#### Lesson 11:

#### Esther

#### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Book of Esther

#### MEMORY WORK:

Bible skills 1-6 Psalms 119:105

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

When I am afraid or sad, I can be sure that God is always with me, so I can choose to be brave.

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

Review last week’s lesson. Daniel and his friends had to be brave, even when it was very hard. Today we’re going to learn about someone else who had to trust God and do something that was very brave.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

* + 1. The people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (the Jews/Hebrews/Israelites) had lived in a land far from their homeland for about 70 years, under foreign kings. Their homeland had been devastated, and Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed. They were ruled by a Persian king named Ahasuerus (or Xerxes) for part of this time. Kings of ancient nations were known to have extravagant banquets, and Ahasuerus was no exception, holding a great banquet for 180 days! [This is the first of eight banquets described in the book of Esther.]
    2. When this banquet was over, Ahasuerus decided to have another one that lasted seven days. At the same time, Queen Vashti was having a banquet for the women in her palace.
    3. The king decided to entertain his guests by showing off his beautiful wife. He and his guests had a great deal of wine to drink and were no doubt very rowdy. As one of the most powerful kings in the world, he thought he could do anything he wanted and make anyone obey him. But Vashti refused to come to the banquet and parade herself before a crowd of drunken men. Ahasuerus was very angry; the queen refusing to obey him made him look foolish. He decided that Vashti would no longer be queen and ordered his servants to begin a search for a new queen to replace her. The king sent orders throughout his huge kingdom that the most beautiful young women were to come to his palace. [It probably took three or four years for the king’s orders to be carried, i.e., there are three or four years between chapters 1 and 2.]
    4. A Jew named Mordecai, a gatekeeper at the city gates, heard about the king’s desire for a new queen. His uncle and aunt had died years before, and Mordecai had taken their young daughter Esther to raise as his own daughter. [Esther is the Persian word meaning “star;” her Hebrew name, Hadassah, means “myrtle.”] He took Esther (his cousin) to the palace to see if she could become the new queen. He warned her not to tell anyone that she was a Jew.
    5. Esther (and the other girls) was prepared for 12 months, with oils and perfumes, to be brought before the king. When Esther was taken, Mordecai saw very little of her. But he walked in front of the building where the women were kept every day and waited for word on how she was doing. When Ahasuerus looked at the young women who were brought to the palace, he chose Esther to be his new queen.
    6. In the capital city of Susa (or Shushan), there was a government official named Haman. He was a very wealthy man, and he was in charge of a lot of the king’s business. The king ordered that people bow down to Haman wherever he went. But Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, and this made Haman very angry! When he found out that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman decided to try to get rid, not only of Mordecai, but also all of the Jews in the entire kingdom!
    7. Haman went to the king and told him that a certain group of people, the Jews, were willfully disobeying the laws of the kingdom and should be punished. He asked the king to sign a letter to be sent throughout the kingdom that on a certain day twelve months later, all the Jews would be killed. The king agreed and sent messengers throughout the kingdom to deliver these special orders. The entire capital city was in an uproar because so many Jews lived there. Many Jews had been born and raised in Susa and didn’t know anything about Palestine (Canaan) where the Jews had come from.
    8. When Mordecai heard about the king’s order and the planned massacre of his people, he became very sad and upset. He tore his clothes as people did back then when they were extremely distressed and sad; he wept and wailed throughout the city and sat in sackcloth and ashes—another thing people did when they were that upset. Esther did not know why Mordecai was acting this way and sent servants to find out what was wrong with him. He sent a message back to the queen telling her what would happen to her people—and to her. He urged Esther to plead with the king to change the law.
    9. Esther responded to Mordecai, reminding him that if anyone who had not been called by the king tried to go before him, he would be killed if the king did not choose to hold out his golden scepter to him to allow him to come to him. Esther told him that the king had not called for her in a month.
    10. Mordecai sent word back to Esther warning her that all of the Jews, including her, would be killed if she did not go to the king. Mordecai knew that the Jews would be saved one way or the other, but he also believed in God’s providence. He told her, “[W]ho knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (3:14). [With the older children, read together Esther 4:13-14 and Esther’s reply in verse 16.]
    11. Esther spent three days fasting, and asked Mordecai to encourage the rest of the Jews in Shushan to do the same. They were, no doubt, praying to God as well.
    12. Esther went to the king and waited outside the throne room. The king did hold out his scepter to Esther, and he offered to give her anything she wanted, up to half of his kingdom. She explained that she would like to invite Haman and him to a banquet she’d prepared that very day. This, no doubt, made Haman feel very important and more prideful.
    13. At the banquet the king asked Esther what troubled her and again offered to give her anything that she wanted up to half of the kingdom. She asked only for Haman and him to come to another banquet the next day. This made Haman feel even more proud, that he would be invited, not just to one private banquet with the king and queen, but two! [Remind older children about the pride of Belshazzar and what happened to him!]
    14. As Haman walked by the king’s gate again, Mordecai still didn’t “stand or tremble” before Haman. So Haman’s anger continued to grow against Mordecai and, with the advice of his family, he built a gallows to be used specifically to kill Mordecai. He would suggest to the king the next day that Mordecai be killed on it.
    15. That very night, the king could not sleep and asked for some old records to be read to him. Providentially, of all the nights he couldn’t sleep, and of all the records that could have been brought to the king, the king read the record that told of how Mordecai had uncovered a plot to kill him and found that nothing had been done to honor Mordecai.
    16. The next day, Haman came to suggest to the king to kill Mordecai, but instead, the king asked Haman what he thought should be done for someone who the king wanted to honor. Haman, full of pride, assumed the king was talking about himself. Instead, the king wanted Haman to bestow the same honors that he had suggested on Mordecai. The king ordered Haman to lead Mordecai through the streets on the king’s horse, wearing royal robes and a crown. Haman’s plan had backfired, and now he was terribly angry and embarrassed!
    17. At the second banquet, the king again asked Esther what she wished from him. This time she asked the king to save her life and the lives of her people, thus telling him for the first time that she was a Jew. The king was so very angry that someone would plan to harm his beautiful queen. When she told him Haman was the evil man who wanted to have the Jews destroyed, the king ordered that Haman be killed on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.
    18. Because the first order (to kill the Jews) was sealed with the king’s signet ring and therefore could not be “undone,” the king gave permission to Esther and Mordecai to write another order to be sent throughout the kingdom, signed by the king. [The second order was sent about two months after the first.] The new order gave the Jews the right to defend themselves if anyone attacked them. The Jews had a great celebration that became known as the Feast of Purim. Mordecai told the Jews to give gifts to the poor as part of their celebration. The Jews today still celebrate this feast for two days (in February or March) each year, at which time the book of Esther is read, special food is eaten, and gifts are exchanged.
    19. Sometimes going to the doctor, staying with a new babysitter, spending the night at a camp or a friend’s house for the first time, or starting a new school year, etc., can frighten us. Whenever we need to be brave, we can remember brave Queen Esther. She listened to the advice of Mordecai. She knew that he would not ask her to do something she could not do. And remember that Esther prayed for three days before going to the king. Even a queen knew that she could depend on God to help her to be brave.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (**note disclaimers**):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces

##### Esther ABeka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)

##### Free Bible Images saved on flash drive

##### Bible Study Guide for All Ages (BSGFAA) Lesson 409, 410, 411. These visuals will look like a black and white comic strip on one large piece of cardstock. To use these attach it to the magnetic dry erase board. Use dry erase markers to follow the directions. Let students take turns marking on the page.

##### *A Queen Named Esther* book. This book is on a younger level and does not provide as many details. The teacher can always add in the necessary details.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS :

# Prophet SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Make scepters – Using small dowel rods or paper straws and pipe cleaners, and plastic beads make a scepter like the king would have used. Review how the king would hold out his scepter to those he allowed to speak.
* Act out the story – Use masks in the lesson file to let the students act out the story

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

#### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Decorate crowns – print crowns on cardstock using a crown template or blank crowns are also available through oriental trading.com Decorate with stick on jewels or foam pieces.

### Review Questions

1. What was the name of the Persian king that ruled the Southern Kingdom of Judah during the time of Esther?
   1. Ahasuerus
2. Why did King Ahasuerus decide that Vashti would no longer be his queen?
   1. Because she refused to go to his banquet and parade before a crowd of drunken men
3. What orders did the king send out to the kingdom?
   1. That the most beautiful young women were to come to his palace
4. What was the name of the Jewish gatekeeper of the city gates that was raising Esther as his own daughter?
   1. Mordecai
5. What did Mordecai tell Esther to keep hidden?
   1. The fact that she was a Jew
6. Who did Ahasuerus choose as his new queen?
   1. Esther
7. Who was Haman?
   1. A government official that was in charge of much of the king’s business
8. What did Mordecai do that made Haman very angry?
   1. He refused to bow down to him.
9. What did Haman decide to do to punish Mordecai?
   1. He asked the king to sign a letter to be sent throughout the kingdom, that on a certain day, 12 months later, all of the Jews would be killed.
10. For what did Esther bravely ask King Ahasuerus at a second banquet with Haman?
    1. For him to save her life and the lives of her people
11. How did King Ahasuerus react to Esther’s request?
    1. He was upset that anyone would plan to harm her. He believed her when she told him that Haman was evil.
12. What happened to Haman?
    1. The king ordered that Haman be hung on the gallows that Haman had prepared for Mordecai.

Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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