

LESSON PLAN

For Lower Elementary Students & Classes

Classroom Greeting

Teachers should arrive 10 to 15 minutes before class to greet students and parents by name. Have the day's Bible Message written on the white board or on poster board that all the kids can see. Consider using a repeatable special greeting ("This is the day the Lord has made!") or handshake for your students.



Opening Prayer Song

Have kids gather on a rug or in a dedicated meeting space. Take a minute and have students greet each other by name. It helps build community after not seeing each other for a week. The opening prayer song should be sung every week with these young kids — repetition is good.

This is sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Accompaniment music isn't needed.

*Heavenly Father, we love you,
thanks for everything you do.*

*Open our hearts and open our ears,
so we can learn from what we hear.*

*Thanks for hearing us when we pray,
and for loving us every day. Amen.*

Introduction to Today's Bible Message

Teacher's Script (student responses are in bold).

Today's Bible message is: God has a plan. Say it with me: **God has a plan.** God has a BIG plan for the whole world, and Jesus is a part of that plan. He also has a plan for each person's life. He knows what you're going to do now and when you grow up because **God has a plan.**

- Raise your hand if you can tell me something God knows about you.
- Raise your hand if you trust God to take care of you. (*Hopefully they all will. If not, encourage them.*)

Today we're going to learn about a lady named Esther who had to trust God's plan even when she didn't know what it was. Even when we don't know it, **God has a plan.**

Read the Story while Showing the Pictures

Each Bible Story has been divided into four parts, each with an accompanying Poster Picture to be printed on letter-sized paper (or enlarged to ledger-sized paper if a bigger printer is available). The teacher should hold up or point to the relevant Poster Picture while reading the individual part of the story, asking questions while reading.

Esther Becomes Queen

Based on Esther 2:5-17a

Esther was a beautiful Jewish girl living in a city that did not like Jewish people. [*Who is Esther?*] Some of the other people even wanted to kill the Jewish people, but they trusted in God to keep them safe.

Picture 1

Esther's parents were dead and her uncle Mordecai loved her and took care of her. [*Why did Esther live with her Uncle?*] They were Jews and lived in the city of Susa. The king in Susa had a queen who didn't listen to him. [*What did the queen do?*] The king did not like that.

Picture 2

The king decided that he wanted a new queen and decided to have a beauty contest to choose the most beautiful queen. [*How would the king choose his new queen?*] Esther's uncle Mordecai told her it would keep the Jews safe if she became queen, so she went to the castle to meet the king.

Picture 3

Esther didn't tell anyone at the castle that she was a Jew. She was afraid that they would do something terrible to her. [*Why didn't Esther tell them she was a Jew?*] She said to her uncle, "The king will never choose me as the queen if he knows I am a Jew." Mordecai told her that God had a plan for her and she should try. [*Why should Esther try to be the new queen?*]

Picture 4

The king loved Esther more than any of the other women and he chose her to be the next queen. [*Why was Esther chosen to be the new queen?*] God had a job for Esther and wanted her to be queen.

Bible Message

Do you remember today's Bible Message? **God has a plan.**

Optional Activities for Young Children

You can choose one or two of the optional activities, depending on how much time you have. Be sure to leave time to go over the Take-Home Page before students leave.

a. Fingerplay

A fingerplay is a story or rhyme with hand actions or movement that includes repeated lines to reinforce the story and/or the weekly Bible message.

*Today's repeat action is: **God** (point to heaven) and **has a plan** (clap, clap)*

God Has a Plan

Esther lives with Uncle Mordecai.

God (point to heaven) **has a plan!** (clap, clap)

They live in a town called Susa.

God has a plan!

The people there don't like God's people.

God has a plan!

If Esther is queen she can save God's people.

God has a plan!

The king has a contest to choose a new queen.

God has a plan!

The king picks Esther for his new queen.

God has a plan!

New Queen Esther saves God's people.

God has a plan!

Even if we can never see it,

God has a plan!

We don't ever have to worry.

God has a plan!

b. Then What Happened?

Then What Happened is a learning game that helps kids retell the story and remember it. The rule is that whoever is speaking can only say one sentence or one thing. The teacher reads the starting sentence and then chooses a student to continue the story. The story needs to be in the right order.

If the younger kids have trouble, cut a Take-Home Page apart and let them put the illustrations (no words) in order while they tell the story.

START: The king decided to get a new queen. Then what happened?

c. Song

This simple camp song has motions and can be found online.

I've Got the Joy!

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart.
(Where?)

Down in my heart; (Where?)

Down in my heart.

I've got the joy joy, joy, joy, down in my heart.
(Where?)

Down in my heart to stay.

I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus, down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart; (Where?)

Down in my heart.

I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus, down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart to stay.

d. Young Children's Craft

Esther's Crown

Have the kids make a simple crown.

- Purchased cardboard or foam crowns OR use the crown template copied onto cardstock
- Crayons or markers
- Items to decorate crown (gems, pompoms, beads, etc.)
- Strips of paper and/or piece of elastic to secure crown on head
- Stapler to secure paper strips or elastic to crown

Write the phrase
"Like Esther, God
has a plan for me!"

on the crown. Let kids color their crowns. If necessary, cut each crown out. (Older kids can cut their own.) Let kids decorate their crowns. Attach strips to go around the head or staple the elastic to the back of each crown so it's easy to put on and remove.

Crafts may best be left to the end of class if behavior is a challenge. See the craft summary list for a description of all the younger children's crafts in this unit.



Take-Home Page

Repetition is very important to learning. The Take-Home Page allows teachers to review the story at the end of class. Invite children to take a seat at a table, and give each a copy of the Take-Home Page. Use the following questions to guide discussion. If necessary, explain to kids about thought and dream bubbles.

Encourage children to use the Take-Home Page to tell the story to their family.

Have children point to Picture 1.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me something you see in this picture. (*Allow kids to answer until they start repeating answers or become silly.*)

Read the words under Picture 1.

- Esther lived with her uncle Mordecai. What do you think happened to her parents?
- Have you ever wanted to be a queen or a king? Why?

Have children point to Picture 2.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me who is in this picture.

Read the words under Picture 2.

- Does the king look happy with the queen? What will the king do to find a new queen?
- What do you think a queen should be like?

Have children point to Picture 3.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me who is in this picture.

Read the words under Picture 3.

- Look at the faces of Esther and Mordecai. What do you think they're feeling?
- The people in Susa didn't like Jews. Would you be afraid to be queen there?

Have children point to Picture 4.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me what you see in this picture. Do you think the king is happy with his new queen? Why or why not?

Read the words under Picture 4.

- God wanted Esther to be the queen. Do you think God has a job for you?

Have children point to the Bible Message at the top of the page.

Do you remember today's Bible Message? **God has a plan.**

Closing Prayer

End class with this closing prayer, repeated each week for memorization.

Thank you, Jesus, for teaching me.

Bless me, my friends, and my family.

*This week I ask you to keep me safe
and through the week to grow my faith.*

*Bring me back to learn again,
and fill my heart with love. Amen.*

