

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 the green cloth, Bible, offering basket, and teaching picture "Jesus and the Children."
- ❑ Playtime: Set out a variety of toys. Bring king and queen costumes if possible.
- ❑ Prepare Brave Queen Esther puppets and palace from teaching picture sheets (#7 & #8). Omit table and Haman puppet which are not used in Nursery lesson. Bring Scotch tape.
- ❑ Bring CD player, *Rainbow and Sunshine* CDs.
- ❑ Snacktime: Bring ingredients such as raisins, dry cereal (i.e.

Shreddies, Cheerios, Rice Krispies, etc.), chocolate chips, miniature marshmallows, etc. Place each ingredient in separate containers; have one container or baggie for each child. Bring a large bowl and spoon for mixing. Bring a cup and spoon for each child.

- ❑ Choose the option(s) you would like to use for the Take-Home Activity. Prepare and bring the necessary materials.
- ❑ Check the birthday list.
- ❑ Pray that the children will know the strength and love of belonging to God's community.

1

Playtime

As the children arrive, help them to learn the routines of your classroom. Invite them to add a sticker to the attendance chart, put their offering in the basket, and choose a toy or activity. Provide king and queen costumes (e.g. bathrobes, foil crowns, party dresses, large scarves, old jewelry, etc) and encourage them to engage in imaginative play. What do kings and queens do?

2

Circletime

Gather everyone and ask them to join hands in a circle. Drop hands and sit down.

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.

Welcome: Say each child's name around the circle. Tell them that you are glad they came.

Birthdays: Celebrate any upcoming birthdays for the next week.

Offering: Ask one of the children to bring the offering basket into the circle from the worship table. We bring our offering each week to say thanks to God for all that God has given us, and to help other people who have very little. While the child holds the basket, everyone folds their hands and says a special prayer of thanks to God.

Ask the children to repeat each line after you.

Prayer: Thank you God,
that we can share
to help others
everywhere. Amen.



Story: "Brave Queen Esther" (Have story puppets and palace, crown and Scotch tape nearby.)

Ask the children if anyone reads stories to them before they go to bed. Do the stories sometimes have kings or queens or princesses in them? (*Lift Bible from the worship table.*) The story from our Bible today, is about a young woman named Esther who became a queen. (*Set all 3 people puppets in front of you.*)

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.*)

Esther knew she had to help. She prayed for three days asking God to show her what to do. 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. 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 and her people were safe. They celebrated and praised God. (*Have children look happy like Queen Esther.*)

3

Integrating the Theme

Jewish people today, celebrate the story of Queen Esther at a special festival call Purim. The children often dress up in costumes and everyone gives thanks to God for always being with them. Let's sing a song of praise about God.

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

4

Snacktime

Purim is also a time to share gifts of food. Give each child a container; have them open theirs. Check first for allergies, then have them pour the contents of their container into the big bowl one at a time. Invite each of them to help stir the mixture up. Before eating say a prayer together.

(*Invite children to repeat after you*)

Prayer: Dear God,
It's good to be together
and share this food
with our friends.
Amen

5

Take-Home Activity

Option A: 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.



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.



6

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)

