

Esther Saves Her People

Esther 8:1-17

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 11:10

“When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two bean bags for this game and four sheets of various colors of construction paper.

A bag of ring pops to use as signet rings, paper and crayons or markers

Strips of various colored card stock paper approximately 1/2” wide, markers, glitter, small “precious stones” from supply room

ATTENTION GETTER!

Messengers of the Good News!

Today we will learn about a proclamation of good news for the Jews. Their lives were going to be saved from the wicked plan of Haman. Is it not wonderful that someone shared with us the good news of salvation in Jesus? Satan wants to destroy us, but Jesus has provided salvation for all who believe on Him. Use this game to introduce today’s lesson and theme.

You will need 2 beanbags for this game and four sheets of various colored construction paper. Tape the construction paper to each corner of your room. Split your class in half. Have the children line up on opposite sides of the room against the wall. The object of the game will be to have one child at a time take the message (bean bag) to the four corners of the room (can represent the four corners of the world) and tag each corner. After tagging all four corners they will go to the end of the line and hand the beanbag to

the person in front of them who will pass it to the person next to them and up the line until the person in first position has the bean bag.

The person in the front of the line will repeat the process and the game will continue until everyone has had a chance to go. The winner will be the first team to have everyone on their team carry the message around the room and the last person to sit down in the center of the room. Declare a winning team. Explain to the children how this game helps us to understand our responsibility to take the good news of the gospel to the four corners of the world.

LESSON TIME!

As we follow this wonderful story of Esther, we see her become a true leader of the Jewish people. There are many qualities we can learn from Esther's life. Just to review, below are some of the godly characteristics we see in Esther and can learn in our lives:

1. We see that Esther disciplined herself to be obedient to authorities in her life (Esther 2:8-9, 20).
2. She had God's call upon her life (Esther 4:13, 14).
3. Esther trusted God's promises for her life (Esther 4:14-16).
4. God gave Esther His instructions (Esther 2:22, 4:8-14).
5. We see her leadership as she accepted God's will (Esther 4:16).
6. She was confident of God's providence and help (Esther 4:17).
7. She was able to stir her people to fasting and prayer as she herself set the example of fasting (Esther 5:1-6:14).
8. She considered the timing of her actions (Esther 6:1-14).
9. Her influence was unusual for a woman of her time.
10. She also wrote an edict that was entered in official records (Esther 9:29, 32).
11. Esther was courageous, self-sacrificing, clever and used by God to save her people.

It is this last quality in Esther's life that we will be learning about today. We will also learn that **God protects His people.**

ESTHER 8:1-2

On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her.

So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman to Esther. It is interesting to note that Haman is referred to as the "Jews' enemy." What a sad legacy to be told of him. As the Jews enemy he became God's enemy. Zechariah 2:8 tells us, "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.'"

It was the custom that the properties of a traitor, in this case Haman, became the property of the king. Ahasuerus gave the confiscated property to Esther as restitution for the offence against her. We also see that not only is Mordecai's life saved from Haman's wrath, he is promoted as Haman's successor in the court as indicated by the king giving Mordecai the signet ring from his finger.

Haman's attempt to kill Mordecai led to Mordecai's exaltation and Haman's own destruction. A very important lesson of scripture is shown to us here. The person who exalts himself will be humbled, as in the case of Haman. And the person who humbles himself will be exalted, as in the case of Mordecai.

We also see here an awesome warning to the enemies of God, and an encouragement to us who follow the Lord – His protection on our lives. Esther then put Mordecai in charge of Haman's estate, which made him very wealthy. **God protects His people.**

ESTHER 8:3-6

Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews.

And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king,

and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

"For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

Esther's life and Mordecai's life were spared, but Esther was still concerned for the lives of her people. She knew the danger they were still in, and she pleaded for their lives before the king. She again put herself in danger as she came before the king, but he extended the golden scepter to her. She asked the king to take away Haman's wicked decree against all the Jews in the kingdom.

It is a beautiful picture in verse 6 as Queen Esther identifies herself with her people, showing her love for them. “For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?” **God protects His people.**

In the same way, Jesus loves us. The Bible says the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance. God doesn't want to see anyone die and spend eternity in hell. That's why He sent His son, Jesus to die on the cross and provide forgiveness of sin for us who believe. We are all under a death sentence until we trust in Jesus as our savior. Have you asked Jesus into your life yet?

ESTHER 8:7-14

Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.

"You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.

By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives; to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions,

on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

By law, the king could not revoke his edict. When he made a law it could not be undone. The king was supportive of Esther and her people, so he told them to write a new law and he would give his seal on the law.

So there would now be a second law that would be as strong as the first one, but would turn the result around. He gave the Jewish people the right to arm and protect themselves and he also gave them nine months to get ready. This told the people of the land that the king did not want the Jews to be hurt in any way. **God protects His people.**

Warren Wiersbe gives a beautiful illustration of this act; “Can you see here an illustration of how God saved the sinner from his plight? You were under condemnation because of the law of sin and death. God did not revoke that law - He obeyed it! He sent His Son to die for our sins and to bring in ‘the law of the Spirit of life’ (Rom. 8:2). Any sinner who believes the message and trusts the Savior will receive everlasting life (John 3:15-16).” It is a good time to examine our hearts. Have you believed God’s message and trusted in Jesus as your Savior?

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

You will need a bag of Ring Pops (candies that resemble rings with large gems on them) to use as signet rings, paper and crayons or markers. Have the team that won the “Messengers” game serve the ring pops to the rest of the class. Use this opportunity to discuss with the class what the Bible talks about concerning “seals.” You can use the following definition taken from the Holman Bible Dictionary to help you explain what seals are and what they were used for in Bible times.

SEAL - A signet containing a distinctive mark which stood for the individual who owned it. The earliest seals found so far date to before 3000 B.C. Seals varied in shapes and sizes. Some were round and were worn around the neck. Others were rings worn on the finger. The mark was made by stamping the seal into soft clay. Many cylinder seals have been found which contain scenes that communicate a message. These were rolled in the clay to form the impression. Tamar asked for Judah’s signet as collateral on a pledge he made (Gen. 38:18). Joseph was given pharaoh’s ring when he was placed in command of the country (Gen. 41:42), symbolizing Joseph’s right to act with the ruler’s authority.

Jezebel used Ahab’s seal to sign letters asking that Naboth be tried and stoned to death (1 Kings 21:8).

Have the children take a piece of paper and markers and allow them to design their own seal. They might use the initials in their name or something that would describe what is important to them.

After drawing their seal, have the children look up, or you can read to them, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:13-14. Talk about how we have been “sealed” by the Holy Spirit and what that means to us as Christians.

ESTHER 8:15-17

So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.

And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

In verse 15, Mordecai, dressed in royal attire, receives a joyful welcome from the city of Shushan from both the Gentiles and Jews living there. It is so important to see here that Mordecai's character was that of a godly man. God exalted him to a position he did not seek after. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up” James 4:10. “For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; he puts down one, and sets up another” Psalm 75:6,7.

In verse 16, the Jews are rejoicing, a sharp contrast to their reaction of the first decree of death. As the people around them saw how they had been delivered, many of them “became” Jews. This is the only place in the Old Testament that this Hebrew word is used of conversion to Judaism. While under Hamans’s decree, it was dangerous to be a Jew; under Mordecai’s it was no longer a danger, but a desire to many. Again a wonderful picture of two lives who so willingly sacrificed themselves for their God and their people. **God protects His people.**

King Size Rings

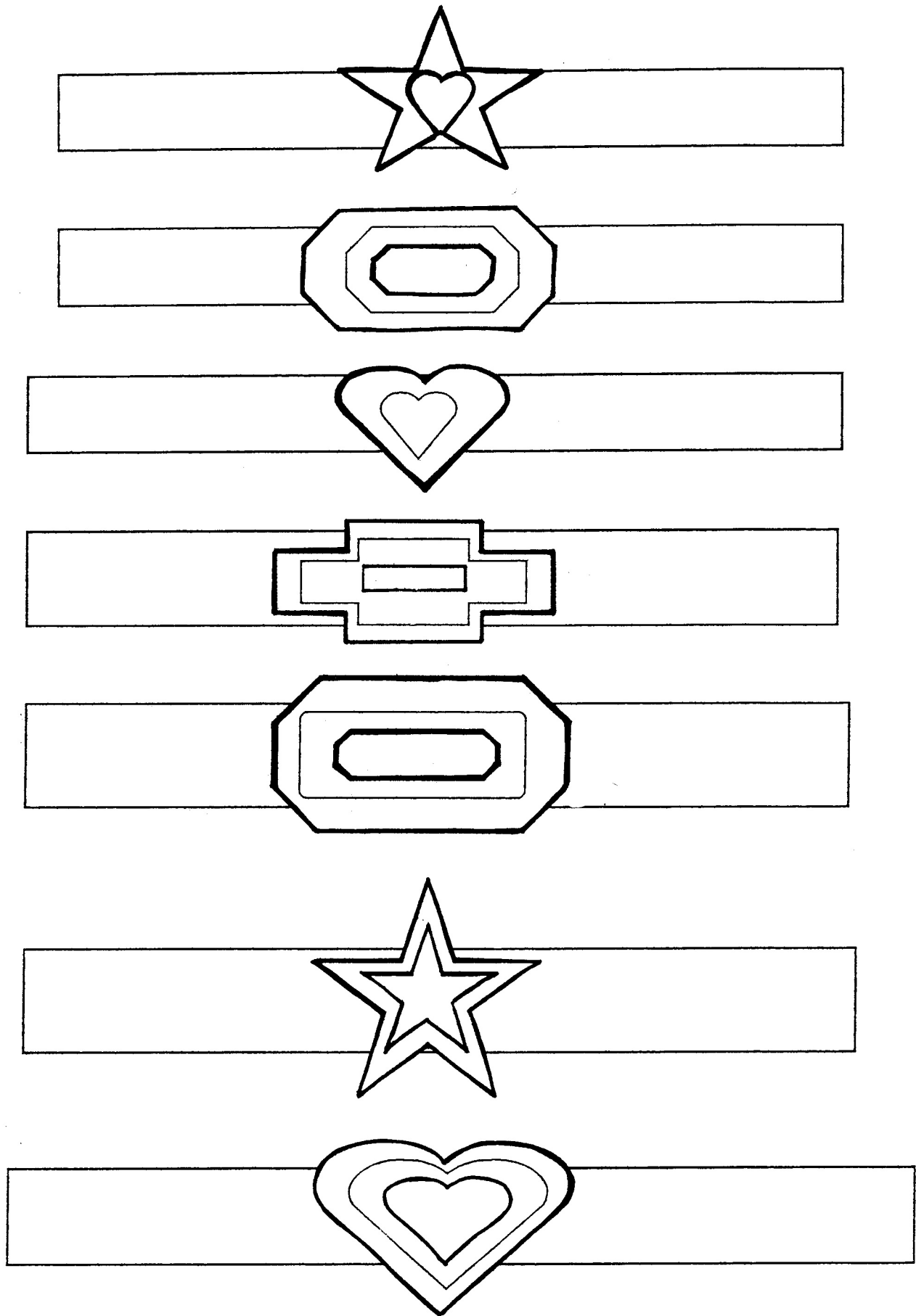
In this craft, the children will make signet rings out of card stock paper. You will need strips of card stock paper approximately 2” wide. The paper should be various colors. Next, using different colors of card stock or construction paper, have the children cut out shapes for their signet rings.

Next they can decorate their signet however they would like. They can duplicate their design from the last activity if they would like. As an option they can use glitter or plastic gems. Glue the shape or signet onto the band. Have the children wrap the band around their finger and help them cut it to the size of their finger. Using a glue stick or white glue (they will need to allow time for drying if using white glue) glue band together at the end. After drying they will have a signet ring.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of trust to commit to the Lord anything that might make the children afraid, knowing that God will always protect His people. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template - King Size Rings



These are examples of how the children might design their King Size Rings.
Tape or glue the ends together to form the ring