



LESSON 2 ESTHER

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is Working Even When We Can't See It

SCRIPTURE: Esther 1–5; 8

GOD'S BIG STORY: Because God is always working, a young Jewish woman named Esther becomes queen of Persia and prevents an evil plan to kill all the Jewish people in the kingdom.

WORD OF WONDER: God has said, "I will never leave you. I will never desert you." —Hebrews 13:5b

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- **PRE-SERVICE Interactive Game: What Am I?**
- Welcome Question: Who is your hero and why?
- SMALL GROUP
- Prayer of Invitation
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Worship: My Help, Praise
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship: I Exalt Thee/I Speak Jesus
 - **Baptism Video**
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 13:5b

“That was a total God thing.” I heard that phrase as a woman told a story about her granddaughter, who had run into an old friend from church at a coffee shop and now is considering coming back to church. I could have told her it was just a coincidence that the two teenage girls happened to go to the same coffee shop, but as a believer in the providence of God, I see it too. Running into a girl who would point her granddaughter back to her roots in the church at the perfect time in her life would indeed appear to be “a God thing.”

As Christ followers, we can see God’s providential hand in each and every interaction throughout our days. We praise Him for the little things, like a close parking spot on a rainy day, and the big things, like a friend being healed of cancer after years of treatment. We do this because we know God is working even when we cannot see it.

Read the book of Esther and look for God to be named—you won’t find it. If you were to read it without context, you could say each event was random, complete coincidence, without divine intervention. But the author would have us search and find where God is working, and in doing so, consider our own lives and how God might be working, creating “God things” in every moment.

—**Courtney Wilson**

Children’s Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Esther is a Persian name meaning “star,” derived from the name of the Babylonian deity, Ishtar. Esther’s Hebrew name is *Hadassah*, which refers to the myrtle plant. Her parents died when she was young, and she was adopted and raised by her cousin Mordecai.

WHAT?

The narrative of Esther offers a peek into God’s work behind the scenes in the days of Israel’s exile. Esther rises to the level of queen during a vital moment. A man named Haman tries to eliminate all the Jews in the land. However, Queen Esther intervenes by asking the king to save her people.

WHERE?

Susa was one of the oldest cities in the world. It was the ancient capital of Elam and later, Persia. It was situated on a plain near the Zagros mountains and had a temperate climate. Many Jews, including Esther and Nehemiah, lived there and became prominent during exile.

WHEN?

King Xerxes reigned 486–465 BC. The events of the book of Esther probably took place during 483–474 BC. During this period, King Xerxes and the Persians were involved in multiple campaigns against the Greeks, including at Thermopylae and Athens.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Purim is a Jewish festival celebrating the story of Esther. It is joyous time of remembering when God worked behind the scenes through Esther to overturn Haman’s plot to destroy the Jews. In the same way, God has worked through Jesus to overturn Satan’s plot to destroy all humankind.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service)

Interactive Game: What Am I?

SUPPLIES: timer, large plastic jars or containers (1 per small group, optional), pom-poms of one color (enough to fill multiple jars, optional), pom-poms of another color (1 per small group, optional)

SLIDE: WHAT AM I

Display the first What Am I? Slide. Help kids form pairs (if your group is relatively small) or groups of five (if your group is large).

"You're really going to need your thinking caps on for this activity!

With your partner or team, you're going to try to solve three different

riddles. I'll give you one minute for each riddle. If you think you know

the answer, one person from your group can come and tell me quietly what you think the answer

is. If you get the answer right, your team wins that round. If not, we'll let other teams continue to

guess until time runs out.

Advance to **Riddle 1** on the next slide. Read the riddle out loud: **Kids can make me but never hold me**

or see me. What am I? Set a timer for one minute and encourage pairs or groups to work together

to figure out the answer. If no one has answered correctly after 30 seconds have passed, give the

following clue: **When you all are talking, there is a lot of me, but you won't find me in a place like**

the library. After one minute, **advance to the next slide to reveal the answer. The answer is noise! We**

can't see noise or hold noise, but we can sure make a lot of noise!



Advance to Riddle 2 on the next slide. Read the riddle out loud: **I'm light as a feather, yet the strongest person can't hold me very long. What am I?** Give kids one minute to work together to figure out the answer. If no one has answered correctly after 30 seconds have passed, give the following clue: **Swimmers can hold me the longest.** After one minute, **advance to the next slide to reveal the answer. The answer is breath!**

Advance to Riddle 3 on the next slide. Read the riddle out loud: **You can't see me; you can only feel me. In a storm, some people fear me. What am I?** Give kids one minute to work together to figure out the answer. If no one has answered correctly after 30 seconds have passed, give the following clue:

I am useful if you want to fly a kite. After one minute, **advance to the next slide to reveal the answer. The answer is wind!**

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Consider this alternate activity for younger kids in your group who might struggle with riddles: Fill large plastic jars or containers with one color of pom-poms. (You'll need a jar for each small group.) Hide one pom-pom of a different color within each container. Give each group a container and see which group can find the one pom-pom of a different color. At first, they couldn't see the colored pom-pom, but it was there and very real! (If any kids in your group are color blind, hide a different sized pom-pom in the jar rather than one of a different color.)

You all did a great job figuring out those riddles! Did you notice that in all the riddles, the answer was something we can't see but is very much real and working? Today we're going to hear a story from the Bible that shows how God is similar.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD IS WORKING EVEN WHEN WE CAN'T SEE IT."**



Welcome Question

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question: "Who is your hero and why?" Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

"We know God is the perfect hero who is always working to do His good will. Today we're going to hear a story about a brave woman who trusted that God would help her do what's right. But, first, it's time for small group."



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **God, thank You for giving us Your Word so we can learn more about who You are. We invite Your Holy Spirit to teach us and show us that You are always at work even when we can't see it. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

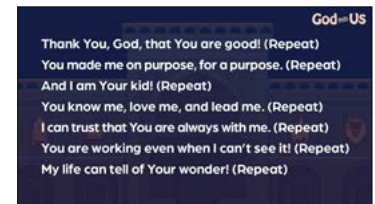
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

I can trust that You are always with me. (Kids repeat.)

You are working even when I can't see it! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Worship

****NEW SONGS!!** Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: My Help, Praise

God's Big Story

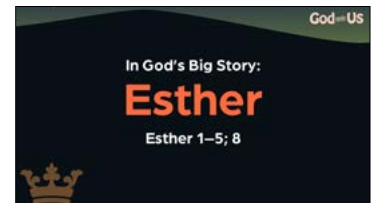
SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

SLIDE: TITLE

Explain to kids that today's story is a true story where God is working in the midst of a really hard situation. Explain that Esther is in the Old Testament before Job and Psalms.

"In today's story, many of God's people were captured and exiled, taken far from their home and forced to live in a land that belonged to other people. God promised to bring His people back to their land, and 50 years later, He kept His promise. God did not forget His people in exile. He kept working to help them even when they couldn't see it."

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY



LESSON 2 ESTHER EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: small table, short glasses or clear cups (3), food coloring (yellow and blue), spoons (2), paper towels, crown, tiara, waist sash, robe, long brown cloth, basket or box

Ahead of time, set the table on one end of the stage area. On the table, arrange the three glasses so they are in a row. Fill the outer two glasses mostly full of water, stirring yellow food coloring in one glass and blue food coloring in the other. Tear off two paper towels and accordion-fold them lengthwise so they are long but thin. Place the crown, tiara, sash, robe, and cloth in the basket or box on the other end of the stage or teaching area.

Leader Tip: It can take over an hour for all or most of the water to be absorbed by the paper towel and travel into the empty glass. The shallower the glass, the faster the water will travel. Also, be sure to use very absorbent paper towels. Consider practicing the experiment ahead of time, and expect only some of the water to make it to the empty glass during the lesson. You can also set up a demo ahead of time, hide it out of sight, and bring it out to show kids the final product.



Gather kids in front of the stage area. **Welcome, everyone! I have a question.** Stand next to the table. Point to the two glasses with water in them. **Who thinks I can move some water from these glasses into the middle glass without touching them?** Allow kids to respond. **Let's see!**

Take one folded paper towel. Stick one end in the yellow water and the other in the empty middle glass. Take the second folded paper towel. Stick one end in the blue water and the other in the empty middle glass.

Well ... not too much seems to be happening yet. I wonder if this will work. Let's just let that sit while we hear today's part of God's big story.

Step away from the table and stand near the basket or box of props. (If you read the biblical background provided earlier, skip to the next paragraph.)

Years after the prophet Isaiah warned God's people of what would happen when they turned away from God, the Babylonian empire conquered the kingdom of Judah. Many of God's people were captured and exiled, taken far from their home and forced to live in a land that belonged to other people. God did not forget His people in exile. He kept working to help them even when they couldn't see it.



The book of Esther tells one story about how God was working for His people living in Persia.

Let's see ... we're going to need a king. Select a volunteer to play King Xerxes. Put the crown on his head and invite him to practice standing with hands on hips every time you say, "Xerxes" (ZURK-seez). Have him stand at the center of the stage area.

King Xerxes, the ruler of the Persian empire, was looking for a new wife. To find his queen, Xerxes gathered many young women from across his empire. One of these women was Esther. Let's see ... where is our Esther? Select a volunteer to play Esther. Invite her to practice standing with hands clasped every time you say, "Esther;" then have her stand next to the king.

Esther was a Jewish orphan who had been adopted by her cousin Mordecai. Let's see ... we need a Mordecai too! Select a volunteer to play Mordecai. Place brown cloth over his shoulders and invite him to practice standing with his arms folded every time you say, "Mordecai." Have him stand as far from Esther as possible (maybe even at the back of the room).

Of all the women he met, Xerxes loved Esther most, and he decided to marry her. That made Esther the most powerful woman in the empire. Place the tiara on Esther's head.

Esther would soon find that her good fortune had a bigger purpose. The king chose a new advisor named Haman. Let's see ... where's our Haman? Select a volunteer to play Haman. Place the robe on Haman and practice having him grab his lapels every time you say, "Haman." Have him stand next to the king.

The king ordered everyone to honor Haman. But Mordecai refused to kneel to Haman. Haman grew so angry that he plotted to kill not only Mordecai but all his fellow Jews, God's people. Haman convinced King Xerxes that the Jews were bad for the kingdom, so the king gave Haman permission to get rid of them. Mordecai found out about Haman's evil plan. Mordecai and the Jews were sad and afraid.

Encourage the actor playing Mordecai to look sad and afraid. Invite the rest of the kids in the audience to play the part of the Jews. They too can look sad and afraid. **It looked like they were doomed.** **Queen Esther heard from her servants that Mordecai was so upset he wept out loud.** Mordecai can cry aloud.

Esther felt concern for her cousin, so she sent her servant to speak with Mordecai. Let's see ... we need Esther's servant. Select a volunteer to play the servant. Wrap the sash around her waist. Practice having her bow every time you say, "Servant." Encourage the servant to walk quickly from Esther to Mordecai.

The servant asked Mordecai what was wrong. The actor playing the servant can act like she is talking to Mordecai. **Mordecai told the servant about Haman's plan. He said Esther needed to go to the king and beg him for mercy so the Jews could be saved.** Encourage the servant to walk quickly back to Esther and act like she is telling Esther the message. **There was a problem though. Esther knew she could be put to death for approaching King Xerxes without him calling for her first.**

Mordecai said that if Esther didn't go, "Then help for the Jews will come from another place. But you and your family will die. Who knows? It's possible that you became queen for a time just like this" (Esther 4:14). Mordecai was suggesting that God made Esther queen to help save her people.

Esther sent her servant to Mordecai with a final message asking him and all the Jews to pray and fast for three days, not eating or drinking anything. Encourage the servant to travel back to Mordecai and act like she is relaying the message. Invite Mordecai and the audience to bow their heads in prayer. **Esther promised that after the three days, she would go to the king and ask for help. Esther needed God's help when talking to the king.**

Encourage the actors to continue doing their assigned motion every time their character's name is mentioned. They might also choose to act out their parts through their facial expressions and physical actions. **After much prayer, fasting, and careful planning, Esther put on her royal robes and entered the inner courtyard of the palace. King Xerxes called her to him, and Esther met with him and Haman. She invited them to a feast she had prepared. At the feast, Esther asked them to return for another feast the next day. The next day, the queen told the king about Haman's plot to murder Mordecai and the Jews. King Xerxes was enraged at Haman and ordered that he be put to death. Then, King Xerxes promoted Mordecai! He also gave the Jews the support to defend themselves and fight against enemies who came to attack. They were saved! God had placed Esther in the right position to help protect God's people.**

Thank the volunteers, collect the costume pieces, and invite them to sit down.

God was working, even when His people couldn't see it. God still works, even when we can't see it. That reminds me ... let's see how our experiment is going!

Walk over to the table and check on the glasses. Point out that some of the blue and yellow water has indeed moved from the two outside glasses into the center one to form green water. **Even when we weren't looking and couldn't see the water moving, the experiment was working! It's the same way with God! Even though we can't see Him and don't always know His plans, we can trust that He's working!"**



Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD IS WORKING EVEN WHEN WE CAN'T SEE IT**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

God worked through Esther to stop Haman's plan to destroy the Jews. In the same way, God worked through Jesus to stop sin from destroying all humankind."



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

*****Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.**

VIDEO: BAPTISM

WORSHIP VIDEO: Exalt Thee/I Speak Jesus



Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: May God increase your faith as He works even when you can't see it. God will never leave you or desert you! May this truth give you peace.