

Esther—The Girl Who Became Queen

ACTIVITY	MINUTES	GRADE LEVEL	FOCUS	PITstops	*OTHER SUPPLIES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OPENING ACTIVITY Let's Get Ready To Celebrate!	5	1-6			bottles, dried beans, stickers, permanent markers, face paint (optional)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LESSON Esther—The Girl Who Became Queen	10	1-6			noisemakers from opening
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEMORY VERSE	7	1-6		 A	
REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITY (Choose One Option)					
<input type="checkbox"/> OPTION 1 Feast Of Purim Celebration	9	1-6			noisemakers from opening, snack items, volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> OPTION 2 Mystery Guest Game	7	1-6			volunteers, small prizes, large sheet or screen
<input type="checkbox"/> WORSHIP PROGRAM A Risk Worth Taking	5	1-6			
<input type="checkbox"/> LET'S DO IT! (LDI)					
Esther Becomes Queen	5	1-2			
All About Esther	5	3-4			
Esther's Story	5	5-6			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIALOGUE FOLDER					
iSpeak	5	1-2			
iSpeak	5	3-4			
iSpeak	5	5-6			

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

This lesson will help junior soldiers understand that God has a purpose for all of His children. Through the example of Esther, junior soldiers will learn about courage and faithfulness. They'll be challenged to step out in faith.

YOU ARE HERE!

Place the timeline marker on **480 B.C.** on the **Old Testament** timeline.



*In addition to materials listed in this chart, you need Basic Classroom Supplies.

Esther—The Girl Who Became Queen

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE LEADER

BIBLE REFERENCES:

This lesson is based on the following Bible references:

Esther 1-7

UNIT AIM:

This unit will introduce junior soldiers to four people from the Old Testament who are powerful examples for young people. Junior soldiers will learn the importance of relying on God, listening to God, following His guidance, and having complete trust in Him.

IN HIS BOOK *Celebrate the Feasts of the Lord*, Lt. Colonel William Francis wrote this about the Feast of Purim:

Throughout the Jewish year, there is no merrier occasion than Purim—known also as the Feast of Lots or the Feast of Esther. It is celebrated in the month of Adar (February – March) as a religious and secular holiday, commemorating one of the Jewish people’s greatest triumphs over tyranny. Purim celebrates an enormous moral and tangible victory achieved on the eve of what was nearly annihilation.

The joyous festival venerates the deliverance of the Jews of Persia from the imminent destruction planned against them by Haman, prime minister of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), 485-465 B.C. The king’s Jewish wife, Esther, and her cousin, Mordecai, accomplished the rescue.

Great rejoicing marks Purim. It is a day of masquerades, carnivals, parades, parties and all manner of joyous revelry—a day of uninhibited joy. (Page 111)

A key element in the story of Esther is the choice she made at the end of chapter four of the book of Esther. Haman, a Persian noble, harbored resentment toward the Jewish people because Mordecai, a Jew, refused to kneel before him. Haman was a descendant of Amalek (traditionally an enemy of the Jews—see Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19; 1 Samuel 15:7-9). He was elevated to the position of prime minister. Haman convinced King Xerxes that the Jews were a threat to the king and his laws. Haman offered the king a large sum of silver for permission to dispose of the Jews.

Mordecai, a Jewish exile, working at the citadel of Susa, learned of Haman’s terrible plot. However, what could he do? By wearing the traditional Hebrew mourning garb—sackcloth and ashes—he disqualified himself from entering the palace. Mordecai’s cousin Esther, Xerxes’s queen, lived in the palace; maybe she’d use her influence to help her people.

Mordecai raised Esther after her parents’ death. Mordecai instructed Esther not to reveal her Jewish heritage, and he kept close to her while she was in the palace.

As the Jews of Persia mourned their fate, Mordecai sent word to Esther telling her about the situation. He asked Esther to plead her people’s case before Xerxes. At first, Esther was hesitant because such intercession could mean death. It was common knowledge that anyone (even the queen) who approached the king without being summoned was executed. Recognizing that Esther might be the



LESSON 4

only hope for her people, Mordecai said, “Who knows? It’s possible that you became queen for a time just like this” (Esther 4:14b NIV). Esther didn’t make her choice lightly. She instructed Mordecai to ask the Jews to fast and pray on her behalf.

Esther sought an audience with the king, and when he asked what she wanted, she invited the king and Haman to a banquet in their honor the following evening. That night the king couldn’t sleep. He summoned his servants to read to him from the royal chronicles. As they were reading, the king remembered that Mordecai had saved his life.

The next morning, Haman was about to ask the king for his approval to kill Mordecai in the gallows. Instead, the king asked, “What should be done for the man I want to honor?” (Esther 6:6 NIV). Thinking it was for him, Haman responded only to have the king tell him, “find Mordecai and lead him on horseback throughout the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor!’” (Esther 6:11). Furious, Haman did as the king ordered.

That night Haman and the king attended the banquet prepared by Esther. She pleaded with the king to spare the lives of her people. She revealed that Haman was the enemy of the Jews. The king was furious. He ordered that Haman be killed at the gallows he had built instead of Mordecai. Esther and her people were safe.

As Christians in today’s world, we often face decisions that require us to step out in faith. The story of Esther should encourage and inspire your junior soldiers. She was a Jewish orphan, but God had big plans for her life. Her courage and steadfastness saved the Jewish people from annihilation at the hands of Haman. Help your junior soldiers understand that God molds people, and places them in situations where they can serve Him best.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Let’s Get Ready To Celebrate!

Before class, gather the necessary supplies to make Purim noisemakers.

Say: **Today we’re going to talk about a famous queen from the Old Testament, Esther. She saved the Jewish people, and because of her courage, they named a celebration in her honor, the Feast of Purim.**

We have to get ready to celebrate! One of the ways people celebrate the Feast of Purim is to make noisemakers. Some people like to paint



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- bottles
- dried beans
- tape
- stickers
- permanent markers
- paper
- glue
- face paint (optional)



their faces in celebration. The Feast of Purim is a happy time for the Jewish people.

To make Purim noisemakers fill clean, plastic bottles with dried beans. Secure the lid with colored tape. Decorate the bottle with stickers, permanent markers, or by gluing pieces of paper to the bottle.

If you have time, ask a few adult volunteers to set up a face painting station and decorate the junior soldiers' faces while they decorate their noisemakers.



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- noisemakers prepared during the opening activity

LESSON

Esther—The Girl Who Became Queen



Instruct junior soldiers to shake their noisemakers every time you say the word “Esther” as you read the lesson. Every time you say the name Esther in the story, pause and allow the junior soldiers to shake their noisemakers in celebration.

Say: **Esther was just a little girl when her mother and father died. She was a Jewish girl living in the land of Persia, where only a few Jewish people lived. Esther’s cousin Mordecai took Esther to his house and raised her as his own child. Mordecai was the gatekeeper at the king’s palace.**

The king of Persia, Xerxes, wanted a new wife. His wife, Vashti, disobeyed him so she was no longer the queen. Esther was very beautiful and the king wanted her to be his new queen. Esther moved into the palace and became the new queen of Persia.

Esther didn’t tell anyone that she was Jewish because Mordecai told her not to. Haman, the king’s most trusted advisor, didn’t like the Jews. He wanted to destroy them. He developed a plot to get rid of the Jews. When Mordecai learned of Haman’s plans, he sent a message to Esther, asking for her help.

Mordecai asked Esther to go to the king and ask him to change his mind. Esther told Mordecai, “No man or woman may go to the king in the inner courtyard without being called. There is only one law about this; anyone who enters must die! However, if the king holds out his scepter, the person may live. I haven’t been called to the king in the last thirty days!”

Esther sent a message to Mordecai explaining the situation. Mordecai said, “Just because you live in the king’s palace, don’t think that out of all the Jews you alone will escape. Who knows? It’s possible that you became queen for a time just like this.”



Esther said to Mordecai, “Go and get all the Jews in Susa, don’t eat or drink for three days. Then I’ll go to the king, even if it’s against the law. If I die, I die.”

Do you think it was easy for Esther to make that decision? (Allow response.) **The king could kill her just for going to see him without him calling for her. Do you think she was afraid?** (Allow response.) **Would you go to the king if you knew you might die?** (Allow response.) **Why do you think Esther was able to do it?** (Allow response.) **Esther asked her people to fast and pray for her, and her cousin told her that maybe she became queen so she could save the Jews. It gives us courage to do something if we know it’s what God wants us to do.**

The king asked Esther what she wanted, but she didn’t tell him right away. Instead, she told the king that she wanted to make a special banquet for the king and Haman.

Later that night, the king couldn’t sleep. **What do you do when you can’t sleep?** (Allow response.) **The king called one of his servants to come and read to him from the history books. When the servant was reading, the king remembered that Mordecai had once saved his life.**

The next morning, Haman went to ask the king for permission to kill Mordecai. Before Haman asked for permission, the king said, “find Mordecai and lead him on horseback throughout the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor!’”

That day, Esther invited the king and Haman to another banquet. The king said to Esther, “What are you asking for? I’ll give you anything you ask for.” Esther said, “My king, I hope you’re pleased with me. If it pleases you, let me live. And let my people live too. I ask this because my people are about to be destroyed, we’re to be wiped out.”

This upset the king. He said, “Who is he? Who has done such a thing?” Esther said, “The man who is against us—our enemy is this wicked Haman.” Haman was afraid. The king ordered that Haman be destroyed the same way he wanted to destroy the Jews.

Esther and her people were saved because God put her in the right place at the right time. Esther was courageous. The people honored Esther by celebrating the Feast of Purim.

Say: **God can use us too. If we have faith in God, and obey His commands, He’ll use us to do things for Him. Esther was an ordinary person, but God used her to do something special.**



MEMORY VERSE

Esther 4:14b (NIV) 

“It’s possible that you became queen for a time just like this.”

Write the memory verse on a large sheet of poster board. Cut the verse into as many jigsaw pieces as you have junior soldiers in your brigade. Hide the pieces around the classroom.

Use  A to make as many clue cards as puzzle pieces. Write one clue on each card. Give each junior soldier a card, then say:

Say: **There’s a secret message in this room. To find the message, use your clue card to find a piece of the puzzle. When everyone has a piece of the puzzle, we can read the message.**

After the junior soldiers complete the puzzle, read the verse together. Keep reading the verse, removing a puzzle piece each time, until the junior soldiers have memorized the verse.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

(CHOOSE ONE OPTION)

Feast of Purim

Celebration (option 1)

Plan a Purim party to celebrate Esther’s courage. Include food, games, prizes, and a Purim parade. You can even invite guests (corps cadets or other volunteers) to come dressed as the main characters from the lesson.

BE AWARE!

Before serving food products to junior soldiers, check for food allergies.



MATERIALS NEEDED:

-  A
- poster board
- scissors
- marker/pen


MATERIALS NEEDED:

- snack items
- noisemakers from opening activity
- volunteers



Mystery Guest Game (option 2)

Enlist the help of corps cadets or other volunteers for this activity. Ask the volunteers to dress up as the main characters from today’s lesson. Instruct the volunteers to stay behind a large sheet or screen. Allow junior soldiers to ask yes or no questions to guess who the mystery person is. Give small prizes to the junior soldiers who guess correctly.

WORSHIP PROGRAM

CHORUS: Song #64: “Be Bold, Be Strong”
(Track #14, *Great Big Praise* CD 2)

SCRIPTURE: Esther 4:14 (NirV)

CHORUS: Song #68: “Yes, Lord, Yes”
(Track #18, *Great Big Praise* CD 2)

DEVOTIONAL

A Risk Worth Taking

Say: **Do you know what it means to take a risk?** (Allow response.) **Taking a risk is doing something we aren’t sure will turn out the way we want, but we do it anyway. Taking a risk can be scary.**

Esther wasn’t afraid to take a risk. Well, maybe she was afraid, but she did it anyway. That takes a lot of courage.

What did Esther ask people to do before she took a risk by going to the king? (Allow response.) **She asked people to pray for her. Prayer is something that can help us all the time, especially when we encounter a risky situation. We can ask others to pray for us—our parents, friends, brothers, sisters, and Sunday school teachers—and we can pray as well. God will give us the courage to make the right decision.**

Every time we make the right choice, it makes us stronger. We become more like Jesus every time we make a good choice, and that makes God happy.

PRAYER



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- volunteers
- small prizes
- large sheet or screen



Remember to fill out the *What Do You Think Evaluation* on page 109.

