! It is so good to see you!

Mordecai Yes, my dear, it is wonderful to see you too! You have done well my dear. You must continue with the faith that you have – that no matter what happens, you will always trust in God – that he has a plan. We don't always understand. But one day, we will understand the clear picture.

Esther Thank you for encouraging me Uncle. I'm not sure I could have done it support and guidance – and without all my friends here.

Mordecai Oh yes of course – I forgot you had these friends. This is why God brings us together as believers you know – so that we can help each other to stay strong through trials. Keep on children – hold your faith strong. For the scriptures tell us that a savior will come one day to save us all from the sin of this world and set up His kingdom on earth. Until then – keep the faith. I must go my dear. *(giving her a hug)* God be with you.

Esther Goodbye Uncle. God be with you as well!

Mordecai leaves

Esther Well, I must attend to the chamberlains to ensure that your letters have gone out with the post, so I must be going. Can we end our visit with a prayer?

Dear God, merciful and loving you are! We thank you so much for saving your people. We thank you for giving us this time to be an example that you are always watching and you are preserving a remnant so that your Truth will always live. Please help us to see through the trials that we face, help us to think on times like these and remember that even when things look impossible, you are in control and your plan is being carried out. God be with us as we part this day. Please bless all of us and send your son soon to reign on this earth so we might live the rest of our lives in your glorious kingdom. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Thank you once again for visiting children. God be with you and always remember – stay strong and encourage one another through trials so that you can have faith to see them through to the end. You never know what marvelous plans God has in store for you! Good bye!

DAY 5

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

Family Time Reading: Esther 9 and 10

Points to remember for Day 5 Lessons:

The same day Haman had decreed for the Jews to be slaughtered, the Jews were given permission to kill all those who were involved in the plot, this included Haman's 10 sons and 500 men in Shushan.

A day of sorrow was turned to a day of joy

Mordecai's name was proclaimed through all the land and became a prominent figure.

Esther was given permission to nominate the 14th and 15th days of the month Adar as the Feast of Purim, where the Jews were to feast and give presents to each other and remember it as the days when the Jews were delivered from the hands of the wicked Haman.

They were commanded to remember these days from generation to generation and it is still a feast and holiday recognized by the Jews even today.

Characters

Esther

Mordecai

2 chamberlains – at the feast of Purim cleaning up, passing out napkins, passing out plates, pouring drinks, etc.

Décor

Table on the floor with nice tablecloth and platters of food down the center

Extra Props

- 12 sticks, all the same length with random days written on them
- Food on pretty platters for feast of purim (rolls and grapes and cookies and oranges and apples, grape juice in wine bottles)
- Presents for each of the kids from Esther to remember Purim

Esther meets the families outside the entry of the main hall

Esther Hello everyone! I am so excited to have you today! I have a wonderful surprise to share with you!

So much has happened since we last spoke! Remember how the king commanded that a decree go out to all the lands around us? Does anyone remember what that decree said? *Wait for kids to answer*

That's right! The Jews were given permission to kill anyone who was involved in the plot to kill the Jews. Even after Haman was hanged for his terrible deeds, there were others that supported his plan that were still alive and those people still wanted the Jews to be killed. Well, all of those people were taken care of.

On the same day Haman had planned to kill all of God's children, the Jews killed Haman's 10 sons AND 500 other men in Shushan! Then the king gave order that the 14th and 15th days of the month Adar (those are the two days after Haman was going to kill all the Jews) be declared feast days to celebrate that the Jews were delivered from the hand of Haman! So we are calling the feast days, the Feast of Purim. Does anyone know what Purim means? Purim was taken from the word Pur, which means the lots. Does anyone know why we might call it that? Well, I'll give you a hint, its also called the Feast of Lots. *Wait for the kids to answer.*

Does anyone know what it means to cast lots? Well its sortof like a game people in ancient games played and they would bet money on it or make guesses on the outcome. Here is an example. Does anyone remember what date Haman chose to be the day that the Jews would be destroyed? *Wait for kids to answer...*

The 13th day of the 12th month, Adar right? Well, we don't know for sure if this is what he did, but the Bible says that he cast lots to determine the day the Jews would be destroyed. So its very possible that he did something like this – he may of grabbed a group of sticks like these and written a bunch of dates on them and then held them in his hand in a bunch and then said “Hey, you, yeah you, come over here and draw one of these sticks” and then whatever stick the person picked out of his hand would be the day that he chose for the Jews to be destroyed. So he made kindof a game out of his desire to kill God's people. That's pretty terrible isn't it? You know another way you can cast lots is to have a group of sticks that are all the same length except one of them. And say I wanted to choose one person who was going to go downstairs and get me a snack from the marketplace, so I would take this group of sticks and I'd say, “Ok, whoever choses the shortest stick gets the job of going down stairs to get me a snack”. Everyone chose a stick. Then the person with the short stick gets that job. Can anyone else think of another way we might do something similar to casting lots today? (flipping a coin?)

Well, like we said, the way Haman chose the date to destroy the Jews was by casting lots. So, we have called the feast we are going to have today, the feast of Purim or the Feast of Lots. Get it? Now how would you like to experience what the Feast of Purim really is like? Wonderful!! I have had the chamberlains prepare us a Feast of Purim so you can understand the tradition that Jews will keep for generations and generations to remember the great blessing that we have been saved from the wicked Haman's hand of destruction! Are you ready?

Come this way everyone! *Go through the doors of the hall and onto the stage where it is decorated for the Feast of Purim*

Okay everyone have a seat around the table. Now this feast, like I said before is to remember the merciful hand of God and how His people were saved from Haman. In your time, Jews still keep this feast of Purim. They retell the story and every time Haman's name is mentioned in the story, all

the people gathered at the feast make loud noises with instruments and banging to drown out the name of Haman. Would you like to try that??

Very good everyone!

Mordecai enters from the side

Esther Uncle! Hello! Its so wonderful to see you! *Walking over to greet Mordecai with a hug*

Mordecai Esther, *(bowing on one knee)* my queen, and my niece *(giving her a hug again)*

Esther You came just in time! We have just sat down to begin our Feast of Purim!

Mordecai Well, then I came at the perfect time indeed because I have brought gifts for everyone here!

Esther Oh, I had forgotten to mention that part of the Feast of Purim to my friends. We have also decreed that this is a time where we exchange gifts with one another and be glad together.

Mordecai Here we go, I have one for each of you, even our adults *(pass them out until they are all done – tell the children they can open them)*

Esther These gifts are perfect!! They will be very useful for our story telling!! Remember how I said you must make loud noises when I say Haman's name in the story? We can use these!! This is just wonderful, what do we all say to Mordecai for sharing gifts with us? I think this will be a grand tradition to keep. What a blessing it will be to remember how we were saved from Haman and to celebrate with those we love. Do any of you have times where your family is together to celebrate something significant in your family?

Mordecai You know children, we have put this feast in place to be celebrated every year. But there will come a time where there will be a final feast, celebrating a final end to those who want to destroy the Jews. That will be the Ultimate Feast of Purim. Can anyone tell me when that feast may be?

Wait for children to answer "When Jesus returns".

That's right. We will have a final Feast of Purim with Christ. This Feast is not only remembering the day that the Jews were delivered from Haman but it is also to look forward to a day when all those who seek to destroy God's chosen people are destroyed. There are many people who still hate the Jews, even in the time that you children are from! But God will put a final end to that when He sends His son to reign on earth. God willing, you children will be celebrating the Feast of Purim in Jerusalem when the Messiah returns!

Well, I must be off my dear. I have more gifts to deliver in other places. I'm glad your friends could share in this Feast of Purim with us today. Have a good day everyone! Good bye!

Esther

Goodbye Unlce!

Ok, is everyone ready to read our story?

Read story having children drown out the name of Haman with Kazoos.

Good job children! Well, I best be off to ensure the rest of the plans for our Feast are being carried out. Thank you for sharing in this Feast with me today! Shall we say a prayer before everyone leaves?

Dear God and Maker of Mankind, we rejoice and thank you this day for all the many blessings you have given us. We especially than you for delivering your people out of the hand of wicked Haman. We pray that you will continue to deliver us out of the hand of evil and help us to look forward to the day when your Son returns and we will all celebrate the Feast of Purim for evermore. Where your people will no longer live under the threat of persecution. Please, we pray that you will help us to remember the lessons we have learned this week. Help us to remember that you will give us what we need. That you are always with us and we must trust you. Give us the strength we need to overcome our fears and the trials of this life. And help us to bond together so we can help each

other with the struggles we may face. We look forward to your Son's return and it is through his name we pray, Amen.

Thank you all again for visiting me again – have a wonderful day today on this Feast of Purim! Remember to be thankful for all things!