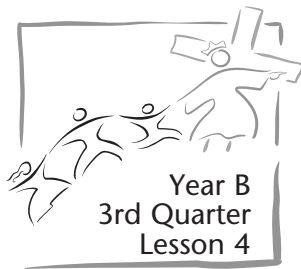


LESSON



Esther Saves Her People

COMMUNITY We help each other.

References

Esther 4; 5:1-7; 7:1-4; 8:11; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 602-606.

Memory Verse

"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20, NIV).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that God hears the prayers of His people.

Feel stronger and encouraged when praying with others.

Respond by praying for others with their friends and families.

The Message

God hears us when we pray together.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

A wicked man, Haman, persuades the king to make a law to have all the Jewish people killed. Mordecai tells Queen Esther and asks her to speak to the king. She is afraid, but Mordecai persuades her that she may have become queen for just this reason. She agrees, but only after spending three days and nights fasting. She asks that the Jewish commu-

nity do the same. She risks her life before the king and pleads for the life of her people. God helps the king to say yes to Esther's request. Esther's people are saved because she is brave, and because God answered their prayers.

This is a lesson about community.

Esther's story assures us that God hears when we pray on behalf of others.

FOUR

Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Activities	up to 10	A. <i>Prayer Circle</i> B. <i>Three-legged Walk</i>	round dry cereal, yarn, scissors old neckties or wide strips of material, scissors
* Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	See page 43. *Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	scepter model or picture
		Bible Study	Bible
		Memory Verse	Bible
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Praying Together</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Praying Hands Crown</i> B. <i>Esther Shines</i>	Praying Hands Crown pattern (see p. 154), heavy paper, scissors, crayons, tape or stapler Star pattern (see p. 153), cardboard or heavy paper, scissors, aluminum foil, flashlight (optional)

People in a Christian community support and intercede for one another in prayer. Jesus also is always interceding for us before the Father.

Teacher Enrichment

"It was still the Lord's purpose, as it had been from the beginning, that His people should be a praise in the earth, to the glory of His name. During the long years of their exile He had given them many opportunities to return to their allegiance to Him. Some had chosen to listen and to learn; some had found salvation in the midst of affliction"

(*Prophets and Kings*, p. 599).

"The crisis that Esther faced demanded quick, earnest action; but both she and Mordecai realized that unless God should work mightily in their behalf, their own efforts would be unavailing. So Esther took time for communion with God, the source of her strength" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 601).

Do you take time daily to commune with God? Is He the source of your strength?

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Prayer Circle

You Need:

- round dry cereal
- scissors
- yarn

In advance, cut the yarn in six-inch (15-centimeter) lengths, one for each child. Have the children string one round cereal piece on the yarn to represent each person they normally pray with (mother, father, brothers, sisters, grandmother, grandfather, church family, Sabbath School family, etc.). Help them tie the ends of the yarn together.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you like to pray with people? Where do you usually pray with people?** (at Sabbath School, at church, at home) **Your cereal pieces are close together and are made into a circle. That reminds me of praying together. Praying together gives us strength and makes us want to help each other. We can do great things when we pray together. God listens to us whether we pray alone or together. Our Bible story is about a time Jewish people prayed together to give someone courage. Today's message is:**



God hears us when we pray together.

Say that with me.

B. Three-legged Walk

You Need:

- old neckties or wide pieces of material
- scissors

Have the children form pairs. Give each pair an old necktie or wide strip of material to tie two of their legs together as they stand side by side. Let them practice walking together with three legs. Then have each pair walk to the other side of the room together, then back, without falling.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How did you manage to walk together? That reminds me of praying together. How is walking together like praying together? Sometimes you may feel awkward about praying aloud with someone. But praying together gives us**

strength and binds us together with others. Just as you had to work together and be close together to walk with three legs, when we pray with one another we should bring our minds and hearts together. Do you like praying with other people? Where do you usually pray with others? (at Sabbath School, at church, at home)

Say: **God will do great things when we pray together. God listens to us when we pray alone, and when we pray together. Today's Bible story is about a time all the Jewish people prayed together. They were praying for someone special to have courage. Today's message is:**



God hears us when we pray together.

Say that with me.

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"O God, Listen to My Prayer" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 15)

"I Talk to Jesus" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 228)

"Jesus Is My Helper" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 230)

"Praying Every Day" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 232)

"Whisper a Prayer" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 233)

Mission

Say: **Jesus hears us when we pray together in all the different countries of the world. Let's see what country our mission story is from today.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Say: **Jesus hears us when we pray together. We also serve God when we give Him our offerings. Today our offering is for _____ mission.**

Prayer

Say: **Let's pray together. Children, please repeat after me. Thank You, Jesus, that You hear us when we pray together. We love You. Amen.**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- scepter model or picture

The names of the people in this story may be unfamiliar to the children. To help the children remember which people belong to God, have them react to the names as they are read in the story. Practice together before beginning the story. It may be helpful to have an adult helper lead the children.

If desired, form four groups and assign one of the following words and actions to each.

When they hear:	They should:
Esther	raise hands to head as if wearing a crown
The king	bow
Mordecai	clap
Haman	thumbs down

Show a picture of a scepter, or make a model by pushing a piece of dowel into a styrofoam or tennis ball. The ball can be decorated with masking tape and the model sprayed gold. Show the children the scepter before you tell the story. Explain that it's something that only a king can have and shows his power.

Read or tell the story.

Esther ["crown" action] was now the queen of Persia. The little orphaned Jewish girl who lived in a foreign country had grown up to become queen. **Mordecai** [clap] had raised her to love and honor God, but he had also told her not to tell anyone she was Jewish. He didn't want the **king** [bow] to change his mind about **Esther** ["crown" action] because her people were from another country.

Mordecai's [clap] job was to sit near the palace gate and help people who came to the palace. Because he worked in

the palace, he was able to keep in touch with **Esther** ["crown" action] and to send her messages and advice. **Esther** ["crown" action] was glad to hear from **Mordecai** [clap] and always did what he told her to do.

One day after **Esther** ["crown" action] had been queen for about five years, she got a very important message from **Mordecai** [clap]. It said that the **king's** [bow] most important helper, **Haman** [thumbs down], had tricked the **king** [bow] into making a terrible new law. **Haman** [thumbs down] didn't like the Jewish people. This new law said that on a certain date the people of Persia could kill all the Jewish people and take everything they owned.

Mordecai [clap] sent a message to **Esther** ["crown" action]. "You must tell the **king** [bow] that you are Jewish and ask him to save the lives of all your people," it said.

Esther ["crown" action] sent a message back to **Mordecai** [clap]. "I am afraid. The **king** [bow] hasn't asked to see me for over a month, and I'm not allowed to go see him." No one, not even the queen, was allowed to go into the **king's** [bow] inner court without being invited. Anyone who did would be killed, unless the **king** [bow] held out his royal scepter [show the scepter]. How would she get a chance to talk to him?

Mordecai [clap] sent back a message. "Don't think that you will escape just because you live in the **king's** [bow] house. Who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this."

Esther ["crown" action] made up her mind and sent a message back to **Mordecai** [clap]. "Gather together all the Jews in the city. For three days, spend all your time fasting and praying. My maids and I will do the same thing. On the third day I will go and see the **king** [bow], even

though it is against the law, and if I die, I die.”

When people don't eat, it is called fasting. **Esther** [“crown” action] wanted to think only about God and not even be thinking about food. All over the city people were fasting and praying together.

On the third day, **Esther** [“crown” action] said a last prayer and put on her royal robes. Would the **king** [bow] be happy to see her? Would he hold out his royal scepter [show the scepter] to her? Bravely she walked into the **king's** [bow] inner court.

The **king** [bow] looked up. Who would dare to come before him without an invitation? Why, it was **Esther** [“crown” action]! The **king** [bow] smiled and held out his golden scepter [show the scepter]. “What is it, Queen **Esther** [“crown” action]?” he asked. “Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.”

Esther [“crown” action] reached out and touched the tip of the scepter [show scepter]. Then she invited the **king** [bow] to two special dinners. At the second dinner she told the **king** [bow] that she was Jewish. Then she asked him to change the terrible law that would cause her and all her people to be destroyed.

The **king** [bow] was angry that he had been tricked into making such a horrible law, but the law could not be changed. So he had a new law written that said that the Jews could protect themselves. When the day came, no one tried to destroy them.

The Jewish people had been saved by **Esther's** [“crown” action] bravery and prayers. God had heard the prayers of all the people praying together. God still hears our prayers, whether we pray alone or with others. He is a wonderful God who cares for us all the time.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:
How do you think Esther felt when she went to see the king? (scared, worried, calm)

What did Esther first ask the king? (to come to a dinner) **How did the king help Esther and her people?** (He had a new law made to protect them.)

Could you have done what Esther did? Can you be brave even when you're frightened? (yes) **What can help you to be brave?** (Jesus can help when you pray or when someone else prays for you.)

Bible Study

Open your Bible to Esther 4; 5:1-7; 7:1-4; 8:11. Point to the verses and say: **This is where today's story is found in the Bible.** Read the verses aloud, paraphrasing as necessary.

You Need:

Bible

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:
Why did Haman want to destroy the Jews? (He didn't like them.) **What did Esther do to help her people?** (She fasted and prayed; she went to see the king to ask for help.)

Why did Esther and the Jewish people fast (or not eat) while they prayed? (so they could think only about God and pray better) **God doesn't expect children to stop eating, but He does want you to think only about Him when you are praying.**

Say: **Esther may have been very calm because she had spent three days praying and asking God to be with her. Praying with other people helps you feel closer together. You can encourage one another.**

Praying together can also help you feel stronger in your faith in God. Do you remember our message? Let's say it together:



God hears us when we pray together.

Memory Verse

You Need:

- Bible

Turn to Matthew 18:20 and say: **This is where we find our memory verse in God’s Word, the Bible.** Read the text aloud.

“Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Then proceed to teach the memory verse as outlined:



Where two

Hold up two fingers.



or three

Hold up three fingers.



gather in my name,

Arms outstretched as if gathering together.



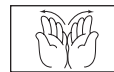
there am I

Point upward.



with them.

Point to self and others.



Matthew 18:20

Palms together; then open as if opening a book.

3

Applying the Lesson

Praying Together

Allow response time as you ask:
What do we do when we pray? Can you show me? Why do we fold our hands? (so we aren’t playing with things) **Why do you bow your head and sometimes kneel down?** (to be respectful and show reverence to God) **Why do you close your eyes?** (so we’re not looking around at things or people; so we can only think about God)

Where do you usually pray with other people? (in Sabbath School, in church, at home) **Why do we pray together?** (It encourages us, makes us stronger together.) **Do you think God likes it when we pray together?** (yes)

Do you think fasting and praying together with her maids and knowing that others were fasting and praying for her helped Queen Esther be brave? (yes)

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:
What would you like to pray about? Do you have something that is worrying you, or making you sad, or bringing you happiness? (Encourage children to respond with their prayer requests.) **These are all things you can pray about.**

Say: **Remember, Jesus hears us when we pray together.** Ask the children to kneel while you pray for their requests. Then sing as a response “Thank You for Hearing Our Prayer” (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 20). Say: **Let’s say our message together again:**



God hears us when we pray together.

4

Sharing the Lesson**A. Praying Hands Crown****You Need:**

- Praying Hands Crown pattern (see p. 154)
- heavy paper
- scissors
- crayons
- tape or stapler

In advance, prepare a copy of the Praying Hands Crown pattern (see p. 154) for each child on heavy paper. Either cut the crowns out beforehand, or have the children do it. Have the children ask each other to color a set of praying hands on their crown. Encourage them to make it colorful. Then

attach the long strip to the crown and tape or staple the crown to fit the child's head.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you like all the colorful praying hands you have on your crown now? It can remind you of Queen Esther's crown and all the people who were praying for her when she went to see the king.**

Say: **Take your praying hands crown home and share it with someone you want to pray for. Tell them that your Sabbath School class is praying for them too.**

Now let's pray together in small groups. Try to remember who the other people in your group prayed for so you can pray for those people this week too. Let's say our message together:



God hears us when we pray together.

B. Esther Shines

In advance, prepare a copy of the Star pattern (see p. 153) for each child cut from cardboard or heavy paper. Give each child a piece of aluminum foil large enough to cover the star, and tell them to make it as smooth as they can. Shine the flashlight on their stars (or go outside in the sun) so they can see how the stars reflect the light.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

See how your star shines? Esther's name is similar to the Persian word for "star." Take your star home and share it with someone as you tell them how Queen Esther shone like a star as she prayed for courage to help her people. Tell that person that your Sabbath School class is praying for them too.

Right now we are going to pray together in small groups. Let's say our message together:



God hears us when we pray together.

You Need:

- Star pattern (see p. 153)
- cardboard or heavy paper
- scissors
- aluminum foil
- flashlight (optional)

Closing

Say: **Try to remember who the other people prayed for so you can pray for them this week too.** Sing "Good-bye Prayer" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 44).

STUDENT LESSON

Esther Saves Her People

References

Esther 4; 5:1-7; 7:1-4; 8:11; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 602-606

Memory Verse

"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20, NIV).

The Message

God hears us when we pray together.

Do you pray with your family at home? Queen Esther prayed with her maids in the palace. Lots of other people were praying for her too.

Esther, the little orphaned Jewish girl who lived in a foreign country, had grown up to be queen. Her cousin Mordecai had raised her to love and honor God, but he had also told her not to tell anyone she was Jewish. Mordecai didn't want the king to change his mind about Esther.

Because Mordecai worked in the palace, he could give Esther messages and advice. Esther was always glad to hear from him.

One day after Esther had been queen for about five years, she got a very important message from Mordecai. The king's important helper, Haman, had tricked the king into making a terrible new law. This new law said that on a certain date the people of Persia could hurt all the Jewish people and take everything they owned. "You must ask the king to save the lives of all your people," Mordecai said.

Esther sent a message back to Mordecai. "I am afraid. The king hasn't asked to see me for more than a month, and I'm not allowed to go see him." No one, not even the queen, was allowed to go into the king's inner court without being invited. Anyone who did would be killed, unless the king held out his royal scepter.

Mordecai sent another message. "Don't think that you will escape because you live in the king's house. Who knows, you may have been chosen queen for just such a time as this."

Esther made up her mind. She sent a message back to Mordecai. "Gather all the Jews in the city. For three days don't eat anything. Spend all your time praying. My maids and I will do the same thing. On the third day, I will go and see the king, and if I die, I die."

On the third day, Esther said a last prayer and put on her royal robes. Bravely she walked into the king's inner court.



The king looked up. Who would dare to come before him without an invitation? Why, it was Esther! The king smiled and held out his golden scepter. "What is it, Queen Esther?" he asked. "Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

Esther reached out and touched the tip of the scepter. Then she invited the king to two special dinners. At the second dinner she told the king she was Jewish. And she asked him to change the terrible law that would hurt her and her people.

The king knew then that he had been tricked into making such a horrible law. But the law could not be changed. So he had a new law written that said that the Jews could protect themselves. When the day came, no one tried to hurt them.

The Jewish people had been saved by Esther's bravery and God's power. God had heard the prayers of all the people praying. God still hears our prayers, whether we pray alone or with others. He is a wonderful God who cares for us all the time.

Do and Say

Sabbath

Each day this week read the lesson story together and review the memory verse.

Where two Hold up two fingers.

or three Hold up three fingers.

gather Arms outstretched as if gathering together.

in my name,

there am I Point upward.

with them. Point to self and others.

Matthew 18:20 Palms together; then open as if opening a book.

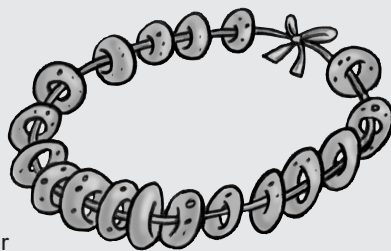
Sunday

Encourage your child to share the Crown of Praying Hands or the star they made in Sabbath School with someone and tell them about Queen Esther. (Or draw a picture of a crown or a star.) Esther shone like a star when she led her people to pray.

Monday

Read together Esther 4. Talk about why people fast and pray.

Help your child string together round cereal pieces on yarn to represent the people they pray with. Tie the ends together. Tying the yarn together will make a circle, like a prayer circle.



Tuesday

Tie one of your legs to one of your child's legs with a wide strip of material or an old necktie and try walking together without falling. Say: That reminds me: Praying together gives us strength and binds us together with others. Sing a prayer song.



Wednesday

Hold a towel outstretched between you and your child. Put an inflated balloon on it and walk around the house without letting it fall off. Ask: Was that fun? We made a good team. We can do other things together, such as praying.

Sing "Whisper a Prayer" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 233). then pray for someone you know.

Thursday

Ask: What do we do to get ready to pray? Why do we do those things? (so we can think only about God; to be reverent and respectful) Thank God that your family can pray together. Tell Him that you love Him.

Friday

Act out the Bible story with your family. Talk about ways your child can be brave like Esther, and act out some situations. Ask: Who can help you be brave? (Jesus)