

Esther

PLEASE NOTE!

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Introduction

The events of the book of Esther occurred between 490 and 480 BC. The Jews had been taken captive to Babylon, which had in turn become part of the Persian Empire. Daniel, who had held a high position in the court, was now dead. Ahasuerus, son of Darius I, was on the throne of Persia. (Point out on a map of the near East at that time, where Jerusalem, Babylon and Shushan were located.)

There is plenty of excitement and suspense in the story of Esther. Not only that, the book clearly demonstrates the providence and sovereignty of God. Although the name of God is not mentioned, we see His hand at work throughout this period of Old Testament history.

Teaching Bible truths

As you teach these lessons make sure that you do not get so engrossed in the narrative that you do not teach Bible truths. We fall short of our responsibility as teachers if we only tell children Bible stories. It is essential that children learn the truths those stories were written down to teach us, and that we then take them a step further to show what that truth means to them in their daily lives. Of course, we cannot in one lesson cover all the teaching any particular story would provide, so in each of these lessons one central truth has been chosen. The teaching of the central truth has been woven throughout the narrative, but to help you in your preparation the teaching sections have been marked “CT”. These are also marked out in the lesson plan.

You will notice that the central truths are marked with a “U” or an “S” to show the kind of children the truth is applied to - unsaved or saved. This is also made clear in the text by using phrases such as, “If you have not trusted the Lord Jesus to forgive your sin ...” or, “Christian, you ...”.

The application of the truth has been highlighted with a line beside the text. You may feel it necessary to adapt the applications to better suit the children you teach. For example, the application may use a boy’s name, yet you have only girls present. It could be that the application given is more applicable to older children, while yours are very young. Make the changes you feel are necessary. The important thing is that the Word of God is applied to their lives.

Make yourself available for counselling

When you present the Gospel message, there will be children who will respond to it independently. They may or may not at a later date tell you that they have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. There will, however, be others who would like some help. They may have questions to ask; they may need help or encouragement in knowing what to say.

As you teach the saved children, there may be times when they would like advice in a difficult situation; they may need clarification on how a particular lesson applies to their daily lives; they may find themselves in a situation where they do not know what the Bible says they should do; they may want to share a difficulty so that you can pray for them, especially if you are the only Christian support they have.

For these reasons it is important that the children know you are available to talk. It is also important that they know when and where to go when they want to talk to you. Finally, it is essential that unsaved children do not confuse coming to the Lord Jesus with coming to you.

In all cases you should not make yourself available at the same time as giving the Gospel invitation, so that the children never get the impression that they cannot come to Christ without coming through you, or that they are saved simply by waiting to speak to you.

An example for use with the unsaved child

“Do you really want to live for the Lord Jesus, but don’t know how to come to Him? I will be glad to explain it from the Bible; come and see me. I’ll be standing by that tree when the meeting is over. Remember, I can’t take away your sin - only the Lord Jesus can do that - but I will be glad to help you understand better how you can come to Him. Just come and sit with me under that tree.”

An example for use with the saved child

“If you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and you have never told me about it, please let me know. I’ll be standing beside the piano after the meeting is finished. I would like to know if you too have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, so that I can pray for you and perhaps help you.”

Memory verses

A Scripture verse to teach the children is suggested for each lesson. If you are teaching the lessons as a series over six weeks it would be advisable to choose two or three verses to teach well, which the children will then remember.

Practise using the visuals

It is wise to practise using the visuals before teaching the lesson to children. Become thoroughly familiar with the flashcards and know when you need to use them in the lesson.

Extra visual aids

On a piece of card print out the words of the central truth for each lesson; back it with flannel or pieces of flocked paper. (Use lower case letters, so that even the younger ones can read the words easily.) Put this card on the board at the beginning of the class or when you first teach the central truth in the lesson.

Additional helps

Along the left and right margins additional helps are provided, giving background information and optional ideas on how to add interest to your lesson.

These ideas are designed to incorporate different learning styles. For effective learning some children need to see or write, others need to hear or speak, others need to touch or handle, and still others need active participation.

You can use these ideas in your club as time allows.

Review questions

For each lesson some review questions are given. These can be used after the lesson or the following week, before teaching the new lesson.

Review time, if conducted in an orderly way, can be an ideal opportunity to reinforce what you have taught, while still being fun for the children. You can use this time ...

- 1 to find out how much the children are understanding and remembering.
- 2 to help you as a teacher to know what you need to emphasise more so that the children will remember better.
- 3 to provide a time of fun in the class. The children like competition and look forward to this part of the programme. But it is more than just a game: it is a time of learning.

In this textbook only questions on the lesson are included. It would be profitable to include questions also on the songs, verse and whatever else you teach. In this way the children realise that every part of the programme is important.

Overview

Lesson	Central truth	Application	Memory verse
Esther becomes queen 2 Kings 24:10 - 25:30 Esther 1:1 - 2:20	God has plans for each of His children	Unsaved: You must receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord before you can know God's plans for you Saved: Obey God and you will discover His plans for you	"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" Jeremiah 29:11
Mordecai stands true Esther 2:21 - 4:3	Be faithful to God, as Mordecai was	Saved: You should obey God and be known as a Christian, even when it is difficult to do so	Review Jeremiah 29:11
A call for help Esther 3:15b - 5:2	God hears and answers the prayers of His children	Saved: You should talk to Him often and bring all your problems to Him	"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry" Psalm 34:15
God's people honoured Esther 5 - 6	Don't be a slave to sin, as Haman was	Unsaved: Trust the Lord Jesus to set you free	"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" John 8:36
Esther pleads for her people Esther 6:14 - 8:14 Psalm 73	God always defeats His enemies	Unsaved: Make sure that you are not an enemy of God Saved: When you see wrong-doers being successful, do not copy their sinful ways, but trust God	"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" 1 Peter 5:7
God's people are victorious Esther 8:1-2,7 Esther 8:11 - 9:17 Esther 10:1-3	God loves His people in a special way and cares for them	Unsaved: You will know His love and care when you trust Christ as Lord and Saviour and so become one of the people of God Saved: Trust Him at all times	Review 1 Peter 5:7

Lesson 1

Esther becomes queen

Scripture for teachers

2 Kings 24:10 - 25:30

Esther 1:1 - 2:20

Central truth

God has plans for each of His children

Application

Unsaved: You must receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord before you can know God's plans for you

Saved: Obey God and you will discover His plans for you

Memory verse

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" Jeremiah 29:11

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6 and 1-7
- ◆ Wordstrips: "God has plans for each of His children" (central truth) and "Obey God and you will discover His plans for you" (application for the saved child)
- ◆ Map of the Persian Empire
- ◆ "Banquet" food (eg carrot sticks, bite-sized fruits, cakes)
- ◆ Perfumes or lotions for the children to smell
- ◆ Robe or shawl for the children to dress up like Esther going before the king
- ◆ Crown

Lesson outline

Introduction

"Why can't I sit up late and watch TV?"

Progression of events

- 1 Esther and Mordecai live in strange land - Persia **CTU**
- 2 The king of Persia holds a banquet
- 3 The king summons Vashti
- 4 Vashti refuses to come **CT**
- 5 Vashti loses her position
- 6 A search for beautiful ladies

Climax

Esther brought to the palace **CTS**

Esther keeps her secret **CTS**

Conclusion

Esther made queen **CTS, CTU**

Lesson

“Why can’t I sit up late and watch TV?”

“Why don’t bats bump into things as they fly around?”

“Why must babies cry?”

Why? Why? Why? We have lots of “why?” questions, haven’t we? I’m sure little Esther often asked “why?” also. Perhaps her “whys” sounded like this.

“Why are we different from the other people in Shushan?”

Her cousin Mordecai was there to answer. “We are Jews, God’s chosen people. We worship and obey God, for He is the only true God.”

Esther had more questions. “Why aren’t all the people in Shushan Jews?”

“Long, long ago,” replied Mordecai, “God gave His people their own land, but they disobeyed Him and turned to worship false gods. The Lord God used kings and armies to come into their land as punishment. These armies captured many Jews and took them back to their own country. That is why we live in Persia. Our great grandparents were among those captured.”

“Why don’t I live with my mother and father?” Esther may have asked.

“They died, Esther,” Mordecai explained sadly, “but I will look after you well” - and he did, right through Esther’s teenage years.

There are many sad things in Esther’s life, but the wonderful thing is that God had a plan for her life. She was a Jewish orphan and perhaps many people didn’t think she was special, but she was special to God. He had really good plans for Esther’s life. This is true for every child of God. If you are a child of God, He has special plans for you.

Who are God’s children? The Bible tells us that “as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

This means that if you ask the Lord Jesus to take away your sin and to take charge of your life, and you really mean it, you become at that moment a child of God. Each one of us needs to receive Christ as our Lord and Saviour. It is God’s children who can know that God has a special plan for them, just as He had great plans for Esther.

Flashcard 1-1

Let’s go now to a very different home from that of Esther. It overlooked the great city of Shushan. If you were to walk right round it you would have had to walk about 4 km. This was a very, very important place - the palace of the King of Persia. Persia was the greatest nation in the world at that time. Here King Ahasuerus sat on his throne ruling his great empire.

Mordecai’s family was of the tribe of Benjamin. His ancestors were part of the Babylonian captivity.

CTU

Show card with central truth: “God has plans for each of His children”.

You will want to establish the series theme of God’s providence at the outset of these lessons.

If possible, show a map of the Persian Empire, letting the children locate Shushan, in Elam (modern-day Iran).

Ahasuerus means “mighty man”. This was probably the same person as

Just at this time he was having a great banquet. He was planning another war and before it would begin he brought many important people together for a time of planning and feasting. His army commanders, nobles and princes crowded the palace grounds. This was a party to remember - it went on for 180 days! How would you like a party like that, a party lasting six months? It's like having a party which starts at Christmas and finishes at the start of the summer holidays!

What a palace for a banquet! In the gardens white and blue curtains were attached to marble pillars by silver rings. The pavements were made of marble in patterns of different colours. Here and there were gold and silver couches.

For the last seven days of this great feast all the people of Shushan were invited to the palace. The queen was having a separate party in the palace for all the women.

The proud king wanted everyone to see how great and wealthy he was. He showed his wealth and treasure.

By the last day he had had far too much wine to drink, but he was still thinking, "How can I show these people how great, powerful and wealthy I am?" Then he had an idea. "The Queen must come to my banquet," he thought. "She is a most beautiful woman. They'll surely think I'm great to have such a beautiful queen."

Flashcard 1-2

Quickly he sent seven servants off to bring the queen. Even her name, Vashti, means "beautiful". The king waited. Perhaps he had already boasted to the commanders, nobles and princes about his queen.

The seven servants returned.

"The Queen refuses to come," they told the king.

The Bible does not tell us why Queen Vashti would not come, but it does tell us that King Ahasuerus was very angry. His plan had failed! This great king did not know that there was a great, almighty God and that what was happening was in His plan. It had even something to do with His plans for the Jewish orphan, Esther. It is good to remember that the One Who has plans for His children is almighty. Sometimes we have ideas but we can't carry them out. It's not like that with God, He can carry out His plans. If you are a child of God remember this, and remember that God's plans for you are good. He is a good God as well as an almighty God. He says in His Word, the will of God is "good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

Flashcard 1-3

Everything seemed to have gone wrong in the palace. Immediately King Ahasuerus consulted his wise men.

"According to the law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?" he asked.

Xerxes 1, who reigned
486-465 BC.



Count to seven with
preschoolers.

Pass around "banquet"
food - eg carrot sticks,
bite-sized fruits, cakes.
This will help children to
remember.



Although Vashti's name
does not appear in
historical accounts of
the Persian Empire, it
is believed Vashti was
Xerxes' queen called
Amestris.

Commentators disagree
on why Vashti disagreed.
Some think it was a
"power play" to humiliate
the king. Others think that
the king was ordering
an immoral act by Vashti
before his guests.

CT

Show card with central
truth.



The king's seven advisors were an elite group who had exclusive access to the king. He consulted them in all major decisions.



Laws were communicated through a relay system much like a pony express. This assured that every corner of the vast empire would be informed efficiently. Children would enjoy acting out the giving and delivering of the king's law.



CTS

The leader of his wise men replied, "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king, but against all the people of the Persian Empire. When other women hear about what she has done, they too will disobey their husbands. There will be no end to the trouble it will cause. The king must send out a royal decree saying that Vashti is no longer queen. When women hear this they will respect their husbands."

This new law was to be written into the laws of Persia and these laws could never, never be changed.

Flashcard 1-4

Quickly messages were prepared to be sent throughout the great empire. Riders were sent out with these copies of the law. Rapidly the news of the new law spread - Queen Vashti was no longer queen. Never again would she come before the king.

After a long while King Ahasuerus got over being angry and began to think again of Vashti. His advisors saw that he was thinking about her.

"Let a search be made for the most beautiful young ladies in the kingdom," they suggested. "Have them brought to the palace and then the king can choose the most beautiful one to be his queen."

The king thought this was a good idea and soon the search was underway.

Flashcard 1-5

All the beautiful young ladies were brought to a house in the palace grounds. They were well cared for by the king's servants.

One of those young ladies was especially popular and very beautiful. It was Esther, the Jewess. It was because she was so beautiful that she had to leave her home and come to the palace. Esther belonged to the one, true God. The palace of a pagan king was the last place you would expect to find her. She must have been sad when she said goodbye to Mordecai.

Why did it happen? God wanted Esther in the palace. Perhaps you are the only Christian in your family. God has a special reason for having you there. He wants you to show the others what a difference the Lord Jesus has made in your life. Think of your class in school. God has you there so that those who do not know the Lord Jesus will have someone to show them what being a Christian is about. Sometimes it is very hard to live for Him in school but doesn't it help to know that nothing can happen to you except what God allows? It helps you not to grumble and complain when you remember that God's plan is good. Indeed, it is the very best.

You won't always know the reasons why sad or difficult things happen to you, but God has His reasons for allowing them to happen. One

day Esther would discover this also, though she did not yet know why God wanted her to be in the palace.

When she arrived there, Esther was given seven maids to look after her. She was given the best place in the house of women.

All the young ladies had twelve months of beauty treatment before going to the king. Then one by one they were to be presented. They could take anything they thought would make them more beautiful. Can't you see them choosing clothes and jewels? As they went before the king, each one must have hoped that she would be chosen to be queen.

Every day Mordecai, Esther's cousin, walked up and down near the courtyard of the house where the women were. He wanted to find out how Esther was getting along.

Esther could not see him, nor could he see her. It was a rule of the Persian court. But some of the servants must have given news of Esther to Mordecai.

There was one thing Mordecai must have wondered about. He and Esther had a secret. He had told Esther that no-one in the palace should be told. Can you think what the secret was? Yes - Esther was a Jewess. That was their secret. Although Esther did not know why she should not tell, she didn't because Mordecai had told her not to. When she obeyed Mordecai, she obeyed God.

It is important to remember that it is those who obey God who discover His plan for their lives. When you read the Bible, make sure you obey it. If, as a Christian, you are disobedient to God, you may miss what He has planned for you. Esther was obedient to God for she respected and obeyed Mordecai who had taken the place of her parents. God's command is, "Honour your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12a). So Esther knew she must keep the secret.

Mordecai, out there in the courtyard, wondered, "Will she be able to keep the secret? Will someone recognise her?"

We'll have to wait and see.

At last the day came when Esther was to go to be presented to the king. The servant in charge told her what to wear and she did what he said. She didn't choose anything else to make her look beautiful. She was beautiful, and jewels and elaborate clothes would probably have spoiled her beauty. She was a popular person too - everyone liked her.

Flashcard 1-6

She must have been nervous and fearful as she was taken to meet King Ahasuerus, the greatest ruler in the world.

The king thought Esther more beautiful than any of the other girls. He made up his mind that she would be his queen. The royal crown was

Bring some perfumes or lotions for the children to smell.

Speak quietly as if telling a secret.

CTS

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Bring a robe or shawl for the children to dress up like Esther going before the king.



You may wish to make a crown and show it at this point.

placed on Esther's head. Now she was Queen Esther! She was queen of a great empire. This was a part of what God had planned for her.

CTS

If you are a child of God, remember He has plans for you. I don't think God plans for any of you to be king or queen of a great empire, but He has other plans for you. They are the very best plans. You discover His plans as you are obedient to Him. As you grow up, ask God to show you what He wants you to be. Perhaps He'll want you to be a lorry driver, a nurse, a teacher, a factory worker, or a missionary. Ask God to help you always to go in the way He has planned for you. It may not always be the way you would choose. It may be very difficult sometimes. The important thing is that you do His will. The Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts [plans] that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts [plans] of peace and not of evil ..."

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.



God's way for Esther was very strange, but perfect. There she was in the royal palace. Would she be able to keep her secret? You'll find out another day.

Flashcard 1-7

CTU

Invite children to receive the Lord Jesus. Be sure to designate time and location for further counsel. See "Steps for counselling the child who wants to come to Christ" on the end of this text.

Think of Esther who reminds us that God has wonderful plans for each of His children. Perhaps you know nothing of this because you are not God's child. Do you really long to be? The only way is to be willing to turn from all you know to be wrong in your life and receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and King. You can say to Him right now, "Dear Lord Jesus, forgive me for all my sin and for going my own way. Thank You for dying on the cross for me. I ask You now to save me and to take over my life and to make me what You want me to be." Then you will begin to discover His way for you.

CTS

Show card with application for the saved child: "Obey God and you will discover His plans for you".

Christian boy and girl, isn't it exciting to know that God has plans for you? When sad or discouraging things happen, remember that God's ways are best. The way to know God's plan is to obey Him. Perhaps there is something that you are being disobedient in. Don't go on in that disobedience. Turn from it today, ask for God's forgiveness. You can say to Him, "Dear Heavenly Father, forgive me for disobeying You in this way. I ask You to help me not to do it again. Thank You for Your promise to forgive us when we confess our sins to You." It is God's obedient children who enjoy God's special plans for them.

Review game

Crown points

Cut ten crowns out of paper.

Write point values on eight of the crowns and "dethroned" on the other two.

Review questions

- 1 How do you know King Ahasuerus was rich? (Six-month party, beautiful palace, lots of food.)
- 2 What did the king want Queen Vashti to do? (Present herself before the banquet guests.)
- 3 Why was King Ahasuerus angry with Queen Vashti? (She didn't obey him and refused to come.)

- 4 What did the king's advisors tell him to do about Queen Vashti? (She should not be queen any longer and the king should choose another queen instead.)
 - 5 Mordecai and Esther had a secret that no-one in the palace should be told. What was it? (Esther was a Jewess.)
 - 6 When Esther obeyed Mordecai by not telling her secret, who else was she obeying? (God.)
 - 7 Why had God allowed His people Israel to be taken captive? (They had disobeyed Him and turned to worship idols.)
 - 8 Why was Esther taken to the palace? (To see if the king would choose her as the new queen.)
 - 9 We learned that God has plans for each of His children. Who are God's children? (Everyone who has received Christ as Lord and Saviour.)
 - 10 When we have been disobedient to God, what should we do? (Turn from it and ask for God's forgiveness.)
- Place all crowns in a bag.
- Divide the class into teams and ask questions of the teams alternately.
- When a child answers a question correctly, he draws a crown.
- If he draws a point value, he can either stop and keep the points for his team or try for more by drawing another crown.
- If he draws a dethroned crown, he loses all points for that turn.
- All crowns are returned to the bag and play continues until all questions have been asked.
- The team earning the most points wins.

Lesson 2

Mordecai stands true

Scripture for teachers

Esther 2:21 - 4:3

Central truth

Be faithful to God, as Mordecai was

Application

Saved: You should obey God and be known as a Christian, even when it is difficult to do so

Memory verse

Review Jeremiah 29:11

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 2-1, 2-2, 2-4, 2-3, 2-5 and 2-6
- ◆ Wordstrips: “Be faithful to God, as Mordecai was” (central truth) and “You should obey God and be known as a Christian, even when it is difficult to do so” (application for the saved child)
- ◆ Small notebook and pen/pencil
- ◆ A signet ring or a press, and wax or clay to demonstrate how to seal a letter

Lesson outline

Introduction

Can you keep a secret?

Progression of events

- 1 Mordecai hears of plot to murder king
- 2 Mordecai reports it **CTS**
- 3 A record is kept but Mordecai is not rewarded **CTS**
- 4 Haman is promoted
- 5 Others have to bow to Haman
- 6 Mordecai refuses to bow **CTS**
- 7 Officials tell Haman why **CTS**
- 8 Haman plots to kill Jews

Climax

Haman asks king's permission

Permission granted

Conclusion

News spreads that on the thirteenth day of twelfth month all the Jews will die **CTS**

Mordecai mourns **CTS**

The teaching in this lesson is for Christian children. You should not, however, forget to evangelise the unsaved children in your group. To do this we suggest you include evangelistic songs in your programme and teach them in the way outlined here.

Gospel presentation

“Good news” song

Before you present lesson 2 teach the song “Good News” (published by CEF®).

Perhaps your dad reads a newspaper everyday. Often the news is bad - an aeroplane crash, a war, or his favourite football team lost a match. Today we are going to sing some good news, the best news you could ever hear.

Sing the song.

“Good news! Christ died for me!” - Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, loved us so much that He died for our sin. God must punish sin and His only Son took the punishment we deserve. That is very good news!

“Good news! I’m saved eternally!” - that means that, instead of being punished for ever for your sin, you are safe and will go to Heaven. Jesus Christ can save you from the punishment you deserve. He came to rescue you from the sin that spoils your life. He will keep you safe for ever and ever.

But wait, there is a very important little word here. The word is “if”. You are saved forever **if** you believe. You must trust Jesus Christ to save you. You need to tell Him that you are sorry for your sin and that you are trusting Him to save you. Then you are saved eternally.

Let’s sing about the good news again!

Gospel presentation

Accepted by God

Show the completed flashcard with the word "Accepted."

Isn't it great to be accepted? When you have friends who love you just the way you are? When your friends choose you to sit by them at lunch or play a game? When you work hard to do a project for school and your work is accepted? It's great to know others approve of who you are or what you have done.

But sometimes it's not good to be accepted. If most of the kids are doing something wrong, you would be better off not being accepted by them. Can you think of some things you shouldn't do even if it seems like most of your friends are doing them?

Share examples of unwise activities - staying up too late, eating too much "junk" food, spending too much money on designer fashions, etc.

God's Word teaches that most people are doing something else you don't want to do.

Have a child read Matthew 7:13 from your Bible.

Everyone in this world has a problem with sin. The Bible says, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23a). We have all thought, said and done wrong things that break God's laws. You may have never done drugs, shoplifted or looked at harmful sites on the Internet but there are other ways you have sinned. When you disobey your mum or dad, you sin. Just having a bad attitude about something they ask you to do (even if you obey them) is a sin. The punishment you and I deserve for our sin is **destruction** - separation from God forever in a terrible place called Hell. The verse which ____ (*add name of child*) read a moment ago says **many** people are on the road to destruction.

Have a different child read Matthew 7:14 from your Bible.

According to this verse, how many people are on the narrow way leading to life forever with God in Heaven? (Few.) I would much rather be with the smaller group of people, wouldn't you? God tells us in His Word there is only one way to have your sins forgiven. He provided that way when He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to Earth. Jesus was born as a baby but grew to be a man. He lived a perfect life and never did even one thing wrong. One day wicked men punished Him like a criminal when they nailed Him to a cross. Jesus didn't deserve to die; He suffered, bled and died to pay for your sins and mine. The Bible says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7b). Jesus' body was buried in a tomb but He didn't stay dead. Three days later He came alive again. Today He is in Heaven!

When you admit to God you have sinned and believe Jesus died on the cross to pay for your sins, you can choose Jesus as your Saviour. Then you will be on the narrow way leading to life. You may have family and friends who are not with you on the right path.

Create a flashcard with eight blank lines in the middle. Let the children try to guess the letters in the mystery word "Accepted". Use a marker to fill in their correct guesses until the word is complete. Show the completed word to begin your presentation.

Before

<p>_____</p>

After

<p>A c c e p t e d</p>

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Show the "Accepted" flashcard.

Your decision might not be accepted by them. But in this case it's most important to be accepted by God! And you can pray, asking God to help your family and friends get on the right path too.

If you have never believed on the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, I hope you will do that today!

Lesson

Flashcard 2-1

Can you keep a secret? Mordecai certainly hoped that Esther could! Do you remember what that secret was? Yes, that Esther was a Jewess!

Mordecai was a servant of the king and worked at the palace gate. He must have seen many interesting people going in and out. Often he must have heard people chat as they passed by.

One day he “pricked up his ears” and listened more carefully. This sounded like a plot! As Mordecai listened he discovered that two men were plotting to kill King Ahasuerus.

Mordecai knew something must be done to stop the wicked plot. Quickly he sent word to Esther, and Esther got the news to the king. If you are a child of God can you remember how you became a child of God?

Briefly review teaching on this in last week’s lesson.

If you are a child of God you must be faithful to God, as Mordecai was. “Being faithful” means doing what God wants, even when it is difficult. There will be times when you will have to speak out against wrong. Maybe some of the others in your class are nasty and mean to one particular boy, Mike. They laugh at him, they poke fun at him, they don’t play with him. They play with you, but they won’t play with Mike. As a Christian what should you do?

Allow children to respond.

If you are going to do what God wants you to do it might mean saying quietly, “I think we should have Mike in our team.” Perhaps you could play with Mike and show the others that you want to be friendly with him. God’s children should not allow nasty, mean things to happen without trying to stop them. Be faithful to God, as Mordecai was.

Now the king knew about the plot. A careful search was made. The two men were found guilty and hanged.

Then it was all carefully written down in the king’s record book. Mordecai’s name was written there too. The king must not have noticed Mordecai’s name, for he didn’t give him any kind of reward or gift as kings usually did for someone who had done such a favour.

Often when you are true to God no-one says “thank you” or praises you. Once there was a boy called Tony. Some of his friends had raided an orchard and were enjoying the juicy red apples.

“Here, Tony, have one. They’re really good.”

“No thanks,” said Tony quietly.

“Why not?” his friend demanded.

“I wouldn’t be very happy about taking stolen apples,” explained Tony.



CTS

Show card with central truth: “Be faithful to God, as Mordecai was”.

Have a child write Mordecai’s name in a small notebook and close it. Keep the book to use again in lesson 4.

CTS

Show card with application for the saved child: "You should obey God and be known as a Christian, even when it is difficult to do so".



Children would enjoy acting out this part of the story.



Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

CTS

Show card with application for the saved child.

Ask God to show you practical ways to apply this truth to the saved children you teach.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.



"Tony's a goody-goody," mocked his friend, "and we don't want a goody-goody in our gang, do we?"

Tony went off home feeling rather sad. He liked playing with the boys, but in his heart he knew he had been obedient to God. God was pleased that he had been faithful to Him. It is much more important to please God than to please people. The Bible says, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29b). This is what Mordecai did.

Flashcard 2-2

Later on King Ahasuerus decided to promote one of his men, Haman, to great honour. Indeed he made him more important than all the other nobles. All the royal servants and officials were commanded by the king to bow before proud Haman.

Flashcard 2-4

As Haman walked proudly through the gate all the king's servants bowed low with their faces to the ground. How proud Haman must have loved having all these servants bowing before him! But there was one who did not bow. Can you guess who it was? Yes, Mordecai.

The Bible does not tell us why Mordecai did not bow down, but we think it was because he felt he was being asked to worship Haman. This was something he could not do. God's law said, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). God's people could not worship anyone or anything, but God alone. Mordecai must have known that not bowing down to Haman could get him into trouble, but he wanted to stand true to God and obey him even when it was difficult. This is what God expects you to do too if you are a child of God. He wants you to obey His commands and show that you belong to Him. Being true to God means obeying Him, even though this might be difficult.

Perhaps you are outside having a game with your friends. Your dad has told you to come home at 6 pm but the game isn't over. Your friends say, "Come on, stay till the end." God's command is "Honour your father and mother" (Exodus 20:12a). If you are going to be faithful to God, you'll have to say, "Sorry, I'll have to go now." The wonderful thing is that God gives you the strength to be true to Him. There will never be a time when He will not help you do right. He is faithful to His children and that's why they can be true to Him. This was something Mordecai could be sure of.

Flashcard 2-3

What a fuss there was when he didn't bow before Haman.

Some of the royal officials asked him, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" - but he refused to bow.

So they went off and told Haman, “Mordecai will not bow before you - he’s a Jew.”

Mordecai was known to be a Jew. Are you a Christian? Has anyone asked you, “Why do you go to Sunday School?” Did you explain that you are a Christian? In your family, do your parents, brothers and sisters know that it’s because you are a Christian that you read your Bible, or are helpful at home? If you are going to be true to God it will mean being known as a Christian. We read in God’s Word, “‘You are My witnesses’, says the Lord” (Isaiah 43:10a). If you are going to be a witness, you cannot keep it a secret that you are a Christian.

Perhaps you are having a real problem just now in being faithful to God. You would like to talk to someone about it. I would be glad to talk with you and pray with you. Come and see me at ... (*designate place*) after the meeting. It is important you should be faithful to God as Mordecai was.

When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down to him, he was very, very angry. His cruel, wicked mind plotted revenge. He was so angry he wouldn’t bother with one man, he would have all the Jewish people destroyed.

Flashcard 2-5

He hurried to his wise men to find out when would be his lucky day to carry out his wicked plot. His wise men cast lots and at last told him that the thirteenth day of the twelfth month would be the lucky day. The Persian people did not know that it was the Lord God (and not “good luck” or “bad luck”) who ruled all the days. So Haman was convinced that he would have good luck with carrying out his plans against the Jews.

First he had to tell the king about his plans and he did this in a very crafty way.

“Oh, King Ahasuerus, there is a certain people in your empire who keep themselves separate. They are different from all the other people and they do not obey the king’s laws. Surely, oh King, it is not good to let them live. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them. I will give ten thousand talents of silver to help pay the cost.”

Cunning Haman did not say that it was the Jews he was trying to destroy.

King Ahasuerus wasn’t even a little bit suspicious. He agreed with the plan. He even took off his ring and gave it to Haman. This meant that Haman could press the signet ring into the wax which would seal the new law. Then everyone would know that this was a law of King Ahasuerus and it could not be changed.

“You don’t have to pay all that money,” the king said to Haman. “Do with those people as you please.”

CTS

Encourage your saved children to stand for God. Help them see the role that God’s providence plays in giving them confidence to stand for Him.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Make yourself available for personal counselling.



Bring a signet ring if available, or a press that is used with wax to seal letters. If time allows, you may want to demonstrate using wax or clay. Children would enjoy seeing such objects.



Things were going better than Haman had dared to hope. Soon the laws were written and sealed with the king's seal, the ring now worn by Haman.

Flashcard 2-6

Riders took the message throughout the great empire. The Persians had a tremendous way of getting news spread quickly. Riders rode their horses, mules or camels a certain distance, then other animals and riders took the message on and were later replaced by other animals and riders. So the message was spread very, very quickly. This time the message was very sad. A law had been made that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month all Jews would be killed. This dreaded day was less than eleven months away.

The message spread quickly around Shushan, the capital city. The Jews must have been stunned - on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month they would all die.

Wouldn't it have been better if Mordecai had bowed down to Haman, rather than get the Jews into all this trouble? If Mordecai knew in his heart that bowing down would mean worshipping Haman, he was right to obey God. We learned that the Bible says, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29b). We are to do this even when it is very, very difficult. This is being faithful to God. Remember God will help you. He will strengthen you when things are very hard. Be true to Him for He promises to be faithful to you. "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you" (Isaiah 41:10a). Remember this wonderful promise when things get difficult.

Mordecai was really upset when he heard the dreadful news. He tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and ashes. In Bible times people put on old clothing made of rough sacks to show great sorrow. Mordecai cried aloud as he went into the centre of Shushan.

After this awful news was sent out, what did the king and Haman do? They just sat down to drink and enjoy themselves. Haman didn't know and King Ahasuerus didn't know what this new law would mean in the palace. Esther had kept her secret. We must wait and see what happens.

If you are God's child, remember to obey Him. Don't be ashamed to say you are a Christian. Live for God. Even when things are hard be faithful, as Mordecai was. God will be faithful to you. The Bible tells us, "God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 1:9a).

CTS

Show card with central truth.

Read (or have an older child read) the verses from your Bible.

CTS

Show card with application for the saved child.

Review game

Puzzle phrase

Write the words "Be faithful to God" on a large sheet of paper and cut it into twelve pieces.

Review questions

- 1 How did Mordecai save the king's life? (By telling Esther about a plot to kill the king.)
- 2 Why were the people supposed to bow down to Haman? (He was one of the king's most important officials and the king commanded it.)

- 3 What does God want you to do when your friends want you to do something wrong? (Obey His commands and show that you belong to Him.)
- 4 Why do you think Mordecai didn't want to bow down to Haman? (Mordecai was a Jew, and God commanded the Jews not to worship or bow down to anyone but Him.)
- 5 What did Haman want to do when he found out Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him? (Kill him and all the other Jews as well.)
- 6 What does it mean to be faithful to God? (Doing what God wants you to do, even when it is difficult.)
- 7 When the lots were cast to choose what day the Jews would be killed, who was really in control of what happened? (God.)
- 8 What did the king give Haman to show he had permission to make whatever law he wished? (The king gave Haman his ring to make a special seal, and he told him he could make any law he wanted regarding the Jews.)
- 9 Why do you think the law was written down and taken out to the different parts of the country? (So everyone would hear about the new law.)
- 10 Why might the Jews have thought God wasn't taking care of them? (The law said they would all be killed.)
- 11 What should you do when you think God isn't taking care of you? (Be faithful to God - trust Him and ask Him to give you courage and strength, knowing He really is taking care of you.)
- 12 What does Jeremiah 29:11 say? ("For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.")

As a child answers a question correctly he chooses a piece of the puzzle to put in place on the floor or on a table.

(If you have a large group, back the puzzle pieces with pieces of paper towel, flannel or felt and put them together on a small flannel board.)

Children try to guess the phrase as more and more pieces are joined together.

Continue until all questions have been asked.

Lesson 3

A call for help

Scripture for teachers

Esther 3:15b - 5:2

Central truth

God hears and answers the prayers of His children

Application

Saved: You should talk to Him often and bring all your problems to Him

Memory verse

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry” Psalm 34:15

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6 and 4-1
- ◆ Wordstrips: “God hears and answers the prayers of His children” (central truth) and “You should talk to Him often and bring all your problems to Him” (application for the saved child)
- ◆ A piece of hessian or other rough fabric
- ◆ A picture or model of a sceptre

Lesson outline

Introduction

The news spread quickly, and so did the sadness

Progression of events

- 1 Jews weep and fast **CT**
- 2 Esther hears of Mordecai’s sadness
- 3 Esther sends clothes to Mordecai
- 4 Mordecai refuses the clothes
- 5 Esther sends Hatach to Mordecai
- 6 Hatach gives Esther message from Mordecai
- 7 Esther fears going to king **CTS**
- 8 Esther sends message to Mordecai - “I cannot do it” **CTS**
- 9 Mordecai - “She must” **CTS**
- 10 Esther decides to go **CTS**
- 11 Jews and Esther fast

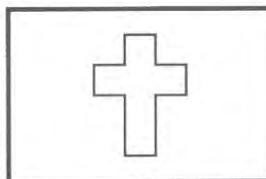
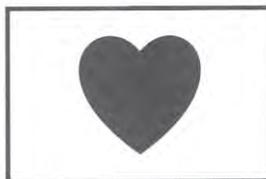
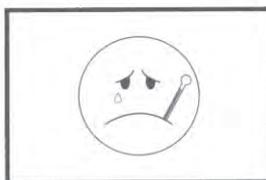
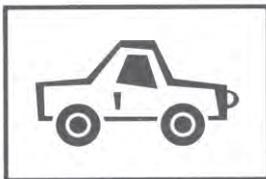
Climax

Esther goes to inner court

Conclusion

The king holds out his sceptre **CTS**

Create six visuals as shown below - a tooth, a car, a stack of books, a sick person, a black heart and a red cross.



Gospel presentation

Where to go for help

When you have a problem, it's important to know where to get help. See if you know where to get help for these problems.

Have four children come to the front and hold up the tooth, car, books and sick person visuals. Point to the pictures one at a time and discuss.

When you have a toothache, where should you go for help? (To a dentist.) Who can help with car problems? (A mechanic.) Where should you go when you don't understand your homework? (To your teacher, parents or tutor.) When you're feeling sick, who can help? (A doctor.)

Would you go to a dentist to get your car fixed? Do you think a mechanic could help you get well? Would you ask your doctor to help you understand your homework?

Briefly discuss each.

When you have a problem, you need to go to someone who can truly help!

Have the four children return the cards and sit down. Show the dark heart.

What if your problem is sin? Do you suppose anyone here has a problem with sin?

Allow response.

The Bible says, "There is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). None of us can say, "I don't have a problem with sin." We have all broken God's laws by thinking, saying and doing wrong things. What are some ways boys and girls your age sin?

Briefly discuss.

Sin is a terrible problem that causes a lot of pain in our world. Sin also separates you from God and if you don't get help, sin will keep you out of Heaven.

Who can help with your sin problem?

Show the cross.

Only God can! God, Who created you, loves you. He knew there was nothing you could ever do to solve your sin problem. That's why God sent His one and only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay for your sins by dying on a cross. Jesus didn't deserve to die. He bled and died on the cross to pay for your sins and mine. Jesus' body was buried in a tomb but three days later He came alive again. Today He's alive in Heaven.

If you have not called on the Lord Jesus, God the Son, to save you from your sin you need to do that today. He is the only One Who can forgive your sin and make it possible for you to know God and live with Him forever in Heaven someday. Listen carefully during our lesson to find out more.

Lesson

Flashcard 3-1

The news spread quickly, and so did the sadness. When Jews heard what would happen on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month they wept and put on sackcloth. Also they went without food. (This is called fasting.) Sometimes people fast if they really want to concentrate on spending time with God, asking Him for help.

The Jews knew that only God could save them from disaster. During those days many Jews cried to the Lord God for help. They knew that in the past God had heard the prayers of His people. The Bible makes it plain that God is still the same. He listens when His children pray and He answers their prayer. One of His children wrote these words in the Bible, "I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill" (Psalm 3:4). It is only God's children who can be sure that God will hear and answer their prayers. Are you God's child? You become God's child when you receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and Lord. If you have, God is your loving Heavenly Father. He loves to hear you speak to Him. He always listens. He is so great and powerful. He can always listen.

One night this truth became very real to a Christian boy. Peter lived with his mother and father on a lonely farm far from town. That evening his father became seriously ill and his mother asked her son to go to tell the doctor. They did not have a telephone or mobile phone and so this was the only way to let the doctor know that he was needed. The fastest way for Peter to go to get the doctor was to ride to town on his horse, but he was afraid to ride in the dark. His mother insisted and finally he asked God to help him. Peter got on his horse and as he rode to town he prayed. God brought him safely to the home of the doctor who was able to come right away. As a result his father got well again. That night Peter realised in a special way that God hears and answers the prayers of His children.

The Jews knew that they needed God in this time of trouble. No problem was too big for Him to solve, not even the problem of wicked Haman's plot.

In the palace Queen Esther knew nothing of Haman's cruel schemes. She hadn't yet heard what was happening to her people. Of course, she still kept her secret - that she was a Jewess.

One day her maids brought strange news.

"Queen Esther, something has happened to make the Jews very sad. They seem to be very afraid. They are wearing sackcloth and are sitting in ashes. Even Mordecai is standing in the street outside the palace gate, dressed in ugly sackcloth."

Sackcloth was a rough material made of goat's hair. Wearing sackcloth, sitting in ashes and crying out loudly were common customs of the Persians and Jews to show mourning. Touching hessian or other rough fabric will aid children.

CT

Show card with central truth: "God hears and answers the prayers of His children".

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.



In those days it was the custom for people who were in great sadness to wear sackcloth and sit among ashes, just like some people wear black clothing today when someone they love has died.

The queen was really upset when she heard the news about the Jewish people. Her maids must have wondered why, but maids don't ask a queen questions!

"What is wrong?" thought Queen Esther. "If only I could speak to Mordecai, but that is impossible. Somehow I must find out. I must help Mordecai."

Flashcard 3-2

The troubled queen found some good clothes and asked a servant to take them out to Mordecai.

"Tell him to put them on," she urged, "and take his sackcloth away."

The servant hurried out to Mordecai, but when he tried to give the clothes to Mordecai he wouldn't take them. So back went the servant to Esther.

"Oh, why have you brought them back? Why did Mordecai not take them?" asked the distressed queen.

The servant explained that Mordecai had refused, but he had given no explanation. The queen felt that there was something terribly wrong. She must find out.

She summoned Hatach, one of her servants.

"You must go to Mordecai and find out what is troubling him and why," was her desperate command.

Flashcard 3-3

Hatach hurried to Mordecai and delivered the queen's message. Mordecai must have been very relieved to hear that the queen knew about the Jews' great sorrow.

"Hatach, you must tell the queen everything," answered Mordecai. "I refused to bow to Haman. He got very angry and has ordered the Jews to be killed. Haman has even promised to pay a lot of silver to the king. Here! Take this to Queen Esther."

Mordecai gave Hatach a copy of Haman's order which had to be sent over all the kingdom.

"Hatach, you must tell Queen Esther to go and speak to the king and beg him to save our people. You must make her understand that it is very important."

Hatach didn't stop to ask any questions.



Children will enjoy role-playing the encounter between Hatach and Mordecai.



Flashcard 3-4

He hurried back into the palace, where Esther was anxiously waiting.

“Queen Esther!” Hatach began hurriedly. “It ... it is very bad news for Mordecai and all the Jews! They must die on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Here, read this, Mordecai sent it.”

As she read, the queen’s face became very sad. Hatach must have wondered why.

“Queen Esther,” continued Hatach, “you are to go to King Ahasuerus and beg him not to kill all the Jews. Mordecai says you must do it!”

“Oh no!” exclaimed the queen. She was shocked and afraid. She felt that this was something she dared not do.

I wonder if Esther forgot that the Lord God would give her courage. Did she forget to bring her problem to Him? If the Lord Jesus is your Saviour, then you are God’s child and you can tell your Heavenly Father about your fears. In Psalm 50:15 we read, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” Whatever your trouble is - perhaps your friend stops being your friend, or your dad loses his job, or someone says nasty, mean things to you - tell your Heavenly Father about it. He will help, and you will praise Him. Don’t forget to talk to God about your problems and needs when you’re afraid. It seems as if Esther forgot.

“Hatach,” she said, “you must go at once to Mordecai and give him this message. Everyone knows that any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court, without being summoned, is put to death. Only the person to whom the king holds out his golden sceptre lives.”

A sceptre is a kind of staff belonging to a king. It shows he has the power and the right to rule.

“That is the law,” continued Esther. “And Hatach, tell Mordecai this, I haven’t been invited to come before the king for thirty days.”

Esther was thinking of the problems. They did seem impossible, but when you have big problems remember that God is far greater than your problems. There is nothing too hard for God. He has all power, He can do whatever He pleases. This is the God Who is your Heavenly Father, if the Lord Jesus is your Saviour. The almighty Lord was Esther’s God too, but just now she thought more about her problems than she did about Him.

As Hatach hurried off to Mordecai once more, Esther must have felt that her cousin would understand.

Hatach found Mordecai and told him what the queen had said. “She hasn’t been called by the king for thirty days now,” Hatach concluded.



CTS

Show card with application for the saved child: “You should talk to Him often and bring all your problems to Him”.

Make this application very practical by using examples that your children will relate to.

A picture or model of a sceptre would be interesting for children.

CTS

The queen’s message really meant that it was impossible for her to speak to the king.

Flashcard 3-5

Mordecai was not easily put off.

“Hatach,” he said firmly, “you must take this message to Esther: ‘Esther, do not think that you will escape just because you live in the king’s house. Even if you say nothing to the king the Jews will be saved, but you and your family will be killed. Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? You may have been made queen just for this time so you can save your people.’”

Mordecai wanted Esther to remember that God has plans for His children. Was she not in the palace because God had planned it so?

CTS

We have already learned that God has a reason for saving each believer. He has placed us in our family, on our street and in our school to be used of Him in a special way.

There was a boy called Colin who lived in a certain street, let’s call it Bridge Street. He was a Christian. One day a man and a woman came to have special meetings for children in Colin’s street. They didn’t know where the children lived. When they got out of their car they met Colin.

“We’re going to have special meetings for boys and girls. Could you tell us the houses where children live?”

“Sure,” said Colin and he took them to the houses where the boys and girls lived.

When they had finished the man said to Colin, “I think God planned it that you should live on this street. Because you were here we could give the children invitations. Thank you very much.”

It gave Colin a very happy feeling to think that God had even planned where he should live.

Back in the palace Hatach told Esther everything. She was very, very frightened at the thought of going to the king without being summoned, but she bravely decided that she would try to save her people, even if she lost her life in the attempt.

Flashcard 3-6

She sent a reply to Mordecai.

“Gather the Jews in the city. Fast for me - neither eat nor drink for three days. In the palace my maids and I will do the same. Then I will go to the king. If I die, I die.”

CTS

Esther knew that she needed God’s help. Christian boy and girl, you need God’s help all the time, don’t you? Perhaps you are the only Christian in your class at school and you find it very hard to live for



God. Tell your loving Heavenly Father about it. He wants you to tell Him, He promises to help. It may be that there is a problem at home that you can't share with anyone. You can share it with God. He is interested and He can help. Whether they are little problems or big problems talk to God about them. Remember the Bible verse, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15). God is so powerful and great that there is nothing too hard for Him. He hears and answers the prayers of His children.

That is why Esther knew that she and her people must ask for His help.

When Mordecai heard the news he quietly sent word to the Jews. For three days they fasted and prayed. Oh how they needed God's help!

Esther couldn't leave the palace to fast and pray with the others, so she called her maids together. Esther was asking God, the only One Who was more powerful than King Ahasuerus and Haman, for His help.

After three days Esther put on her royal dress and walked towards the inner court. How nervous she must have felt. Inside the inner court she waited. Her heart almost stopped beating. Would she die for this? Would the king hold out his golden sceptre?

She waited and watched with baited breath. King Ahasuerus saw his beautiful queen. His hand moved.

Flashcard 4-1

Yes, he held out the golden sceptre! Esther could come and speak to him!

God had heard the cry of His people! He always hears His children when they speak to Him. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14). Sometimes He does not do what we think He should do, but He always does what is best. What a wonderful thing to be a child of God and to know that He promises to hear and answer our prayers, just as He answered His people long ago.

What did Esther say to the king? What she did was very surprising ... but we'll have to wait until next time to hear about that.

Christian boy and girl, never forget that your Heavenly Father hears and answers prayer. Do you take time to talk with Him each day? Do you tell Him your problems? Do you ask Him to save your friends or family who don't know the Lord Jesus? As we finish, let us ask God to help us to pray.

"Dear Heavenly Father, thank You that You are a great God Who can hear and answer our prayers. Please forgive us that sometimes we do not talk with You and help us to pray to You each day. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Show card with application for the saved child.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Hold up fingers and count to three with preschoolers.



CTS

Show card with application for the saved child.

Read the verse from your Bible.

CTS

Show card with application for the saved child.

Review game

Pick a prayer

Photocopy the verses on page 56, cut them apart and place them in a bag.

Divide the children into two teams.

When a child answers a question correctly, he draws a verse from the bag and reads it aloud.

His team then scores the points totaling the numbers in the reference (eg "Jeremiah 33:3" would be $33 + 3 = 36$).

The team scoring the most points wins.

Review questions

- 1 What did Mordecai and the other Jews do when they found out about the new law? (Dressed in sackcloth, cried and fasted.)
- 2 How did Esther find out what was wrong with Mordecai? (One of her maids told her that the Jews were very sad, and so Esther sent a servant out to talk to Mordecai.)
- 3 What did Mordecai want Esther to do to help save the people? (Go and ask the king for the lives of her people.)
- 4 Why would this be a dangerous thing for Esther to do? (The king had not called for her, and anyone who went before the king without being called for could be killed.)
- 5 What verse tells you what to do when you face troubles in your life? (Psalm 50:15 - "Call upon Me [God] in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.")
- 6 What did Mordecai tell Esther would happen if she didn't go to the king? (Her life would not be saved, even though she was queen.)
- 7 What did it mean when Esther asked the Jews to fast for her? (Not to eat or drink anything, and probably to pray for her.)
- 8 Why do you think Esther would want the Jews to pray? (She needed God's help to have courage to go to the king and to have the king allow her to speak.)
- 9 What are some troubles boys and girls might need to pray about? (Answers will vary. Examples in the lesson include fears; your friend stops being your friend; your dad loses his job; someone says nasty, mean things to you; or you are the only Christian in your class at school and find it hard to live for God.)
- 10 What did Esther say she would do for her people? (Go to the king and ask him to spare their lives.)
- 11 What do you think you should do when God helps you with a problem? (Thank Him and tell others about how He answered your prayer.)
- 12 What does Psalm 34:15 say? ("The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.")

Lesson 4

God's people honoured

Scripture for teachers

Esther 5 - 6

Central truth

Don't be a slave to sin, as Haman was

Application

Unsaved: Trust the Lord Jesus to set you free

Memory verse

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" John 8:36

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6 and 4-7
- ◆ Wordstrips: "Don't be a slave to sin, as Haman was"
- ◆ "Banquet" food for the children to sample
- ◆ Notebook used in lesson 2

Lesson outline

Introduction

Quickly the queen moved forward and touched the tip of the golden sceptre

Progression of events

- 1 Esther asks the king and Haman to banquet
- 2 Esther invites the king and Haman to second banquet **CT**
- 3 Haman proudly reports this
- 4 Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman
- 5 Zeresh and friends advise Haman to build gallows for Mordecai **CTU**
- 6 The king cannot sleep
- 7 Servant reads aloud record of Mordecai's discovery of plot
- 8 The king asks Haman how such a man should be honoured **CTU**
- 9 Haman gives his ideas

Climax

The king follows Haman's suggestion

Haman leads Mordecai around

Conclusion

Haman goes home humiliated **CTU**

To illustrate the truth of how sin gets an even stronger grip on lives, you could use a short object lesson after teaching the memory verse.

Gospel presentation

Breaking sinful habits

Ask one of the boys to come up and hold his arms together. (It is good if he is wearing a long-sleeved shirt or pullover.) Wrap a thread once round his arms and tie a knot. Then ask him ...

Now try to break the thread.

He will find it easy.

It's like that with sinful habits, such as swearing, stealing and gambling. We may be able at the beginning to break the habit, but habits grow stronger.

This time wrap the thread around his arms a number of times.

You say one swear word and then another and another. You steal a toy, and then a bicycle, and then money, and it gets worse and worse. You start gambling on a machine, and then you start to play bingo or betting on horses, and so on. It gets stronger and stronger. What happens in the end?

Now try to break the thread which is wrapped a lot of times around your arms ... of course you can't. Just like you need me to cut this thread to set you free, even so each one of us needs the Lord Jesus Christ to set us free from the sinful habits which hold us captive. The Lord Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose again to set us free and give us power to live for Him.

Gospel presentation

Pride inside

Who can tell me what pride is?

Allow response.

Pride is thinking of yourself more highly than you should. It is not seeing yourself as you really are - the way God sees you. We've been learning about Haman, who had a problem with pride. But pride is also a problem you and I have today.

Show the "Real You" starburst.

Pride comes not from the outside (things you have or do) but from the inside. It's a problem with your heart (the "real you"). The Bible says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Fold the clean heart over the "Real You" starburst.

Your heart can deceive (trick) you into thinking you are better than you really are. You might tell yourself, "I don't have a problem with sin. Other kids do wrong things but I don't." Or maybe you think the wrong things you do are not really that bad.

But even though you might think your heart is pure, God knows the truth.

Fold the dark heart over the clean heart.

God knows that ever since the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, sinned, everyone has been born with a "want to" to do things his own way instead of God's way. That is why you sin by thinking, saying and doing things that break God's laws. When you take something that does not belong to you, you sin. When you say mean things about someone or walk away when someone needs your help, you sin.

Sin causes a lot of pain in our world. But the worst thing about sin is that it separates you from God. Unless your sin is forgiven, you will be separated from God for ever. That means someday going to a horrible place of punishment called Hell instead of going to Heaven.

The only One Who doesn't have a sinful deceitful heart is God. God is our Creator (Maker) and He is completely holy (perfect) and good. But even though God is holy and you are sinful, God loves you.

Show the cross and tomb.

God loved you so much He was willing to send His Son, the Lord Jesus, to suffer, bleed and die on a cross to pay for your sins. The Bible says, "Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... He rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Not only did Jesus pay for all your sins, He proved you can be forgiven when He rose from the dead! Today Jesus lives in Heaven.

Create a two-sided visual folded in thirds as shown on page 57.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

If you have sinned and believe Jesus died for your sin and rose again, you can choose Him as your Saviour.

Show the dark heart then fold it back to reveal the clean heart.

Then God will forgive your sin and change your heart so you will want to please Him in everything you think, say and do. You will be God's child and someday live forever with Him in Heaven. If you have never believed in Jesus as your Saviour, and you have questions about how to do that, be sure you talk with one of the teachers after our lesson. Choosing Jesus as your Saviour is the most important decision you will ever make.

Lesson

Flashcard 4-2

Quickly the queen moved forward and touched the tip of the golden sceptre.

King Ahasuerus asked, “Queen Esther, what is your request? Even if you ask for half of the kingdom, your wish will be granted.”

His kindness must have encouraged Esther.

“If it pleases the King,” she replied, “let the King, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.”

What a strange request! This isn’t what we expected her to ask, is it? Probably the king didn’t expect it either! Imagine risking her life just to ask the king to a banquet!

“Bring Haman at once,” the king commanded, “so that we may do what Esther asks.”

“What a lucky prince I am,” Haman must have thought as he sat proudly at the queen’s banquet. “Wait until my family and friends hear about this! I am becoming greater every day.”

Who was the most important person in Haman’s life? Yes - Haman. He loved himself more than anyone else. When you love yourself more than anyone else that is sin, for God says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5). Sin is putting yourself first in your life. Even when we’re very young we do that. Nobody had to teach your little brother or sister, or you, to eat up all the chocolate and not share. We are born wanting to put ourselves before God and other people. That’s why even little children want their own way and cry if they don’t get it. As we grow up we are slaves to sin. A slave is someone who has to do what his master says. We are born slaves to sin, sin is in charge of us. Sin was very much in charge of Haman.

As time went on at the queen’s banquet, King Ahasuerus asked, “Now what is your request? Even if you ask for half of the kingdom, you will get it.”

“If it please the king,” she replied, “will you and Haman come to another banquet I shall prepare for you tomorrow? Then I shall tell you what I want.”

The king must have been very puzzled. Haman was delighted, he was all too happy to be going to another royal banquet.

Flashcard 4-3

Haman strutted out of the palace. He could hardly wait to get home to tell Zeresh, his wife, and his friends about the honour he had had that day. Then he saw Mordecai at the palace gate and, of course, Mordecai



The king’s offer of “up to half his kingdom” was a common figure of speech and was probably not meant to be taken literally. It showed his regard for the queen.

Preschoolers will enjoy pretending to sample “banquet” foods. This experience will help all children remember this story event.

CT

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

It could be that Esther didn’t feel the timing was right for her to make her request yet, or this may have been a reflection of the eastern custom of approaching important business matters in an elaborate manner.



Let preschoolers make an angry face.



A gallows is a wooden frame made of two posts standing up on end and holding another wooden beam jutting out at the top. You may want to make a rough drawing on a sheet of paper.

The extreme height of the gallows would ensure

CTU

that it would be seen by all, making an example of Mordecai's disrespect of Haman. It was another evidence of Haman's proud nature.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Show card with central truth: "Don't be a slave to sin, as Haman was".

Make yourself available for personal counselling.

did not bow before the proud prince. As he walked home, Haman was filled with rage against Mordecai.

Flashcard 4-4

As soon as he got home Haman called his friends and Zeresh, his wife. He boasted about how rich he was, about his sons and about how the king had given him the most important position in the kingdom.

"That's not all," he continued, "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to go with the king to the banquet she gave, and she has invited me to go with the king to another banquet tomorrow." Haman's proud face clouded with anger as he continued, "But everything is ruined by one man - that Jew, Mordecai. I can't be happy as long as he still serves at the king's gate."

Then Zeresh and all Haman's friends put forward an idea, "Have gallows built, 22 metres (75 feet) high. Tomorrow you should ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it."

This idea delighted the cruel Haman and at once he had the gallows built. Soon Mordecai would trouble him no more.

What a bad master sin is! Haman was doing one wicked thing after another. This is just what happens when sin is the master of your life. As you get older you do more and more wrong things.

I want to tell you about Alan who soon discovered this. When he was three or four years old he used to tell lies from time to time, but his dad always knew when he was not telling the truth. When Alan was nine years old he could tell lies and no-one got suspicious. Not only that, when he was nine he used bad language he wouldn't have dreamed of using before. Sin was his master and was getting a tighter and firmer grip on his life. It's just the same with every boy and girl as they grow up. Don't say, "Well, I must stop sinning." You can't stop sinning and start to live a perfect life. You need Someone stronger than sin to rescue you from that evil master. There is only One Who can do that for you - the Lord Jesus Christ. He died on the cross to save people from sin - not only from sin's punishment, but also from sin's power. He is alive today and is the only One Who can set you free from sin's hold on your life. If you trust Him He will do this for you. The Bible says, "He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21b). Then He will be in charge of your life, you will no longer be a slave to sin.

It may be that you really want the Lord Jesus to do this for you. Perhaps you don't know how to ask Him to save you. I would be glad to show you from the Bible. It is important to know why we need the Lord Jesus to save us, what we must do and what He promises to do. If you want me to explain it more clearly to you, you will find me ... (*designate place*) at the end of the meeting. Just come and tell me, "I would like to know more about being saved." Remember you are a slave to sin, as Haman was. That night his mind was full of wicked ideas.

Back in the palace King Ahasuerus just could not sleep. That night seemed very long. Was it just an accident that King Ahasuerus was not sleeping? No. What had Esther, Mordecai and the other Jews done? They had prayed. Who was it that kept Ahasuerus from sleeping? It was God. At last the king asked his servants to bring the book in which was written all the things that had happened during the time he had been king.

A servant started to read aloud. Soon he came to the plot to kill the king and how Mordecai had discovered it.

“What honour was given to Mordecai for this?” asked the king.

“Nothing was done for him,” the servant replied.

“What? No rewards?”

This should never have happened in a Persian court. It was a shame that Mordecai had not been rewarded. The king decided he must do something for Mordecai right away, but what?

Just then the king heard someone walking in the court.

“Who is in the court?” he asked.

“Haman is standing in the court,” replied the servant.

“Bring him in,” commanded the king.

Haman would be just the man to help him with his plan.

Flashcard 4-5

We know why Haman was there so early, don't we?

“Haman, what should be done for the man the king wants to reward?” asked King Ahasuerus.

At once Haman thought to himself, “Who but me would the king want to honour?”

Once again he was thinking of himself. When sin is in charge of your life, you can't even think the way God wants you to think. The Bible says that the devil has blinded the minds of those who do not believe (2 Corinthians 4:4). That means that everyone who does not have the Lord Jesus as their Saviour has had their mind blinded by the devil. Perhaps you are like that. You don't worry too much about doing wrong, so long as you don't get caught. You think the Bible is quite boring. You are the most important person in your thinking. Doesn't this show you how much of a slave to sin you are, and how you need the Lord Jesus to set you free? Are you a slave? Haman was. He thought only of himself. Of course, he was full of ideas of how the king should honour him!

“For the man the king delights to honour,” he suggested, “have them bring royal robes that the king has worn and a horse that the king has ridden. One of your princes should place the robe on this man and lead

There would have been twelve years' worth of record books for Ahasuerus' reign by this time. It is interesting that, of all these books, the servant chose one from five years earlier and, of all the accounts, he read the account about Mordecai. The providence of God is clearly evident in these circumstances!

If you had a child write “Mordecai” in a small notebook in lesson 2, bring the notebook out now and have a child open it and read Mordecai's name.



Haman's conversation with the king and his subsequent embarrassing assignment would be enjoyable for the children to role-play.

CTU

Show card with central truth.

him on the horse through the city streets. He should call out before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honour!'"

The king seemed pleased with Haman's ideas.

"Go at once, Haman, get the robe and the horse. Do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Remember, do all the things you have suggested."

Mordecai! Did the king mean Mordecai? Haman could scarcely believe his ears. Would he really have to do those things to Mordecai, his enemy? Yes, he knew he must do it all for the king's word was law. So, feeling as if he were having a bad dream, Haman left the king's room to do the hateful task.

Flashcard 4-6

He put the king's robe on Mordecai. He held the king's horse while Mordecai climbed on. Then he led Mordecai on horseback through the streets of Shushan.

He had to keep calling out, "This is what is done for the man whom the king delights to honour!"

People must have looked on in amazement. How Haman must have hated every moment! When the strange ride was over Mordecai went back to his work at the palace gate.

Haman hung his head in shame and hurried to his home. Sadly he told his wife, Zeresh, and his friends all that had happened and how his plans had gone wrong. They listened but didn't give him much comfort.

"Since Mordecai is a Jew you cannot go against him. You will be ruined," they said.

Such awful words! That is where sin and wickedness had brought Haman. Sin is a hard, cruel master. The Bible says, "The way of the unfaithful is hard" (Proverbs 13:15b).

For a time you might have lots of fun. You might have a really good time when sin is your master, but sin separates you from God. It will ruin your life. The sinful way is a hard way. In the end sin will keep you away from God for ever and ever. Don't be a slave to sin any longer.

Flashcard 4-7

The Lord Jesus died to set people free from the punishment and power of sin. Trust Him today to do that for you. You can say to Him, "Dear Lord Jesus, up until now I have allowed sin to rule in my life. Thank You for dying and rising again to save me from my sin. I ask You to save me now and to take over my life." Listen to these words which the Lord Jesus said. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).



CTU

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Show card with central truth.



Read the verse from your Bible.

Review questions

- 1 What did Esther ask the king to do after he held out the sceptre to her? (Bring Haman and come to a banquet.)
- 2 During the banquet the king again asked Esther what her request was. What did she ask the king? (That the king and Haman would come to a second banquet the next day, at which time she would tell him what she wanted.)
- 3 Why was Haman so upset after he left the palace following the banquet? (Mordecai did not bow before him.)
- 4 What problems could being proud cause you? (Answers will vary. Examples could include hurting others by what you say or do; or pride getting control over you.)
- 5 Why do you think Haman boasted to his family and friends? (He wanted to impress them and make them think he was important.)
- 6 What are some of the sinful things that children do? (Answers will vary. Examples in the lesson include not sharing with others; telling lies; and using bad language.)
- 7 What did Haman want to have done to Mordecai? (Have him hung on a 22 metre/75 foot gallows.)
- 8 Why do you think King Ahasuerus asked to have the book of records read when he had trouble sleeping? (God put the thought into his mind.)
- 9 What did Haman have to do for Mordecai? (He had to put the royal robes on him, put him on the king's horse and lead him through the city saying, "This is what is done for the man the king wants to honour.")
- 10 Why could Haman not win against God's people? (God was the One in control of everything that happened.)

Review game

Memory

Photocopy and cut out the game pieces on page 58 and place face down on a table, floor or wordstrip board.

Each time a child answers a question correctly, he gets to turn over two of the pieces.

If he gets a match, he keeps the pieces. If not, they are turned back over.

Continue until all questions have been asked.

Lesson 5

Esther pleads for her people

Scripture for teachers

Esther 6:14 - 8:14

Psalms 73

Central truth

God always defeats His enemies

Application

Unsaved: Make sure that you are not an enemy of God

Saved: When you see wrong-doers being successful, do not copy their sinful ways, but trust God

Memory verse

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 and 5-5
- ◆ Wordstrips: “God always defeats His enemies” (central truth) and “When you see wrong-doers being successful, do not copy their sinful way, but trust God” (application for the saved child)
- ◆ “Banquet” food for the children to sample

Lesson outline

Introduction

How quickly things had changed!

Progression of events

- 1 Haman and the king at banquet **CT**
- 2 Esther requests the king to save her people
- 3 Esther points out Haman as the guilty one **CTS**
- 4 The king leaves banqueting room
- 5 Haman pleads with Esther
- 6 The king returns
- 7 The king orders the death of Haman
- 8 Haman hanged on gallows **CTS**

Climax

Esther pleads for her people

The king - “Write another decree” **CTU**

Conclusion

Decree taken to Jews **CTU**



Children will enjoy sampling "banquet" foods - grapes, dried fruits, bread, cheese, etc.

CT

Show card with central truth: "God always defeats His enemies".

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Lesson

Flashcard 5-1

How quickly things had changed! Haman had felt very happy, proud and sure of himself. Now, although he was at the queen's banquet, he felt very unhappy, "small" and unsure of himself.

These changes had taken place for reasons that Haman knew nothing about. He did not know about the Jews praying to God for their deliverance. He did not know of the one true God Who rules over all. Haman was an enemy of the Jews, but he did not know that because of that he was in fact an enemy of the great, almighty Lord God. Those who go against God and His ways will be defeated. The Bible says that God "shall prevail against His enemies" (Isaiah 42:13b). That means that He will triumph over them. God will win. Some of God's enemies have a lot of power, but God has all power. He can never be defeated by those who are against Him. So Haman would surely be defeated also.

Haman was probably thinking over how things had gone wrong. Esther was thinking of Mordecai and her people and how she would have to die with them on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. She knew that she must speak to the king about it. She had promised.

On the second day of the queen's banquet the king asked, "What is it that you want, Esther? Whatever you ask for, it shall be done - even if you ask for half of the kingdom."

The king waited for the queen's reply. Would she ask for jewels, money, land or honour? People usually wanted these things. Esther's heart was probably pounding, but she was sure that this was the time for her to speak.

"If I have found favour in your sight, oh King, if it please the King, then let my life be saved and the lives of my people."

What? The queen's life in danger? How could this possibly be? The king could scarcely believe his ears! Remember, King Ahasuerus did not know that it was the Jews Haman wanted destroyed and, of course, he didn't know that Esther was one of the Jews.

Esther bravely continued, "We have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed. Our whole nation is to be wiped out. If we had merely been sold as slaves I would have kept silent."

"Who is he and where is the person who dared even to think of such a thing?" demanded the king.

The courageous queen turned. "The enemy is this wicked Haman."

Flashcard 5-2

In the very presence of the king the enemy was named! God was bringing about the defeat of an enemy. Everything seemed to go well



Speak with horror.

for Haman for a time, but only for as long as God allowed. It's just the same today. Sometimes people who disobey God don't seem to get punished. Everything seems to go well for them. This is only because God allows it. Every enemy of God will be defeated and punished one day. It would be a great disgrace to the name of God if His enemies defeated Him, but He will never, never allow this to happen. So when you see a cheat or a bully get on well, don't be envious. Don't try to do things the way they do them. Trust God, for in the end God's enemies are the losers. That's what happened to Haman.

He didn't say a word. He was terrified. What a blunder he had made in trying to destroy the Jews, when the queen was one of them.

The king got up in a rage, left the banquet hall and went out into the palace garden. All sorts of angry, mixed up thoughts must have been in his mind.

Haman, the once proud, bold prince was now just a fearful coward. In his heart he knew what the king had decided to do with him, but he decided to make one last desperate effort to do something to save himself. He got up to beg Esther to save his life. As he pleaded with her, he fell at her feet right on the couch.

Flashcard 5-3

Just at that moment the angry king returned and saw Haman with his queen. He was furious and shouted at Haman. The servants knew what that meant. Quickly they moved in and covered the wicked fellow's face. This was a sign that Haman was condemned to die.

One of the king's servants seemed to know about the gallows Haman had built. Quickly he spoke up.

"A gallows 22 metres high stands at Haman's house. He made it for Mordecai, the man who spoke up to save the king's life."

"Hang Haman himself on it!" the king commanded.

The servants wasted no time.

They took him out of the palace. There were no bowing servants and no proud strutting now. Haman was hanged on the gallows at his own home, the gallows he had built for Mordecai. The enemy of God and of His people was dead.

God always defeats His enemies. It doesn't always happen like this. Sometimes God allows His enemies to have their way for a time. People who are disobedient to God sometimes seem to have no problems. Perhaps there is a boy in your school and he cheats in tests, he steals in shops, he uses God's name as a swear word, but he gets along just fine. You're a Christian and even when you work hard you don't do all that well in tests. Some of your friends decide they don't want you for a friend because you are a Christian. It's all very hard to understand. Don't start doing wrong just because it seems easier. Think about

CTS

Show card with central truth.

The king may have left to try and gain control of his anger, or perhaps to try and think of a way to spare Esther's life now that he knew she was a Jew.

Children would enjoy acting out this part of the story.



CTS

Show card with application for the saved child: "When you see wrong-doers being successful, do not copy their sinful way, but trust God".



how wonderful it is to belong to God. Remember that for those who disobey God and seem to have life easy it won't be like that for ever, but you will be with God forever. God's enemies - the devil, his demons and all the people who have been against God - will be defeated and punished for ever and ever. It's a very serious thing to be an enemy of God, as Haman was.

Now he was dead. Esther would be safe on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. The king would protect her. Oh - but all Esther's people, the Jews, were still in danger! According to Persian law the old command of the king had to stand. It would need a new one from the king to replace the old one. The command to destroy them had been sent everywhere in the kingdom. Beside that, many of the Persians would be glad to kill the Jews and take their houses, lands and money. What could be done to save them?

Flashcard 5-5

Once more Esther bravely approached the king. Mordecai was with her as she fell at the king's feet and wept and begged him to put an end to Haman's wicked plan. Once more the king held out his golden sceptre towards her. Esther arose and stood before the king.

She said, "If it please the King, and if it seems right to him, if I am pleasing to the King, let another order be sent out to overrule the order of wicked Haman. How can I stand to see disaster come to my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?"

The courageous queen waited for the king's reply.

"Write another decree," he said to Esther and Mordecai. "Write it in the king's name on behalf of the Jews. Write whatever you think is best and seal it with the king's signet ring. No document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be changed."

How Esther and Mordecai must have rejoiced. They had hoped that something like this would happen. God was not going to allow Haman's plans to be successful. God's enemies and the enemies of His people would be defeated.

CTU

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Help unsaved children to see that God loves them personally and individually.

Show card with central truth.

We must ask ourselves, "Who are God's enemies?" Yes, bad people, the devil, demons, are God's enemies - but listen to what the Lord Jesus said. "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Matthew 12:30a). That means that everyone who has not trusted the Lord Jesus as Saviour is against God and His Son, the Lord Jesus. You see, we are all born wanting to go against God, but God has made a way for us to become His friends. When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, it was to put away all our rebellion and hatred against God. He took the punishment for all our sin. Unless we trust Jesus Christ we remain God's enemies and go on fighting against Him. Think very carefully about which side you are on. Remember, all those who are against God will be defeated and punished forever, but if you ask the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour there

is peace between you and God. You are on God's side, His friend and not His enemy any more. If you have done that I'm sure you are very glad, just as the Jews rejoiced with the Lord as their God.

Esther, Mordecai and the royal secretaries quickly got to work. The queen and her cousin took great care in writing the new decree for it was a very, very important one.

In this new law the Jews were given the right to come together and defend themselves against attack on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. They were given permission to kill any enemy who would attack them or try to take their property.

The orders were carefully written and sealed with the king's ring. The riders were given the very best horses - fast horses especially bred for the king.

Will God's people be saved? We'll learn about that next time.

You must ask yourself, "Do I belong to God, or am I fighting against God?" In your heart do you know that you are against God? Do you long to be one of His people? Do you really want to have peace rather than war between you and God? The Bible says that the Lord Jesus Christ "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20b). When He died on the cross it was to make peace between sinners and God. If you really want this peace, trust the Lord Jesus to make you right with God. Tell the Lord Jesus right now, "Lord Jesus, I'm sorry that I have been fighting against God. Thank You for dying for me. Please forgive me and bring peace between God and me. Please make me one of God's children."

Review questions

- 1 What did Queen Esther ask the king for at the second banquet? (Her life and the lives of her people.)
- 2 Why was King Ahasuerus angry with Haman? (Haman had plotted to have Queen Esther and her people killed.)
- 3 What happened to Haman? (He was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.)
- 4 What did Esther want the king to do after Haman had died? (Make a new law so her people would not be killed.)
- 5 What right did the new law give to the Jews? (They could gather together and defend themselves against their enemies when the battle came. They could also take the property of their enemies after the battle.)
- 6 What was God's plan to save you from sin? (He sent His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus, to Earth to give His blood on the cross to take your punishment.)
- 7 What did the Jews have to be thankful for after the new law came out? (God had answered their prayers and they no longer had to fear death.)

There were still nine months before the day of battle, giving the Jews plenty of time to prepare.

CTU

Read the verse from your Bible.

Review game

Musical questions

Photocopy the questions on page 59, cut them out and put them in a bag.

Have the children get in a circle and pass the bag around as music is played or sung.

When the music stops, the child holding the bag pulls out a question and tries to answer it.

If his answer is correct, he gets a small prize.

- 8 How can you have peace rather than war between you and God?
(By putting your trust completely in Jesus as the only One Who can save you from sin.)

Carry-over activity

Concern cards

Have the children make “concern cards” for a shut-in, sick friend, person in a nursing home, child missing from club, school teacher or parent. Include a simple Gospel tract with the card when it is delivered. You may want to have today’s memory verse on the card as well.

Wallpaper books, pictures from old greeting cards or magazines, stickers or stamps, and markers or crayons are all useful resources.

A selection of tracts for children are produced by European Child Evangelism Fellowship® and are available from your CEF National Office.

If you need an address, contact the European Headquarters (address at the front of this book).

Lesson 6

God's people are victorious

Scripture for teachers

Esther 8:1-2,7
Esther 8:11 - 9:17
Esther 10:1-3

Central truth

God loves His people in a special way and cares for them

Application

Unsaved: You will know His love and care when you trust Christ as Lord and Saviour and so become one of the people of God

Saved: Trust Him at all times

Memory verse

Review 1 Peter 5:7

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 5-4, 5-6, 6-1, 6-2 and 6-5
- ◆ Wordstrips: "God loves His people in a special way and cares for them" (central truth) and "Trust Him at all times" (application for the saved child)
- ◆ Sackcloth and royal robes or blue, white or purple velvet or linen

Lesson outline

Introduction

They were so happy!

Progression of events

- 1 Esther and Mordecai in palace **CTU**
- 2 The Jews celebrate **CTS**
- 3 A visit to a village
- Persians proud, Jews fearful
- A rider comes with decree **CTS**
- Jews rejoice

Climax

- Thirteenth day of twelfth month arrives
- Many Persians die
 - All Jews safe **CTS**

Conclusion

Fourteenth day - a day of rejoicing for the Jews
Mordecai and Esther tell Jews to remember

CTS, CTU

Create a visual with the first half of Romans 6:23 on the top portion and the second half on the bottom.

To begin your presentation fold the visual to conceal the second half of the verse.

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death

but
the gift of God is eternal life.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Gospel presentation

The gift of God

Last week we learned how God used Mordecai to write a new law to save His people. If Mordecai never wrote the law, what would have happened? (His people would have faced death.)

This reminds me of what God did for you and me.

Long ago when God created the world, it was a perfect place because God is perfect. He is holy - that means He never sins. God gave the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, just one rule to keep. But instead of obeying God, the people He created chose to sin. Since that time everyone has been born with a “want to” to sin. That is why you think, say and do wrong things that displease God. When you hurt somebody with your fists or your words, you sin. When you ignore someone just because he is different, you sin. Even thinking mean thoughts about someone is a sin. What are other ways boys and girls your age sin?

Let the children share examples.

God has a law about sin. Do you know what it is?

Give the children time to respond then show the first half of the verse and read the words together.

This law is found in God’s Word, the Bible. It’s a sad law that tells what we earn when we sin even just one time - spiritual death. It means not knowing God in this life and never going to Heaven. How many of us have earned spiritual death? (All of us.)

This would be one of the saddest verses in the Bible if it were not for the second half.

Unfold the card, revealing the last half of the verse, then read the words together.

This verse is clear. You and I deserve spiritual death because we have sinned. But God has a gift - something you and I don’t deserve. That gift is the privilege of knowing God in this life and then afterward living forever in God’s perfect home called Heaven. It’s the most wonderful gift anyone could ever give! Did God give us this gift because there was something good about us? No! God was willing to give this amazing gift because He loved us. The Bible says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). After Jesus died, His body was buried in a tomb. Three days later Jesus came alive again and today He lives in Heaven!

Mordecai made a way to save the Jewish people from death. Jesus Christ did something far greater when He paid for sin and made a way for you and me to be forgiven. Have you received God’s free gift of eternal life - the gift Jesus paid for with His own blood? If you have been waiting to make this important decision, don’t put it off any longer. Put your trust in Jesus today!

Lesson

Flashcard 5-4

They were so happy! Indeed Esther and Mordecai must have been the two happiest people in the palace. Is there a question in your mind? Are you asking, "How did Mordecai get into the palace? Isn't his place at the gate?"

When Esther spoke to the king she told him that Mordecai was her cousin. When the king heard this he brought Mordecai into the palace. He even took off his ring (the one he had given to Haman) and gave it to Mordecai. He certainly seemed to trust the queen's cousin.

He had shown more kindness to Esther too. On the day that Haman was hanged Ahasuerus gave her the house that Haman had owned.

How wonderfully God took care of Esther and Mordecai. So many things reminded them of His love. The Bible makes it clear that God loves all His people and cares for them in a special way. He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). There is no end to God's love for His children. When we think about it we see that there are many, many things that show us His love, but the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross shows us God's love more clearly than anything else. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Esther and Mordecai couldn't think of that for they lived before the Lord Jesus came, but we can think of it. Have you come to see that the Lord Jesus died for your sin? Have you trusted Him as your Saviour? If you have, then you have come to know this wonderful love of God for you. That love will never end. He cares for you and all His people in a special way.

We have been learning together over these past days about the Lord's working in and through Esther. Perhaps in your heart you really want to know Him as your Lord and Saviour. I cannot save you, but I can explain to you how the Lord can save you. If you want me to help you just stay behind when the others leave. Then come and sit here in the front row. If I see you sitting there I will be glad to show you from the Bible God's way of salvation.

God had shown Mordecai and Esther that He was looking after His people.

See Mordecai as he leaves the palace - no sackcloth. He is not even wearing servants' clothing.

On his head is a crown of gold and he is dressed in blue and white, with a robe of fine purple linen - the royal clothing of the palace. Mordecai went out into the streets of Shushan.



CTU

Show card with central truth: "God loves His people in a special way and cares for them".

Read (or have an older child read) the verses from your Bible.

Make yourself available for personal counselling.

Show sackcloth and royal robes or blue, white or purple velvet or linen.

**CTS**

Show card with central truth.

Flashcard 5-6

The Jews were having a feast and a celebration. They had been the first to hear the good news sent out by Esther and Mordecai. They were no longer afraid of what might happen on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. God was with them. He had heard their prayer and rescued them from the enemy. God didn't care only for Mordecai and Esther, He cared for all His people - rich, poor, young and old. He is still the same today.

If the Lord Jesus is your Saviour and you have come to know God's love for you, you can be sure He cares for you. Perhaps the teacher in school doesn't notice you very much. Perhaps your friends let you down, or nobody wants to listen to you. It may be even worse - someone in your family becomes very ill. Maybe your mother or your father has died. You ask yourself, "Does anyone care about me?" God does and you can be sure about that. He knows all about you. He is interested in you. He cares for you all the time. Even when you are asleep He is looking after you. When you are lonely, upset or sad, remember God loves you and cares for you, just as He cared for His people in the great Persian kingdom long ago.

Thousands of Jews who lived in faraway places still had not heard. They were still sad and frightened, dreading the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, but the riders were speeding their way across the kingdom.

Flashcard 6-1

Let's take a make-believe trip to Persia and visit one of the villages where the Jews are still sad and afraid. There don't seem to be any Jews on the streets. They must all be hiding in their houses.

See how the Persians are laughing and talking. One of them is pointing to a nice house that belongs to a Jew.

"This will be mine," we might hear him say. "This will be mine once we get rid of these Jews."

Down the street they go, laughing and talking about how rich they will become on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

But look! Something is happening down the street. Everyone is excited. A rider has come into the village and there seems to be a great hurry.

"More bad news for the Jews!" someone says and they all laugh.

The rider fastens a letter on a wall and then he goes as fast as he came. It must be a very important message from the king.

Here come some of the Jews. How frightened they look. How quiet everyone is. The Persians have stopped laughing. Now some of them seem angry.

"Now, what do you think of that?" a Jew exclaims. "This message is for us, and it seems to be good news!"

“I can hardly believe it,” another replies, “but it has the king’s seal.”

“But what about the king’s first order? That can’t be changed,” someone reminded them.

“Look, it says that we can fight for our lives on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. We won’t have to die after all!”

God was caring for His own people when they lived among people who did not know Him or love Him. It’s just the same today. Perhaps you are the only Christian in your family or your class or in the group you play with. It may be that there are often quarrels in your home. Do you sometimes think, “It’s too hard, I can’t live for God here.” God is caring for you and gives you the help you need to live for Him. He wants you to share your problems with Him. In the Bible He says, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). You can be sure that His wonderful love for you and His care for you never end. Knowing that will give you joy, even when things are very difficult. The Jews were really rejoicing at what had happened.

Wherever the news spread there was great joy and gladness among the Jews. They feasted and celebrated. The Bible says that some of the other people even became Jews, they were so frightened about what was happening.

What would happen on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month?

Finally that day came but the Jews were not afraid. They came together to protect themselves and their property. They knew all too well that they had enemies who were very anxious to get their homes and lands.

The Jews were ready with their swords, but they did not plan to fight unless they were attacked.

Many of the Persians were too afraid to attack. Somehow there was great fear of the Jews everywhere. Even the rulers of the provinces helped the Jews for they had heard how powerful Mordecai had become in the palace.

Flashcard 6-2

Of course, there were many who did attack and tried to take the Jews’ property. How do you think they got on? They were defeated, for God was with His people. There must have been many, many enemies of the Jews like Haman and they must have attacked the Jews very savagely, because thousands of Persians lost their lives in the fighting. The Jews did not take over their land and houses. They were not filled with hatred, like their enemies.

At the end of that day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, not one Jew was missing! God had certainly been with His people, caring for them each moment.

CTS

Show card with central truth.

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Some think it is possible that even the Persian army may have assisted the Jews in defending themselves because of Mordecai’s status in the kingdom.



It is interesting to note that it is mentioned three times that the Jews took nothing from their enemies. The writer seemed to want to emphasise that this battle was for self-defence, not personal gain.

CTS

Show card with application for the saved child: "Trust Him at all times".



Apparently the additional day of fighting took place only in Shushan. The rest of the kingdom only fought on the first day. This accounts for the two-day celebration at the end of the story.

Purim (also known as the Feast of Lots) is still celebrated by Jews

CTS

today in the same way in February - one month before Passover.

CTU

Read the verses from your Bible.

Review game***Praise points***

Draw smiley faces on twelve small circles and add point values to the back of each.

Lay them point side down on a table, floor or wordstrip board.

Divide the class into teams and ask questions to the teams alternately.

If you are a child of God, He is the One Who cares for you. Often Satan will try to get you to stop living to please the Lord Jesus. Sometimes you'll feel a failure because you disobeyed God. During all those times God loves you and cares for you. If you are trusting the Lord Jesus He will care for you until He brings you to Heaven. There you'll know His wonderful love for ever and ever. So remember those words - "He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7b). He always cares for His own.

Flashcard 6-5

Of course the Jews were overjoyed at such a great victory. The next day - the fourteenth day of the twelfth month - they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness. All through the kingdom, in villages and towns, it was a day of rejoicing. In Shushan the Jews went on to celebrate on the next day as well.

In the palace Mordecai was now next to the king in honour. He and Queen Esther wrote letters to the Jews telling them to celebrate on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the twelfth month each year.

They must never forget how their sorrow had been turned to joy. Even today the Jews keep those two days, called Purim, as holidays, reminding them of how God cared for His own people.

Surely if you know the Lord Jesus you must be saying, "I'm so glad I'm one of God's people." Thank Him for His great love, a love you can be sure of. Trust Him, even when things are difficult, for "He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7b).

It may be that you know you are not one of God's people but you really want to be. Are you willing to turn from the wrong in your life? Believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sin, will you trust Him to take away your sin and make you one of God's people? Then you will know His love and care in your life. Remember the Bible verse - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). If God is speaking to your heart today, trust the Lord Jesus. Then you will have everlasting life, you will never perish.

Review questions

- 1 What happened when the enemies of the Jews attacked them? (God allowed the Jews to fight off the attacks.)
- 2 Besides God, who else helped the Jews? (The rulers of the provinces.)
- 3 How can you know that God cares for us? (The Bible tells us so - "He cares for you" 1 Peter 5:7b.)
- 4 How many Jews were killed in the battle? (None.)
- 5 Why didn't the Jews take the property of their defeated enemies as they could have? (They were not filled with hatred, like their enemies, so they just wanted to save their families, not get rich.)

- 6 What did Mordecai and Esther do so that the Jews would not forget how their sorrow had been turned to joy? (They sent letters to the Jews telling them to celebrate on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the twelfth month each year.)
- 7 In the story of Esther, what are some ways God showed He is in control? (Answers will vary. Examples include God making Esther queen; allowing Mordecai to hear of the plot against the king; making the king unable to sleep so the book was read to him; giving Esther courage to go before the king for her people; etc.)
- 8 What does 1 Peter 5:7 say? (“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”.)

As a child answers a question correctly, he picks a circle and his team earns the points on the back.

This can also be played with the whole class working together toward a point goal.

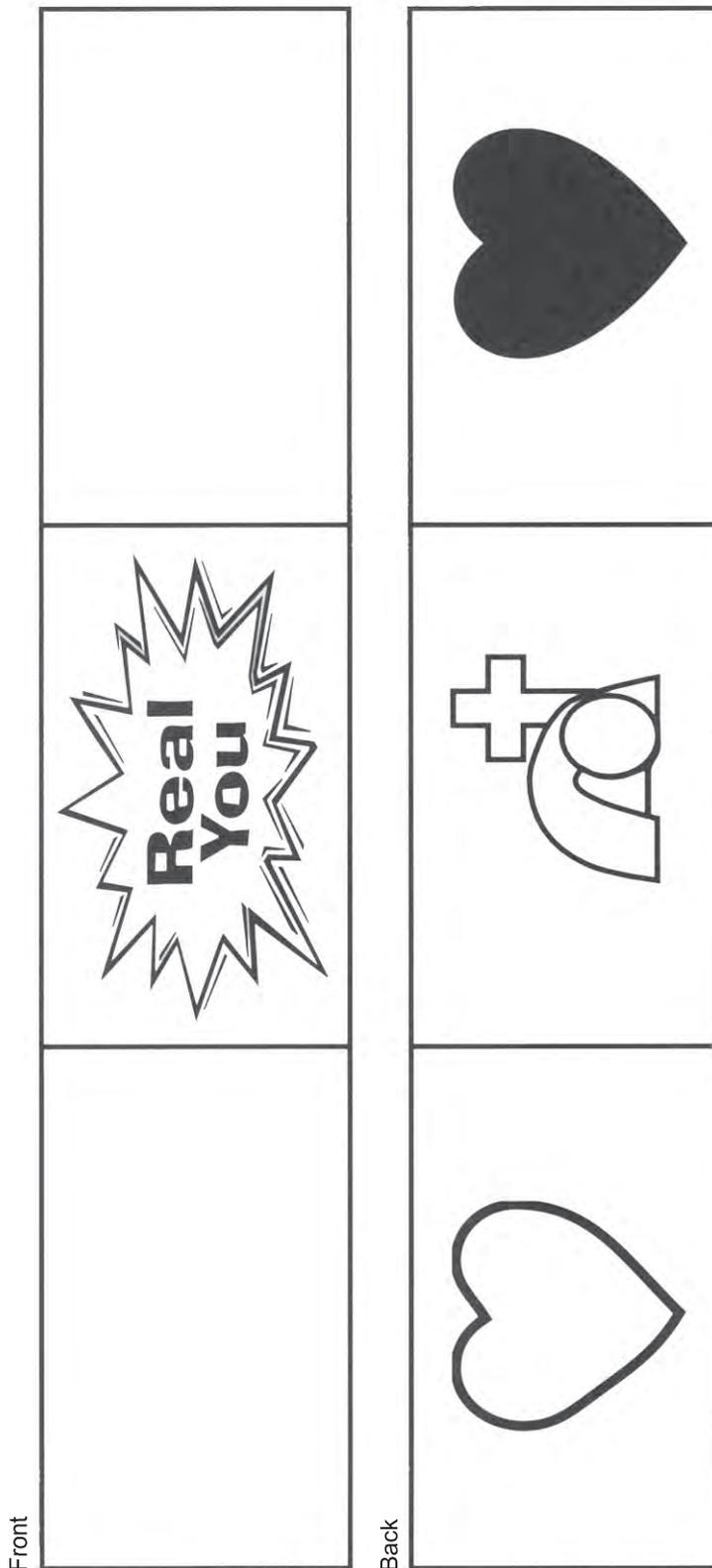
Pick a prayer

Review game - lesson 3

<p>Jeremiah 33:3</p> <p>"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."</p>	<p>Psalm 55:17</p> <p>"Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice."</p>
<p>Luke 6:28</p> <p>"Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."</p>	<p>Psalm 145:18</p> <p>"The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth."</p>
<p>1 Thessalonians 5:17</p> <p>"Pray without ceasing."</p>	<p>Romans 12:12</p> <p>"Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer."</p>
<p>Psalm 18:3</p> <p>"I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies."</p>	<p>Psalm 91:15</p> <p>"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him."</p>
<p>Philippians 4:6</p> <p>"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."</p>	<p>Hebrews 4:16</p> <p>"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."</p>
<p>Matthew 21:22</p> <p>"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."</p>	<p>James 5:16</p> <p>"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."</p>

Pride inside

Gospel presentation - lesson 4



Memory

Review game - lesson 4

Esther	Esther
Pride	Pride
Banquet	Banquet
Sceptre	Sceptre
Haman	Haman
Mordecai	Mordecai

Musical questions

Review game - lesson 5

1 What did Queen Esther ask the king for at the second banquet?	2 Why was King Ahasuerus angry with Haman?
3 What happened to Haman?	4 What did Esther want the king to do after Haman had died?
5 What right did the new law give to the Jews?	6 What was God's plan to save you from sin?
7 What did the Jews have to be thankful for after the new law came out?	8 How can you have peace rather than war between you and God?

Let the Lord have His way

Anonymous

Anonymous

Let the Lord have His way in your life ev - 'ry

day. There's no rest, there's no peace, un - til the Lord has His

way. Place your life in His hand. Rest se - cure in His

plan. Let the Lord, let the Lord have His way.

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Let the Lord have His way

Teaching the song

Song

“Let the Lord have His way”

Introduction

What does a school patrol man do?

Allow the children to respond.

How does it help you to let him tell you what to do? (It keeps you safe.) The school patrol man can help you get across the street safely, but if you let God have His way, He can take care of your whole life.

Presentation

Sing the song for the children while showing visual.

Explanation

“The Lord” is another way of saying “God”. You can let God have His way in your life by obeying the things He tells you in His Word, the Bible. What is it called when you don’t obey God’s Word? (Sin.) Sin is choosing your own way instead of God’s way. What are some sins (wrong things) boys and girls your age think, say or do?

Briefly discuss.

Sin causes you to feel restless inside and not have peace because it separates you from God. If you don’t have your sins forgiven, you will be separated from God forever and kept out of Heaven. But God loves you and made a way for your sin to be forgiven when He sent His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus, to suffer, bleed and die on the cross. Jesus’ body was buried in a tomb but three days later He rose from the dead. Today He’s in Heaven! God provided the way to be forgiven of your sin and to know His wonderful rest and peace.

Application

Unsaved: The first thing you need to do to follow God’s plan and let Him have His way in your life is to trust Jesus as your Saviour. This is the one way God provided for your sin to be forgiven.

Give an invitation to trust Christ.

Saved: If you have already put your trust in Jesus, you should read God’s Word and do what it says. Let God have His way in everything you think, do and say.

Repetition

Have the children sing the song with you once. Have them stand and sing it again. Then have each child turn to another child and sing the song as if talking to him or her. Review the song in upcoming classes.

G-O-S-P-E-L means good news

R.E.T.

Ruth E. Turnwall

G D7 G D7

G - O - S - P - E - L spells gos - pell Spells

G D7 G

Gos - pell G - O - S - P - E - L means

D7 G C G C G

Good News! Means Good News! Je - sus died for sin - ful men.

A7 D A7 D G

But He a - rose and lives a - gain. One day He's com - ing for

Am G Am G D7 G

those who've trust - ed Him. Com - ing to take us to Heav - en.

Copy, cut out and keep in your Bible



Summary of steps for counselling the child who wants to come to Christ

Make sure the child understands about

God

Who is God?
God made us. He speaks to us through the Bible.
God is holy and pure. He loves us.

Sin

What is sin?
Sin is disobeying God's commands. It is against God.
Speak about specific sins.
The child is a sinner by nature and act. (We sin because we are sinners.)
Sin deserves punishment.

The Saviour

Who alone can take away your sin?
God the Son died on the cross for sinners.
The Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.
He is Lord of all.

Explain how to be saved

Explain what the Lord wants us to do, and what He will do.
Use a Bible verse (*John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; Acts 16:31; Romans 6:23 or 10:13*).
What does the Lord want you to do?
What will the Lord do?
Warn about difficulties.
Ask: "Do you want to trust Christ, or would you rather wait?"
Encourage the child to pray audibly (if ready).

Speak about assurance of salvation

Go back to the Bible verse you used.
Speak about a changed life.
Tell him what the person who is truly trusting in Christ can know.

Give (later) some advice about the Christian life

Read and obey your Bible.
Talk to God, our Heavenly Father.
Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
Ask God to forgive you when you sin.
Meet with other Christians.
Remember the Lord promises: "*I will never leave you*" (*Heb 13:5*).