

Who Are the People of God?

Focus Scripture

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

PURPOSE To explore what it means to be the people of God.

Lesson Preparation

- ❑ Read Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22, and biblical background for September 30.
- ❑ Set worship table with a green cloth, votive candle, teaching picture “Jesus and the Children” (#5), a Bible, and offering basket.
- ❑ If possible, bring some children’s story books that have kings, or queens, or princesses (e.g. Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty/ Disney’s Aurora, Beauty and the Beast/Disney’s Belle)
- ❑ Prepare Brave Queen Esther puppets and palace from teaching picture sheets (#7 & #8). Omit table and Haman puppet which are not used in the Beginner lesson.
- ❑ Bring CD player, *Rainbow and Sunshine* CDs.
- ❑ Choose the option(s) you would like to use for Integrating the Theme. Prepare and bring the necessary materials.
- ❑ Check the birthday list.
- ❑ Pray that the children may know the strength and love of belonging to God’s community.

1

Opening

Welcome each child with a personal greeting and tell them how glad you are that they are here.

Light the candle saying “We light this candle to remind us that God is always with us.”



Opening Song:

Good Morning to You (tune: Happy Birthday)

Good morning to you,
 Good morning to you,
 We’ve all come to church school
 We’re glad that we’re here.

Birthdays, Offering

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for (*name each child and include yourself*).

We know that you love and care for each of us. Amen.

2

Introducing the Theme

Favourite Stories

Ask the children if anyone reads stories to them before they go to bed. Can you tell me the name of some of your favourite stories? Do the stories sometimes have kings or queens or princesses in them? (*If you have brought some story books show them now.*) Many

stories involve princesses and kings and queens. And our Bible also has some interesting stories about kings and queens. (*Lift Bible from the worship table.*) The story from our Bible today, is about a young woman named Esther who became a queen.

3

Exploring the Theme

Story: Esther Saves Her People

(Set the 3 people puppets in front of you. Have palace, crown and Scotch tape nearby.)

Long ago and far away, there lived a king named Xerxes (*pronounced Zerk sees*). Ask the children if they can tell which one of the puppets is the King. What do kings often wear on their heads? Does anyone know what we call the house where a king lives? (*Set king beside palace.*)

King Xerxes wanted a queen for his country. Many women came to meet him. One woman, named Esther, came with her uncle Mordecai to see if she might be chosen queen. (*Pretend to walk them over to the palace and King Xerxes.*) The king took a long time to decide who the new queen would be, but finally he chose Esther. (*Have a child tape the crown to Esther.*) So Esther went to live in the king's palace, and Mordecai lived nearby. (*Have the King Xerxes and Queen Esther puppets stand together and Mordecai move slightly away.*)

One day Queen Esther looked out the palace window and saw Mordecai crying and very sad. (*Have the children look sad like Mordecai. Move Esther to Mordecai.*) "Uncle Mordecai," Esther called out, "Why are you so sad?" Mordecai replied, "One of the king's leaders, Haman, doesn't like Jewish people. He is afraid of us because we have come to live here from another country. He wants to kill all the Jewish people, and we don't know what to do. How can we stop him?" Queen Esther was very scared because she and Uncle Mordecai were Jewish people and would be killed, too. (*Have the children look scared like Queen Esther.*)

Queen Esther felt very frightened but she knew she had to help somehow. She must find a way to save

her people. For three days Queen Esther thought and thought and thought. And then she prayed and prayed and prayed. Mordecai went home and gathered all the Jewish people. They too, prayed and prayed and prayed. They trusted that God would help them.

At last Esther had a plan. God helped Esther to feel brave enough to go to the king even though the king had not invited her to come. No one was to come to see the king unless they had been specially invited. People could be punished for disobeying the king's rules. Esther prayed that the king would not be angry, and would listen to her. (*Move Esther back beside King*)

Esther said to the king, "I am Jewish and so is my Uncle Mordecai. Your friend Haman has a plan to kill all the Jewish people in your country. Please let me, my Uncle Mordecai and all the Jewish people live." King Xerxes was very angry at Haman's plan, and had Haman punished. Esther was so happy that her people were saved. (*Have children look happy like Queen Esther.*) She thanked God for helping her be so brave.

From that time till now, Jewish people have a special celebration, called Purim, with special foods to remember how brave Esther was and how God helped her save the people. The children often dress up in costumes and everyone gives thanks to God for always being with them. God is with us, too, in times when we might feel afraid, and in times when we are happy. God is always with us. We are the people of God.

Sing together "Joyful Noise" (*Sunshine Songbook p. 30 and also track #23 on the Sunshine Sing-along CD.*)

4

Integrating the Theme

Option A: Maze Activity Sheet

Materials: crayons, copies of the activity sheet "Gathering God's People to Learn and Pray Together"

In advance: Make copies of maze.

A long time ago Esther belonged to a group like ours. They gathered and prayed and told stories of God's people. We, too, gather to learn and pray. Give each child a copy of activity sheet "Gathering God's People to Learn and Pray Together" and crayons. With a crayon follow the path and talk about each of the people who are on their way to church, and how they are coming. Encourage the children to draw their face along the path as well. Say together the prayer sentence across the bottom of the sheet.

Option B: Queen Esther Paper Tube Puppet

Materials: paper rolls, scissors, coloured markers, small jewel stickers

In advance: Cut about 2.5 cm / 1 in. down from the top of the paper tube, leaving three peaks to form Queen Esther's crown (*see illustration*).

Give each child a precut paper roll. Invite them to add facial features and decorate the crown with markers or stickers. Encourage them to use their puppet to retell the story of brave Queen Esther.



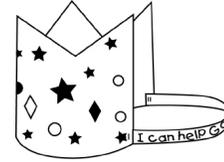
Option C: Esther's Crown

Materials: coloured poster board, stickers, glue sticks, stapler

In advance: Using pattern from the Teacher's resource sheet, cut a poster board crown for each child. Also prepare poster board strips 5 x 30 cm / 2 x 12 in. and print "I can help God like Queen Esther" on these.

Give each child a poster board crown. Invite them to decorate using stickers and stars (or precut construction paper shapes and glue sticks) to decorate the

crown. Staple or tape the crown to the poster board strip and size this to fit the child's head. Staple or tape the printed strip across the back so that it can be worn. Ask what kind of loving things they could do.



5

Closing

Sing:

God We Thank You (Echo Song) (tune Frere Jacques)

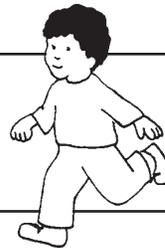
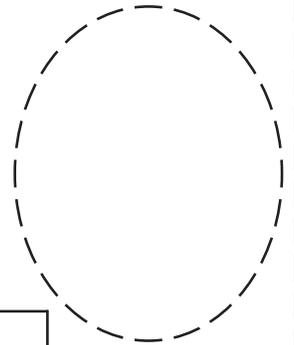
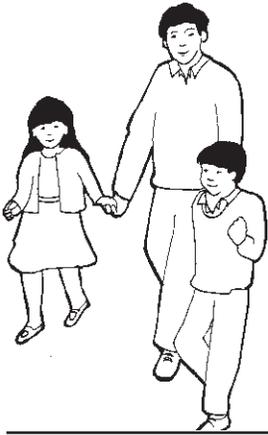
God we thank you (2x)

For our friends (2x)

Help us to be caring (2x)

And show your love. (2x)

Gathering God's People to Learn and Pray Together



September 30, 2018

Beginner Activity Sheet

Thank you, God, for my church family. Amen

