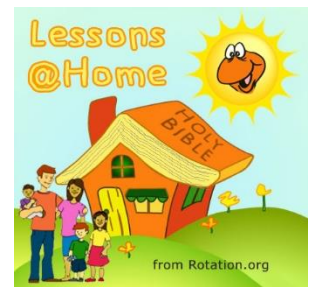


Rotation.org's @Home Lessons on the Book of Esther

In Jewish tradition, Esther's story is celebrated as a story of religious freedom and identity. In Christian tradition, it tends to be celebrated as a story about "standing up for your faith" and practicing your faith when times and circumstances (like a pandemic) make it hard. Your family will have an opportunity to hear her story and then consider the most famous words of the story, saying, "Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" in a unique and personal way.



The Story of Esther: Video and Hands-on Experience

Summary of the activity:

You will explore and understand the story of Esther by watching and discussing a short video, then participate in a truly "hands on" reflection to carry the message with you.

Scripture for the lesson:

The book of Esther, an abbreviated retelling from your favorite Bible storybook (or see some [here](#)).

For additional reading, see the [Bible Background](#) at Rotation.org. It has many interesting insights!



What you need:

- Cue this YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/QOPgxCeg0ow>
- Bible (or online Bible)
- ballpoint pens or fine-tip permanent markers

Start your lesson!

1) Introduce the story.

Today we're going to learn the story of a young girl name Esther who probably felt a lot like a kitten in front of a pack of dogs, or a David in front of a Goliath. But rather than run away from the problem, she realized she could do something about it; and with God's help, Esther saved her people.

As you watch, think about what God is telling you to do in YOUR situation.

2) Watch and talk about the video.

Here's the direct link to the Esther video on YouTube by Tailrace Kids:

<https://youtu.be/QOPgxCeg0ow>. You can also click the video window below.



At 1:33 in the video **PAUSE & ASK:** Who can sum up the events of the story so far?

[A young Jewish woman named Esther became the queen of Persia. Mordecai, the man who raised her, refused to bow down to King Xerxes' second in command, Haman. So Haman managed to get the king to agree to have all the Jewish people killed. Mordecai came to Esther and asked her to talk to the king. Going to the king uninvited could get Queen Esther killed, and she was reluctant.]

The important thing that Mordecai said to Esther is not in this short video. He told her that maybe SHE was put there by God in just the right time and CHANGE THINGS. Let's read those words before we continue. Read [Esther 4:13-14](#).

Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity **for just such a time as this.**" (NRSV)

What was Esther's situation that she could use to her advantage? What do you think Esther decided to do? What would you have done? Let's **watch the rest of the video** to see if you are right.

After the video, ask:

1. What did Esther end up doing? [She went to the king, and he did not kill her. She invited him and Haman to dinner.]
2. How did things turn out for Esther and the Jewish people? [They lived, and Haman was put to death for his treachery against them.]

3) Taking the Word with Us

Working together, **make a list of what we will call, "HAMAN PROBLEMS."**

Explain that "Haman Problems" are things that threaten to destroy people's lives. Think "BIG" here and not about personal problems. Think about problems that affect whole populations of people – just like in Esther's story.

Possible “Big Haman” Problems: War, Racism, Pandemics, Job Loss, Climate Change, Hatred, Poverty, Hunger, Not being able to worship, being persecuted for what you believe.

Go over the list and ask what could each of us do from our positions to begin to make a difference. (Esther used her position to take a risk to make changes.)

Have everyone choose one or two of the Haman problems from the list they think they can help make a difference in, and then working with a partner **WRITE ONE OR MORE PROBLEMS on each other’s arms or hands** using a ballpoint pen or fine-tip permanent markers.

Where does the idea of writing scripture on your hand come from? *From Moses!*

"You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand." Deuteronomy 11:18

Now **write the key verse** or a version of it, above or around the Haman Problem(s) they inscribed. Here's the classic memory verse from Esther 3:14b

“Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”

Suggest that they **REPHRASE** the verse to personalize it, such as, “I am in a position to stop....” You might even suggest the Apostle Paul’s version from Philippians 4:13... “I can do all things through him (Christ) who strengthens me.”

As they’re writing, talk about how a young person can take a stand to confront some of the problems the group came up with.

Suggestions: Speak up for those in need. Talk to parents and friends about issues. Take up a collection. Ask your pastor how you can serve. Show others you care.

Esther's name means “morning star” (“Hadassah” in Hebrew). Note that the morning star (actually, the planet Venus) is just a point of light in our sky, but everyone sees it! We are called to be lights too.

4) Pray.

Finish your devotion time by reviewing what everyone wrote on their hands. Have everyone pile their hands in a prayer stack and pray that each of you would remember to be like Esther and speak out and help others.

Adapted from [this lesson](#) by the Rotation.org Writing Team
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