

Middle School

Teacher's Plans



April 19, 2020

Youth Topic:

Unit II. God Promises
a Just Kingdom

Justice Always Wins!

General Lesson:
**Injustice Will
Be Punished**

Lesson 8

Background Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7

Print Passage: Esther 7:1-10



Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request.” (*Esther 7:3*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, index cards, (**optional:** Youth Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

LESSON OVERVIEW

Dishonorable people often seem to achieve great power and wealth. What evidence is there that people will receive the recompense their evil deeds deserve? The story of Esther’s triumph over Haman’s plot provides assurance that evil does not prevail.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “What are some things you can do to overcome evil when someone sets a trap to mistreat or embarrass you?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Arrange the students in a circle. Direct everyone to participate in a “sentence prayer.” Explain that a sentence prayer involves everyone saying a one-sentence prayer, moving around the circle in a

clockwise direction. Let the theme of this prayer be “courage.” Begin the prayer and encourage the students to follow your example until everyone has prayed.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have the students read this week’s contemporary story and connect it this week’s lesson.

After the story is read, ask the students if they have ever been called upon to help someone who was struggling with a particular issue. Ask the students to discuss likely reasons why Kendrick wanted to help Montie. Tell the students that if God calls them to a certain mission, He will equip them with everything they need to be successful.

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Inspect the passage for the day. You will want to make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the passage for those who do not have a Bible with them.

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today’s text that should be used throughout teaching this lesson—in order to set the stage for the passage.

Today's lesson features King Xerxes, Queen Esther, Mordecai, and Haman. After King Xerxes's first wife, Vashti, was removed from her position as queen for refusing an order from her husband, Esther was selected to become the new queen. Mordecai was Esther's cousin. He held a high government position among the Jewish people. Haman was the king's right-hand man. He was boastful and evil. One day, Haman commanded Mordecai to bow down before him. Mordecai refused, which made Haman so angry that he vowed to kill Mordecai and all the Jews. Haman developed a plan to persuade the king to sign a new law that would authorize the killing of all the Jews. Mordecai told Esther about this cruel plan and asked her to tell the king about her Jewish ancestry and to ask for his help in blocking Haman's wicked plan. Esther fasted and prayed to gain courage to go before the king with her request.

Esther invited the king and Haman to two banquets. Haman thought he was to be honored, but Esther was only building a plan to tell the king about Haman's hateful plan to destroy the Jews. The king loved Esther, so when she told him about what Haman was planning to do, the king believed her. The king ordered that Haman be hanged on the same gallows that he had built for Mordecai's hanging. Esther's bravery and favor with the king saved her and her people from being destroyed.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Esther 7:1-10)

1 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, **2** and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." **3** Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. **4** For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no

such distress would justify disturbing the king." **5** King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?" **6** Esther said, "An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. **7** The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. **8** Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?" As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. **9** Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Impale him on it!" **10** So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Examine the intersections of the passage. What is the passage about? How was it heard at the time? How does it apply now?

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "During Queen Esther's time, the king had authority to kill people who approached his throne without permission. Knowing the customs of the land, Queen Esther had to be very careful about how she planned to tell the king about Haman's evil plan. But Queen Esther's own cousin, Mordecai, insisted she talk to the king. Mordecai did not want harm to come to Esther, but he realized her relationship with the king was the best hope of stopping the Jews from being destroyed." Emphasize this point: "Queen Esther had to set her own comfort aside and do what was best for an entire group of people. Likewise, sometimes we may have to set aside our own comfort in order to be a blessing to someone else."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Work on the passage from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book has been read, ask the students how they would have reacted if they would have been asked to talk to the king about Haman’s plot to kill the Jews. Allow the students some time to discuss this statement. Emphasize the point that believers should be willing to speak up for those who are being mistreated in some way. Encourage the students to always seek guidance from God as to the right way to intervene for others.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Show how this Scripture applies to present day.

Explain how Queen Esther chose to represent her people before the king, even though she lived a life of comfort. Explain to the students how some situations in life may require them to be brave and speak up for others who may not have the confidence or ability to speak up for themselves. Assure the students that the Holy Spirit will empower them to accomplish great things when they desire to please God in their daily living.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Help the students think about how this Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, discuss with the students how Queen Esther’s favor with the king was likely based on the good relationship they shared. People often treat you the way you treat them. Those who want favor with God and with others must focus on being kind, respectful, loving, and loyal. By demonstrating these attributes, they reflect God’s image. Allow the students to discuss this point.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

Give the students this challenge for the week. Emphasize that they can do it!

Challenge the students to consider their actions when they are faced with a difficult personality or situation. Remind the students how Queen Esther took time to develop a plan before speaking to the king. Tell the students that a good strategy to try before they react to a situation is to (1) Stop! (2) Pray! (3) Listen! (4) React! Encourage the students to use this strategy and share their results.

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

Have the students play the game “Practicing Justice.” Instruct them to write down three ways to stand up for justice by helping people in their community who may have a special need. Guide the students through the example provided in the student book.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song that relates to this lesson.

Encourage the students to complete this week’s “Media Mission” activity. Invite them to discuss **JustServe.org**, which is a Web site where the volunteer needs of organizations may be posted and volunteers may search for places to serve in the community. Encourage the students to visit the Web site and learn how they might be able to assist others in their community: **<https://www.justserve.org/about>**. Help the students understand that they can be used to ensure justice and impact others in a positive way.

NOTES

High School

Teacher's Plans



April 19, 2020

Youth Topic: Unit II. God Promises
a Just Kingdom

Justice Always Wins!

General Lesson:
**Injustice Will
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Lesson 8

Background Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7

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PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, index cards, (**optional:** Youth Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])
- Prior to class, select a word for the day.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Sometimes, dishonorable people gain great power and wealth. What evidence is there that people will receive the punishment their evil deeds deserve? The story of Esther’s triumph over Haman provides assurance that evil does not prevail.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Share a time when you witnessed or heard about good triumphing over evil.”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Ask the students to share common sayings that relate to reaping what you sow (for example, “Every dog has his day”; “What goes around comes around”). Ask if anyone in the class has firsthand experience with the truth of these sayings. Allow time for comments.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have the students read this week’s contemporary story and relate it back to the main points of this week’s lesson.

Have the students read the contemporary story and then read and discuss the question posed at the end. When Sean did not get the job at Food King, he trusted that God was still working on his behalf. As you move into the lesson, share the following: (1) This lesson will show us how God causes all things to work together for our good, despite the evil intentions of others. (2) We must be careful not to set traps for others.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Inspect the passage for the day. You will want to make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the passage for those who do not have a Bible with them.

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's text that should be used throughout teaching this lesson—in order to set the stage for the passage.

The events of the book of Esther take place in Persia. God's name is never mentioned in the book, but God's unseen presence and sovereignty are seen as God orders the affairs of this narrative. The preceding chapters, 1–6, lead up to the events in chapter 7. Esther learned about the plot to kill the Jews from her cousin and interceded on behalf of her people.

Haman, an evil man, was promoted to the position of prime minister during Xerxes's reign in Persia. Haman was also the enemy to Mordecai (Esther's cousin) and to all the Jewish people. Haman, because of his connection with the king, persuaded the king to pass a law to have all Jews murdered. Esther used her position as queen to intercede on behalf of the Jewish people. Haman had no idea that Esther was a Jew. Esther requested the king's favor. Esther realized the importance of having favor with the king in order to protect her people and herself.

Esther arranged to have two banquets and invited the king and Haman to both. During the festivities of the second banquet, the king asked Esther about her request. Without mentioning Haman's name, Esther exposed Haman's hatred and his plot to kill the Jews. When the king asked who had ordered the massacre, Esther pointed her finger at Haman!

The tables had been turned on Haman. While the king went outside to cool his head and process what he just heard, Haman begged Esther (who was reclining on the couch) for mercy. When the king returned inside, however, he looked and thought that Haman was molesting his wife, the queen. Without seeking an explanation, the king ordered his servants to cover Haman's face and take him away! Haman (and his family) was hung on the same execution pole that Haman had set up for Mordecai.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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banquet, **2** and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." **3** Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. **4** For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king." **5** King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?" **6** Esther said, "An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. **7** The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. **8** Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?" As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. **9** Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Impale him on it!" **10** So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Examine the intersections of the passage. What is the passage about? How was it heard at the time? How does it apply now?

After the text in this section of the student book has been read, say, "God not only looks ahead and makes provisions for His goals, but also perfectly accomplishes whatever He sets out to do. Because God is sovereign, He is the divine superintendent of all things, and is able to guide any situation toward His own will and purposes. In Esther, we see God's hand directing matters behind the scenes. Although God's name is never mentioned, God's guidance, direction, and loving care of His people are certainly present and active throughout this book."

Inside Out (*interpretation*)

Work on the passage from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have the students read the text in this section of the student book (which is similar to this): “Sometimes in life, tough situations arise, and you just do not know what to do. Esther was in a situation like that. Her people were about to be wiped out because of one man’s hatred. In that desperate situation, Esther turned to God for help—fasting, praying, and trusting God to do the impossible. God gave Esther everything she needed: a cousin, Mordecai, who challenged her to take action; the faith to move forward; a community of Jews in Persia to pray with her; and a relationship with the king who said yes to her request.” Have the students to share a time when they realized that God had given them everything needed to face a big problem.

There’s an App for That! (*application*)

Show how this Scripture applies to present day.

Have the students read the text in this section of the student book (which is similar to this): “Esther may have been beautiful, but Mordecai challenged her with the thought that there may have been a better reason why God allowed her to be promoted to the position of queen—for the benefit of her people whose lives were suddenly in danger. Think about the blessings, positions, promotions, and opportunities God has allowed in your life. Most people are more interested in receiving a blessing than being a blessing.” Ask the students if they are willing to let God use them to be a blessing to someone else.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Help the students think about how this Scripture connects to them personally.

Have the students read the text in this section of the student book (which is similar to this): “God was working behind the scenes in every chapter of Esther’s life. While you may not understand what God is doing in your life, know that God cares about every detail of your life and nothing escapes God’s watchful eye.” Remind the students that God is concerned about the big and small matters in their lives.

Stepping Out! (*challenge*)

Give the students this challenge for the week. Emphasize that they can do it!

This week, the youth are challenged to identify a current event that has a negative impact on a group of people (community/society). Then, they are to develop a plan to use to improve and/or correct the situation.

MEDIA MISSION (*after you meet!*)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song that relates to this lesson.

The students are invited to visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HeV1QSRedo> and watch the video entitled “Exposed: The Injustice of Immigration Detention.” The video is an introduction to the unseen suffering of families from all walks of life whose lives have been made difficult by immigration detention. Encourage the students to consider sending an e-mail to their congressmen about the need for compassion in the U.S. immigration system.

NOTES
