

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

Esther teaches us that we can play a part in wiping out evil. We remember Esther as someone who stood up for what she believed in. We do not need to be afraid of the Hamans in the world. This lesson is designed to teach the celebratory tradition of Purim as an expression of the faith community's joyous belief in God's victory over evil, and the freedom we have to worship the one true God.



The Story of Esther: “Boo” Haman! “Boo” Evil!

Summary of Activity: Your family will have fun learning about the Purim celebration, a Jewish tradition celebrating the story of Esther and God's victory over evil. You will make Purim noisemakers called *groggers* to show that you will not be silent in the face of evil, and then watch a short video about Esther and explore what you can apply to your life today.

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:

- A paper plate for each person
- A handful of dried beans for each person
- Stapler and staples
- Markers or crayons
- Optional: ribbons, stickers, and other things to decorate your grogger
- Cue the YouTube [“Queen Esther: For Such a Time as This”](#) clip from *Read & Share Bible DVD*

Start your lesson!

1) Introduce the story.

Purim is the most anticipated of Jewish festivals by young and old because it celebrates God's victory over evil with humor, games, and traditional foods. The festival is based on the story of Queen Esther, which is found in the Bible in the Book of Esther. We will hear Esther's story after we make a noisemaker!

Noisemakers are a favorite Purim tradition. Whenever the name of the Haman the bad guy in the story is heard, everyone makes noise to show that they will not be silent in the face of evil —that it is our job to speak out against evil. Purim noisemakers are called *groggers*. We will each make a grogger and then watch a video about Esther.

2) Make a Grogger.

Have everyone decorate and then fold a paper plate. Pour a handful of dry beans in the folded plate, then staple it closed. Write slogans, such as, "Boo Evil!" or "Now is the time to make some noise about evil!" or "I will not be silent in the face of wrongdoing."

Ask: As you make groggers, ask about the kinds of evil you see in the world. (Note: The kind of evil Purim confronts may not be what young Christian children typically think about.)

Say: We tend to think of evil as "bad things" between people, such as problems in relationships. Jewish children are taught that Haman threatened their very lives and way of worship.

Ask: What are the threats our community faces today? (Consider racism, hatred, war, and those who tell us that our worship of Jesus is foolish and not important.) What things in your own life threaten your faith in God and spiritual practices such as prayer, reading your Bible, and serving others?

As people mention each of these things, SHAKE YOUR GROGGER!

3) Watch and discuss the Queen Esther video.

Say: During the video, whenever you hear Haman's name, rattle your grogger! Drown out his name with the noise! This video clip is a *very* short version of Esther's story. [Note that this 3-minute video skips certain parts of the story, including the story of Queen Vashti, the two evening banquets, and Haman's death.] **Here is the direct link to the video on YouTube:** <https://youtu.be/iWnMGSw97Wg> ...or you can click this video box to open it.



Say: The word *Pur* is the Hebrew word for “lots” which are like dice with numbers on them. Haman threw lots (“Pur”) to decide which day he would try to wipe out the Jews in the kingdom. *Pur-im* means the Festival of Pur, or “Festival of Lots.” We can think of it today as the “Festival of Choices.”

Ask: What good and bad choices could Esther have made?

Ask: Who are the "super heroes" and “villains” in the story of Esther?

Say and Ask: Villains don’t have to be killers like Haman. They can simply be people who stand in God’s ways of forgiveness, mercy, and taking care of those in need. The villains don’t even have to be people! They can be bad attitudes and wrong ideas that stand in the way of Godly values.

Who or what are some of the villains in our world today? (Shake your grogger when someone names one!)

Intolerance, cruelty, racism, bullying, poverty, lazy attitude about going to church, greed, excuses for not standing up to hatred or injustice, etc.

Say: Another part of the Purim tradition is to wear costumes and masks. The masks and costumes hide who you are—your identity. This is a tradition that goes back to the idea that God's identity is “hidden” or “silent” in the story of Esther because it is the only book of the Bible that doesn't mention God's name! God is working through us in “hidden” ways. And when he does, we become God’s super heroes!

Give each person a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to draw themselves solving a BIG PROBLEM - - i.e. becoming one of God’s super heroes.” What your superhero name? What’s your superhero power? What problem are you battling? Draw all this.

Share your drawings, and when a problem is mentioned, don’t forget to **shake your grogger!**

4) Close with prayer, asking God to help us speak out and be heroes in His name.

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

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