

*Get Ready!***Queen Esther**

By: Annie Wagganer

**Text**

Esther

Key Quest Verse

“Yet who knows—maybe it was for a time like this that you were made queen.” Esther 4:14b

Bible Background

The story of Esther takes place between the return of the first group of Jewish exiles from Babylon, 538 B.C., and the second group, which was led by Ezra in 458 B.C. Relatively few Jews, less than 50,000, chose to return to their homeland. A majority of the captive Jews had been born in Babylon and had established themselves there. Esther and Mordecai were among the majority who chose to stay with their captors in the Persian Empire. If all Jews had returned to Jerusalem, then this book might not have been written.

At this point in history, King Xerxes was ruling the Persian Empire. Extremely handsome and a great builder, he was a cruel king. For instance, when Vashti refuses to present herself to the king and male guests, the king became a laughingstock. To reclaim his honor and to defend himself, he had the queen deposed. Despite the cruelty of his action, this event paved the way for Esther to become queen. She used her beauty and position to gain the king’s favor and approached him with requests. In light of the king’s treatment of Vashti, Queen Esther’s assertive actions were courageous.

Esther rose to a place of prominence at the right time. Though she concealed her heritage, having a Jew in the palace at the same time as Haman allowed the Jews to be spared annihilation. This seeming coincidence shows God working throughout history. Though the book of Esther does not mention God, it clearly expresses that God is the power behind the actions. Each event has a purpose that leads to another event. It shows us how God works in everyone’s life. He has a plan and purpose for each of us, just as He placed Esther in the right place at the right time.

written by Jennifer Wetzel

Get Ready!

Lesson Quest

What I want my students to:

- Know:** God is in control even when our circumstances seem out of control.
- Feel:** Impassioned to live for Christ, no matter the earthly costs.
- Do:** Seek spiritual guidance through prayer, fasting, and Godly council.

Leader's Devotion

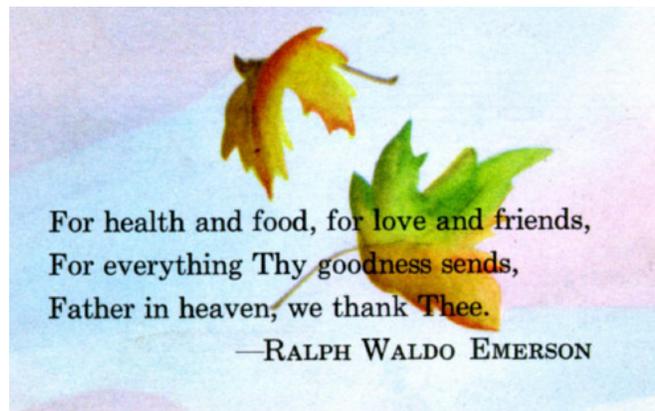
I want to buy a better car than my '92 Toyota Corolla. I want to teach at a community college. I want to have a family of my own. I want to live close to my brother and his wife and their children. I want to get my to-do list done tomorrow. I want to visit New England. Ever wonder what Esther wanted? Did she want to enjoy the benefits of being a queen? Did she want to live outside of the palace? Did she have a list of things she needed to get done? Of course, I don't know these answers, but I do know that when her life was interrupted for the purpose of saving the Jews, she stood up to and met the challenge. I love it when Mordecai says to Esther, "maybe it was for a time like this, you were made queen!" In the moments when I don't want to answer to God's calling because I'm scared, or I'm busy working on a list of to-dos, I am reminded, "Annie, maybe it was for a time like this!" I wonder what Esther's wants were, how they would compare to my own in this century. But I don't wonder who Esther served first, it was not herself, or her wants, it was her God. It is my hope that when others look at my life, they might not know my wants, but that they will know who I serve first. Let your students know who you are serving, let them know He's the same God Esther served first.

Get Set!

Option A

Materials: Famous quotes found in the Teacher Resources.

Quiz students on who said which quote. Give them clues if they need it, for instance, let them know if the quote belongs to a political leader or movie star. End with Queen Esther’s quote, “If I must die for doing it, I will die,” found in Esther 4:16b. **Many people are famous because of something they said, but today we want to read more about Esther to find out what it is that she not only said, but *did*, that merited an entire book in the Old Testament.**



GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

Materials: None

Take the first five minutes of class to discuss a hero in each student’s life. Allow each student to share someone in their life or maybe someone they have only heard of that they consider a hero. Ask: **What makes someone a hero? Do all heroes share certain qualities? We’re going to read in the book of Esther about this woman’s life, a life that included saving an entire race of people, the Jews. Let’s see after we read the story if you’d consider her a hero.**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!



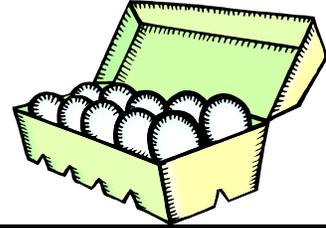
Bible Story

Advanced Preparation: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles. Read through the entire book of Esther so that you can summarize briefly the events leading up to and following chapter 4.

Read Esther 4 out loud together.



Go!



Real Fear

OBJECT LESSON

Materials: Several eggs, plastic wrap

Quest Connection

If I let this egg roll off the table and onto the floor, what do you think will happen? Well, let's see. Allow the egg to roll off the table and fall to the floor breaking on plastic wrap you have already placed for easy clean-up. **You were right, it broke. What about a second egg? Do you think it will crack too?** Roll it off the table and let it break. **Maybe that was just a coincidence, maybe a third egg wouldn't crack. What do you think? Maybe if someone else besides me rolled it off the table the outcome would change.** Let one student roll it off the table, but this time, step in and catch it before it hits the floor. **The law of gravity says that each egg that rolls off of the table will hit the floor and crack. But, what the law of gravity doesn't know is that I am able to intercept the egg in the air and prevent the egg from falling further and cracking. Unlike these eggs, Queen Esther could anticipate the danger she would put herself in if she went to the King without his request to see her first. It was the law that he could put her to death, just like gravity makes it inevitable for the eggs to break, it was certain she faced the possibility of dying if she did what Mordecai asked of her and approach the King. Esther and this egg were able to rely on another power, a greater power, to step in on their behalf and protect them from danger. Esther still had legitimate reasons for being afraid. But Mordecai reminded her that her fear might stop her from going to the king, but it wouldn't stop God from helping the Jews. Esther overcame her fear and did go to the King and ultimately was able to save her people.**

Close

We aren't going to go through life without any fear. It is an emotion that can often help us know when we are in danger. But at other times our fear of the unknown can hold us back and hinder us from doing mighty things for God. Next time you face a scary situation, remember Esther. Even though she had the right to be afraid, she was able to overcome her fear and face all the possible danger ahead of her. We may feel like an egg headed for inevitable doom, but let's always remember there is a God who can reach out to catch us and prevent us from falling. What an awesome God that Esther served and that we still serve today!

Go!**Right Time & Place****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Worksheet, *For a Time Like This*, pencils

Quest Connection

Do you think it's possible for God to use us even when we don't know we are being used for His purpose? Allow for discussion. In verse 14 in chapter 4, what does Mordecai say to Esther? Have a student read the Scripture. Mordecai basically tells Esther she has the opportunity to save the Jews and quite possibly this is the very reason she is Queen, to be the right person, in the right place, at the right time. I want us to think about the people we know in different areas of our lives, through our various roles as students, athletes, musicians, sisters, sons. I want us to also think about difficult situations we are in right at this moment, challenges we are facing, or obstacles that are in our way. And finally, let's think about the gifts and abilities each of us has. On your worksheet, begin to brainstorm and write down what comes to your mind for each box. Maybe, right now God has you in a particular circumstance, or in a specific relationship with someone, or in the right situation to be able give of your resources. Look over each box and try to recognize at least one area where God is ready to use you to do good for others.

Close

Let's pray together that as God directs our lives, we will continue to look at the people we know, the difficulties we face and the gifts that we have as opportunities to be in the right time at the right place.

Go!



King vs. King

FIELD TRIP

Materials: Transportation for the students to collectively go out to eat for breakfast, or, breakfast foods and willing adults to serve the breakfast to the students, waiting on their every need!

Quest Connection

Procedure: Arrange for your class to eat breakfast together, make sure it is in an environment where the entire class is being waited on and no one in the class has to serve another person in the class, a completely relaxed environment. Enjoy fellowship with each other, ask questions to get to know each other better. Also discuss:

Isn't it so nice to be waited on, to have someone else cook the food, serve the food and clean up after we eat? Has anyone here ever been a server at a restaurant? Has anyone else ever had to serve someone and do whatever they asked of you? How do you think it would have felt to be the King back in the day of Esther—to have everyone not only serving you, but afraid to even come near you without your permission? Do you think it would be easy to become unfriendly or demanding? Esther was afraid just to approach King Xerxes. Can you imagine being a server and being afraid to approach one of your tables? Have you ever felt like you cannot approach God? That He doesn't want to be bothered by you? Have you ever felt not worthy? God is different from earthly kings, God desires us, His children to approach Him. He calls us all to be servants, serving Him as well as each other. He does not tell us to seek power, to seek control over others, but to instead carry each others' burdens and seek the good of each other. But we do not have to serve out of fear, rather we serve out of love. What is the difference? King Xerxes is dead today, but our King lives forever. Praise God we can serve Him!

Close

Thanks for a wonderful breakfast. It is nice to be waited on, but it is most important to serve!

Go!



Loyalty to The King

GAME

Material: Various candy

Quest Connection

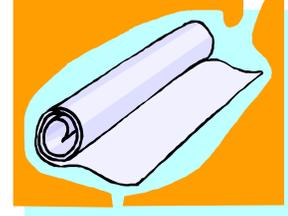
Procedure: Divide the class into two teams. Have one person from each team sit on a chair facing the other team while their team members stand behind the chair facing the opposing team as well. The object of the game is for each team to convince the other opposing team member that is sitting down to join their team and come to their side. Give each team different candy to use as enticement if they need it. The idea is to have the most loyal team member and whoever loses their member to the other side first loses. If neither team can win, offer one person money to come to your side, the teacher's side and see if that works!

Sometimes it is so hard to be loyal! Why is that? Allow for discussion. In Esther's case, it was hard to be loyal to her people when it meant putting her life on the line. She faced a challenging choice—should she remain loyal no matter what, to the point of death, or should she choose to be loyal to the king instead and try to save her own life. It sounds like a huge, one time, monumental choice Queen Esther made, and it was a big deal. But you know, we make choices like this one probably close to every day. Who are we going to be loyal to? Will we choose to follow Christ no matter what, or will we give in to try and save our pride, or our money, or our friendships, or our popularity. It's not a one time decision, it is a choice we are faced with all the time and often, it can feel like a hard one to make. How can we make sure we remain loyal to our faith?

Close

Queen Esther said, "if I must die, I'll die." What an awesome example of loyalty for us to remember when it gets difficult to remain faithful to Christ.

Go!



Spiritual Friendships

DISCUSSION

Materials: Butcher paper, markers, large area to draw as well as to hang completed project, index cards, pens

Quest Connection

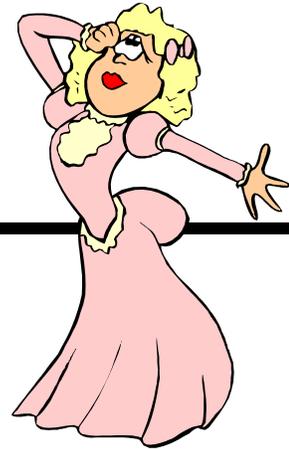
Procedure: Before class, draw three large squares on the butcher paper. Divide the class into two; direct one half to write down what friendship means, different ways to define the word friend and what comes to mind when discussing friendship in the first square. Have the other half of the class write down in the third square what friendship does NOT mean, what would keep someone from befriending another or ending a special friendship. Once each group is satisfied with their list and definitions allow both groups to agree or disagree with each others' ideas. Finally, in the middle square, have the class collectively discuss the benefits of friendship, specifically Christian friendships. Use chapter 4 in Esther to guide the discussion. Esther and Mordecai relied on each other for help, they valued the opinion of the other, they were spiritually accountable to one another, they were honest with each other.

The Christian friendship that Esther and Mordecai shared was vital in order for Esther to be able to save the Jews. Without Mordecai she would have been caught unaware, she might have shrugged her opportunity to make a difference. Likewise, Mordecai knew he could trust Esther, not just to care about him, but to pray and seek God's will. Christian friendships are vital to our every day lives, they make us stronger.

Close

Make your own list on an index card of the benefits of Christian friendships. It's not just about having Christian friends to encourage you, but being a Christian friend to strengthen another. Make this list for yourself and put it in the book of Esther as a bookmark, so that every time your Bible falls open and the index card is sticking up, you can be reminded of the importance of spiritual friendship and the example we have in Esther and Mordecai.

Go!



Am I Willing?

DRAMA

Materials: Video Camera, VCR, TV, scratch paper and pencil

Quest Connection

Procedure: Instruct the class that they will be writing their own movie today. It is to be a short video that captures the essence of heroic courage. It can be a comedy, a drama, even a scary movie, but it must portray a hero that faces extreme danger for a specific cause. Give the students 10-15 minutes to write the script and assign roles. Then allow 10 minutes for filming and another 5-10 minutes for viewing and wrap-up discussion. Give them enough freedom for creative genius to come alive and enough guidance to stay on task!

What an awesome movie—I see some great movie star potential in this class room! Let’s go back over the impressive movie and dissect it just a moment. First, who was the hero? What was the hero fighting for? What was the hero willing to do in order to try to win? How does this hero and heroic act compare to Esther? In Esther 4:16, what does it say she is willing to do in order to try and save her people? Now let’s think about the life of Jesus Christ. What was He ultimately willing to do in order to save not just the Jews, but the entire world? Right, He was willing to die, and not just die, but to suffer. How does it make you feel to know that the cause He died for was you? That you are important enough to His father and to Him to mean letting Himself be the sacrifice for your sins? Our movie we made in class today was great and Esther was truly a heroic woman, but there is no one that can compare to Jesus Christ. He took on the world, He took on the entire world’s sin, in order to save the entire world, which includes all of us here today. Now that’s an amazing hero story.

Close

Before we leave today I want us to take a few minutes and silently think to ourselves: What am I willing to risk, to do for Christ, in order to live for and obediently serve Him? He was willing to die for me; what am I willing to do for Him?

Famous Quotes

“Give me liberty or give me death.”

-Patrick Henry

“May the force be with you.”

-Obi Wan Konobi (or any Star Wars character)

“I have a dream.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Four score and seven years ago.”

-Abraham Lincoln

“Only you can prevent forest fires.”

-Smokey the Bear

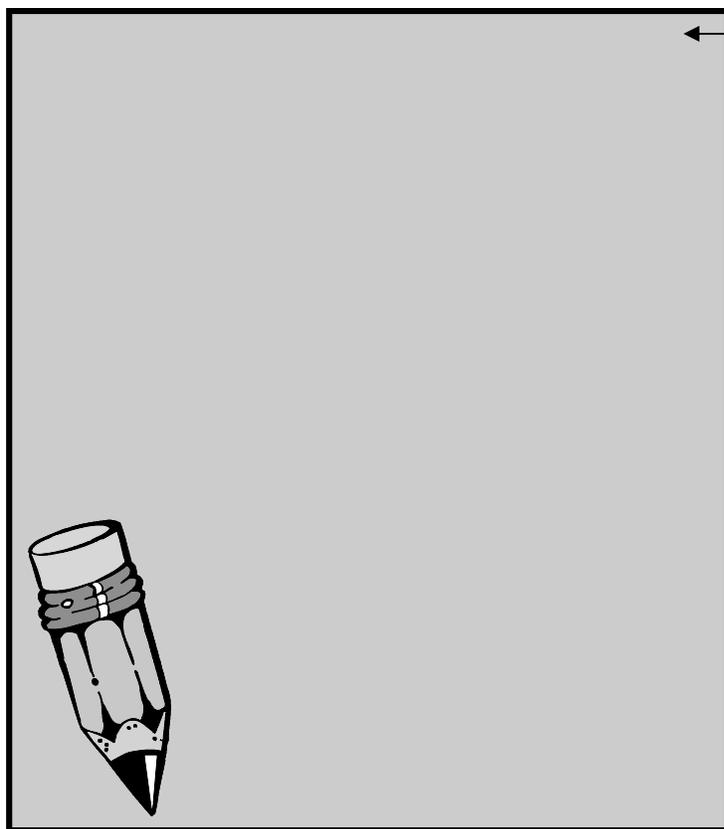
“Mama always said life is like a box of chocolates.”

-Forest Gump

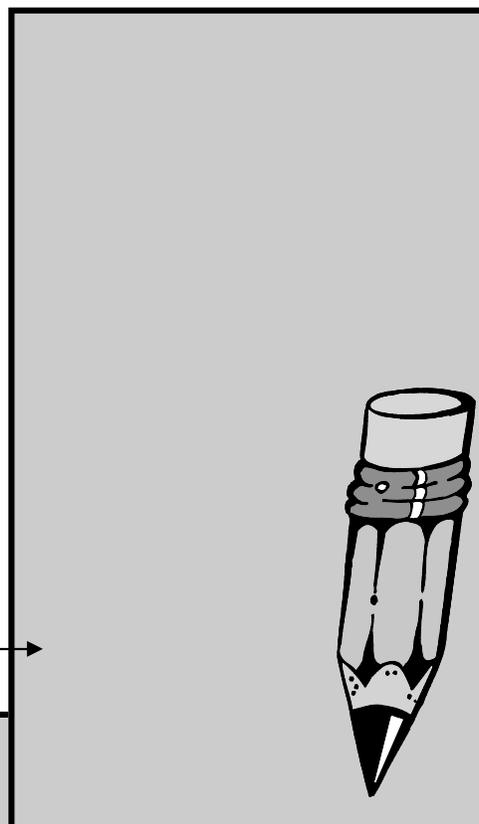
“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

-JFK

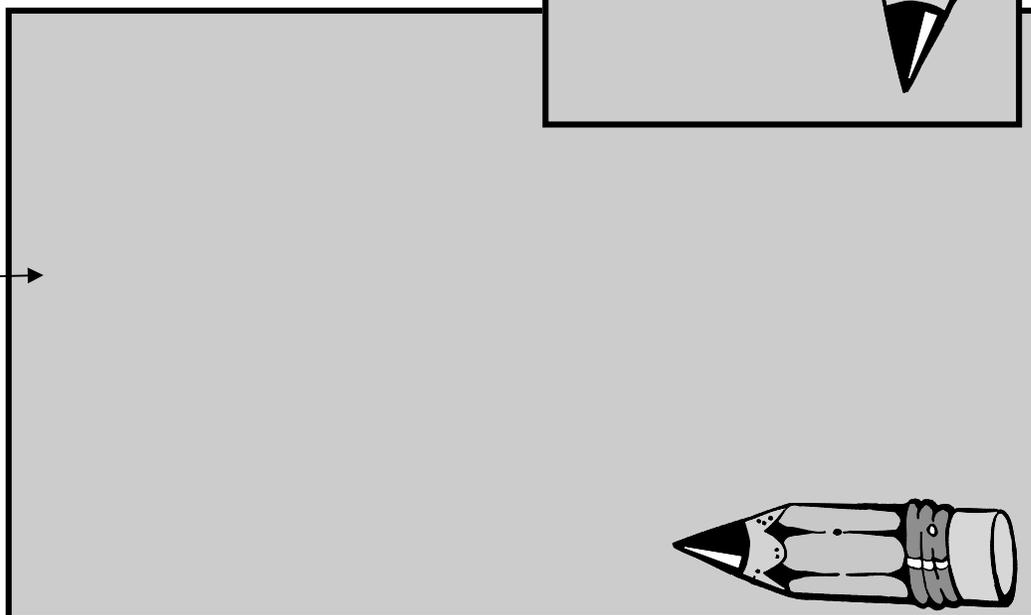
“FOR A TIME LIKE THIS...”



← ...people I know



→ ...difficult situations I face



→ ...gifts that I have

courage



1

Name the most courageous person you know:

2

If I had to give myself a grade for courage, I would give myself:

A+ B+ C+ D+ F+ Other _____

3

The hardest situation I am facing today is:

4

Read Deuteronomy 31:6. Write it in your own words:

5

Identify one courageous step you could take today:

“If I must die for it, I’ll die.”

