

EDGE – Every Day God Encounters

Esther - eyes to see and ears to hear

To the Parents:

The story of Esther reminds us that God has a plan for each person. Circumstances may have put you in a situation or position you did not intend to be in – much like the lockdown we are experiencing currently, but in all things God works for the good of those that love Him. (Rom 8:26-28)

There is an opportunity for self-reflection and assessing the value we place on certain things which have suddenly been removed. Did we value our freedom or were we too busy keeping up with the pace of busy lives? What we thought was important may have been proven to be insignificant in the greater picture of life.

For Esther her position as queen came with a challenge, to be bold and take a risk with her own life, for the sake of the Jewish nation. Notice that this did not come naturally and was preceded by prayer and fasting. Esther may not have chosen this course for her own life. In a sense Mordecai was her **eyes and ears** to the things happening around her. He was the one who brought her information to save the King's life and later to save the lives of all the Jewish people.

For this lesson I'd like to suggest that we focus on Mordecai's part in the story. Esther trusted him. He had adopted her and raised her, giving her advice on how to handle herself in the King's palace and gave her crucial information as well as the motivation to act wisely on the information. This reminds me of the work of the Holy Spirit. We have been adopted into the family of God and He has given us a special helper who will teach, guide and counsel us through this life. He, the Holy Spirit, will speak only what He hears from Heaven and will even tell us of things still to come (John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit is the one who can open our **spiritual eyes and ears** to the things that are happening in the world around us and in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Mt 13:11-16). We need Him at this time when people all around the world are uncertain, afraid and under attack from an unseen enemy. He is our hope to act wisely and to be well prepared for whatever is to come. How glorious the outcome will be when God turns all this for His good and ours, just as He did for Esther and Mordecai!

We continue in prayer and faith, knowing we are called to be representatives of the Kingdom of God here on earth. For now it starts with us teaching our children about God. I encourage each of you to take on this role with renewed strength and determination through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, so the next generation will be well equipped to bring in a great harvest of souls.

Toddler lesson ideas

Sing praise songs together or choose a verse or phrase to sing out loud together and *create your own tune*. It doesn't have to be perfect but a heartfelt "I love you Jesus" can become a powerful declaration of praise.

Ask your little ones what they'd like to sing to God today.

Pray: Talk to God and give Him thanks for something today.

Tell: The story of Esther

Short summary:

A girl named Esther became queen. She had an uncle named Mordecai. He helped her to be a good queen. Esther had a very difficult job to do. So she first prayed and fasted (she didn't eat any food). She needed God's help to keep her people safe. Together with the King and Mordecai, Esther was able to help all the Jews in her land to stay safe.

(Clap hands as a victorious end to the story)

Talk the story:

What did Esther do when she had a difficult job to do?

Do you know you can pray when you need help for something and mom and dad aren't close by?

God always hears our prayers and helps us! He keeps us safe.

He gives us a special helper called the Holy Spirit. Ask God for His Holy Spirit to live in your life and help you.

Story activities:

- Draw Queen Esther
- Make a queen's crown
- Various colouring pages available here
<https://www.clipart.email/clipart/queen-esther-coloring-pages-123785.html>
- Colour the prayer hand below
Each finger is a reminder for a prayer
Thumb – Thanks
Pointer – Praise
Index – I'm sorry
Ring – Request
Pinky – Protection

Prayer Hands



<https://www.childrens-ministry-deals.com/products/prayer-hands-coloring-page>

Young children and Junior schoolers

Sing:

Think of something about God that is amazing or special and then turn it into a song of your own eg. 'God loves me, He always helps me, He never leaves me!' Have fun making up your own tunes, singing loudly or softly and try a few different verses.

Pray:

What are you grateful for today? Thank God for it.

Read: The story of Esther

(If you are not using a shortened kids version but reading from your Bible I'd suggest doing it over the course of the coming week and be available to answer any questions that arise.)

Video story of Esther with a song at the end – 'For such a time as this'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQaGaj5gavs>

Discuss:

- Who was Esther?
- Did she choose to become queen?
- Who in the story was a big help to Esther and the King?
- God has given us a helper, do you know who it is?
(The Holy Spirit. God says He gives His Holy Spirit to anyone who asks Him. If you're not sure that you have God's Holy Spirit in you, then just ask God right now. "Dear God, please give me your special helper the Holy Spirit and help me to listen and be obedient to what He teaches me." Amen.)
- When Esther had a very important and dangerous job to do, what did she do first? Why?
- Do you ask God when you need help with something important?
(He wants us to ask Him. He loves to help us. That's why He gave us His Holy Spirit.)
- How did the story end? Do you think God helped Esther and the Jewish people?

Activities:

- Draw a picture of the story.
- Ask God to speak to you, then spend quiet time listening. Tell Him if you're worried about anything, then trust Him to help you.

Senior primary children

Sing:

Get creative and make up your own worship song. Even if it is just one thought or verse that you sing to your own tune. Give God praise through your voice.

Pray:

Talk to God as you would talk to your Dad or someone you love and trust. Say sorry for the things you need to say sorry for, forgive the people you need to forgive, ask God to teach you more about Himself, ask for what you need and remember to thank Him for all the good things you have in your life.

Read: The book of Esther

It may be a good idea to read the book of Esther over the course of the coming week. Breaking it down into smaller sections and spending time discussing each section and any questions that arise.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom in understanding this book and in answering any questions.

Below is an overview of the book and it is recommended that you watch with your children so you can answer any questions that may come up.

The Bible Project's overview of Esther

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JydNSlufRIs>

Discuss:

- Does this story teach you anything about the kind of people God uses to show His greatness here on the earth?
(He uses women and men, queens and uncles, anyone who loves God. It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor God has work for you to do on this earth. Obedience even when you feel you can't do it, but you know it is right, will always lead to God's blessing.)
- Do you think the information Mordecai gave Esther was important for her to know, why?
(Yes. Her survival and the survival of the Jews depended on how she chose to use her position in the palace and plead with the King for help.)
- Did Esther do everything on her own?
(No. Mordecai helped give her information she needed and encouraged her to do the right thing. She asked that all the Jewish people pray and fast with her before she went uninvited to see the King. Each person and all the Jews had a part to play in this story. Esther had to do the dangerous bit by going to the King but it was all the prayers that God answered that kept her safe and won the victory. Never think that prayer is not important or insignificant.)

- Who does God give us to help us in our daily lives? (Read Luke 11:13 and Acts 1:4-5 if you are not sure.)
(God gives us His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a bit like Mordecai in today's story. He gives us information we need, sometimes about things that are still going to happen (see John 16:13). He guides us in what to do, teaching us the things we need to know, so we can be victorious in this life and a blessing to other people.
He even helps us to pray when we don't know what to pray. The Holy Spirit can help you to pray in tongues - a language you don't know or understand but you are talking directly to God and praying perfect prayers through the Holy Spirit. You can read more about speaking and praying in tongues in Acts 19:6, Acts 2, 1 Cor 13 & 14,)
- Have you received the Holy Spirit as God's gift to help you?
If not, simply ask God to give you His Holy Spirit and trust that He has answered you. He gives to anyone who asks. Then begin to give Him praise, open your mouth and thank God for who He is and all that He's done for you.
- Now ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes to see and your ears to hear God's voice and to know Him and His Kingdom better.

To do:

- Spend time in prayer, *listening to what God wants to say to you*. Ask Him to speak to you, He will.
Esther and Mordecai had to be creative in how they were able to defend themselves. The world has changed since we went into lockdown and many people have lost their jobs. Our country is going to need new and creative ways of living and making money.
If you ask God, He can use you to help the people around you. Maybe God gives you a plan to help your family or neighbours. Maybe the plan or idea is a bit bigger and helps more people. Or maybe God gives you a very creative idea that helps the whole country.
Pray, asking God and the Holy Spirit for wisdom and creativity, then be listening to God all throughout the day and do what He tells you.
(Talk your ideas through with your parents. It is a good idea to pray about it altogether and all hear what God says. Your parents may need wisdom from God in how to help your idea happen or who to tell about it.)
If you don't get anything straight away, don't get stressed, God knows the exact day and time an idea is needed. He can speak to you anytime. Just let Him know you are willing. Then rest and thank Him that He is in control of all things and works all things for your good.
- Keep smiling and share God's love with those closest to you.

Youth

Read: The Book of Esther

The Bible Project's overview of Esther gives a good outline

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JydNSlufRIs>

Pray and Praise:

Get creative this week, ask the Holy Spirit for new inspiration and creativity in everything you do (even your school work). Try writing your own praise song or a poem to God.

Ponder:

Esther did not choose her position as queen, she probably had a very different plan and idea for her life. (Think about the probable age difference between her and the King). Yet she found herself as queen. She just got comfortable in this role and lifestyle when she's asked to do something that could potentially end her life!

Mordecai's comment that the reason she became queen in the first place is for this very moment, gets her to set her eyes and heart in the right place. She makes a choice of obedience to God's plan for her life and goes straight into a time of prayer and fasting, so that she can be sure she knows God's will and has His help to do it, because by herself she is afraid and weak. She doesn't pray alone but asks Mordecai to get all the Jews to fast and pray with her.

I don't think this story would have happened as it did, if Mordecai had not fulfilled His role and God's plan for his life. In a sense Mordecai was Esther's **eyes and ears** to the things happening around her. He was the one who brought her information to save the King's life and later to save the lives of all the Jewish people. Esther trusted him. He had adopted her and raised her, giving her advice on how to handle herself in the King's palace. He gave her crucial information as well as the motivation to act wisely on the information. This reminds me of *the work of the Holy Spirit*.

We have been adopted into the family of God and He has given us the Holy Spirit who will teach, guide and counsel us through this life. *The Holy Spirit, will speak only what He hears from Heaven and will even tell us of things still to come (John 16:13-15)*. The Holy Spirit is the one who can open our **spiritual eyes and ears** to the things that are happening in the world around us and in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Mt 13:11-16). We need Him at this time when people all around the world are uncertain, afraid and under attack from an unseen enemy. He is our hope to act wisely and to be well prepared for whatever is to come.

Ask God for the gift of His Holy Spirit if you have not already done so. Some of you may need to repent of any fear or wrong believing regarding the Holy Spirit, He is not a mystery or something to fear, He is a vital part of your relationship with God while you are here on earth. He is your eyes and ears. You can trust Him. He will

even help you pray when you don't know what to say. Speaking in tongues is available to you if you ask. As you receive the Holy Spirit by asking, trust that you will receive a new heavenly language by asking and open your mouth by faith to speak what the Holy Spirit leads you to.

To Do:

- Pray and ask God to reveal His plans for your life to you. The answer might come verbally, through someone else, in a dream or vision but trust that He will answer.
- Ask God for new and creative ways to live life, both for yourself and for the benefit of others. We are going to need creative ideas in the months ahead. Many people have lost their jobs and income. Your idea may not just be for yourself but could affect families, suburbs, towns or even the entire country. Who knows the plans that God has for you and the answers to other people's problems that you carry within you. **Be Bold, Ask!** Then wait and listen expectantly and obey when you hear His voice. Follow His lead, it may be only one step at a time, but this builds trust and the end result is always good.

Stay blessed, stay healthy and most importantly stay connected to God.