

ESTHER





DEAR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS,

Often times when we read the bible we see phrases like, "God said," or "Jesus said," but when we read the book of Esther, we don't see that. Despite the absence of these phrases, when we read the book of Esther, we can see how God had a plan to take care of his people and how he can use his people to accomplish his purposes. Sometimes we see in scripture that God had to perform miracles and do big things through people to get their attention, but when we come to Esther, we see God use an ordinary woman to do mighty things for his kingdom.

Each card in this series will pull out one part of scripture to give children an overview of the book. You'll use the video provided (access via the QR code on each card) and be prompted to discuss some questions with the children in your home.

We pray that this short study will help your family learn that God is sovereign, or in control of all things. He can use ordinary people to accomplish his purposes.

-The Crossing Kids Team

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

1. Set aside 5-10 minutes each week to go through this devotional. There is one card per week.
2. Read the front of the card to your children to help them understand what's happening in the book of Esther.
3. Flip the card over to read the scripture and scan the QR code to watch the video. Each video will give an overview of the whole story of Esther, but the scripture and questions will focus on a different part of the story each week.
4. Discuss what you've learned using the questions provided.



WEEK 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Have you ever moved to a new city or gone to a new place where you didn't know very many people? Maybe you didn't feel like you fit in. That's what life was like for Esther and her people. Esther was a Jew living in Persia. This means that Esther was part of God's special family. She was called a Jew because her people were from Judah. Persia, the place Esther lived, had a king named Xerxes. Xerxes was a king known for taking bad advice and having a bad temper. So how did Esther end up queen of Persia?

Read the facts about Esther below, then flip this card over and scan the QR code to see how our story begins. Then, use the questions provided to help your family discuss what you just heard.

FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Who wrote the book of Esther? *Unknown*

Who will we meet in this story? *King Xerxes, Haman, Esther, Mordecai (Esther's cousin who adopted her)*

When did these events take place? *Between 483 and 471 B.C.*

Where did these events take place? *In Persia's capital, Susa, a royal city built by the king.*



WEEK 1: READ & WATCH

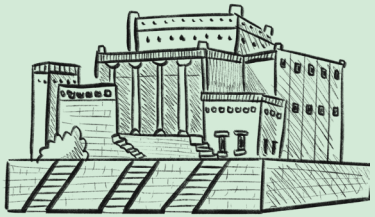
Read the intro below then scan the QR code for this week's video.

Have you ever wondered how you ended up in the place you currently live? How did you end up at the school you attend? How did you end up in the neighborhood you're in? When we reflect on questions like these, we're able to see ways that God has been at work in our lives and in the lives of the people around us. Esther's story isn't any different. Esther was a Jew living in Persia, and yet she ended up living in the king's palace. Throughout the next few weeks, we'll ask one big question: How does God take care of his people? We'll explore how God is sovereign, or in control of all things, and how God can use ordinary people to accomplish his purposes.



POST-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What would it have been like to live in a place where you didn't truly belong?
- What events took place for Esther to end up living in the palace?



WEEK 2: ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

Want to know something crazy? In Esther chapter two, we learn that a man named Mordecai had been taken captive by the king of Babylon (Nebeuchadnezzar, have you heard of him?), and then, years later he is taken captive again! That's how Mordecai ended up living in Persia and working in the king's palace. Mordecai had some family members who died, so he was left to care for his cousin Esther. When the king of Persia asked for women to be brought to the palace so he could find a queen, Esther went and found favor from a king's official, who put her in the best place in the palace. Guess what? The people in the palace had no idea that Esther was a Jew! Do you think she'll reveal who she really is?

Flip this card over to read this week's scripture and watch a video retelling the story of Esther. As you watch be thinking of how God is sovereign, or in control of Esther's story. Then, answer the family discussion questions.



WEEK 2: READ & WATCH

Read the verses below then scan the QR code for this week's video.

¹⁵Mordecai had adopted Esther. She had been the daughter of his uncle Abihail. Her turn came to go in to the king. She only asked for what Hegai suggested. He was the king's official who was in charge of the place where the virgins stayed. Everyone who saw Esther was pleased with her. ¹⁶She was taken to King Xerxes in the royal house. It was now the tenth month. That was the month of Tebeth. It was the seventh year of the rule of Xerxes. ¹⁷The king liked Esther more than he liked any of the other women. She pleased him more than any of the other virgins. So he put a royal crown on her head. He made her queen in Vashti's place. - *Esther 2:15-17 NIRV*



POST-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What does the scripture we read mean when it says, "He put a royal crown on her head?"** *It means Esther became queen of Persia.*
- **What are some ways God worked in Esther's story that led her to become queen?**

WEEK 3: A PLAN TO DESTROY

If you've ever read or watched a fairy tale you know there is always someone who does something to try to destroy the main character. In the story of Esther, a time comes when someone wants to destroy an entire people group - the Jews. This is where we meet Haman. Haman had been given a seat of honor in the king's palace and everyone was supposed to kneel and pay him honor. Would you have? Mordecai didn't. This angered Haman so much that Haman wanted to do more than just destroy Mordecai, he wanted to destroy Mordecai's people, the Jews. But if all the Jewish people were destroyed, how could God's rescue plan continue through them? Would God's special family come to an end because of Haman?

Flip this card over to read this week's scripture and watch a video retelling the story of Esther. As you watch, see if you can figure out who God might use to save the Jewish people. Then, answer the family discussion questions.



WEEK 3: READ & WATCH

Read the verses below then scan the QR code for this week's video.

⁵Then Esther sent for Hathak. He was one of the king's officials. He had been appointed to take care of her. She ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai. She wanted to know why he was so upset. ⁶So Hathak went out to see Mordecai. He was in the open area in front of the palace gate. ⁷Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him. He told him about the exact amount of money Haman had promised to add to the royal treasures. He said Haman wanted it to be used to pay some men to destroy the Jews. ⁸Mordecai also gave Hathak a copy of the order. It commanded people to wipe out the Jews. The order had been sent from Susa. Mordecai told Hathak to show the order to Esther. He wanted Hathak to explain it to her. Mordecai told him to tell her to go and beg the king for mercy. Mordecai wanted her to make an appeal to the king for her people.
– *Esther 4:5-8*



POST-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman because he knew he should only give glory to God. What would you have done?**
- **Why was Mordecai troubled?** *Haman wanted to kill all the Jews.*
- **What did Mordecai want Esther to do?** *Go beg the king for mercy*

WEEK 4: WILL GOD SAVE HIS PEOPLE?

At this point in the story, Esther is the queen but the people in the palace don't realize she's Jewish. Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, a man who had honor in the palace, and Haman convinced King Xerxes to issue an order that would sentence all Jewish people to death. If all the Jewish people were sentenced to death, God's plan to rescue his people would come to an end. How could that happen? Was God really in control?

Esther couldn't approach the king's throne without being invited, so she had to proceed with caution. Would she chicken out? If she did, all her people including herself would be destroyed. Cleverly, Esther invited the king to a dinner party not once, but twice. During both parties the king told Esther that she could ask him anything and he would give it to her, even if it was half of the kingdom. Would King Xerxes have mercy upon the Jewish people?

Flip this card over to read this week's scripture and watch a video retelling the story of Esther. As you watch, consider what kind of bravery it would take to approach a king who wasn't easy to approach. Then, answer the family discussion questions.



WEEK 4: READ & WATCH

Read the verses below then scan the QR code for this week's video.

¹So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's feast. ²They were drinking wine on the second day. The king again asked, "What do you want, Queen Esther? I'll give it to you. What do you want me to do for you? I'll even give you up to half of my kingdom." ³Then Queen Esther answered, "Your Majesty, I hope you will be pleased to let me live. That's what I want. Please spare my people. That's my appeal to you. ⁴My people and I have been sold to be destroyed. We've been sold to be killed and wiped out. Suppose we had only been sold as male and female slaves. Then I wouldn't have said anything. That kind of suffering wouldn't be a good enough reason to bother you." ⁵King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is the man who has dared to do such a thing? And where is he?" ⁶Esther said, "The man hates us! He's our enemy! He's this evil Haman!" Then Haman was terrified in front of the king and queen. ⁷The king got up. He was very angry. He left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman realized that the king had already decided what he was going to do to him. So he stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. - *Esther 7:1-7*



POST-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Why do you think King Xerxes was so mad at Haman?**
Because Haman wanted to kill Esther and Esther was his queen.
- **How has God been at work throughout this story? He took a Jewish exile and made her queen, he put her in a position where she could beg the king to have mercy on the Jewish people**

WEEK 5: GOD'S PEOPLE ACCOMPLISHING HIS PURPOSES

When we left off last week King Xerxes was furious with Haman's plan to destroy the Jewish people. Esther had asked him to spare her people, but do you know what was missing? The King hadn't said if he would do it or not. Did Haman survive the king's wrath? No! Haman was destroyed and Esther is given his estate. Mordecai and Esther once again come into the king's presence.

Flip this card over to read this week's scripture and watch a video retelling the story of Esther. As you watch, consider how God took care of his people, and how he used Esther and Mordecai to accomplish his plan. Then, answer the family discussion questions.



WEEK 5: READ & WATCH

Read the verses below then scan the QR code for this week's video.

³Esther made another appeal to the king. She fell at his feet and wept. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman, the Agagite. He had decided to kill the Jews. ⁴The king reached out his gold scepter toward Esther. She got up and stood in front of him. ⁵She said, "King Xerxes, I hope you will think what I'm asking is the right thing to do. I hope you are pleased with me. If you are, and if it pleases you, let an order be written. Let it take the place of the messages Haman wrote. Haman was the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. He planned to kill the Jews. He wrote orders to destroy us in all your territories. ⁶I couldn't stand by and see the horrible trouble that would fall on my people! I couldn't stand to see my family destroyed!" - *Esther 8:3-6*



POST-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Why is it important that the Jewish people were saved in the story of Esther?** *God had promised that a rescuer would come through the Jewish people. If all the Jews were destroyed, how could God's promise come true?*
- **How do we see that God is sovereign, or in control, through the story of Esther?**
- **How does knowing that God can use ordinary people like Esther and Mordecai help you trust that God can use you to accomplish his purposes?**