



Date: _____
Series: Labor Day
Fall Year 4, Lesson 15

Queen Esther

Take Home Point: *God rescues his people.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Scripture portions from the book of Esther telling the entire Bible event of Queen Esther.

Key Verse: Psalm 18:17, "He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, because they were too strong for me."

On Labor Day many shepherds may be absent and this lesson is written understanding the challenge of finding substitutes. This lesson is designed for groups to easily be combined with one shepherd overseeing up to 20 children. More time is given to the large group presentation and a video is included for teaching. The lesson has the feel of a holiday celebration as the children learn about Purim, the Jewish celebration of Esther's rescue.

Kingdom Quest uses a chronological scope and sequence through the Old Testament. The study of Esther would typically happen later this fall. However, Esther is placed on Labor Day because it is a holiday. This lesson teaches about the Jewish festival of Purim, a celebration of Esther, though it occurs in March on the Jewish calendar.

We will help kids know:

- The Bible event of Queen Esther and the celebration of Purim, the Jewish holiday that celebrates God's rescue.
- God rescues his people and we can trust him.
- Queen Esther was willing to risk her life to save the Jewish people. This reminds us of Jesus who gave his life for us that we could be rescued from sin and the power of the enemy.




We will help kids feel:

- Happy to celebrate together.
- Thankful for rescue in Christ.

We will help kids do:

- Watch a video of Esther.
- Play games that remind them of the Jewish celebration of Purim.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Play a life-size game of Tic-tac-toe. A wicked advisor wanted to kill the Jews and a traitorous game was played that could cost them their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masking tape or string to make the game boards construction paper or other object (one per child) that designates five kids as members of the same team (different color for each team)
Large Group 	4 7 8 8	Overview Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Parties during Purim”—Gordy struggles to understand the holiday of Purim. Video: <i>Esther</i> , Nest Family Entertainment Network Puppet Conclusion: “Gordy Parties during Purim”—The video aids Gordy in understanding the importance of Esther’s courage...the saving of the Jewish people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>optional:</i> noisemakers – Oriental trading , item number IN-25/101, cost \$14.95 per 50 (1-800-875-8480) http://www.orientaltrading.com video: <i>Esther</i> by Nest Family Entertainment—order from www.nestfamily.com
Small Group Application 	4	Game choices: “Xerx-Xerxes Game”—King Xerxes changed his mind. “Trash Ball Game”—Haman wanted to trash Mordecai. “Air Ball Game”—Haman used his hot air to influence the king.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trash can or box—one per team plastic or tennis balls—one per team chairs—one per kid straws—one per kid

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Today's lesson is designed with a lot of games that will help tell the story of Queen Esther. The group will have their own celebration of Purim (Esther 9: 18-19). Since it is Labor Day and many shepherds may be out of town, one shepherd can supervise a large group of children.

Supplies needed: masking tape or string, construction paper or other object (one per child) that designates five kids as members of the same team (different color for each team)

In advance, use string or tape to mark the floor with a giant tic-tac-toe board for every ten kids. The minimum size of a square should be 15"x15." The nine squares of each tic-tac-toe board should be big enough for a child to stand in. Mark a championship board #1. It is also called the King's Board. Then label boards #2, #3, etc. that lead up to the championship board.

The object of the game is to win at tic-tac-toe and advance to the King's Board. At the end of each round, the winners will advance up one game board closer to the King's Board and the loser will move down one game board. (The winners at the King's Board and the losers at the last board stay put.) For each round, teams will play new opponents. At the end of the time allotment, whoever has won in the King's Board is the overall winner.

Kids on the same team may be marked by each holding the same color of construction paper or other object to designate they are team members.

Have kids form teams of five. Arrange two teams at each tic-tac-toe board facing each other at opposite sides. Then explain the rules of the game and how the teams advance through the boards. Say:

When I say "go," each team will place one player at a time onto the tic-tac-toe board until a winner is declared.

If it ends up a tie, flip a coin to decide the winner.

Play the game for seven to eight minutes. At the end, declare the winner and have all the kids sit down.

We played this game for fun. How would you like to play this game if the losers lost their lives?

Today we will hear a Bible event about God's people in a city in Persia. A wicked advisor kept moving closer and closer to the king. He convinced the king to have all of the Jewish people killed. This is how the traitorous game began. It was a game of who could become close to the king and save these people. We will learn today how **God rescues his people.*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Puppet Presentation: "Gordy Parties During Purim"—Gordy struggles to understand the holiday of Purim.

Video: *Esther*, Nest Family Entertainment Network.

Puppet Conclusion: "Gordy Parties During Purim"—the video aids Gordy in understanding the importance of Esther's courage...the saving of the Jewish people.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible Event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

The following games will replace the usual small group observation and implementation questions.

Supplies: *chairs—one per kid; trash can or box—one per team; plastic or tennis balls—one per team; straws—one per kid*

Xerx-Xerxes Game

Have eight to ten players in a circle with enough chairs for all but one. Place chairs in a close circle, facing the center. Choose one child to be the "chair snatcher" and to stand in the center of the circle. Have the rest of the group sit in the chairs.

When the chair snatcher yells, “Xerx” begin the game. Players move one chair to the right while the chair snatcher tries to find a seat to sit in. Movement continues to the right until the chair snatcher says, “Xerxes”. Then everyone moves to the left. The chair snatcher may call, “Xerxes” at anytime. When the chair snatcher finally snatches a seat, the person who is left without a chair is the next chair snatcher.

Play for five minutes and have the kids sit down. Then discuss:

Have your parents ever made a decision and then, after thinking about it or discussing it with you, changed their minds about that decision?

In our Bible event today, we saw how King Xerxes changed his mind and drastically affected the lives of the Jewish people. What did he do first and then how did he change his mind? *(He gave the order to kill the Jews because he believed Haman who said the Jews would not obey the king. When he discovered that Haman’s plot would destroy all of Esther’s people, he allowed Mordecai to issue an order that the Jews could defend themselves against their enemies.)*

Remind the kids that ****God rescues his people.***

Trash Ball Game

Place a trash can in the center of ten kids. The object is to bounce the ball (one bounce) and into the trash can. Give the following instructions.

Stand in a circle about three feet back from the trash can. When I say begin, you will take turns bouncing the ball attempting to get it into the trash can. Your team will get one point for every ball that goes into the trash can. Have one person on your team keep track of the points. The team with the most points when time is called is the winner.

Remember that the ball must bounce before it goes into the trash can or it does not count. Are you ready? Begin.

Play the game for five minutes and have the kids sit down. Then debrief:

In our Bible event today, we heard about Haman and Mordecai. Haman hated Mordecai because he did not bow down to him. Mordecai would only bow down before God. For this reason, Haman wanted to “trash” Mordecai and all of his people, the Jews. But, God rescued them and there was a bounce or change of events and Haman was the one who was trashed. **God rescues his people.*

Air Ball Game

Have kids get into teams of eight for this relay race. Divide each team in two and have four stand at one end of the room and have the other four at the other end of the room.

The idea of this game is to take your straw and blow through it, moving the ball across the floor to your teammate at the other side of the room. This teammate will in turn blow the tennis ball back to the next teammate. Continue until all have attempted the task. The winner is the first team to finish.

Are you ready? Go!

This game can be played again with two team members blowing on the ball with the straws at the same time. When this is finished, have all the kids sit down.

Haman used his hot air to influence the king and destroy God's people. But through Queen Esther, God turned the events around, rescued his people and destroyed Haman.

The key verse for today from Psalm 18:17 says, *"He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, because they were too strong for me."* Just like God saved the Jews from Haman's plot to destroy them, **God too will rescue us, his people.*

How did God already rescue us from eternal destruction? *(He sent Jesus to rescue us from the plot of Satan. Jesus defeated death and Satan's power through his death and resurrection, so all who believe in Jesus as Savior and Son of God, will have life with him forever.)*

What joyful celebration do we participate in that is an annual reminder of what Jesus has done for us? *(Easter or Resurrection Day.)*

Closing prayer:

Thank God that he sent Jesus to rescue us from the evil plot of Satan. Thank him for his love that continues to rescue us from our enemies. Pray for those who do not know this Good News.

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Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Gordy Parties During Purim Puppet Presentation

Supplies: party noisemakers, gragger (handheld noisemaker), or some other party instruments

Presenter: Boys and girls, shall we welcome Gordy?

Kids welcome Gordy—Gordy...Gordy...Gordy...Gordy...

Gordy enters triumphantly, singing his own praises.

Gordy: *(Pretends he is tooting his own horn.)* TA-da-da-DA! I'm invincible Gordy, champion of tic-tac-toe! Oh, yeah, that's me. I rule, I'm cool.

Presenter: Let me guess, Gordy. You won at tic-tac-toe.

Gordy: Did you expect anything else? Now I think we should have a party.

Presenter: Okay, Gordy. Let's have a party.

Gordy: What? I thought you would tell me to settle down.

Presenter: Well, I don't think our party should be about you winning at tic-tac-toe.

Gordy: I figured.

Presenter: Instead, we could have a party celebrating Purim.

Gordy: Purim??? Celebrating what?

Presenter: Purim. It's the Jewish holiday that celebrates what Esther did.

Gordy: What did Esther do?

Presenter: Queen Esther was very brave. She risked her life to save the Jewish people from the plot of an evil man named Haman.

Gordy: What? This doesn't make sense.

Presenter: Well, maybe it will make sense after we watch the video. As we watch the video, we can do something many Jews do when they celebrate Purim and tell the story of Esther.

Gordy: What is that?

Presenter: They make noise and wear masks to act out the drama.

Gordy: What??

Presenter: They use noisemakers (show a noisemaker if you have one) or stomp their feet anytime they hear the name, Haman, when the story is told. We can do that also while we watch the video. But, if we use the noisemakers, we can only make lots of noise for 2 seconds, otherwise, we won't be able to hear the video Bible event. So listen to the video and listen for the name of Haman. Let's practice so we know what a 2-second noise sounds like.

Practice with the kids.

Okay, Gordy, go back in your clubhouse and watch along with us.

Video

Show the video, *Esther*, produced by Nest Family Entertainment.

Optional: Hand out the noisemakers before the movie. During the movie, every time the name of Haman is mentioned or he is seen in the movie, have the children make noise with their noisemakers.

Gordy Parties During Purim

Puppet Conclusion.

Presenter: Gordy, let's have some review questions. I need one girl and one boy to volunteer as the "answer person" for their team (boys vs. girls). We'll take turns seeing who gets the right answer.

Choose a boy and girl volunteer from the audience to act as representatives for their team. They will answer the questions. Alternate asking a question of a girl and then a boy. Have the child stand up and give his/her answer. If he/she doesn't answer correctly, let another boy or girl make a guess. Give them the answer if neither gets it correct.

Gordy: Can I play, too?

Presenter: I guess you can.

Gordy: Good, because I'm really smart... and I really listened.

Presenter: Okay, let's see.

During the following questions and answers, Gordy's response is completely silly or ridiculous. Gordy can give his response right after the question is read and before the student gives the correct answer. Feel free to edit Gordy's silly responses to your taste or omit them all together if you don't want to take the time for them.

1. What was the name of the uncle who raised Esther?

Gordy: Uncle Festus.

Right answer: Mordecai.

2. How did Mordecai save King Xerxes' life?

Gordy: He overheard the bad guys talking about killing the king, so he tied them up and poured mayonnaise on their heads.

Right answer: Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate when he overheard two of the guards plotting to kill the king. Mordecai informed Queen Esther who told the king, on behalf of Mordecai.

3. Why did Haman, the king's chief adviser, want to get rid of Mordecai?

Gordy: Because Mordecai gave Haman "the look." (Strike a weird pose with the mouth agape.)

Right answer: Because Mordecai would not bow down to him like the others and because he was a Jew.

4. How did Queen Esther risk her life to save the Jews?

Gordy: She pulled the fire alarm and told all the people to run out of the country.

Right answer: She dared to approach the king to beg mercy without being summoned, which was punishable by death.

5. Haman was so proud that he thought when the king asked him, "What should be done for a man the king wants to reward?" Haman thought the king was thinking about him. Who did the king plan to reward? (Mordecai.) Why did the king want to reward him?

Gordy: The king awoke and read in a book that, at one time, Mordecai had won the national spelling bee.

Right answer: The king had been restless one night and read through his official records and discovered Mordecai had never been rewarded for saving his life.

6. How did Haman's evil plan against Mordecai turn back on him?

Gordy: Haman was put in "time out."

Right answer: Haman was hung on the very pole he planned to hang Mordecai on. Mordecai took Haman's place and became the king's chief advisor.

7. How did Mordecai save the Jews in the kingdom?

Gordy: The Jews were given squirt guns in case anyone tried to get them.

Right answer: He wrote an order and sealed it with the king's ring that declared the Jews could defend themselves and fight their enemies who wanted to kill them.)

8. What festival did Mordecai institute in remembrance of the day the Jews defeated their enemies?

Gordy: Something with candy. I think it was pure M&M's!

Right answer: The Feast of Purim.

9. Jesus died on the cross to defeat Satan's power against us. But Jesus didn't stay dead. Instead, he rose again. What celebration do we participate in to remember Jesus' victory for us and that Jesus is alive?

Gordy: (No silly answer.) Easter!

Presenter: Gordy, I think the kids did a great job of answering questions and you did an "interesting" job of making up answers.

Gordy: Well, I think I'm in the party mood.

Presenter: I guess so. But I think we all learned something from the story of Queen Esther.

Gordy: We learned that Queen Esther rescued the people.

Presenter: Exactly. God used her for that. And God rescues us. The point we want to remember is **God rescues his people*. Can you say that? God rescues his people. We'll especially remember—the victory he won for us when Jesus gave his life and rose alive again. Would you close us in prayer?

Gordy: Sure. Dear God, thank you for Jesus. Thank you for rescuing us. I know I was just being silly, but it is cool how you used Queen Esther to rescue your people. We are very thankful you used Jesus to rescue us. Thank you. We'll have a great time remembering that you rescue your people. In Jesus' name. Amen.