

TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Stand Up
Esther
Esther

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

You can do what you should even when you don't know what will happen.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go."
Joshua 1:9b, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Courage—Being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you're afraid

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP

15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Early Arriver
Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP

35
MIN

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways **WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God**

Welcome/Opener
Worship ("I Want to Say) Thank You" from *This Love* and "Brave" from *Everything to Me*)
Bible Story
Bottom Line
Prayer
Closer

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Bible Story Review: Esther's Act of Courage (*k-1st grade*), Rock, Paper, STAND (*2nd-3rd grade*)

Application Activity: This or That (*k-1st grade*), Even When (*2nd-3rd grade*)

Memory Verse Activity: What's the Word? (*k-1st grade*), Connect the Dots (*2nd-3rd grade*)

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

Parent Cue Card (print or email)
Devotionals for Kids
Parent Cue App

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Stand Up
Esther
Esther

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MONTHLY VIRTUE

Courage—Being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you're afraid

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

Verses

Open the Bible to Esther 3:8-9 (NIV) and read.
Open the Bible to Esther 4:14 (NIV) and read.
Open the Bible to Esther 7:3-4 (NIV) and read.

Host Supplies

- Thor costume or Thor Helmet, Cape, and hammer
- Worship Leaders to assist with the game (see "What You Do")
- Two large buckets filled about 1/3 of the way with water
- About 100 ping-pong balls
- Two large inflatable hammers (mallet style) plus extra(s) in case one pops or loses air
- Masking tape

Story Supplies

- Table
- Prop box including:
 - "Praying Hands Picture" printed on cardstock from the LG Assets PDF
 - Tape
 - 4 sock puppets (Esther, Mordecai, Hamman, King X)
 - if possible different color/theme socks for each and/or doll clothing
 - King and Queen's crowns
 - Two rolled-up scrolls
 - Scepter
 - Play food
- Trash can (on stage)

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS KIDS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

OPENER

HOST: "Hello, everybody! Raise your hand if you're happy to be here at [your environment's name]. (*Raise your hand.*) Me, too! All month long, we've been looking at some stories from the Bible of people who had amazing courage. We're finding out how WE can have courage, too.

SLIDE: VIRTUE

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

"Courage is being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you're afraid.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME

"There might be things in life that scare you. That's perfectly normal. There might be times when you know what you SHOULD do, but it's hard to work up the courage to do it. That happens to me, too. But here's the great news. You don't have to face your fears alone! You know that God is always with you.

"Now, you don't have to be a superhero to show courage. All of us can show courage with God's help! But it's hard to think of anyone more courageous than a superhero. So I've got another fun superhero game for us to play. Today, we'll be playing a game with Thor's hammer!

Hold up one of the inflatable hammers (mallets).

"I mean, this kind of looks like Thor's hammer. Just a little bit puffier.

"We have two teams (*Reference sides of the room on each side of the tape line.*), this side and this side. I've got a hammer for each team.

Give an inflatable hammer (mallet) to a Small Group Leader on each side of the room.

"And we have a goal on each side of the room.

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

Set a bucket on each side of the room. (The buckets should be about 1/3 full of water so the ping-pong balls don't bounce out.) you can also set the buckets on stage on opposite sides so you are dodging ping pong balls while encouraging them

"You'll line up in a big line and take turns using your team's hammer to try to knock a ping-pong ball to the other side and into the bucket. Give it a gentle whack, like this. (*Demonstrate, underhand.*) I know, this is really tough! I wonder if anyone can actually make a goal? It'll be fun to try!

"Let's have this team line up behind [leader's name]. [Leader's name], you can stand behind the line and face the bucket.

(to the other side) "THIS team, you'll line up behind [leader's name], facing the opposite direction so you're aiming toward the other bucket.

Note: Guide the teams to form two parallel lines, on opposite sides of the tape line, facing opposite directions. Each line should be facing a bucket.

"We'll put all the ping-pong balls here in the center.

Dump the ping-pong balls on the floor, on the line between the two teams.

"I've asked our friends to come out and help toss the ping-pong balls back in the middle after you've hit them.

Worship Leaders enter. They split up so half are standing next to each bucket.

"When it's your turn, take the hammer from the person in front of you, pick up a ping-pong ball, and try to hit it into the bucket. Then give the hammer to the person behind you and go to the back of the line. Make sense?

"All right, I think we're ready. Summon your courage and wield the hammer wisely! Ready, set, go!

AUDIO: FUN SUPERHERO MUSIC

Comment on the action as the kids and leaders try to hit ping-pong balls into the buckets. Worship Leaders should continuously roll the ping-pong balls back to the center of the room (between the two teams).

Keep playing until all kids in line have had at least one attempt. When you stop the game, check the buckets. Hopefully at least one team will have scored a goal. Regardless, congratulate everyone on their effort.

Get the kids to help you collect the ping-pong balls and set the game supplies to the side. Worship Leaders can help with this, too.

"That was so fun! Thanks for playing that game with me. Now I know I can call you any time I need to face my fear of ping-pong balls. I mean, those little things can be dangerous! You can head back to where you were before, but stay on your feet because the fun is just beginning. Let's sing and worship God together!"

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters carrying a prop box as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Hi, friends! Wow, it's great to be here with you as we continue God's Big Story. *(Hold up Bible.)*

"If we look back at where we've been so far, we can see how God has been showing love to people since the very beginning! God had a plan to bless the whole world through Abraham's family, the Israelites. God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and led them to the Promised Land.

"God put kings in place to lead the people. But over and over, the Israelites kept turning away from God.

"At last, we read in the Bible how God allowed the Israelites to be captured by other nations. Even in captivity, though, some of these men and women still loved and honored God. One of those people was a young woman named Esther."

SLIDE: STORY BACKGROUND #1: MORDECAI'S HOUSE

Move behind the table with the prop box. Pull out Esther puppet

THE NEW QUEEN

STORYTELLER: "Esther was Jewish, which meant that she was part of Abraham's family, the Israelites. She grew up in Persia, but she still kept her Jewish traditions and beliefs. She still followed the One True God.

Pull the praying hands picture from the box and hold it up.

"What do we have here? *(Pause for response.)* Yes, praying hands. Esther prayed and followed God, even though she was in a faraway land.

Tape the picture to the end of the table so the audience can see it.

"Esther was raised by her older cousin Mordecai, who was really like a father to her.

Put on Mordecai sock puppet

"One day, a new king named Xerxes came to power in Persia. King Xerxes had a bit of a temper. He actually fired his queen because she didn't show up for a party! So then King Xerxes needed a NEW queen. After a year-long search through the entire kingdom, King Xerxes chose Esther!

Pull the crown from the box and hold it up. Then set it on Esther.

"Mordecai wanted to keep Esther safe, so he told her not to tell anyone that she was from a Jewish family."

SLIDE: STORY BACKGROUND #2: PALACE

HAMAN'S PLOT

STORYTELLER: "Now that Esther was the queen, she lived in the palace. Everything was fine—until a man named Haman entered the scene. King Xerxes had put Haman in charge of all the other nobles in the kingdom . . . and Haman LOVED to make all the other officials bow to him.

Switch Esther for Haman puppet

"But remember Esther's cousin, Mordecai? Mordecai worshipped the One True God, so he refused to bow down to Haman. This made Haman furious! Haman came up with a terrible plan. He went to the king and asked the king to give an order.

Switch Mordecai with King Xerxes puppet

"This is what Haman said.

Open the Bible to Esther 3:8-9 (NIV) and read.

"Certain people are scattered among the nations. They live in all the territories in your kingdom. They keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their practices are different from the practices of all other people. They don't obey your laws. It really isn't good for you to put up with them. If it pleases you, give the order to destroy them. I'll even add 375 tons of silver to the king's officials for the royal treasures.

"This was AWFUL! Haman wanted the king to destroy the Jewish people, because they lived differently and didn't obey the king's laws.

Pull one of the scrolls out of the box and hold it up.

"Why do you think we have a letter here? Well, King Xerxes actually listened to Haman, and he sent a letter all over the kingdom to put Haman's plan in motion. The letter declared that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all Jewish people were to be killed. See, I told you—this was awful!

Set the scroll on the table. Switch puppets to Esther and Mordecai

"Of course, Mordecai was shocked to hear this. He sent a message to Esther in the palace to tell her what Haman had done. Mordecai asked Esther to go to the king and ask him to save her people.

"But it wasn't that easy. Esther explained to Mordecai that no one could come before the king unless he sent for them. In fact, she could die if she approached the king and he didn't want to see her!

Pull the scepter out of the box and hold it up.

"BUT . . . if the king reached out his golden scepter to her, then she would be safe. That meant that he was willing to listen to what she had to say.

Put the scepter on the table.

"I'm sure Esther was afraid of what might happen. But listen to what Mordecai said to her next.

Open the Bible to Esther 4:14 (NirV) and read.

“What if you don’t say anything at this time? Then help for the Jews will come from another place . . . Who knows? It’s possible that you became queen for a time just like this.

“Esther told Mordecai to gather the Jewish people together to pray and not eat or drink anything for three days. Esther would do the same thing. Then she would try to talk to the king.”

ESTHER SAVES THE DAY

STORYTELLER: *“Esther knew that Mordecai was right. As the queen, she was the only one who could get close enough to the king to actually save her people. So she gathered all her courage and entered the king’s hall.*

(dramatically) “The king saw Esther . . . and he reached out his golden scepter to her!

Switch Mordecai with the King and Hold up the scepter again.

“Esther was safe!

Set the scepter on the table.

“King Xerxes asked Esther what she wanted, but she didn’t make her request right away. Instead, she asked the king to attend a special banquet . . . along with Haman. Remember, Haman was the man who had come up with the awful plan to destroy the Jewish people.

SLIDE: STORY BACKGROUND #3: BANQUET HALL

Take the play food out of the box and set it on the table.

“At the banquet, King Xerxes again asked Esther what she wanted. She told the king that she’d like for him and Haman to come to another feast the next day. THEN she would answer his question. The king and Haman came to this second feast. And once again, the king asked Esther what she wanted.

“Listen to what Esther said next!

Open the Bible to Esther 7:3-4 (NirV) and read.

“Your Majesty, I hope you will be pleased to let me live. That’s what I want. Please spare my people. That’s my appeal to you. My people and I have been sold to be destroyed. We’ve been sold to be killed and wiped out.

Switch Esther with Haman and make it look like his mouth drops when you say the following

“The king was outraged and asked who had dared to do such an awful thing. Esther answered that it was Haman! King Xerxes was so angry that he had Haman put to death.

Pull off Haman sock and throw it into the trash can.

“The king threw out Haman’s old order, and he made a NEW order in its place.

STAND

DON'T FACE YOUR FEARS ALONE

WEEK
FOUR
NOVEMBER 2022

LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

Throw the scroll that's already on the table into the trash can. Then pull the new scroll out of the prop box and hold it up.

"This new law would allow the Jewish people to be saved!"

Set the new scroll on the table and take off sock puppet. Move in front of the table as you wrap up.

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Esther's story is truly an amazing story of courage. Esther had the chance to save her people, but she had to risk her life by approaching the king! And don't forget, Esther had no idea what would happen next. She didn't know if the king would let her live and listen to what she had to say.

"But the king DID listen to her. God had put Esther in her position as queen so that she could be the one to speak up for her people.

"Sometimes there's something we know we should do, but it's hard to work up the courage to actually do it. In those times, we can trust that God is with us. We can think of Esther and remember how God was with HER, even when she didn't know what would happen next.

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"You can do what you should even when you don't know what will happen.

"Let's talk to God and ask God to give us the kind of courage Esther had. Will you pray with me?"

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: "Dear God, thank You for saving Esther and her people in such an amazing, powerful way! Esther must have been afraid when she went to approach the king. But even in that scary situation, You were there with her. You helped her speak up for what was right. Thank You for being here with us, too. Please show us how we can be courageous and do what we should, even when we're not sure what will happen. Help us trust You, no matter what. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

HOST: "What a story! Esther really had to trust God, didn't she? I mean, it was a BIG risk for her to speak up and try to save her people. She didn't know what would happen when she went to speak to the king.

SLIDE: GOD'S BIG STORY TIMELINE

SLIDE: WEEK 4 TIMELINE IMAGE

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.

"But Esther chose to trust God. She faced her fears. That's how she ended up saving the Jewish people from Haman's awful plan.

"It's tough to have courage when you don't know what will happen next. But God can give you the strength you need to do what's right.

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"You can do what you should even when you don't know what will happen.

"And remember, you don't have to find courage all by yourself. When you decide to trust Jesus and live His way, you have God's Holy Spirit living inside you. That means that you have the power of GOD living inside of you. So you can be ready for anything!

"When you have a decision to make and it's hard to know what to do, ask God to give you courage. If you find out some news that takes you by surprise, and you're not sure what will happen next, talk to God about it. Talk to an adult who you trust that God has put in your life. God loves you and cares about everything that happens in your life. **[Basic Truth] You can trust God no matter what!**

"You'll get to talk some more in Small Group about how you can have courage, even when you don't know what will happen. Talk about that with your friends, okay? I'll see you later!"

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP