

MinistryPlace.net

Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:1-6:16

Theme: Prayer and action go hand in hand

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Sunday School Lesson Overview: "For Such a Time as This" (Esther 1, 10 , God's Purpose for Us) Opening Hook (Engage): Start with a simple question: "What's something you're good at, or would like to be good at?" Let kids share (e.g., drawing, helping friends, singing). Explain: God knows exactly what we can do and needs us to try, even if it feels scary or different! Lesson Teach (Key Points): Esther was a Jewish girl living in Persia who didn't know she'd be chosen to help save her people. The king called for a beauty contest, but Esther's story isn't about looks, it's about courage and listening to God. When her people were in danger, Esther hid in the background... until she was brave enough to speak up (Esther 4:14). God didn't give her a sign or a magic plan; He gave her her time, her voice, and her trust, just like He does with us. Application (Connect to Kids): Ask: "Where does God want you to use your gifts right now?" Share how Esther's story shows that God doesn't always act in grand ways, sometimes He calls us to small, brave steps. Encourage kids to journal or pray: "Lord, help me be brave like Esther today!" (Use a simple prayer like "Thank You for my friends, my hands, my heart... help me use them for You!") Closing Challenge (Call to Action): End with: "Today, we'll ask God to help us be brave in one small way, whether it's sharing kindness, asking a question, or speaking up for someone who's hurting. Let's give Him our hearts!" Leave time for kids to whisper to a friend: "Who do I know needs my courage today?" Teacher Tips: - Visual Aid: Draw a timeline of Esther's story (from the beauty contest to her brave speech). Use a "bravery scale" (1, 10) to discuss how hard it was for her. - Scripture Memory: Pick a short verse ("Do not hide your gifts" or "For such a time as this" from Esther 4:14) and sing it to a tune (e.g., "I'm brave because You're brave"). - Group Activity: Role-play Esther's courage, have kids take turns "speaking up" for a pretend friend in danger. Key Message: God's purpose isn't about when or how we're used, it's about where He puts us. Let's trust Him with our "Esther moments" today!

Bible Story

Esther's Brave Heart

Long ago in the kingdom of Persia, a young woman named Esther lived in secret. She was a Jewish girl living in a place where her people were in danger. One day, King Xerxes called a big party for his most beautiful women, including Esther. Though she was not chosen as queen, she was invited to appear before the king. She thought it was strange, but she went anyway. When the king saw her, he loved her so much that he made her queen!

One day, King Xerxes's wise minister, Haman, made plans to hurt the Jewish people. He thought, "The king will let me do anything I want." But God had a plan. Esther knew her people were in trouble, but she was afraid to ask for help. She decided to pray and ask God to help her. Later, her cousin, Mordecai, told her what was happening. "God is still in control," he said. Esther knew she had to be brave. She asked the king to protect her people, and he listened!

Haman was so angry that he hung on a tall pole. The king even ordered that Haman's family be punished. This was a big victory for God's people! Esther had acted with courage, and God used her to save her people. Her name means "star" in Hebrew, and she was a shining example of how God can work through even small people when they have faith and love.

This story teaches us that God is always with us, even when things look scary. Sometimes, we don't have to do big things to make a difference, just trust Him and love our neighbors. Let's be brave like Esther, knowing that God sees us and loves us!

(Connection: Esther's story shows that God can use anyone, even someone like you, to do big things for Him!)

Key Verse

Nehemiah 2:18

Esther's story teaches us a big lesson about God's special plan for each of us. Esther was a brave girl who became the queen of Persia (a long time ago). Even though she didn't know how she ended up in this special place, she knew God had a reason for her. Her friend Mordechai told her this kind of kind of words from the Bible: "Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" This means God has a special plan for you, too, even if it doesn't always feel obvious. God wants us to trust Him, just like Esther did. Even when things seem confusing or scary, like when we feel like we don't belong or don't know our purpose, we can remember that God has a reason for everything. Sometimes, that reason is to use us to help others, like Esther used her position to save her people. It might not always be easy, but if we listen to God and do what He calls us to do, He will guide us. Sometimes, we might wonder if we're too young, too small, or not smart enough to do something important. But Esther wasn't the queen by chance, she was chosen because God wanted her to be! The same is true for you. God has a special plan for you, even if it's hard to see right now. Maybe that plan means helping your friends, sharing kindness, or even standing up for what's right. All you have to do is trust that God loves you and wants the best for you. So next time you feel unsure about something big or small, remember this verse. Instead of worrying, try asking God: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" He'll give you guidance and help you find your way. And just like Esther, you'll discover that God's plan for you is always for good! Maybe today, you'll help your family, make someone laugh, or show love to someone who needs it. That's how God uses you to make a difference. Simple Application for You: - Pray: Ask God to remind you that He has a special plan for you. - Listen: Pay attention to how God speaks to you in your heart or through others. - Take Action: Do one thing today that feels like it's part of God's plan, maybe helping a friend or sharing kindness. You're never too small to make a big difference!

Activities

Activity 1:

A fast-paced game where kids act out key moments from Esther's story (like hiding or speaking up) while moving, freezing when the music stops, to reinforce bravery in God's ways.

1. Prep the Craft: Ask each child to pick a fabric scrap or paper color. Teacher cuts strips of ribbon/paper into 6-inch lengths (2, 3 per child).

2. Create the Base: Have them glue the strips onto a cardboard tube or dowel (if using) to form a circle. Alternatively, fold paper into a small ring.
3. Decorate: Let them add glitter, markers, or embroidery thread to decorate their "crown." Talk about how Esther's beauty helped her stand strong in front of the king.
4. Wear & Share: Let them wear their crowns for a moment and discuss: "How can we 'wear' courage like Esther?"
5. Application: Connect to real life: "When we face hard things, we can stand up brave, just like Esther did!"
2. "Biblical Courage: Freeze Dance" Game
7. Review Key Moments: Read Esther 2:8, 10 (how Esther was chosen) and Esther 4:14 (her prayer to God). Ask: "How did Esther feel? How did she act?"
8. Set Up the Game: Play music and say: "When the music stops, you freeze in a pose that shows how you'd handle a brave moment (e.g., hiding like in Esther's first hiding place or speaking up like in her final prayer)."
9. Act It Out: Choose 3, 4 scenes from Esther's story (e.g., hiding in the royal palace, wearing her crown, praying). Kids act them out while dancing in between.
10. Discuss: Ask: "What did Esther learn from God? How can we trust Him like she did?"
11. Application: "Even small acts of courage matter, like Esther's quiet strength, God uses them!"
12. Both activities use minimal supplies, encourage movement, and help kids connect Esther's story to their own lives. Would you like adjustments for specific themes (e.g., teamwork, prayer)?

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6-8) based on the story of Esther:
- Who do you think would be the bravest person in this story? Why?
- Esther's story is all about courage, she chose to stand up for her people even though she was new to the kingdom and not known. What is something you've been brave enough to do in your own life? Maybe you told the truth even when it was hard, or you stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly. How did that make you feel, and what did you learn?
- If you were in Esther's shoes, what would you do when King Xerxes asked you to drink wine every day?
- At first, Esther hesitated because she was worried about her family back home. But she remembered something important: even though she didn't know the king, God had a plan for her. What's a time in your life when you didn't know what to do, but you trusted someone (like a parent, teacher, or God) to help you make the right choice? How did it turn out?
- Esther was very kind to her neighbors, even though she didn't know them. How can you be kind to people who might not know you?
- In the story, Esther didn't judge others because she remembered how she felt being new in a strange place. How can you be kind to someone new in your school, like a new friend or a classmate who looks different? Maybe you could sit with them at lunch, share your toys, or just listen to them talk.
- What would you do if someone in your school or community wasn't treated fairly?
- Esther's story teaches us that sometimes, even if we don't know who we're helping, God can use us to make a difference. If you saw someone being left out, or someone being treated unfairly, how could you help? Would you tell a grown-up? Write a note? Stand up for them? What would make you feel like you were doing the right thing?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus for Esther , A Time for Courage and Kindness Dear God, We come to you today like Esther did long ago. Esther was a brave girl who knew it was her time to speak up for others. She wasn't afraid to share her kind heart and make a big difference. Just like Esther, we want to be brave and kind, like you tell us to be. Help us to listen to what's important, just like Esther listened to her friends. Show us how to stand up for what is right, even when it's hard. We pray that we'll be like Esther and feel brave when we need to help others, like helping a friend who feels left out or sharing our toys with someone who doesn't have many. Help us to remember that our kindness and courage can make a difference in our families, our schools, and the world. Just like Esther trusted God and acted with wisdom, help us to trust you and follow your lead. God, you made us special just as we are, just like Esther was special. Help us to find our own special way to serve others, just like she found her way to help her people. Give us the strength to believe that even small acts of kindness can change big things, just like how Esther's courage changed history. Amen. (Teacher can close by asking the class: "Who can tell me one kind thing we can do today, like Esther?" to connect the prayer to their own actions!)

>> Missions Spotlight

The Persian-speaking peoples of Iran (Farsi) have a deep love for the story of Esther, which takes place in their homeland. Iranian believers use Esther's story to encourage courage in the face of persecution, God is at work even when He seems hidden.

-> To the Cross

Esther was placed in the palace 'for such a time as this' to save her people. Jesus was placed on the cross 'for such a time as this', to save all people. God has a plan, and He uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things.