

*Get Ready!***Esther**

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Text

Esther

**Key Quest Verse**

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.” Proverbs 16:9

Bible Background

Persia was a world power during Esther’s time and the king was one of the wealthiest people in the world ruling 127 provinces. Kings loved to flaunt their wealth and even wore jewels in their beards. Soldiers wore jewelry in battle to show their rank. Before a battle Persian kings threw a huge celebration to prove they had resources and also to plan strategy for their war. King Xerxes was planning to invade Greece and planned a celebration for about six months. It was during this celebration that he requested his wife’s (Vashti) presence. He had been drinking for seven days and was drunk and demanded for her to appear to show her off. She refused and he was furious. He exiled her. Historical sources call Xerxes a mad man. He once ordered a bridge to be built and it was destroyed in a storm. He had the bridge builders beheaded and ordered that the sea be given 300 lashes. Once a loyal member in the community donated a large sum of money for the military, Xerxes returned the money along with a huge gift. When the same man asked that one of his sons not have to serve in the military, Xerxes was so furious he ordered that the son be cut in half and the army was to march between the halves of the boy’s body. Was this a sane man? What was Esther getting herself into? (Information from Compton’s) No one is sure who wrote Esther. The book of Esther demonstrates that God is all powerful and in control. His love for His people and Esther being in the right position to be able to make intercession shows how much God is in control. The book of Esther institutes the celebration of Purim for all Jewish people.

*Get Ready!***Lesson Quest**

What I want my students to:

Know: God is in control.

Feel: God is always there.

Do: Pray for God to be with me.

Leader's Devotion

What do you know about Princess Diana of Wales? What made Princess Diana so popular? We know so much about this royal person we have never met and why? By the end of the lesson on Esther, try to make your students as familiar with Esther as you are with the fairy tale true-life story of Princess Diana. How can you do that? Daydream and think of what Esther's life was compared to what you've heard of Princess Diana's life. Place yourself in Esther's shoes and how you would feel, act, and respond. Transfer those feelings to your students by telling the story as if you were Esther. Send them an invitation for a special banquet the way that Esther requested the King for a special meal. It was no accident that Esther was placed in a position long before the Israelites faced the possibility of being destroyed. God is in control of our lives. We never know how God is going to use us. God is in control!



Get Set!



Option A

Materials: Ring pops, bag

I have a hidden treasure in this bag that everyone likes. Would you like to guess what it is? I'll pass the bag around and each one of you can smell what's inside and feel. Don't say anything until each person has had a chance to feel and smell our treasure. (Pass bag around). Can you guess what's inside? Right, they are rings. In our story, we're going to learn about a very rich king who loved to show off all his jewelry and liked for everyone to know that he was in control of everything. He was so silly he thought he was even in control of storms and one day when a storm blew a bridge down he was building, he ordered that the sea be spanked 300 lashes and that the men building the bridge had to be killed. Was he in control of the storm? Who is really in control of everything? Let's go to our story and see.

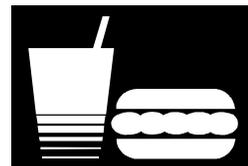
GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

Materials: McDonald's item (bag, French fry bag, cup, etc.)

Who likes to go out to eat? What's your favorite place to go eat? What do you think the most popular restaurant is? My guess would be that the most popular restaurant in the entire world is McDonald's. (Hold up your McDonald's item.) I have some very interesting facts about McDonald's. There are over 30,000 McDonald's restaurants in over 120 countries and they serve 45 million people every day. McDonald's uses over three million pounds of potatoes a day. That's a lot of fries! In our story today we're going to learn about a king who had a celebration for 180 days and served many people lots of food and drinks kind of like McDonald's. This king even had a different designed gold glass for each guest. Does McDonald's have a different decorated glass for each customer? Let's learn more about this king and what he did.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY



Get Set!



Bible Story

Materials: None

King Xerxes of Persia was the ruler over 127 provinces. In the United States we don't have provinces we have 50 states. So how many (like) states did I say the king was over? (127) King Xerxes was like the president over all these states. He was very powerful. He was having a huge party or banquet for all the important people of his country and they were deciding what to do to take more land. He was so happy partying and he wanted to brag and show everybody how beautiful his wife was and also let everyone see all her expensive jewelry. He said, "Get my wife and tell her to come here so I can brag and show her off." His servants told his wife Vashti, "Come your king is drunk and he has ordered you to come so he can show you off!" She said "NO!" Can you imagine how that made the king feel? What do you think our president would do if he was on television and he said "Wife come and let all the people see you" and she said, "NO!" King Xerxes was mad, especially when his servants told him that this would make all the other women in the country get sassy and not listen to anything the men told them. So King Xerxes ordered that she be exiled or thrown out of the palace and she was to never see him again. After a while the king was lonely and thought, "I'm lonely!" He commanded that a beauty pageant be held and he would pick the new queen from the most beautiful women in the land. Esther was an orphan being raised by her cousin Mordecai. Mordecai told her to keep a secret and not tell anyone that she was an Israelite or Jew because a lot of people in the Persian nation did not like Israelites. She entered the beauty contest and was taught what to do for a year before she was called to go before the king. The king liked her so much that he crowned her queen. Mordecai, Esther's cousin, was a very important man and he sat at the king's gate where legal affairs of the country were conducted. He knew a lot of business that was going on in the country. One day he heard men planning a plot to kill the king. He told Queen Esther to be sure and tell the king about the plot to kill him. The king appreciated that he was told and wrote about it in his diary. Haman was a high ranking official in the king's service and loved to walk through the crowds and have everyone bow down to him. As he walked along, everyone bowed except one... Mordecai. That really ticked Haman off and he wanted to do something to get rid of Mordecai. He thought and thought about what he could do. Mordecai was not about to bow down to Haman and let a man take the place of God. Haman hated Mordecai and the Jews so much he plotted to get rid of all of them. He went to the king and told him that the Jews or Israelites were becoming too strong and didn't obey the king and that they should all be killed before they tried to overthrow the government. The king thought Haman was thinking only of what was best for the king and his kingdom and made the order for all Jews or Israelites to be killed. Do you remember what secret Esther was keeping? What was going to happen to her? Mordecai heard about the terrible order and went to Esther to tell her what was going to happen.

Get Set!



Bible Story

Esther could have ignored the news since she was safe in the castle and not worried about anybody but herself but she didn't want her people to be destroyed. She asked for all the Israelites to fast or not eat for three days and pray to God to know what to do. The rules of the king were that no one would go to him unless he requested their presence. If someone went into his room without being invited, he could just have them killed. What was Esther going to do? Esther knew what the king's order meant, she had to act! After 3 days of all God's people not eating and praying to God. Esther knew what she had to do. She had to go to the king. Esther was calm and entered the king's palace without being invited. She knew she could be put to death. She saw the king and he was pleased that she had come. He asked her what she wanted. She probably acted very meek and shy and said, "I really wanted to invite you to a special banquet, just for you and Haman." The king was happy and said he would come. Haman was more than happy because he thought he was one of the queen's favorite people. Do you think he was? Why or why not? The king and Haman went to the banquet only to be invited to another banquet. This made Haman very excited and he made plans to have a gallows built to hang Mordeca so that all the people could see what would happen if you didn't bow down to Haman. That night the king couldn't sleep and started reading his writings. He turned to the section that talked about when Mordeca had told him about the plot being planned to have him killed. The king never rewarded Mordeca for saving his life. The next morning when Haman came to see the king, the king asked, "What do you think should be done to honor an important man?" Now Haman knew that Queen Esther liked him since she had invited him to two banquets but now it sounded as if the king really liked him too and wanted to do something special to honor him. Haman didn't take long to answer. Have a parade through the city and let the man of honor ride on the king's horse and wear the king's royal robes. King Xerxes agreed, "That's a great idea...call Mordeca and give him a parade of honor for saving my life and you can lead the horse through the city." What do you think Haman thought of that? He was not happy and couldn't wait to hang Mordeca! At the second banquet the King said, "My queen what do you want." Queen Esther told the King that someone had a plot to have her killed. The king couldn't believe it! "Who would do such a thing?" "Haman," was Esther's answer. The king was mad and had Haman hung on the gallows that was made for Mordeca. There was still a problem! The king ordered for all Jews or Israelite's to be killed and he couldn't take it back. The king ordered for Esther and Mordeca to write a new order that if someone came to kill the Israelites that they could fight back. Normally they were not allowed to fight back but just be killed. No Israelites were killed that day! The king honored Mordeca and gave him his signet ring putting him in the position that Haman had been. Esther trusted in God and God was in control. God used Esther to save her people. "Purim" is the celebration each year that is to remember how Esther saved her people. The Jewish people do "Purim" plays and celebrate every year just like we do Christmas plays each year and celebrate. Esther served God and God saved His people because of Esther!

Go!

ART/CRAFT

Materials: Disposable wineglasses, glue, jewels, 1/4” squares of multi-colored construction paper

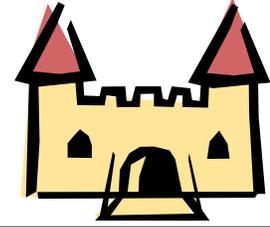
Quest Connection

King Xerxes gave a celebration banquet for all the people. He had golden cups or wineglasses and each one was different. Today we’re going to decorate wineglasses.

Procedure: Give each student a wineglass, glue stick, and jewels or colored paper. Let them create a unique wineglass and discuss the story of Xerxes or Esther’s banquet.

Close

Esther trusted in God to keep her safe and save her people and God did.

Go!**Cracker Castle****FOOD**

Materials: Graham crackers, frosting, chex cereal, chocolate kisses, knives to spread frosting, cookie sheet

Quest Connection

We're going to build a castle. I would love to go see a castle. Would you? What do you think it would be like to live in a castle? Was Esther lucky or unlucky to be chosen by the king to be the queen? Why or why not?

Procedure: Spread a foundation or layer of mortar on the cookie sheet and set the crackers in it. To make the walls, place crackers vertically, gluing them to each other with mortar. Glue small crackers on the large ones for shutters and doors. Windows can be made from chex cereal. Place graham crackers in place on a sloped roof. Turrets can be made of Hershey kisses. Have a few extra materials for students to snack on. Save the castle until the second week of the lesson and let students retell the story of Esther going to the king to save her people.

Close

It seems like being a queen or king and living in a castle would be fun. Do you think it would be fun to hear that all your family and friends were going to be killed? Esther trusted in God that He would help her know what to do. She was patient and God helped her know what to do. We must be patient and ask for God's help just as Esther did. Know that God is in control.

Go!**Crowned In Glory****ART/CRAFT**

Materials: Resource Page picture of Esther, markers, plastic jewels (available at Wal-Mart), Q-tips, glue

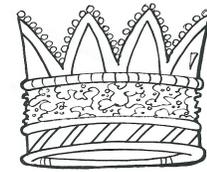
Quest Connection

Esther must have been beautiful. Do you think the King loved her? Do you think he gave her jewelry? Let's use markers to color Esther and then add jewels to her that the king may have given her.

Procedure: Give each student a Resource Page picture. Place markers in the middle of the table for students to share. Give each student the same number of jewels to be placed on Esther. Place glue on a disposable plate and let each student use a Q-tip to dot the jewel with glue and then place it on Esther.

Close

Do you think Esther was beautiful? Did Esther follow God because she was beautiful? Why was Esther brave? Whenever you are afraid and don't know what to do, ask God for help just like Esther did. God is always there for you.

Go!**Queen for the Day**

ART/CRAFT

Materials: Poster board or construction paper (or crowns), stapler, puffy paint, jewels**Quest Connection**

It was an honor for Esther to be crowned Queen. She was a faithful servant of God and she was rewarded by being chosen Queen.

Procedure: Before class cut enough crown front and backs so each child can have a crown. Staple the crown on one side and wait until the child has decorated the crown to fit it to their head and then staple the sides together. Let each student decorate their crown to either be Queen Esther or King Xeres or prince or princess for the royal celebrations.

Close

Esther worshipped God and trusted in Him. She became queen and saved her people who were God's chosen people the Israelites. The Israelites still celebrate today for what Esther did for them. We should think of Esther when we have a tough decision to make. Who did she trust? Who can we turn to and trust? God!

Go!**Tug-O-War****GAME**

Materials: Rope with a knot tied in the middle and masking tape in middle of floor for winner's line.

Quest Connection

We're going to play a game today to find out who is in control. We're going to divide into two teams. We're going to play a game of tug-of-war with this rope. Who do you think will win? Wait a minute, we don't have equal teams. There's one too many people on this team. I know what we can do... I'll get someone to make the teams equal. (If the teams are unequal... teacher make the teams equal... or ask a guest to come help. If the teams are equal... teacher be on one team and don't try too hard and then ask a guest to help. However, it is done an adult is needed to make sure their team is in control and wins.)

Procedure: Have teams hold either end of the rope and pull until team with guest or teacher is pulled across the winner line.

Close

What did you think of our game? In our game of tug-of-war, who was in control? What about Esther's life/who was in control? Sometimes we think we can do everything on our own. Can we? How do we let God be in control of our lives!

Go!**Skittles Review****GAME**

Materials: Large bag of Skittles, Ziploc bags

Quest Connection

Procedure: Let each student take one Skittle at a time, answering the corresponding question depending on the color of the Skittle (if the color does not have a question, the student can pick their color). Reward the students at the end of class with their own small Ziploc bag of Skittles.

Red

1. Why is Esther popular today with the Israelites? She saved the Israelites
2. Why did the king get rid of the first queen? She wouldn't come to him.
3. What was the king's name that wanted to marry Esther? Xerxes
4. God's chosen people are the _____? Israelites
5. Why was Esther brave? She trusted in God and saved her people.
6. Who raised Esther? Cousin Mordeca

Orange

1. Was Esther the only girl chosen to go before the king? No
2. What did the people do when Haman came? Knelt down
3. What was Esther's cousin's name? Mordeca
4. Did Esther have any relatives? yes
5. What did Haman want Moredeca to do? Bow down to him
6. What did Esther do before she went before the king's beauty contest? Got ready

Purple

1. Did Esther grow up with her sisters and brothers? no
2. What was Mordeca's niece's name? Esther
3. What did Esther invite the king too? Banquet
4. What secret did Esther have? She was an Israelite
5. Who got to ride on the special horse through town? Mordeca
6. What made the king think of Mordeca? Reading his book

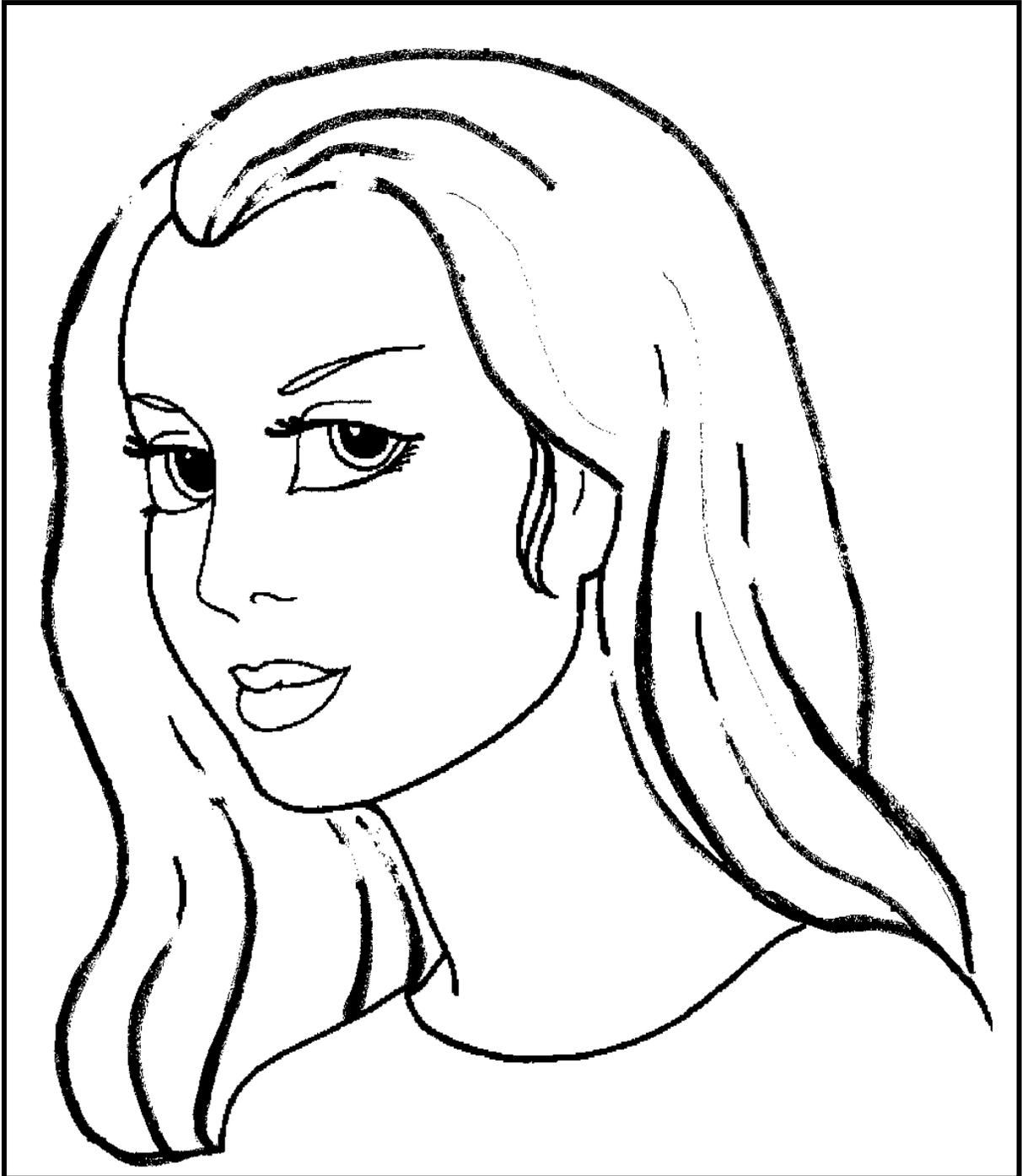
Green

1. What did Modeca let the king know was being planned? Plot to kill the king.
2. What did Esther want to tell the king? She and her people were doomed.
3. What was Haman planning for Mordeca? To hang him.
4. What is the name of God's chosen people? Israelites
5. Why did Haman tell the king to have a parade through the town? For him he thought.
6. What book of the Bible do we find today's story in? Esther

Close

Thanks for playing our review game. I'm so glad we learned so much from Esther's story!

Resource Page: Color Esther and glue jewels around her neck and in her hair.



“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”
Proverbs 16:9

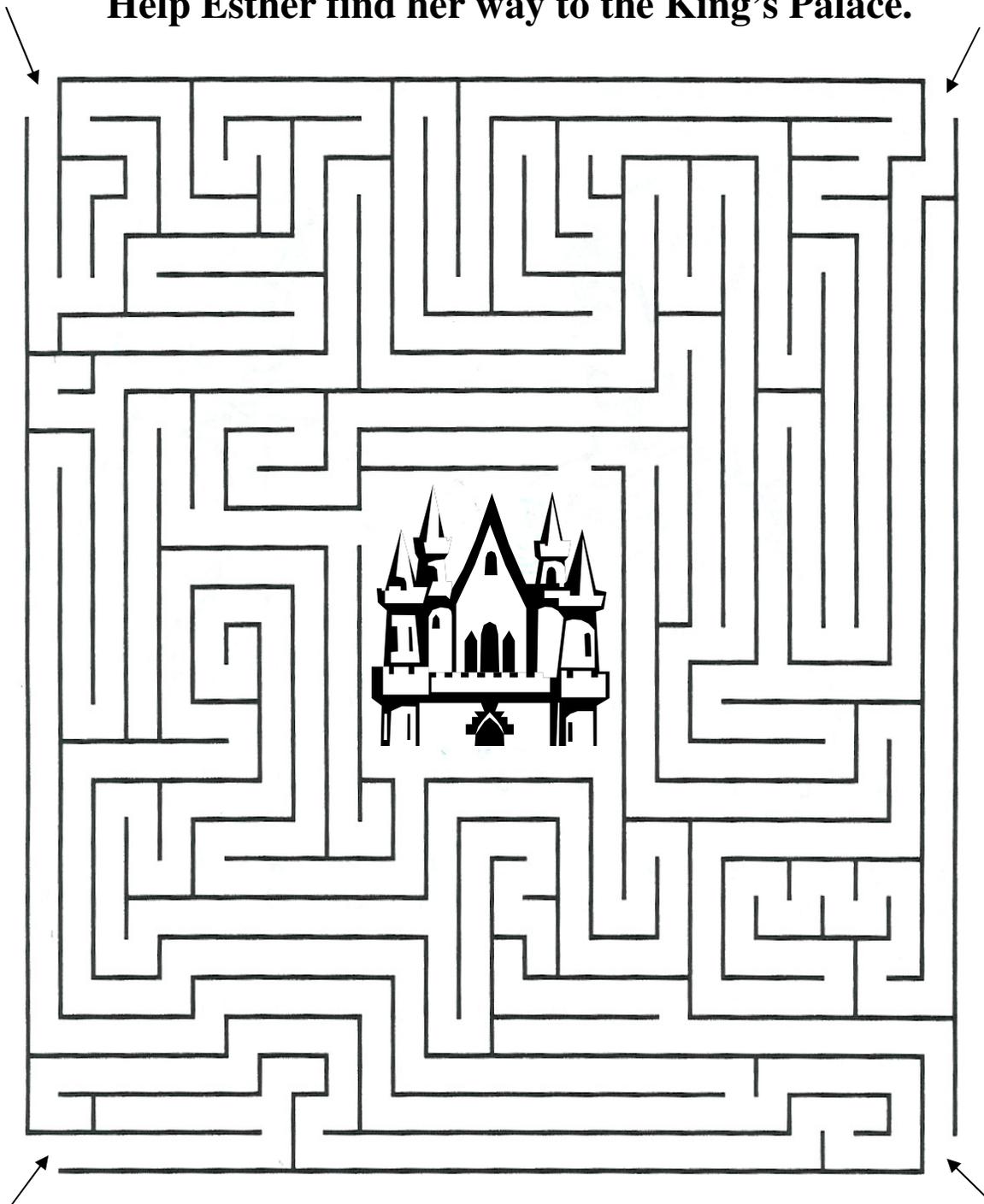
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Color By Number:

- 1. RED
- 2. PINK
- 3. PURPLE
- 4. YELLOW
- 5. GREEN



Help Esther find her way to the King's Palace.



Journal Page: **Draw a picture of Queen Esther in her wedding gown.**



Name: _____ Date: _____

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