



# 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>

September 14-15, 2013

DATE

Esther (Pg.558-566); Jeremiah 29:11 (Pg.859)

WHERE TO FIND IT

Esther

LESSON TITLE

God Has Plans for Us

MAIN POINT

## schedule

**Hang out with kids (10 minutes):** Ask kids about their week. Get kids into groups and play games together.

**Large Group (30 minutes):** Model what it looks like to be engaged in large group. And don't be afraid to redirect kids who aren't!

**Small Group (20-30 minutes):** Keep kids in small groups until parents arrive. If you *all* have extra time at the end, you can review the video and songs together.

## tips

Esther is a really cool story, but we can't cover all the twists and turns in one week. Read the book in the Bible (between Nehemiah and Job) this week so you can be prepared to talk about it with them—and tip them off that they should ask their parents to read it to them at home!

## check-in/out

As kids leave, they might still be wearing a character sticker. Encourage them to tell their parents why they have it on!

## large group heads up

Today's story is all about Esther. It's a great picture of how God orchestrated his plan for Esther, which reminds us that he'll orchestrate his plans for us! All we have to do is trust Him and follow him.



## instructions

**Goal:** to review the story, identify what it shows us about God, and apply the truths revealed in this story to our own lives

**Tip:** Feel free to adapt the group game to best fit your group (one alternative is listed for you).

**Why?** Esther's story has a lot of details, but it reveals how intricate and unexpected God's plans for our lives can be. Knowing God has a plan for us can change the way we live (and our outlook on life).

## small group

### CONNECT

1. Share your name and one word to describe the best part of your week (if you've already connected before large group, move directly to question #2).
2. Share a time when you faced a tough decision. (Give kids some ideas: maybe they had the choice to talk about somebody behind his/her back or stay quiet; the choice to listen to their parents or disobey; the choice to hang out with their best friend or another friend; etc.)

### REVIEW GAME

To review today's story, we're going to play a little game to help kids review the different things characters did. Put a **nametag** on each kid's back. It'll be the name of ONE character from the story. (Some kids will have the same character; that's OK.) Here's how to play\*:

- Have kids stand up.
- They can ask other kids YES and NO questions about what their character did but they *cannot* use a character's name. For example, kids can say, "Did my person have two people killed?" And somebody can answer "yes." But that's it. (They *cannot* say, "Am I the king?")
- When kids *think* they know which character they have, they should sit down but leave their nametag on.
- Play the game
- When all kids are sitting, go around the circle and ask each kid these questions:
  - Which character do you think you have?
  - Why? (Have kids share the hint that was given to them.)
  - Ask kids to turn around and tell them if they're right or wrong.

*\*If the game seems too complicated for your group, try this: give each kid a character  
(Continued on the following page)*

*name tag sticker. Go around and ask them to share ONE thing they remember about that character. Even if you do play the game, you can ask kids to share something else they remember about their character. Mine for all the details the kids remember!*

### **DIG DEEPER**

- If you were Esther, would you have been willing to talk to the king? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about God from today's story? (Could say that he rescues his family, he puts people in certain places at certain times, he can control the hearts/reactions of people, he wants us to trust him, he doesn't tell us his plans ahead of time, etc.)
- Read today's verse again: **Jeremiah 29:11 "I know the plans I have for you," announces the LORD. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come."** How do you think Esther felt about God's plan for her? Why?
- What kind of a plan do you think God has for you? (kids can refer to the verse; or ask kids to think about where God has placed them--their school, home, neighborhood, clubs, etc.—and consider specific ways God could use them there)
- How do we figure out God's plans? (tie this to making choices to follow God; remind kids that God doesn't tell us his plans ahead of time; that's part of trust)
- What's one decision you could make this week to follow God?

**\*Pray together, thanking God that he has a plan for each of us!**

*...Extra time? Break kids into 5 groups. Give each group a character and let them **draw** that character the way they imagine he/she would have looked. Or play charades, using the characters from the story.*

# LARGE group

## special notes

This story has some cool twists that we didn't have time to include in the script. For the sake of time, stick to the story as it's written but encourage kids to read the whole thing for themselves at home!

## presenter tips

This script relies on you using volunteers to help tell the story and keep the characters straight. Feel free to adapt and use fewer volunteers—or more—if that's a better fit for your group. (There is also some whole-group questions to make sure all the kids interact with your storytelling!)

## script

Hi everybody! Welcome to Kids' Club. I'm so happy to see you here today. Before we get started, we're going to play a little game of "Would You Rather?" I'm going to offer you two options. If you'd rather the first option, go to THIS (point) side of the room. If you'd rather the second option happen, go to THAT (point) side of the room. Ready? Stand up and get ready to move! (Let kids stand.)

### **WOULD YOU RATHER GAME**

Let's start with an easy one. Would you rather...eat M&Ms (point to one side of the room) or Skittles (point to the other side of the room). Go! (Let kids choose.)

Would you rather...never play another video game (point) or never go on Facebook again (point). Go!

Would you rather....wrestle an alligator (point)? Or wrestle a bear (point)? Go!

Would you rather...never watch your favorite movie again (point)? Or never listen to your favorite song again (point)?

Would you rather...be covered in feathers (point)? Or be covered in fur (point)? Go!

Alright, good job! OK, go ahead and sit down (Let kids sit.)

### **DEBRIEF**

Were any of those choices hard? (Let kids respond.) Which one? (Let kids respond.) Sometimes, we get into situations where we have to make a choice. And it's not always easy. Sometimes one of the choices doesn't sound very fun. Sometimes one of the choices is scary. Sometimes we don't really want to do either one.



## script continued

Well, today, we're going to hear the story of a woman who got to be a part of God's family. And she was faced with a REALLY big choice. Let's find out what happened. To tell this story well, I need 5 volunteers.

*(Choose 5 kids: Give each of them a name sign to hold: Esther, Mordecai, Queen Vashti, King Xerxes, and Haman; the king and queen both get a crown. Before you get started, encourage your "actors" to use the facial expressions and actions that their character in the story would have used. Help direct them as needed throughout the script. Some instructions are included but adapt to fit your group.)*

### INTRO: ESTHER AND KING XERXES

(Point to "Esther":) This girl's name was Esther, and she was born into God's family. But her parents died when she was a little girl. So her cousin, named Mordecai, took care of her. They lived a regular life in a place called Persia. (Ask Mordecai and Esther to sit off to the side of the presentation area.)

One night, over at the palace, the King was throwing a big party (**play the loop of the Persian Palace**). (As it plays, motion to the king and queen.) The King wanted to show off his riches and his beautiful wife, Queen Vashti. But Queen Vashti didn't want to be paraded around for everybody to look at. So she said she wouldn't come. (Stop so the actors can "act.")

Can anybody guess what the king did to punish her? (Let kids guess.) Yes, he *killed* her. Now he needed a new queen. (Take "Vashti's" crown and nametag and ask her to sit down.)

### ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

**(Show picture of the palace.)** The king wanted a new queen, so he held a big beauty contest. All the beautiful single women had to prepare themselves for 12 months to be as beautiful as possible. Then they were taken to see the king. Esther was really pretty, so she got to be part of the contest! (Esther can pretend to primp.)

And guess who the king liked the best? (Let kids say: Esther.) Yep. So Esther became the queen! (Give Esther the crown.)

### HAMAN MAKES A LAW

Now, the king had an official who was pretty important. His name was Haman, and he thought he was the best, #1 (Give Haman **the foam #1 finger**). He made a rule that everybody had to bow down to worship him!

But one guy wouldn't bow down because he only worshiped God. This guy: (point to Mordecai) Mordecai. Remember who Mordecai was? (Let kids say: Esther's cousin.)

That's right. Esther's cousin Mordecai made Haman mad. So mad, in fact, that Haman made a law saying that all God's Special family would have to die. The king said OK, because he didn't know that his new, beautiful queen Esther was part of God's special family!



### script continued

Mordecai was heartbroken about this law. After all, it meant he would have to *die*. He tore his clothes, cried, and sat in ashes, because that's what people did back then to show they were really and truly sad.

But then...Mordecai had an idea! He told Esther to go and talk to the king. He even told her that the very reason she was queen could be so that God could use her to save his family!

### **ESTHER'S "WOULD YOU RATHER"**

But do you guys remember what King Xerxes did to his first queen when she made him mad? (Let kids say: he killed her.) Yeah, he wasn't exactly a nice guy. There was a good chance he'd kill Esther just for talking to him without being invited...But if she didn't go talk to him, Mordecai and all God's family living in Persia would die. And if the king found out she was part of God's family, she'd die too.

Everybody stand up (Let kids stand.) Let's see what you would do if you were in Esther's situation. We're going to do one more "Would You Rather." Would you rather...speak to the king and possibly get killed tonight (point)? Or save yourself tonight, but know that your whole entire family—and eventually you too—would get killed in a few days (point)?

### **ESTHER'S DECISION**

(Point to the ones who chose to speak to the king.) You guys chose the same thing as Esther. She decided she had to risk her own life to save God's whole family. Go ahead and have a seat. (Let kids sit.)

Now, raise your hand if you think Esther was happy to have to make this choice. (Let kids raise their hands—or rather, *not* raise their hands.) Yeah, she probably hated being in this situation. But sometimes, God has us in situations because he wants to use us to help others.

### **THE KING'S RESPONSE**

Anyway, Esther was brave and went to visit the king. And what do you guys think happened? Do you think he killed her or listened to her? (Let kids say: listened to her.) He listened to her, alright! He said he'd give her whatever she wanted.

She told him she just wanted him and Haman to come to dinner (gather the three of them together). At dinner, the king said he'd give Esther whatever she wanted. And *again*, she said she just wanted him and Haman to come to another dinner. The king said OK.

At that second dinner, Esther told the king that Haman had made a law that would destroy her and her entire family. When the king heard this, how do you think he felt? (Let kids say: mad, enraged, etc.) YES, he was furious!

What does this king seem to do when people make him mad? (Let kids say: kill them.) Yes, and right away, he ordered for Haman to be killed! (Tell Haman to sit down.) Then King Xerxes made a new law to save all of God's family. Esther was saved! God had used her to save his entire family. (All the volunteers can sit down.)



script continued

### **GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ALL OF US**

Esther's story is exciting because she was just a normal girl who became a part of God's story. And we are all just regular people who can be a part of God's story, too. In fact, Jeremiah 29:11 says God has plans for EACH of us:

***SLIDE: Jeremiah 29:11 "I know the plans I have for you," announces the LORD. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come.***

When Esther was a little girl with Mordecai, did she know she would be queen? (Let kids say: no!) NO! And when she first became queen, did she know God would use her to save his special family? (Let kids say: NO!) No, but God had a plan, and all she had to do was follow God and trust him.

And guess what? God has a plan for US too, no matter where we are, no matter what we are facing. We can just keep making choices to follow God—and most of all, trust him!

### **WORSHIP**

Let's stand up and worship God, thanking him that he has a plan for us!

***Song: You Come in a Hurry***

***Song: Who I Am***

### **PRAY**

Ask somebody to come and thank God that he has a plan for us.

**COLLECT THE 5 CHARACTER SIGNS AND 2 CROWNS FOR THE NEXT SERVICE**

name



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# PREP needs



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## small group supplies

White paper  
Markers  
Per small group: one sheet of label stickers  
(Avery 15163) with the following names:  
Mordecai, Esther, Queen Vashti, King Xerxes,  
Haman (template in curriculum folder)

\* two sheets if a group has over 10 kids

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## large group supplies

Adventure Bible (pp. 558-566, 859)  
Two fake crowns  
Foam #1 finger  
([http://indyindians.milbstore.com/store\\_contents.cfm?store\\_id=26-30&product\\_id=512](http://indyindians.milbstore.com/store_contents.cfm?store_id=26-30&product_id=512); can be for any team or no team)  
5 pieces of paper with the following names printed

on cardstock (one name per sheet; template in curriculum folder):

- Mordecai
- Esther
- Queen Vashti
- King Xerxes
- Haman

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## a/v needs

1. Video: Palace party clip:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZpUFjaX-uw> (Use ONLY :06-:41; if at all possible, turn the volume down so that the slide plays more quietly than the songs)
2. Image: palace (jpeg in curriculum folder)
3. SLIDE: Jeremiah 29:11 "I know the

plans I have for you," announces the LORD. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come.

4. Song: You Come in A Hurry (lyrics with hand motions)
5. Song: Who I Am (music video)

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## special room set-up

None needed

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## connect questions

Tell me about Esther.  
What was God's plan for Esther?

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## parent page

Through Esther, God rescued many people in his family. God orchestrated all the details so that she was in just the right place...at just the right time. God had a plan for Esther—and he has a plan for us too! Ask your kid about it. Also, there are some pretty cool twists in this story that we didn't have time to go into today. Find out what they are by reading the book of Esther (in the Bible) as a family this week.