



### 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

- Welcome Question: Who is your hero and why?
- Curiosity Questions
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Hebrews 13:5b
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Felt Feelings Response



Victory Elementary Spotify playlist

### INVITATION

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

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“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.

### Small Group

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

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### Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** [Coloring Page](#), whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils  
Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

*Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

#### As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board:

**“What is the strangest thing you have ever seen?”** ” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

#### While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **How would you describe a hero?**
- **Would you be willing to stand up to a bully? Why or why not?**

**Leader Tip:** Remind kids that God is the hero of every story, and Jesus shows us how to live the way God created us to live—loving Him and others! When we follow Jesus’ example, with the help and strength of the Holy Spirit, we become more like Jesus—the true hero!

**\*\*NEW!! Large Group leaders will now lead an opening game or activity 10 minutes before service begins. It is very important that you are with your groups and ready to participate with them!**

### Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

## Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid), [Laugh and Grow Bible](#) (optional), [Bible Story Picture \(1/SG\)](#)

Explain to kids that you are going to read a true story where God is working in the midst of a really hard situation. Invite kids to open their Bibles to the book of Esther. Explain that Esther is in the Old Testament before Job and Psalms. Give kids this background:

"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 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."

Read [Esther 3:8–11; 4:1–4; 7:1–7](#) aloud. **\*\*For K-1st, consider reading pages 172–177 from the [Laugh and Grow Bible](#). Then discuss the following:**

- Who was Esther?
- Why did Haman grow angry at Mordecai?
- What brave thing did Esther decide to do? What do you think gave her the courage to do this?
- Think back on the story of Esther. Where do you think God was working?
- Have you ever had to be brave to do the right thing? What happened?
- What did this story show you about God?
- How does it make you feel to know that God is working all the time, and He never leaves us?

"Sometimes, doing the right thing can be hard or downright scary. However, the story of Esther shows us that God is always working, and we can trust that He is with us when we need to be brave. Let's take some time to thank God for always helping us and ask His Holy Spirit to help us do what is right."

## Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Begin by having kids share different ways God has helped them. Take time to offer a prayer of thanksgiving. Then allow kids to share a situation where they need God's help or faith to believe that He is working, even if they can't see it. (If needed, list examples for kids to choose from, such as help being kind to a friend or sibling or help understanding hard things at school.) Pray together for these situations.

## Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid),

Explain to kids that you are going to read a true story where God is working in the midst of a really hard situation. Invite kids to open their Bibles to the book of Esther. Explain that Esther is in the Old Testament before Job and Psalms. Give kids this background! **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 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."**

**Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.**

**Ask three kid volunteers to read Esther 3:8–11; 4:1–4; 7:1–7 aloud. Then, discuss the following:**

- What surprised you in today's part of God's big story? Why did it surprise you?
- What was Haman's evil plan?
- Why did Mordecai think that Esther should talk to the king?
- What could have happened to Esther when she approached the king without him first calling for her?
- Why do you think the king was enraged at Haman and his plan?
- Do you have a situation in your life that requires you to be brave like Esther? What is the situation?
- Think back on the story of Esther. Where do you think God was working? How does it make you feel to know that God is working all the time, and He never leaves us?

**"Esther had to be courageous to talk to the king, but she was not alone. God is always working, and knowing this fact can give us the courage to do what is right. Let's pray and thank God for never leaving us and ask His Spirit to help our faith in Him grow."**

## Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids to share a time of thanksgiving by recalling different ways God has helped them in hard situations. Pray together, thanking God for His faithfulness. Then, allow kids to pray together in pairs, asking God for help in whatever difficult situations they are currently facing. Remind them that God is always working even if we can't see it.

## Older Kids – Notes Page

**\*\*Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home! Encourage them to keep them out while listening to the God's Big Story video and Experience It Script in Large Group.**

## WORD OF WONDER

God has said, "I will never leave you.  
I will never desert you."

—Hebrews 13:5b (NirV)

### Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

**"The Word of Wonder for the God with Us series is Hebrews 13:5b. Today we've seen how God is working even when we can't see it. This verse tells us more about God's promise to never leave those He loves. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"**

Have kids open their Bibles to Hebrews 13:5b, and display the Word of Wonder Slide on the screen. Read the verse several times together. Encourage kids to read in their most powerful voices. Invite the girls to read the first part of the verse and the boys the second. Then have them swap.

Gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **What does the Word of Wonder show us about who God is?**
- **How can knowing that God will never leave you help you believe that He is working even when we can't see it?**

### Word of Wonder Activity

**"Let's help each other learn the Word of Wonder by not leaving one another just like God never leaves us! We are going to pass the verse forward. Let's form a line and give it a shot!"**

Invite kids to stand up and form a single-file line. Kids will attempt to move their line by passing the verse forward. The kid at the back of the line will say the first word of the verse and then run to the front of the line. The next kid, who is now in the back of the line, will say the next word of the verse and run to the front of the line. Kids will continue this pattern. Eventually, kids should try to say the verse quickly so the line itself seems to be moving forward.

#### **Make It Inclusive!**

For kids who may have trouble memorizing the Word of Wonder or for younger kids, consider having a leader stand next to kids in the line and whisper the word each kid should say. If any kids have mobility challenges, modify the activity by having kids pass a ball (rather than running) from the back of the line to the front as kids say words from the verse.

**Leader Tip:** For Older Kids. Have kids practice writing out the Word of Wonder by memory on their Notes page!

## Head to Large Group!

When you return from LG, continue with these activities until parents arrive.

### Responding in Worship: Felt Feelings Response

**SUPPLIES:** 2" x 2" felt or fabric squares in blue, green, red, yellow, and orange (at least 1 square per kid); bottles of glue (1 per group); pencils; pens; coloring utensils

**RESOURCES:** [Feelings Response Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#), [God with Us Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Feelings Response Sheet for each kid. Cut out at least one 2" x 2" square of felt or fabric per kid. (You will want extras because you don't yet know which colors kids will choose, and some kids may choose more than one.) Place an assortment of felt or fabric squares near each group of kids along with glue, pencils, pens, and coloring utensils.

Gather kids together.

**"Today we heard the encouraging story of Esther, who acted courageously to do the right thing. She approached the king to let him know of Haman's plan to the kill the Jewish people. The king could have responded angrily when Esther approached him, but instead he listened to her and made sure the Jewish people were safe. We know God was working to make sure Haman's evil plan failed.**

**All of us have tough situations we're facing too. They might not be quite as serious as Esther's, but regardless of our situation, God is with us. We can trust that God is working just as He was working in Esther's situation.**

Hand out a Feelings Response Sheet to each kid.

**We are going to take some time to reflect on how we are feeling today. Each of you has a journal sheet in front of you, as well as pieces of fabric and glue.**

Show the color guide below.



**How are you feeling today? Maybe you are really happy because you are going to see your grandparents after lunch. Maybe you are nervous and a little worried because you have a dance recital coming up, and you're not sure how you feel about performing in front of all those people. Or maybe you're a little bit sad because you got in a fight with our best friend.**





**In a moment, you can grab a piece of felt that matches the color of how you feel: blue if you feel sad, green if you feel calm, red if you feel happy, yellow if you feel scared, and orange if you feel worried or nervous. If you feel more than one of those emotions, just choose one for now. If you aren't feeling any of those feelings, then grab the color that represents the emotion closest to how you feel."**

Invite the kids to find their piece of felt and glue it to the square space on their Feelings Response Sheet. They can write the emotion they feel on the line at the top of the page. Next, encourage kids to write a short journal entry in the space at the bottom of the page. They can reflect on how it makes them feel to know that God is always with them no matter what emotions they feel. Consider playing "Waymaker" or another song from the [God with Us Elementary Spotify playlist](#) while kids work for a few minutes.

### **Make It Inclusive!**

This activity is a great way for nonverbal or younger kids to express their feelings. Instead of writing a journal entry, kids can draw a picture or glue another piece of felt that expresses how they feel knowing that God is with them. Some kids with special needs may need one-on-one help with this activity. Kids may not have the vocabulary needed to express feelings and may need help understanding that the colors represent feelings. Demonstrating each feeling with your facial expressions can help!

**Life is not always easy, but God is always working. Let's thank Him for never leaving us."** Pray for the kids, thanking God for working on their behalf no matter how they are feeling. Ask God to increase all their faith, and to remind them that He is with them.