

Lesson 12

Esther Saves Her

Esther

Memory Verse

“In God I have put
my trust; I will not
be afraid. What can
man do to me?”
(Psalm 56:1)

Teacher’s Objective

At the end of the session,
the students should be
able to:

Define what it means
to be full of pride

Locate on a map where
the Persian Empire was

Describe how Esther
trusted God to save her
people from being wiped
out

Express in their own
words how they will trust
in God, who they believe
is always there for them

Materials Needed

See “Teaching Activities”
for specific activities

Teacher’s Bible Study

The events that take place in the book of Esther are set in the Persian Empire, sometime between 539–331 B.C. Many of the Israelites had returned to the land of Palestine to rebuild the Temple. There were Israel captives, however, that chose not to return to their homeland. Isaiah and Jeremiah had encouraged the yet-to-be exiled nation of Israel to come out of Babylon and return to where God would bless them under the promises of the covenant (Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6; 29:10; Deuteronomy 28). Esther and Mordecai were among those who did not return to the homeland and heed the prophetic warning.

During this period in history, the king was Xerxes—the same Xerxes that invaded Greece, but was forced back. Esther was an orphan who was brought up in the home of her uncle, Mordecai. She was brought, along with many other young women, to the palace of Xerxes. They were to become candidate to replace the queen of Xerxes that had been disposed of.

The book of Esther is unique as it is the only book in the Bible that does not mention God. In the New Testament, there are no quotes from the book of Esther. The book of Esther was not among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Law, offerings, and sacrifices are never mentioned either. Prayer is never mentioned as well, but fasting is. Apparently, those Jews residing in the Persian Empire were not following God’s will.

It is in the book of Esther that we learn about the Feast of Purim. *Purim* means “lots” and the name refers to the lots cast by Haman, the king’s chief minister, to decide which day he should massacre the Jews (Esther 3; 7; 9:24, 26).

The book of Esther proves God’s faithfulness, His faithfulness to preserve even his disobedient people. Events in Esther did not happen by chance. There was the sovereign hand of God intervening.

While this is a long story to read, it should be read at a single sitting. It is rich in excitement, drama, and plots. In addition to reading the entire book of Esther this week and being thoroughly familiar with it, be sure to read Psalms 94 and 105.

Presenting the Bible Story

Esther 1:1–2:20

The first section of the book describes why God's people needed His deliverance. We are given details to the setting and the reasons Esther came to be in such a prominent position. The author of the book is unknown to us.

Esther 2:21–4:3

Haman was the chief minister of King Ahasuerus of Persia. Here is where we are first introduced to him in the story. He hated the Jew Mordecai for refusing to bow down to him and plotted to kill Mordecai and all the Jewish people in Persia. Haman was a man full of pride. What does pride mean? If you are someone who is full of pride, you have a high opinion of yourself. Pride is when you have the attitude that you are more important than anyone or anything else. God said he will "halt the arrogance of the proud" (Isaiah 13:11). The king approved of Haman's plan. This greatly distressed Mordecai and his people.

Esther 4:4–9:19

What we see is Esther and Mordecai believed and trusted that God would take care of His chosen people. It is through the following chapters that we see good overcome evil. We also see how vengeful pride can ruin your life. Haman was humiliated before his family and friends when he had to honor Mordecai. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). God resisted Haman's vengeful pride. The danger with which the Jews were faced forced them to turn to God. They fasted, wept and wailed.

Esther 9:20–32

Esther 10

The Mosaic Law did not establish the Feast of Purim. Esther and Mordecai commanded the two-day feast. It was a feast to remember how God protected His people from extinction.

The final chapter in the book of Esther describes the honor given to Mordecai. As we have learned from other stories in the Bible these past few weeks, individual that have trusted and looked to the true God have been exalted into positions of authority and respect in the foreign kingdoms ruling over them (Daniel 5:29; 6:1–2, 28).

The book of Esther is filled with irony. Below are a few examples:

1. The haughty Persian queen, Vashti, was disposed of and Esther, a Jewess, became queen and was able to help her people.
2. The once exalted Haman was brought down and humiliated because of his hatred, jealousy, and arrogance. Mordecai and the Jews who were once hated and vilified were now honored.
3. A decree that would have eliminated the Jews was overruled, and instead 76,000 enemies of the Jews were destroyed. They brought upon themselves what they would have done to the Jews.

Many times we believe that the events that occur in our lives happen

Art and Activities

by chance. You “happen” to be in the right place at the right time, or wrong time, whichever the case might be. It is just “luck” that you got that job, or met the person who became your spouse. As Christians we can see God’s hand in protecting, guiding, and providing for us. As a loving Father, He diligently looks over the welfare of His children. In the book of Esther, we see God intervened in the best interest of His people. What a wonderful example of the faithfulness and love of our Creator.

Explore with your students the following questions

Teaching Activities

Young Children

Provide your students with the appropriate Activity Page.

Older Children

Provide your students with the appropriate Activity Page.

Explore the Subject

Always close your class with prayer

1. Wherever you go in this world, God watches over you. How do we know this? (Jeremiah 16:17).
2. Are all things possible with God? (Mark 10:27).
3. Does God know everything? (1 John 3:20).
4. Did the events in the book of Esther happen by chance, or was God involved?
5. How can pride destroy your life?

Respond and Reinforce

1. Think about all the places you have ever been. Either write down the places or draw a picture of the places. God has cared for you in all these places. Give Him thanks in prayer.
2. Discuss memory verse.

Art Activity

Esther Saves Her People

Esther

Find the words hidden in the puzzle below.



AHASUERUS

KING

FEAST

MAJESTY

VASHTI

QUEEN

REFUSED

DESPISE

VIRGINS

MORDECAI

ESTHER

HEGAI

PLEASED

MAIDEN

PURIFY

COURT

ABIHAIL

UNCLE

FAVOUR

LOVED

KINDRED

HAMAN

DESTROY

PROVINCE

PERISH

PEOPLE

SACKCLOTH

HATACH

JEWS

SHUSHAN

FAST

ROYAL

APPAREL

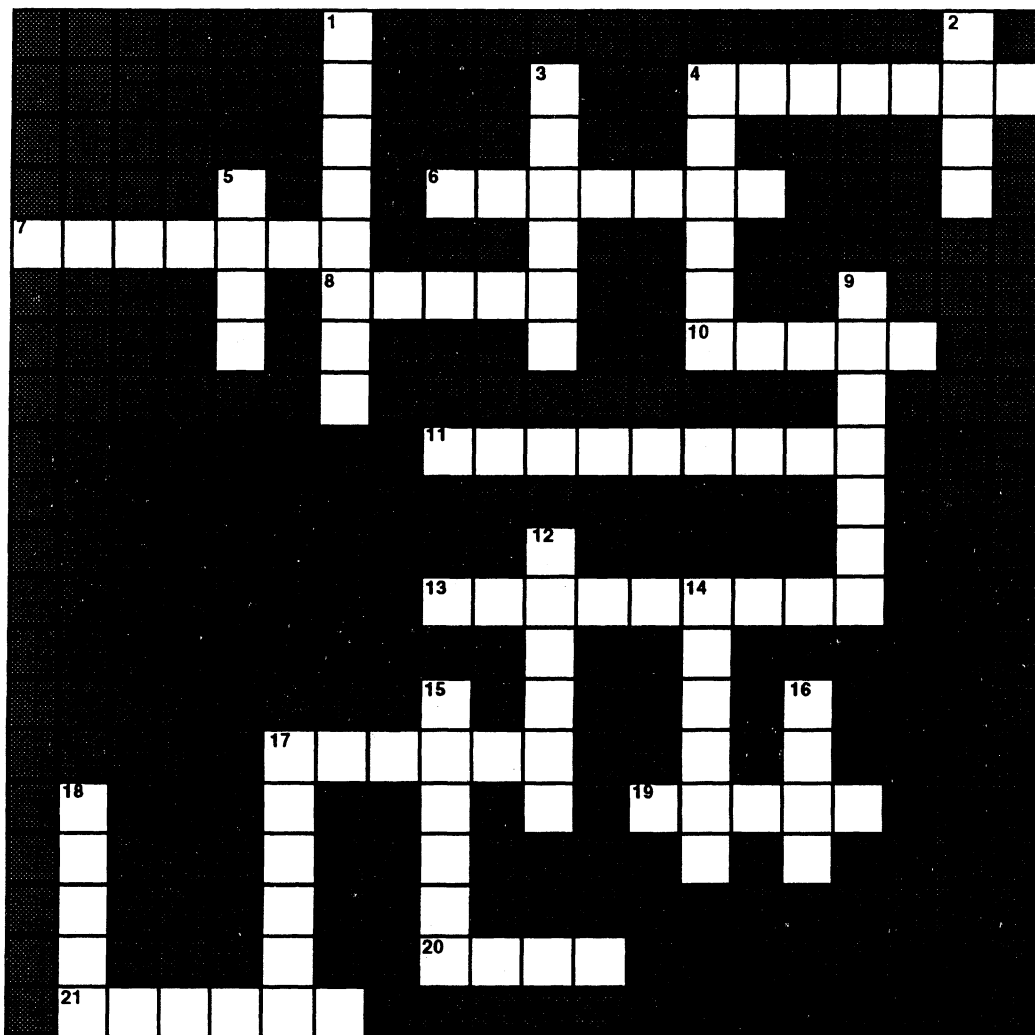
BANQUET

HONOUR

Art Activity

Esther Saves Her People

Esther



Across

- 4. Nobles of the land; preeminent in social structure; sons of a king.
- 6. A married man
- 7. To regard with contempt or disdain; to not value.
- 8. The great feast was held in the garden of the _____ (see Esther 1:5).
- 10. Son of Hammedatha (see Esther 3:1).
- 11. Having beauty.
- 13. The king who married Esther (see Esther 1:1).
- 17. The official residence of a sovereign.
- 19. A time of religious celebration commemorating an event.
- 20. To execute by suspending from a gallows.
- 21. Persons born with noble rank or title.

Down

- 1. Uncle of Esther.
- 2. A way to challenge.
- 3. The queen who disobeyed her husband and was replaced by Esther.
- 4. To impose a penalty on.
- 5. A male sovereign.
- 9. The structure from which condemned people are hanged.
- 12. A girl or young unmarried female.
- 14. The beautiful maiden who became queen and saved her people.
- 15. Bestow in abundance.
- 16. To abstain from food and drink.
- 17. Any persons collectively.
- 18. Female monarch.

4. Punish; 5. King; 6. Gallows; 7. Despise; 8. Court; 9. Haman; 10. Beautiful; 11. Ahasuerus; 12. Palace; 13. Feast; 14. Hang; 15. Princes; 16. Dethrone; 17. Vast; 18. Monarch; 19. Feast; 20. Hang; 21. Princes.

Art Activity

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Art Activity

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Lesson from the book of Esther

Materials Needed:

Copies of the Psalm
Colored construction paper for
backing and stability
Ribbon or string for hanging
Glue

Instructions

Make copies of Psalm (you
may want to use colored paper)
Cut out the Psalm.
Decorate the plaque as ornate-
ly as they desire (perhaps with
gold glitter outline)
Attach to colored construction
paper with glue; make holes in top
corners for the ribbon or string to
pass through.
Encourage them to memorize
the Psalm.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil:
For Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff
They comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me
In the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life: and I will dwell
In the house of the LORD for ever.