



Family Lesson 43

Principle: We are here to fulfill God's purpose, even if it means sacrifice.

Bible Character(s): Esther

Scripture Reference: Esther 2-7

1. Worship - Gather your family and play the [worship video](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Skit Video - Watch the [skit video](#) with your family to hear a special message about what you will be learning this weekend.

3. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

In our lesson last week, we learned about Nehemiah. What happened in Jerusalem? (Allow responses.) The walls and gate were destroyed. What did Nehemiah do? He prayed to God and asked for help. He needed to ask the king for permission to rebuild the wall. Why was Nehemiah afraid? (Allow responses.) The king had already denied the Israelites once before when they asked to rebuild the wall, and Nehemiah was afraid he would be denied. Through prayer, Nehemiah depended on God to lead him. The king gave Nehemiah permission to rebuild the wall. Nehemiah worked hard at the task God gave him to do.

This week, we are going to begin studying from a new book, the book of Esther. Has anyone ever been given a big job to do? (Allow responses.) God had an important job for Esther, and we are going to learn about that task today.

Esther is a beautiful woman who grew up as an orphan. Her cousin Mordecai raised her in Persia. At the time, the king of Persia was Xerxes. His queen's name was Vashti. One day, Xerxes tells Vashti to come meet his friends, but she refuses

to come. Xerxes gets so mad at her that he will not let her be queen anymore. Xerxes decides that he will find another queen. He sends men out to find the prettiest girls in the kingdom. Esther is beautiful, so she is brought in to meet the king along with many other girls. Let's read the Bible to see what happens, beginning in Esther 2 [NLT].

Esther 2:12, 15b-17

¹² Before each young woman was taken to the king..., she was given the prescribed twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh, followed by six months with special perfumes and ointments... she (Esther) was admired by everyone who saw her.

¹⁶ Esther was taken to King Xerxes at the royal palace in early winter of the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷ And the king loved Esther more than any of the other young women. He was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen instead of Vashti.

Esther has to go through one year of beauty treatments before she even meets the king! She does not even know if the king will like her when he sees her. Before she was taken to the palace, Esther experienced pain in her life. Her parents died and she was raised by her cousin. She lived in a country that did not like Jewish people. When she is taken to the palace, she is separated from her cousin, and she now lives with people she does not know. She does not know God's purpose for her, and yet she trusts in the Lord. Do you ever wonder why you experience difficult things? (Allow responses.) Sometimes we do not know why we go through hard times, but God knows. He is completely in control and he has a plan for your life, just like he had a plan for Esther's life. God can use all the difficult times in our lives to fulfill his plan. We can trust God.

The problem with Esther being a queen is that she is an Israelite, or a Jew. Jews are not liked in Persia. Sometimes they were killed, so Mordecai tells Esther not to tell anyone that she is a Jew. He does not want her to be killed.

Let's continue reading the Bible in Esther.

Esther 2:20

²⁰ *Esther continued to keep her family background and nationality a secret. She was still following Mordecai's directions, just as she did when she lived in his home.*

One very powerful man who works for King Xerxes is named Haman. Haman hates the Jews. One day, Haman walks past Mordecai, who does not bow to Haman like the other people who are standing around. Haman gets very mad. He knows that Mordecai is a Jew, but instead of killing just Mordecai, he decides to have all the Jews killed. So Haman meets with King Xerxes.

Let's continue reading to see what happens next.

Esther 3:8-II

⁸ *Then Haman approached King Xerxes and said, "There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their laws are different from those of any other people, and they refuse to obey the laws of the king. So it is not in the king's interest to let them live. ⁹ If it please the king, issue a decree that they be destroyed, and I will give 10,000 large sacks[a] of silver to the government administrators to be deposited in the royal treasury."*

¹⁰ *The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing his signet ring from his finger and giving it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ The king said, "The money and the people are both yours to do with as you see fit."*

So on April 17, the king's secretaries are summoned, and a decree is written exactly as Haman dictates. As the news of this decree

spreads over the provinces, Mordecai and all of the Jews begin to weep.

Mordecai sends a message to Esther, telling her of what Haman has done with the king's permission, and he urges her to go to the king to beg for mercy for her people. At first, Esther is afraid because anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is killed, unless the king holds out his gold scepter. Let's continue the story to see what happens.

Esther 4:13-17

¹³ *Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. ¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"*

¹⁵ *Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die." ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.*

Esther decides to risk her life by going before the king to plead for the lives of the Jews. Esther trusts God and listens to Mordecai when he says, "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?" (vs. 14) She knows that she can trust God and that he has a purpose for her, even if that means losing her life.

God placed Esther as queen. He planned to use her to save the Jews, but Esther had to make a choice. She could obey God, be willing to sacrifice her life, go to King Xerxes, and ask him to save the Jews. Or, she could choose to disobey God, keep her identity a secret, and save her own life. We know that Esther chose to obey God. She chose to trust God even though she did not know what God had for her. Are you willing to obey, even when you don't understand why you have been asked to do something? (Allow responses.) Sometimes we have to obey

and give up something we want even if it is hard. We do not always know what God's plan is for us, but he does have a plan for each one of us.

Let's read the Bible to see what happens when Esther goes to the king.

Esther 7:3-7

³ Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. ⁴ For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king."

⁵ "Who would do such a thing?" King Xerxes demanded. "Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?"

⁶ Esther replied, "This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy." Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen. ⁷ Then the king jumped to his feet in a rage and went out into the palace garden.

King Xerxes orders Haman to be killed. Esther's courage to trust God saves her people from being killed. We also need to be saved from death. Let's take a look at why we need to be saved.

Royal Steps

The purpose is to show that the Jews needed deliverance from physical harm just as we need deliverance from our sin.

Supplies: (Found on the Kids Resource Page.)

Worksheet – ["Royal Steps"](#)

[Set of Royal Steps steps](#)

Give your child a set of steps and have them cut out each step. As you read through the steps (below), have them glue the steps to the corresponding symbol on their worksheets. The scroll represents the message delivered by Haman's men that all the Jewish people were to be killed. The heart represents the willing heart of Esther and the perfect heart of Jesus. The crown represents Queen Esther and our King who is Jesus.

Step 1: Jews needed to be saved from Haman. (Put on the Jewish scroll.)

Step 2: We need to be saved from our sin and delivered from death. (Put on our scroll.)

Step 3: Esther trusted and obeyed God with a good attitude and was willing to sacrifice her life so that the Jews could live. (Put on the Jewish heart.)

Step 4: Jesus trusted and obeyed God (his Father) with a good attitude and sacrificed his life so we can live eternally. (Put on our heart.)

Step 5: God used Esther to save the Jews and fulfill his purpose. (Put on the Jewish [need for a] crown.)

Step 6: God uses Jesus to deliver us from our sin and save us from death through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, which fulfills God's purpose. (Put on our [need for a] crown.)

The book of Esther describes the Jewish people in great danger. Haman wanted to kill them. They needed to be saved from those who were trying to destroy them. God placed Esther as queen so that he could use her to save the Jews. Did you know that you and I need to be saved from death? We need to be saved just like the Jews needed to be rescued because of our sin. God sent his son Jesus to live a perfect life and to die on the cross. Jesus sacrificed his life so that we would not have to die. When we believe that Jesus died for us, he delivers us from our sin and gives us eternal life with him. That is faith in Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer to close the lesson. Ask God to help you trust in his purpose for us, even if it means sacrifice.

Activity

Obey and Sacrifice

The purpose is to show how we can obey and sacrifice with a good attitude so that God can use us to fulfill his purpose.

Supplies: (Found on the [Kids Resource Page.](#))
“How You Obey” cards

Read a situation and Bible verse(s) to your child. Read aloud or have your child read the two corresponding “How You Obey” cards. Have your child choose which response is the better way to handle that situation.

Sometimes it is easy to obey and sacrifice. Often when we obey and sacrifice, we end up with something good, but there are also times when it is hard or embarrassing to obey and trust God. We might lose a friend or have to sacrifice something. We might not even know why we have to sacrifice something. But God wants us to trust him, whether we have to sacrifice something or not. We can always depend on God and trust in his plan. Esther did not understand God’s purpose, and she did not know how God was going to use her. He used her to save her people, the Israelites. Esther chose to trust and obey God. When we choose to obey, we need to choose to have a good attitude and trust that this is what God wants for us.

