



A 4-WEEK SERIES
FROM THE OLD
TESTAMENT ON

ESTHER

FROM OUR ANNUAL **TEACHING STRATEGY**



WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED WITH . . .
STEPHANIE RIEBE

All aspects of Grow Curriculum and Strategy (including all logos, images, videos, language, and related products and resources) are owned by Stuff You Can Use. Stuff You Can Use gives permission to the organization that purchased this product to download, print, electronically send, and use its components for its organization's use only. No part of Grow Curriculum and Strategy may be copied, shared, resold, or republished outside of that organization in any way, except in the case of brief quotations or product reviews that credit and link back to Grow Curriculum and Strategy (growcurriculum.org). Reproducing any of this material or incorporating it into a new work that does not follow these guidelines (including a blog post, podcast, video, article, book, or other resource) is a violation of U.S. copyright laws.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



STUFF FOR THIS SERIES

TEACHING & PROGRAMMING

- ▶ [Series Overview](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Programming Guide](#)
- ▶ [Graphics & Videos](#)
- ▶ [SLIDR Presentation Software](#)
- ▶ [Coloring Book](#)

COMMUNICATION

- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Series Promo Cards & Posters](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)

DISCIPLESHIP

- ▶ [Memory Verse Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discipleship Guide](#)
- ▶ [Devotional for Volunteers](#)

STUFF FOR EACH WEEK

WEEK 1

- ▶ [Weekly Overview](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

WEEK 2

- ▶ [Weekly Overview](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

WEEK 3

- ▶ [Weekly Overview](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

WEEK 4

- ▶ [Weekly Overview](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

SERIES OVERVIEW

The most important part of any play is what happens “behind the scenes.” There’s lighting, wardrobe, casting, playwriting – so much has to happen perfectly to bring the production together! In the story of Esther, there is a whole lot going on behind the scenes, too. In this four-week series, kids will discover the most important character in Esther’s story isn’t always center-stage, but can often be found behind the scenes **working, helping, giving support** and **giving peace**. (Spoiler alert: It’s God!)

WEEK 1

This week, kids learn about who **Esther** was, and **how she became queen**.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** God works behind the scenes.
- **THE BIBLE:** Esther 2:1–18

WEEK 3

This week, kids learn about why **Mordecai asked Esther to help** the people of Israel.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** God gives us support behind the scenes.
- **THE BIBLE:** Esther 3:8–4:17

WEEK 2

This week, kids learn about how **Mordecai and Haman** became bitter rivals.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** God helps us do good behind the scenes.
- **THE BIBLE:** Esther 3:1–6; 6:1–11

WEEK 4

This week, kids learn about the time **Esther talked to the king** about her people.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** God gives us peace behind the scenes.
- **THE BIBLE:** Esther 5:1–8, 7:1–6; 8:1–8

MEMORY VERSE: “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”
— Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

[Click here](#) for a memory verse sign language tutorial video you can share with your families and volunteers!

HOW TO DISCIPLE DURING THIS SERIES

We all know teenagers don't get discipled just by sitting through a message every week. So here's what else we've provided to **help your students develop more consistent spiritual habits.**

THE 4 SPIRITUAL HABITS

We feature one of Grow's 4 Spiritual Habits every month with a unique activity or experience. But the 4 Spiritual Habits show up year-round! **Here are a few of the places you can spot them in this series:**

- **SPEND TIME WITH GOD:** This series is all about getting kids to know that God was present in the story of Esther. As you wrap up each week, talk with kids about ways they can know God is in their lives, too.
- **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** Use Play Time strategically in order to help preschoolers develop social skills like taking turns and using their words. Make sure you verbally praise kids for showing kindness to their friends.
- **USE YOUR GIFTS:** There are many opportunities in this series to talk about helping others. You can help your preschoolers grow that gift each week by providing them with chances to be big helpers and encouraging them to do so at home also.
- **SHARE YOUR STORY:** It might be helpful for preschoolers to share their stories by modeling them after other stories. Set up a simple Bible story-based sentence for them to complete such as, "Just like God was with Esther when she was afraid, God is with me when . . .".

GROW AT HOME

This series (and every series!) comes with **monthly and weekly handouts for families** to help kids and their grown-ups continue the conversation at home. Don't forget to send or print them at the beginning of each series!



DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITY

If you're following along with our scope and sequence, our discipleship activity this quarter is the **Show & Tell Talent Show**, an activity to help kids **use their gifts**. We also made you some [posters and graphics](#) for this quarter's habit you can print, display, or share online. For preschoolers, you might want to pick a talent that kids can do as a group, like a song or a dance — or both — and set aside some time each week during your normal programming to practice together.



MEMORY VERSE

Try challenging students to memorize a verse that corresponds with the Big Ideas or themes of this series. Here's the verse we chose — and [we made graphics](#) you can post, print, or show on screen too!



HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS SERIES



CREATE A THEME

This month's decorating theme is **kids theater** because we're talking about how **God was at work "behind the scenes" in Esther's story!** You can find on-theme decorating ideas, song recommendations, posters, and graphics in this month's [Programming folder](#).



HACK

If you're using Grow for your toddlers, you may want to make some tweaks to make it more age appropriate. **Get the Toddler Hacks** for the entire series [right here](#).

Or . . .

- ▶ [WEEK 1: Toddler Hack](#)
- ▶ [WEEK 2: Toddler Hack](#)
- ▶ [WEEK 3: Toddler Hack](#)
- ▶ [WEEK 4: Toddler Hack](#)



DESIGN

We made **lots of graphics** for you! Use them to create slides, social media posts, and more! You can find them in your [Graphics & Video folder](#), along with a Style Guide for this series.



COMMUNICATE

To make sure volunteers and families are in the loop, don't forget about these . . .

- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer Devotional](#)
- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse](#)



SHOP & PREP

We made a list of everything you'll need to buy, borrow, or dig out of your storage closet in order to make this series happen. We've also included everything you'll need to print, cut, glue, build or make, in order to make this series happen. Get your editable Shop & Prep List [right here](#).



CUSTOMIZE

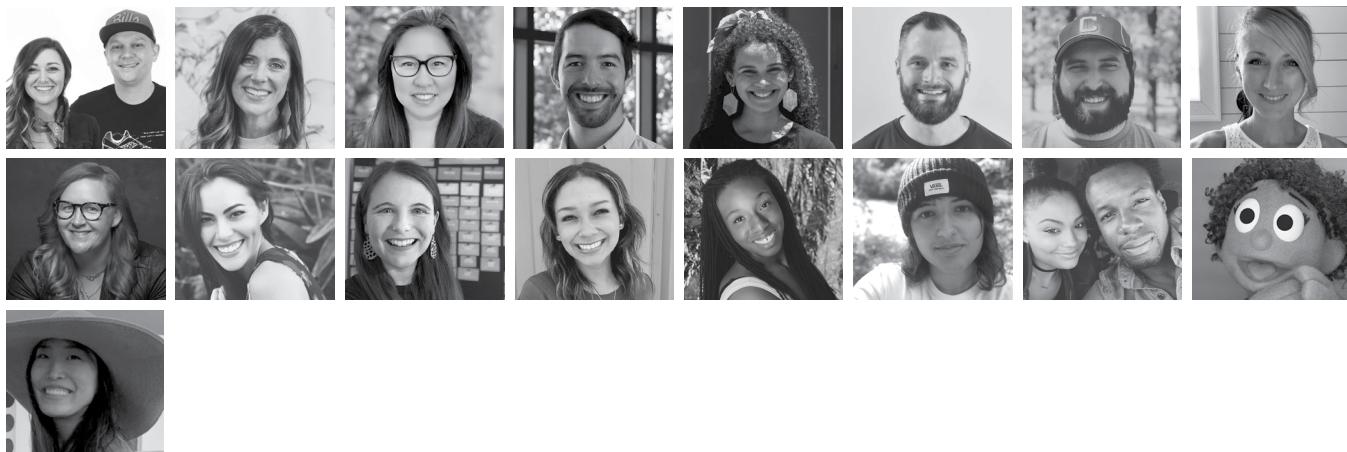
You know your kids and ministry better than we do, so **you might want make some tweaks to this week's lesson**. Customize the lesson by editing the Word document in your series downloads or in the [Message Builder](#). Then customize this week's presentation in [SLIDR](#) by adding or adjusting the images and videos you need for this week's lesson. Finally, customize your teaching content in your [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) to share it with everyone's grown-ups!



WRITTEN & DEVELOPED WITH . . .

Stephanie Riebe is a children & family ministry pastor in Northern Indiana, she has served local churches since 2006. Steph received her master's degree in Family Ministry from Wesley Seminary in 2017. and published her first children's book, *Haley's Heart*, in 2018. If you'd like to chat with Steph about family ministry or single foster parenting, she would love to connect with you!

. . . AND THE REST OF THE TEAM!



SERIES DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW: Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Linda Moon, Crystal Quintero, Stephen Switzer, David Magallanes, Grace Cho

HACKS FOR TODDLERS: Stephanie Riebe

GRAPHIC & LAYOUT DESIGN: Jules Gray, Elle Campbell, Josh Gosney, Phill Conchola

TEACHING VIDEOS: Reuel Pompey, Staci Pompey, Jason Sivewright, Cali and the Ark Kids Team, Linda Moon, Brooklyn Lindsey, Kellee Gentry, Jules Gray, Jada Smith

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Ali Gattison, Kellee Gentry, Madison Terry, Caitlyn Smelser, Jada Smith, Avery Cochran, Emily Acton, Jay Logan, Eddie Irvin

DEVOTIONAL FOR VOLUNTEERS



STUDY

Who doesn't love a behind the scenes look at a favorite movie or TV show? It's fun to see the unnamed things that impact the story significantly. This month while teaching the story of Esther, you'll have an opportunity to think about the things God does every day — things others may not notice as quickly — and consider how these things can change your life and ministry.

To get ready for this series, **spend a few minutes reading the book of Esther.** As you do, think about where God is working in your life behind the scenes, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

WEEK 1: God works behind the scenes.

Esther 2:1-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

WEEK 2: God helps us do good behind the scenes.

Esther 3:1-6; 6:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

WEEK 3: God gives us support behind the scenes.

Esther 3:8-4:17; Colossians 1:9-17

WEEK 4: God gives us peace behind the scenes.

Esther 5:1-8, 7:1-6; 8:1-8; Psalm 122:6-9

PRAY

What's one quirky thing you inherited from an adult in your childhood? It could be double-jointed fingers or a special kind of laugh that can be heard across a crowded room. Even if it's intrinsic to you now, someone else was responsible for passing it down the gene pool or for being around you so much that this quality became a part of your identity, too. Esther's story is kind of like this. You see the behind-the-scenes work of a God who loves the world giving her support, peace, and courage to do good. As you're praying, think about where God has given you support in the past and how it can impact what's coming next.

Which passage of Scripture or Big Idea from this month is most relevant to you right now? Spend a few minutes asking God to show you how you've already grown in this area, plus the next step you need to take in order to keep growing.

GROW

So, what's your next step? Do people know your story and how God has been working in your life? Is there something good you've been waiting to do but you've needed a nudge to go for it? Is it time to reach out to God for support and peace?

Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help kids do the same.



MEMORY VERSE

SIGN LANGUAGE



We all know that strategic hand motions help kids remember what they're learning, but what if you could accomplish even more than simply helping kids remember Scripture? Every Grow Kids memory verse is provided in age-appropriate signs, using a combination of SEE and ASL. Encouraging kids to learn each memory verse in this way will better **include kids and families impacted by hearing impairment**, and will **promote awareness and inclusion** for the rest of your kids and families!

This memory verse was translated into sign language and performed by Sunny Brown, a pastor in Atlanta, and ASL interpreter, with an Associates in ASL Interpreting and a Minor in Deaf Studies.

For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)



MEMORY VERSE: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."
– Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

For it is
GOD
who works in
YOU
to **WILL**
and to **ACT**
in order to fulfill
HIS GOOD
PURPOSE

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

WEEK 1

LESSON OVERVIEW



BIG IDEA

God works behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene I. Esther Becomes Queen:
Esther 2:1-18

STUFF FOR THIS WEEK

TEACHING – WEEK 1

- ▶ [Shop & Prep List](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

FAMILIES & VOLUNTEERS

- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Series Promo Cards & Posters](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse Sign Language](#)

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS WEEK



DESIGN

We made **lots of graphics** for you! Use them to create slides, social media posts, and more! You can find them in your [Graphics & Video folder](#), along with a Style Guide for this series.



CUSTOMIZE

You know your kids and ministry better than we do, so **you might want make some tweaks to this week's lesson**. Customize the lesson by editing the Word document in your series downloads or in the [Message Builder](#). Then customize this week's presentation in [SLIDR](#) by adding or adjusting the images and videos you need for this week's lesson. Finally, customize your teaching content in your [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) to share it with everyone's grown-ups!



SHOP & PREP

We made a list of everything you'll need to make this week happen. Get your editable Shop & Prep List [right here](#).



HACK

If you're using Grow for your toddlers, you may want to make some tweaks to make it more age appropriate. **Get the Toddler Hacks** for Week 1 [here](#).



COMMUNICATE

To make sure volunteers and families are in the loop, don't forget about these . . .

- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer Devotional](#)
- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse](#)

WEEK 1 **HACKS FOR TODDLERS**



REVISE

To make this series more accessible for toddlers, here's what to adjust . . .

ACTIVITY | Our Lovely Helpers

Seat younger kids in a circle and have them go around and say who lives in their house and how they're helpful to them.

ACTIVITY | Paper Crown Craft

Limit decorating supplies to just crayons or stickers.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

ACTIVITY | Director Says

Show the kids what the different movements are multiple times. Then, call out the stage-themed commands and see how much they remember on their own!

REMEMBER

Your toddlers are learning some really big names in Esther's story this week. If they take away even one name from the story, remember that's valuable for this age.

WEEK 1

LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God works behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene I. Esther Becomes Queen:
Esther 2:1-18

WELCOME TIME

MUSIC | Showstoppers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Praise You With My Song (Esther's Song)" (Little Big Heroes)
 - "This Little Light" (Ark Kids)
 - "God is So Good" (Yancy & Little Praise Party)
 - "Strong and Courageous" (Justin Graves Band)

ACTIVITY | Scene Beans

- Actors have to be comfortable with doing all sorts of actions, including silly actions! Let's all practice being stage actors!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids stand in a big circle or in a straight line. When you shout the name of a bean, have kids do some or all of the following actions with you:
 - String beans (stretch up as high as you can)
 - Broad beans (make yourself as wide as you can)
 - Runner beans (run on the spot)
 - Jumping beans (jump on the spot)
 - Jelly beans (shake your whole body like jelly)
 - Baked beans (wipe your brow and say, 'Phew!')
 - Beans on toast (lie flat on the floor)
 - Chili beans (shiver as though you're very cold)
 - Mr. Bean (shrug your shoulders and make a confused face)
 - Beanie Baby (pretend to rock a baby)
 - Human beans (exclaim, 'To bean or not to bean!')
 - Bean bags (huddle in a ball on the floor)

ACTIVITY | Director Says

- Have you ever watched a play where actors tell a story? They spend time getting ready by practicing behind the scenes. Let's get ready like they would!
 - INSTRUCTIONS:** Line the kids up front and play this version of the game, "Simon Says." When you say, "Director says..." give the kids a stage-themed command (like go stage left, go stage right, go backstage, stand upstage, and take a bow). Make sure you point which way kids should go.
- ✖ TODDLER HACK:** Show the kids what the different movements are multiple times. Then, call out the stage-themed commands and see how much they remember on their own!

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Esther 2:1–18 (Scene I. Esther Becomes Queen)

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Make three simple [stick-figure marionettes](#) for Xerxes, Esther, and Mordecai (refer to your [Shop & Prep List](#) for more details). Recruit one or two volunteers to help you as you tell the story behind a [cardboard theater](#). Use the puppets as you read Esther 2:1–18 (using a preschool Bible or kid-friendly Bible translation) or you may choose to use the script below.
- Narrator:** Welcome, everyone, to the Behind-the-Scenes Theater! Today, we're going to look at the very beginning of the story of a girl named Esther. Esther's life is about to change in a big way. Let's see what happens.
- [Enter Esther.]
- Esther:** Hello! I'm Esther. I live in a place called Persia.
 - Me and my family are called Jews. We are originally from Israel, but due to some sad things that happened, our family ended up here.
 - I live with my cousin, Mordecai. Have you met him? Mordecai! Where are you?
- [Enter Mordecai.]
- Mordecai:** Oh! Hi, I'm Mordecai. I know, that's not an easy name to say. Wanna say it with me? Mor-de-cai. Wonderful!
- Esther:** Hi, cousin Mordecai!
- Mordecai:** Esther! Did you hear?
- Esther:** No, what's going on?
- Mordecai:** I heard the king is looking for a new queen!
- Esther:** A new queen? Well, what's that got to do with me?
- Mordecai:** Well, people from the palace are going around the neighborhood to find a new queen. They might call you to go to the palace, too. The king is going to choose someone to be queen out of all the women who come to the palace.
- Esther:** Wow, can you imagine? Me, the queen of Persia? That sounds like a big, important job.
- Mordecai:** It is! Now, listen, Esther. If anyone who works for the king asks you about your family . . . uh, don't tell them you're a Jew, okay?
- Esther:** What? Why not? Our whole family is Jewish and has been for many, many years. Why should I keep it a secret that I love and follow the God of Israel like I was taught my whole life?
- Mordecai:** It's hard to explain. Some people out there just don't like when people are different. Just trust me, okay?
- Esther:** Okay, I'll do as you say.
- [Make trumpet sounds.]
- Mordecai:** Oh, the people from the palace are here! Quick, Esther! Go! And good luck!

- **Esther:** Thanks, Mordecai!
- *[Mordecai and Esther exit the stage in opposite directions. Enter Xerxes.]*
- **Xerxes:** I never thought finding a new queen would be this hard. There are so many to choose from, but I just haven't found my queen. I'm so tired.
- *[Enter Esther.]*
- **Esther:** Good day, King Xerxes.
- **Xerxes:** *[Sounding bored and facing in the opposite direction of Esther.]* Ah, yes. Yes, it is. And what is your name?
- **Esther:** My name is Esther, your majesty. Your palace is beautiful.
- **Xerxes:** Esther, you say? That's a— *[Turns around and freezes.]* . . . that's a, uh, a . . . Esther, wow . . . um . . .
- **Esther:** Yes?
- **Xerxes:** That's a lovely name.
- **Esther:** Thank you, your majesty.
- **Xerxes:** And where are you from?
- **Esther:** Um, I'm from, well, over there—
- **Xerxes:** How would you like to be from here?
- **Esther:** Excuse me?
- **Xerxes:** Marry me! Be my queen! Be the queen of Persia!
- **Esther:** Oh! Well, I'd be honored.
- **Xerxes:** Yay! This is the best day of my life! *[Runs off stage.]*
- **Narrator:** So, King Xerxes found his new queen. And just like that, Esther became Queen Esther. She doesn't know this yet, but God is getting her ready to help others in a special way. We'll find out more next time!

BIG IDEA | God works behind the scenes.

- We saw how Esther went from living a normal life to becoming a queen very quickly.
- God had a plan for Esther because **God works behind the scenes** in our lives.
 - "Behind the scenes" is something we say to talk about what goes on in the background, which we normally can't see. When we see something on the stage, we might only focus on the people performing, but there are a whole bunch of people who help control the light, sound, music, and all sorts of things. Those people work behind the scenes.
- It might seem like Esther was just lucky to get chosen to become the queen, but we know God was behind the scenes and making it happen. And God works behind the scenes for us, too.
- Let's learn these motions to help us remember that God works behind the scenes.
 - **God works** (*point up with both pointer fingers twice*)
 - **behind** (*thumbs point back behind*)
 - **the scenes** (*spread arms out in front of you*)
- God's story for Esther was to become a queen and God has a story and a plan for you!

VIDEO | Behind the Scenes, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | Our Lovely Helpers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask kids to sit in a circle and take turns calling out names of loved ones.
- ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Seat younger kids in a circle and have them go around and say who lives in their house and how they're helpful to them.

- Esther's cousin, Mordecai, helped her meet King Xerxes. Esther's cousin helped her become queen.
- **Is there anyone you know who helps you?** Let's get in a circle and say our names and the name of a cousin, sibling, or friend we love and who helps us.
- God works in our lives through people who love us!
- **God works behind the scenes.**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for knowing us and knowing our families. Even though we can't see you, we know you are there. Thank you for being with us like you were with Esther. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Intermission!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out crackers, cookies, or another snack of your choice on plates or napkins for kids to enjoy. For added fun, give kids play money to "buy" their snacks from the concession stand.
- Intermission is a short break during a play. During intermission, the performers rest, the stage crew changes the scenery, and the audience can go grab a snack!
- Let's try our own intermission snacks now!

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass a plastic crown around the circle for the kids to look at or place on their heads. Make sure to have the puppets available from the Bible story.
- Let's review the important people we met in our story today.
 - **What is the name of the woman who became the queen?** (Hold up the Esther puppet.)
 - **Do you remember who Esther's cousin is?** (Hold up the Mordecai puppet.)
 - **What is the name of the king who made Esther a queen?** (Hold up the King Xerxes puppet.)
- God is working in this story. These are the people we will keep watching each week as we hear more and more about Queen Esther.

ACTIVITY | Paper Crown Craft

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Cut paper plates into the shape of a crown (check out [these](#) instructions for a tutorial) before kids arrive. Give kids stickers, crayons, markers, paint, gems, and other items to decorate their crowns.
- **✖ TODDLER HACK:** Limit decorating supplies to just crayons or stickers.
- Put this crown on your head to help you remember today's story about Queen Esther! Even though God was nowhere to be seen, we know that God was there all along. And guess what? **God works behind the scenes** in your life, too!

MEMORY VERSE | Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

- **"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."**
- This is a big verse! Let's begin learning it together by repeating after me a few phrases at a time. When I point at you, you repeat after me:
 - **For it is God** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **who works in you** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **to will and act** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **in order to fulfill** (point at kids to repeat)

- **his good purpose** (*point at kids to repeat*)
- **Philippians 2:13** (*point at kids to repeat*)

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute the coloring page along with crayons or markers. As the kids color, you can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse.

ACTIVITY | Queen Esther's Crown Jewels

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Fill a sensory table with large beads with wide openings and some pipe cleaners. Encourage kids to free play with the pipe cleaners and beads, making them into bracelets, rings, crowns . . . anything fit for a queen!

ACTIVITY | Cardboard Puppet Theater

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Lay a large cardboard box on its side with the flaps open and have kids decorate their own puppet theater. Provide a variety of toys and help kids retell today's story. Here's [an example](#) of what that might look like.

WEEK 1

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God works behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene I. Esther Becomes Queen:
Esther 2:1-18

QUESTIONS

Pass a plastic crown around the circle for the kids to look at or place on their heads. Make sure to have the puppets available from the Bible story.

Let's review the important people we met in our story today.

- **What is the name of the woman who became the queen?** (Hold up the Esther puppet.)
- **Do you remember who Esther's cousin is?** (Hold up the Mordecai puppet.)
- **What is the name of the king who made Esther a queen?** (Hold up the King Xerxes puppet.)

God is working in this story. These are the people we will keep watching each week as we hear more and more about Queen Esther.

ACTIVITY

Cut paper plates into the shape of a crown (check out the QR code instructions for a tutorial) before kids arrive. Give kids stickers, crayons, markers, paint, gems, and other items to decorate their crowns.



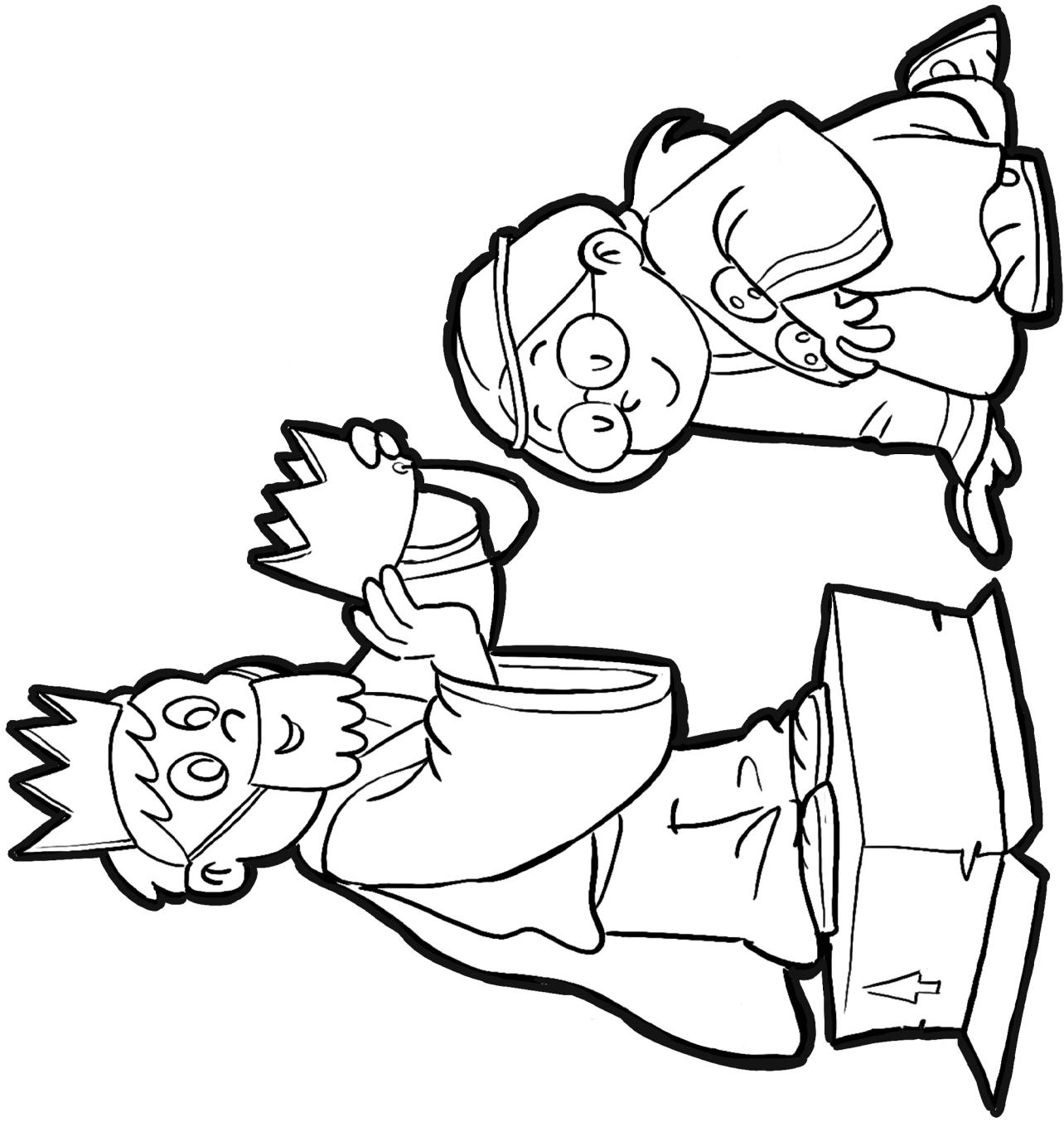
Put this crown on your head to help you remember today's story about Queen Esther! Even though God was nowhere to be seen, we know that God was there all along. And guess what? **God works behind the scenes** in your life, too!

MEMORY VERSE: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."
— Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

[Click here](#) for a memory verse sign language tutorial video you can share with your families and volunteers!

BIG IDEA: God works behind the scenes.

BIBLE: Scene I. Esther Becomes Queen:
Esther 2:1-18



WEEK 2 LESSON OVERVIEW



BIG IDEA

God helps us do good behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene II. Mordecai and Haman:
Esther 3:1-6; 6:1-11

STUFF FOR THIS WEEK

TEACHING – WEEK 2

- ▶ [Shop & Prep List](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

FAMILIES & VOLUNTEERS

- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Series Promo Cards & Posters](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse Sign Language](#)

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS WEEK



DESIGN

We made **lots of graphics** for you! Use them to create slides, social media posts, and more! You can find them in your [Graphics & Video folder](#), along with a Style Guide for this series.



CUSTOMIZE

You know your kids and ministry better than we do, so **you might want make some tweaks to this week's lesson**. Customize the lesson by editing the Word document in your series downloads or in the [Message Builder](#). Then customize this week's presentation in [SLIDR](#) by adding or adjusting the images and videos you need for this week's lesson. Finally, customize your teaching content in your [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) to share it with everyone's grown-ups!



SHOP & PREP

We made a list of everything you'll need to make this week happen. Get your editable Shop & Prep List [right here](#).



HACK

If you're using Grow for your toddlers, you may want to make some tweaks to make it more age appropriate. **Get the Toddler Hacks** for Week 2 [here](#).



COMMUNICATE

To make sure volunteers and families are in the loop, don't forget about these . . .

- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer Devotional](#)
- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse](#)

WEEK 2

HACKS FOR TODDLERS



REVISE

To make this series more accessible for toddlers, here's what to adjust . . .

ACTIVITY | Thumbs Up Relay

Play a game of "Simon Says" thumbs up edition with toddlers.

- Simon says turn to your neighbor and give them a thumbs up.
- Simon says look at me and give me a thumbs up.
- Simon says point your thumb up high to God and give God a thumbs up.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

ACTIVITY | Cut, Cut, Action!

Have an adult leader hold the hand of the kid who's "it" to help them see how it works. Have another adult leader monitor the circle helping kids get up when they are tagged.

ACTIVITY | Hoppin' Behind the Scenes

Some younger kids may have a hard time coordinating the jumps. Instead of jumping on the numbers with one foot, have them jump from box to box with two feet!

REMEMBER

ACTIVITY | Follow the Director

Keep your actions very simple for toddlers. If you have enough adults, have an adult do what the leader is saying so the toddlers can follow along.

WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God helps us do good behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene II. Mordecai and Haman:
Esther 3:1-6; 6:1-11

WELCOME TIME

MUSIC | Showstoppers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Praise You With My Song (Esther's Song)" (Little Big Heroes)
 - "This Little Light" (Ark Kids)
 - "God is So Good" (Yancy & Little Praise Party)
 - "Strong and Courageous" (Justin Graves Band)

ACTIVITY | Thumbs Up Relay

- If you wanted to let people know you thought a show you saw was really good, how might you show them?
- Many people around the world like to use a thumbs up when they like something or think something's good. Let's play a game where we get to tag each other with something good!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Line up the kids single file and facing forward. When you say, "Go!" the first kid in line turns around to the next kid and gives them a thumbs up, then the next one gives the next person a thumbs up. Have the kids keep going until they reach the end of the line. Once they do, the kid in last place runs to the head of the line. Go through the whole line until the first kid is at the beginning of the line again.

❖ **TODDLER HACK:** Play a game of "Simon Says" thumbs up edition with toddlers. For example: "Simon says turn to your neighbor and give them a thumbs up," "Simon says look at me and give me a thumbs up," "Simon says point your thumb up high to God and give God a thumbs up," etc.

ACTIVITY | Cut, Cut, Action!

- In the theater, it's the director's job to make sure everything is going well and that the actors are doing what they're supposed to do.

- When the director wants everyone to stop what they're doing, the director will yell, "Cut!" When the director wants everyone to start acting again, the director will yell, "Action!"
- Let's pretend to be directors today. Ready? Action!
- INSTRUCTIONS:** In this variation of the game, "Duck, Duck Goose," one kid will be "it" while all of the other kids sit in a circle. The kid who's "it" will go around the circle tapping everyone's heads while saying, "Cut . . . cut . . ." Whomever they choose to become "it," they'll yell, "Action!" when they tap their head. Play for as long as time allows.

✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Have an adult leader hold the hand of the kid who's "it" to help them see how it works. Have another adult leader monitor the circle helping kids get up when they are tagged.

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Esther 3:1–6; 6:1–11 (Scene II. Mordecai and Haman)

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the [stick-figure marionettes](#) for Xerxes and Mordecai you used last week. Make another marionette for Haman. Recruit one or two volunteers to help you as you tell the story behind a [cardboard theater](#). Use the puppets as you read Esther 3:1–6; 6:1–11 (using a preschool Bible or kid-friendly Bible translation) or you may choose to use the script below.
- Narrator:** Welcome, everyone, to the Behind-the-Scenes Theater! Last week, we heard a story about Esther, her cousin, Mordecai, and King Xerxes.
 - Esther and Mordecai were both Jews, which meant they worshiped God. King Xerxes picked Esther to become his queen and Mordecai became a guard at the palace gate. Let's see where the story picks up today.
- [Enter Haman.]
- Haman:** Oh. Hello, there. My name is Haman. I'm King Xerxes' right-hand man. King Xerxes trusts me to make a lot of decisions. I'm very important. And because I'm so important I think everyone should bow to me! [Do a long, slow bow.]
- Narrator:** And everyone bowed to Haman just like that. But one person did not . . . Mordecai.
- Mordecai:** I will not bow down to anyone. Not Haman . . . not even the king! I only worship the one, true God and that's it! [Shakes side to side.]
- Narrator:** When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down to him, Haman became very angry. Haman wanted to hurt Mordecai and all of Mordecai's people.
- Haman:** I will get you back, Mordecai! If it's the last thing I do! [Exits stage.]
- Narrator:** I know Haman's feelings were hurt, but that's not very nice, is it? Well, time went on and one day, Mordecai heard some bad news — he heard someone was going to try to hurt the king.
- Mordecai:** Oh, no! I have to do something! [Runs to tell the king.]
- Narrator:** The king was so happy that Mordecai looked out for him in that way, he told Haman to celebrate Mordecai's bravery by giving Mordecai a special parade through town on the king's special horse and with the king's special robe!
- [Have Haman and Mordecai puppets walk across the stage together.]
- Narrator:** This whole thing made Haman even more mad! But Mordecai always chose to do something good behind the scenes even though nobody was watching. But do you know who was watching? God was!

BIG IDEA | God helps us do good behind the scenes.

- Last week, we heard the phrase, "behind the scenes."
 - Does anyone know what that means?

- That's right! It's something we say to talk about what goes on in the background, which we normally can't see.
- God was with Mordecai when Mordecai decided to do good and not bow down to the king. Mordecai only wanted to worship God.
- Let's learn these hand motions to help us remember how **God helps us do good behind the scenes.**
 - **God helps us** (*point up with pointer finger on all three words*)
 - **do good** (*two thumbs up on both words*)
 - **behind the scenes** (*thumbs pointed back behind your shoulders*)
- Even though Mordecai didn't know it then, Mordecai's bravery helped the Jews. And God was with him the whole time, even behind the scenes.

VIDEO | Behind the Scenes, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | Follow the Director

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have the kids stand up and face you. Tell them you're going to instruct them to do a series of actions, but when you tell them to bow down, they should yell, "No!" like Mordecai told Haman. You can give the following commands and make up your own:
 - Follow the director and clap your hands.
 - Follow the director and hop on one foot.
 - Follow the director and wiggle your fingers.
 - Follow the director and bow down.
- **Who was the person who said "No" in today's story?** That's right! You all sounded like Mordecai!
 - ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Keep your actions very simple for toddlers. If you have enough adults, have an adult do what the leader is saying so the toddlers can follow along.

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for loving us and helping us do good things. You are always working to help us behind the scenes. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Intermission!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out string cheese or fruit leather (dried fruit) to the kids. Show them how the string cheese or fruit leather can "bow down" by folding it in half.
- **Did Mordecai bow down to Haman or King Xerxes? No! He did not!**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this video](#) of kids helping others. Then use the puppets from the Bible story to help review today's story.
- There are always chances to be a big helper in your classrooms, at home, and in your neighborhood.
- And in today's story, we heard about how Mordecai was a big helper, too!
 - **How did Mordecai help the king?**
 - **How do you think Haman felt about that?**

- **How can you be a big helper to someone?**
- **How do you think a person will feel after you help them?**

ACTIVITY | Paper Plate Faces

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out a paper plate to each kid along with crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Have them draw a happy face on one side of the plate and a sad face on the other. Show them [this image](#). After they're done designing their plates, ask them questions and have them hold up the side that matches the answer.
- A long time ago, when people performed in a show, they wore masks to show everyone that the play was going to be a happy or sad play.
- These masks were used so much that nowadays when we see these two masks together, everyone knows we're talking about theater!
- **What face do you make when you get yummy food for lunch?**
- **What face do you make when you get hurt?**
- **What face do you make when your friend doesn't want to share with you?**
- **What face do you think Mordecai made when he found out Haman didn't like him?**
- **What face do you think God made when Mordecai showed he only bowed down to God?**

MEMORY VERSE | Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

- **"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."**
- Back in the days when theater was performed outside, people needed to know how to control how loud their voices were so everyone could hear.
- Let's practice that today while going over our memory verse again! When I lift my hands up, I want you to repeat the memory verse as loudly as you can. When I put my hands down, say it like a whisper.
 - **For it is God** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **who works in you** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **to will and act** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **in order to fulfill** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **his good purpose** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **Philippians 2:13** (point at kids to repeat)

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute the coloring page along with crayons or markers. As the kids color, you can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse.

ACTIVITY | Make Something Good

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give kids several containers of Crayola Model Magic clay to play with.
- **What are good things someone has done for you? How about your friends or brother or sister?**
- Let's practice making something good. Let's pretend and make a gift that we can trade with each other!

ACTIVITY | Hoppin' Behind the Scenes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Create a few hopscotch patterns on the floor of your space using masking tape. Have the kids play a game of Hopscotch and instruct them to say, "Behind the scenes!" with each hop on the squares.
- ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Some younger kids may have a hard time coordinating the jumps. Instead of jumping on the numbers with one foot, have them jump from box to box with two feet!

WEEK 2

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God helps us do good behind the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene II. Mordecai and Haman:
Esther 3:1-6; 6:1-11

QUESTIONS

Scan the QR code to show a video of kids helping others. Then use the puppets from the Bible story to help review today's story. There are always chances to be a big helper in your classrooms, at home, and in your neighborhood. And in today's story, we heard about how Mordecai was a big helper, too!



- **How did Mordecai help the king?**
- **How do you think Haman felt about that?**
- **How can you be a big helper to someone?**
- **How do you think a person will feel after you help them?**

ACTIVITY

Scan the QR code to show them an image of a comedy/tragedy mask. Pass out a paper plate to each kid along with crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Have them draw a happy face on one side of the plate and a sad face on the other. After they're done designing their plates, ask them questions and have them hold up the side that matches the answer.



A long time ago, when people performed in a show, they wore masks to show everyone that the play was going to be a happy or sad play. These masks were used so much that nowadays when we see these two masks together, everyone knows we're talking about theater!

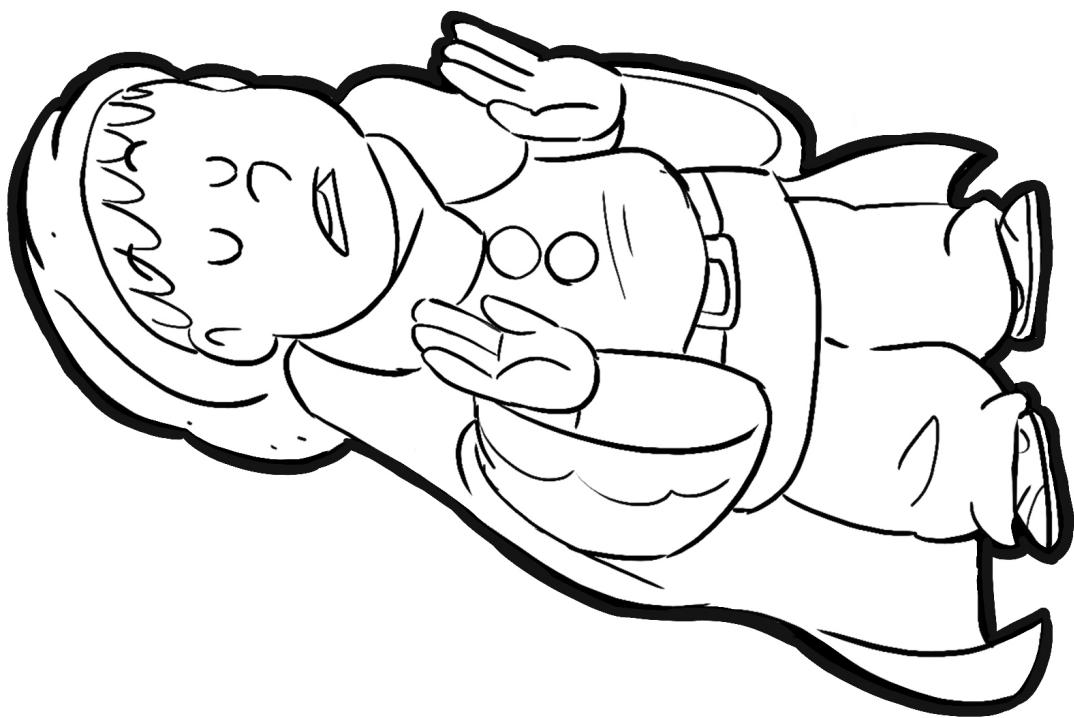
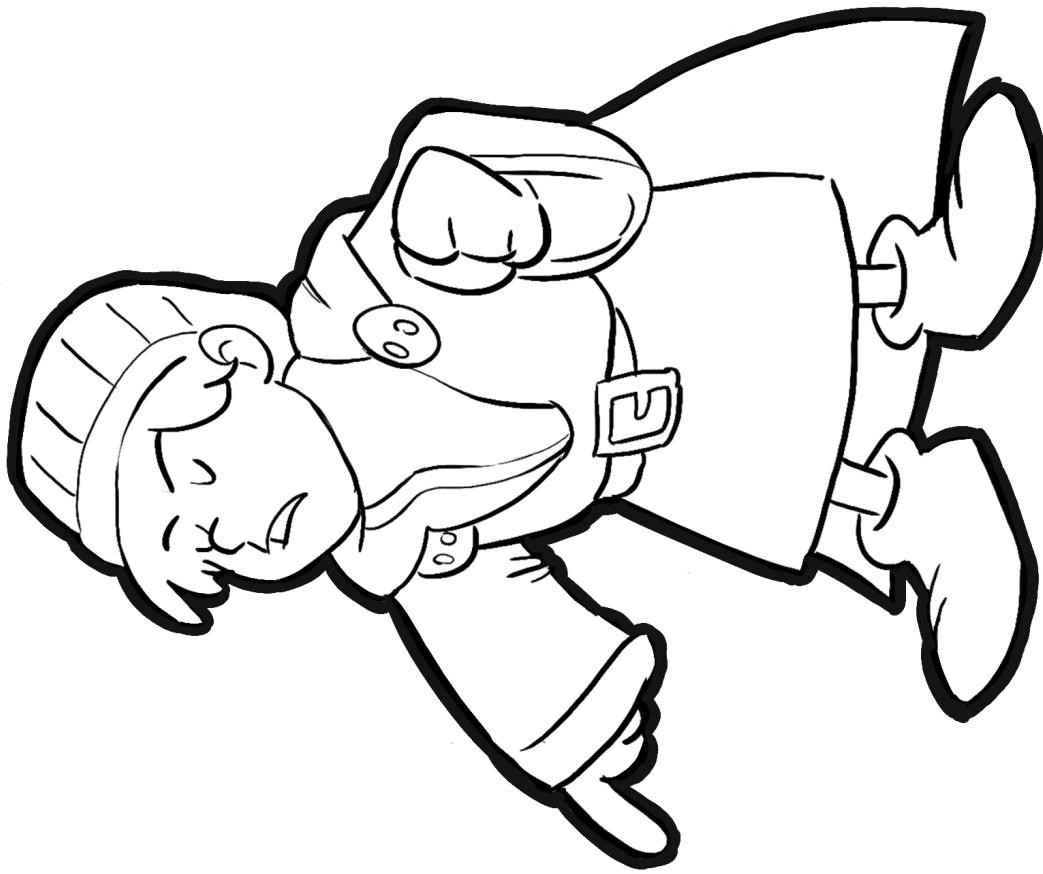
- **What face do you make when you get yummy food for lunch?**
- **What face do you make when you get hurt?**
- **What face do you make when your friend doesn't want to share with you?**
- **What face do you think Mordecai made when he found out Haman didn't like him?**
- **What face do you think God made when Mordecai showed he only bowed down to God?**

MEMORY VERSE: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."
— Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

[Click here](#) for a memory verse sign language tutorial video you can share with your families and volunteers!

BIBLE: Scene II. Mordecai and Haman:
Esther 3:1-6; 6:1-11

BIG IDEA: God helps us do good
behind the scenes.



WEEK 3 LESSON OVERVIEW



BIG IDEA

God gives us support behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene III. Mordecai Asks Esther to Help:
Esther 3:8-4:17

STUFF FOR THIS WEEK

TEACHING – WEEK 3

- ▶ [Shop & Prep List](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

FAMILIES & VOLUNTEERS

- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Series Promo Cards & Posters](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse Sign Language](#)

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS WEEK



DESIGN

We made **lots of graphics** for you! Use them to create slides, social media posts, and more! You can find them in your [Graphics & Video folder](#), along with a Style Guide for this series.



CUSTOMIZE

You know your kids and ministry better than we do, so **you might want make some tweaks to this week's lesson**. Customize the lesson by editing the Word document in your series downloads or in the [Message Builder](#). Then customize this week's presentation in [SLIDR](#) by adding or adjusting the images and videos you need for this week's lesson. Finally, customize your teaching content in your [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) to share it with everyone's grown-ups!



SHOP & PREP

We made a list of everything you'll need to make this week happen. Get your editable Shop & Prep List [right here](#).



HACK

If you're using Grow for your toddlers, you may want to make some tweaks to make it more age appropriate. **Get the Toddler Hacks** for Week 3 [here](#).



COMMUNICATE

To make sure volunteers and families are in the loop, don't forget about these . . .

- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer Devotional](#)
- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse](#)

WEEK 3

HACKS FOR TODDLERS



REVISE

To make this series more accessible for toddlers, here's what to adjust . . .

ACTIVITY | Hot Potato

You can play hot potato and when the music stops just see who it lands on and then keep going until it has stopped on every toddler once. No one needs to be out as that age group can't really understand that concept.

ACTIVITY | Stagehand Soccer

Toddlers are still finding their balance at this age, so don't have them hold hands in this game.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

ACTIVITY | Crossing the Stage

It might be difficult for younger kids to avoid stepping on the pieces. Instead, divide the kids into two-partner teams to get across the space with a leader's help.

ACTIVITY | Sending Support

Write out "God" in large letters on a piece of paper and give kids dot stickers or dot markers to trace the lines of each letter. Have kids repeat the Big Idea after you or a simpler version like, "God helps me."

REMEMBER

If one of your toddlers gets distracted or wanders to another part of your ministry space mid-activity or teaching time, remember how short their attention spans are. Sometimes it helps to have everyone get the wiggles out or to just take a break before moving on to the next activity.

WEEK 3

LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God gives us support behind the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene III. Mordecai Asks Esther to Help:
Esther 3:8-4:17

WELCOME TIME

MUSIC | Showstoppers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Praise You With My Song (Esther's Song)" (Little Big Heroes)
 - "This Little Light" (Ark Kids)
 - "God is So Good" (Yancy & Little Praise Party)
 - "Strong and Courageous" (Justin Graves Band)

ACTIVITY | Crossing the Stage

- Uh oh . . . you're in the middle of performing a play and a light falls from the ceiling! There's glass everywhere!
- The stage manager is going to help you get safely across the stage without stepping on any glass.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Designate a starting point and ending point on opposite sides of the room. Scatter some shredded paper or aluminum foil on the floor to be the broken glass. When you say, "Go!" have kids hold hands and walk together in a line, avoiding the "glass" with you leading the line of kids.
- It was hard to get across the stage and not step on any of the glass, right? But you worked together to get safely across!
- In today's story, we'll find out how one person was being asked to help a whole lot of people!
 - ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** It might be difficult for younger kids to avoid stepping on the pieces. Instead, divide the kids into two-partner teams to get across the space with a leader's help.

ACTIVITY | You've Got It, Director!

- The director of a play tells everyone what to do. Today, we're all going to be directors!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have everyone stand in a circle and choose one kid to be the first director. Tell them to suggest an action the rest of the group has to mimic by starting a sentence with, "I want you to . . ." The rest of the group responds with, "You've got it, director!" before doing the action. Keep choosing kids to be the director until everyone has had a turn.
- **How did it feel to be the leader of the whole group?**

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Esther 3:8–4:17 (Scene III. Mordecai Asks Esther to Help)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the [stick-figure marionettes](#) for Xerxes, Esther, Mordecai, and Haman you used last week. Recruit one or two volunteers to help you as you tell the story behind a [cardboard theater](#). Use the puppets as you read Esther 3:8–4:17 (using a preschool Bible or kid-friendly Bible translation) or you may choose to use the script below.
- **Narrator:** Welcome, everyone, to the Behind-the-Scenes Theater! Last week, we heard all about how Esther's cousin, Mordecai, refused to bow down to anyone but God. That made Haman, the king's trusted adviser, really angry.
 - Also in last week's story, Mordecai heard some secret news that someone had a plan to hurt the king. Mordecai told the king of the plans and saved the day! The king ordered a celebration for Mordecai, including a big parade. That made Haman even more mad!
 - Let's see where our story picks up today.
- *[Enter Haman.]*
- **Haman:** King Xerxes, I have some disappointing news. There are some people – called the Jews – in your kingdom who will not follow your rules. I think they should be punished for breaking the law.
- *[Enter Xerxes.]*
- **Xerxes:** Do what you think is best. I trust you, Haman.
- *[Xerxes exits.]*
- **Narrator:** When Haman heard the king approved for him to carry out his mean plan against the Jews, Haman was happy. He left to go tell everyone about his plans.
- *[Exit Haman.]*
- **Narrator:** Now, I need to give you a little background about the people Haman mentioned – the Jews. The Jews were a very special family and God loved them very much. Queen Esther and Mordecai, her cousin, were a part of the Jewish family. Now, back to our story.
- *[Enter Mordecai.]*
- **Mordecai:** I can't believe Haman would do this to us. I have to do something – I have to tell Esther about this. Maybe she can help us!
- **Narrator:** So, Mordecai sent a message to Queen Esther about Haman's mean plans to hurt the Jews. You see, Esther was Jewish, too, and lived in the palace. But King Xerxes didn't know Queen Esther was Jewish. Mordecai asked Queen Esther to help save their family and friends even though it would be dangerous.
- *[Enter Esther.]*
- **Esther:** Oh, no! This is such bad news! I'm going to pray for God to give me the courage to go talk to the king about this. Mordecai, can you ask everyone to pray for me, too?
- **Mordecai:** You got it, Esther.
- **Narrator:** Even though Esther was scared, she was glad to know that Mordecai and all the people would be praying to God with her. When we continue our story next week, we'll see how God helps her!

BIG IDEA | God gives us support behind the scenes.

- God helped Esther become queen so she could be close to King Xerxes and one day, help all of her family and friends – the Jewish people.
- God helps us in special ways, too, even if we don't know how God does it. **Do you know any other words for "help?"** One word I know that means to help is "support."

- Let's learn these motions to say today's Big Idea together.
 - **God gives** (*point up with both pointer fingers twice on both words*)
 - **us** (*point to self*)
 - **support behind the scenes.** (*crisscross arms across chest like a big hug and rock back and forth*)

VIDEO | Behind the Scenes, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).*

ACTIVITY | Stagehand Soccer

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Divide the kids into two teams and have each team line up, hold hands, and face the opposing team. Choose a team to go first and give one person from that team a ball to kick and try to get past the other team. Instruct the other team to move together to block the ball. Keep playing until everyone on each team has a chance to kick the ball.*
 - ❖ **TODDLER HACK:** *Toddlers are still finding their balance at this age, so don't have them hold hands in this game.*
- In today's story, we heard about how Haman made a law to hurt the Jews. That made them sad and scared.
- The Jewish people couldn't do anything to stop the new law without help, and they knew just the person – Queen Esther!
- But Queen Esther couldn't save her people all on her own – she was going to need God's help and the help of her Jewish friends and family to pray for her to be brave.
- Everyone in our story today had a part in helping the Jewish people to stay safe, just like everyone had a part to play in our game today, too.

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for always helping us. We feel safe and strong because we know you are always behind the scenes to support us. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Intermission!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid some Bugles snacks in a sugar cone or paper cone.*
- These snacks look like a megaphone. A megaphone is something directors use to make their voices sound really loud so everyone can hear them when they're practicing a play.
- **What big announcement did Haman make that scared Mordecai and all the Jews?**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Seat the kids in a circle and pass around a stuffed animal as you talk.*
- **Who can tell me what "support" means?** That's right! It's helping! **What can we do to help someone else?**
- **Who gives support?** God! **Who else helps us?**
- **Who can we support?** Everyone! **Let's name people we know that we can help!**
- Even when we don't know it, God helps us! Getting support feels great, like a big, warm hug! **God gives us support behind the scenes.**

ACTIVITY | Sending Support

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out paper and drawing utensils to the kids. Have kids draw what they need God's help with. After the kids finish drawing, roll their papers like a scroll and tie them with pieces of ribbon. (See a worked example [here](#).)
- ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Write out "God" in large letters on a piece of paper and give kids dot stickers or dot markers to trace the lines of each letter. Have kids repeat the Big Idea after you or a simpler version like, "God helps me."
- In today's Bible story, Mordecai needed Esther's help to save the Jewish people, and Esther needed God's help to be brave.
- And just like Esther asked God for help, you can ask God for help, too.
- Draw something you want God's help with on your paper. It can be anything – you can ask God to help you be a big helper at home, to be more patient with your siblings, or to be more kind and loving to your friends.
- When you're done, you can take this paper home to remind you that God can help you with anything you need!

MEMORY VERSE | Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

- **"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Assign each chunk of the memory verse to different kids. Have them practice their parts out loud a few times.
- We've been learning our memory verse each week, piece by piece. Let's review our memory verse again but this time, only focus on the line I give to you. When I point someone, only that person should repeat after me!
 - **For it is God** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **who works in you** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **to will and act** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **in order to fulfill** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **his good purpose** (point at kids to repeat)
 - **Philippians 2:13** (point at kids to repeat)
- Wonderful! Do you think you can say your part on your own?

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute the coloring page along with crayons or markers. As the kids color, you can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse.

ACTIVITY | Shaving Cream Set Design

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Spray some shaving cream into plastic trays and encourage kids to use wooden popsicle sticks or paintbrushes to draw or paint on their trays.

ACTIVITY | Building the Set

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up an area in your space with blocks (like LEGO DUPLO blocks) and encourage kids to pretend like they're building a theatre set.

WEEK 3

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God gives us support behind the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene III. Mordecai Asks Esther to Help:
Esther 3:8-4:17

QUESTIONS

Seat the kids in a circle and pass around a stuffed animal as you talk.

- **Who can tell me what “support” means?** That’s right! It’s helping!
- **What can we do to help someone else?**
- **Who gives support?** God!
- **Who else helps us?**
- **Who can we support?** Everyone!
- **Let’s name people we know that we can help!**

Even when we don’t know it, God helps us! Getting support feels great, like a big, warm hug! **God gives us support behind the scenes.**

ACTIVITY

Pass out paper and drawing utensils to the kids. Have kids draw what they need God’s help with. After the kids finish drawing, roll their papers like a scroll and tie them with pieces of ribbon.

In today’s Bible story, Mordecai needed Esther’s help to save the Jewish people, and Esther needed God’s help to be brave. And just like Esther asked God for help, you can ask God for help, too.

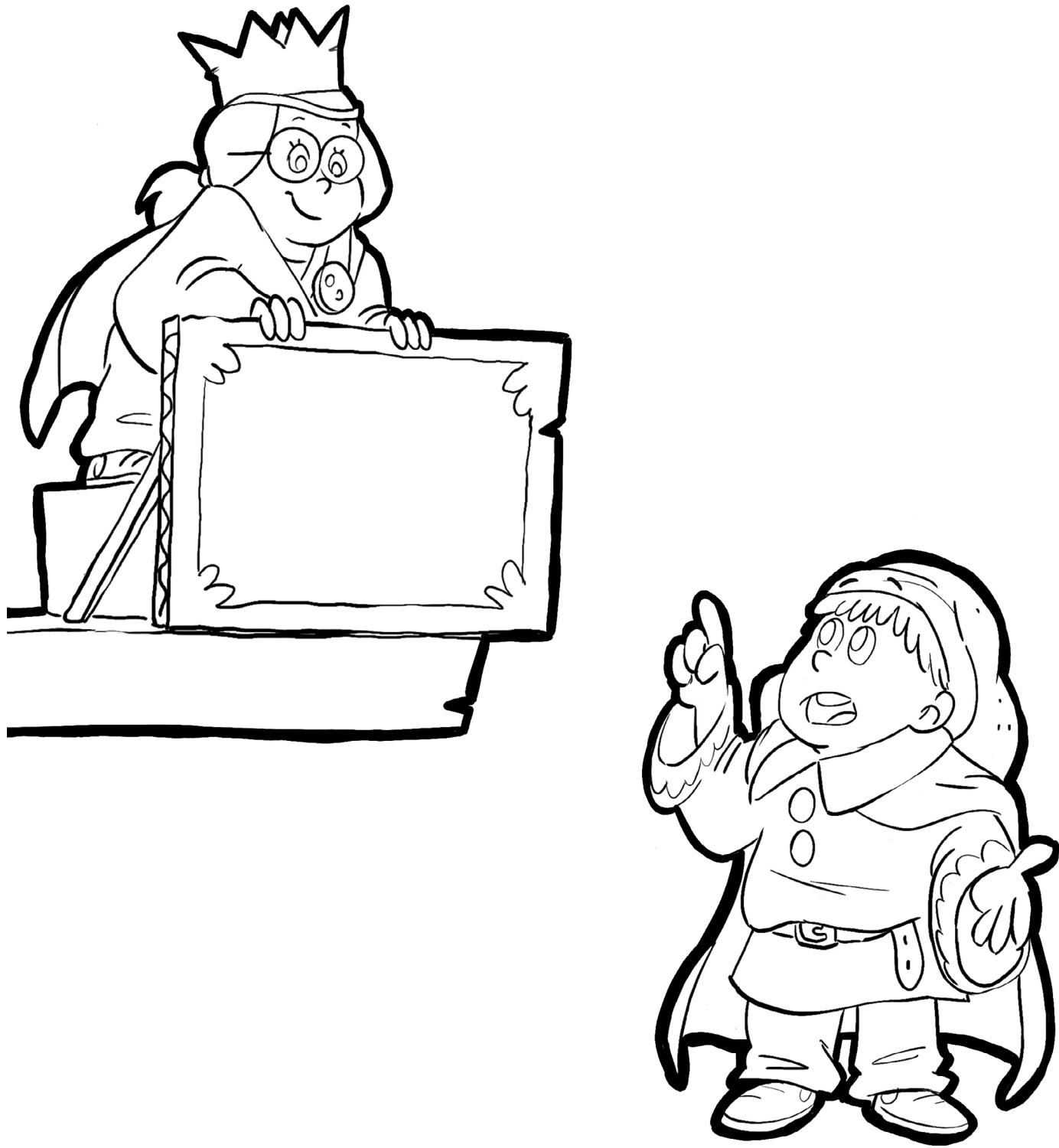
Draw something you want God’s help with on your paper. It can be anything — you can ask God to help you be a big helper at home, to be more patient with your siblings, or to be more kind and loving to your friends. When you’re done, you can take this paper home to remind you that God can help you with anything you need!

MEMORY VERSE: “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”
— Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

[Click here](#) for a memory verse sign language tutorial video you can share with your families and volunteers!

BIG IDEA: God gives us support behind the scenes.

BIBLE: Scene III. Mordecai Asks Esther to Help:
Esther 3:8-4:17



WEEK 4 LESSON OVERVIEW



BIG IDEA

God gives us peace behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene IV. Esther Talks to the King:
Esther 5:1-8, 7:1-6; 8:1-8

STUFF FOR THIS WEEK

TEACHING – WEEK 4

- ▶ [Shop & Prep List](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Toddlers](#)
- ▶ [Lesson Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Printables](#)

FAMILIES & VOLUNTEERS

- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Series Promo Cards & Posters](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse Sign Language](#)

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS WEEK



DESIGN

We made **lots of graphics** for you! Use them to create slides, social media posts, and more! You can find them in your [Graphics & Video folder](#), along with a Style Guide for this series.



CUSTOMIZE

You know your kids and ministry better than we do, so **you might want make some tweaks to this week's lesson**. Customize the lesson by editing the Word document in your series downloads or in the [Message Builder](#). Then customize this week's presentation in [SLIDR](#) by adding or adjusting the images and videos you need for this week's lesson. Finally, customize your teaching content in your [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) to share it with everyone's grown-ups!



SHOP & PREP

We made a list of everything you'll need to make this week happen. Get your editable Shop & Prep List [right here](#).



HACK

If you're using Grow for your toddlers, you may want to make some tweaks to make it more age appropriate. **Get the Toddler Hacks** for Week 4 [here](#).



COMMUNICATE

To make sure volunteers and families are in the loop, don't forget about these . . .

- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Parent & Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer Devotional](#)
- ▶ [Family Handouts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [Memory Verse](#)

WEEK 4 **HACKS FOR TODDLERS**



REVISE

To make this series more accessible for toddlers, here's what to adjust . . .

ACTIVITY | Be Our Guest

Pass around one item of play food. Whoever is holding the item when the music stops, have them say, "I'm so full!" and lie down in their spot instead of in the center (or outside) of the circle.

ACTIVITY | Peace Freeze Dance

Instead of using the word freeze you may just have to say stop when the music stops, who can stand still, and then say go again.

ACTIVITY | Magnificent Marionettes

Have all the puppets pre-made and give toddlers easy-to-grip crayons to color them (or use fingerpaints!). Help kids remember who each puppet is. Make sure you make your own set to show them. Then as you play the video, pause it each time a character comes on and help toddlers identify the puppet version.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

ACTIVITY | Peace Parachute

Instead of using a parachute or blanket, give each toddler a small stuffed animal to hold gently and ask them how they show soft, gentle care to their stuffed animal.

REMEMBER

Your toddlers will feed off of your energy and joy. What you model to them will be reflected in the dynamic of your time with these precious little ones.

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God gives us peace behind
the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene IV. Esther Talks to the King:
Esther 5:1-8, 7:1-6; 8:1-8

WELCOME TIME

MUSIC | Showstoppers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Praise You With My Song (Esther's Song)" (Little Big Heroes)
 - "This Little Light" (Ark Kids)
 - "God is So Good" (Yancy & Little Praise Party)
 - "Strong and Courageous" (Justin Graves Band)

ACTIVITY | Be Our Guest

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Gather some play food and toy dinnerware and seat kids in a circle. Play the song, "[Be Our Guest](#)" from the movie, "Beauty and the Beast." As the song plays, start passing items of play food and dinnerware around the circle clockwise. Instruct kids to only hold one item at a time. Pause the music every so often to call out an item (like salt shaker) and whoever is holding that item has to say, "I'm so full!" while patting their belly. Have that kid lie down in the middle of the circle (or outside the circle if you have a smaller group). Keep playing until only a few kids are left.
- Do you know what a dinner party is? It's where people get together to celebrate something while eating dinner together!
- Today, we'll hear a story about not just one dinner party, but two! Let's pretend we're having a dinner party.
 - ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Pass around one item of play food. Whoever is holding the item when the music stops, have them say, "I'm so full!" and lie down in their spot instead of in the center (or outside) of the circle.

ACTIVITY | Peace Freeze Dance

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Turn on some fun, upbeat music for this game of "Freeze Dance." When the music stops, kids have to freeze into a quiet, peaceful position. Repeat this as time allows.

❖ **TODDLER HACK:** Instead of using the word, "freeze," just say "stop" when the music stops and "go" when you start the music again.

- **What's it like when everyone freezes? Is it loud? No. Is it crazy? No. Is it calm? Yes. Is it quiet? Yes!**

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Esther 5:1–8, 7:1–6; 8:1–8 (Scene IV. Esther Talks to the King)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the [stick-figure marionettes](#) for Xerxes, Esther, Mordecai, and Haman you used last week. Recruit one or two volunteers to help you as you tell the story behind a [cardboard theater](#). Use the puppets as you read Esther 5:1–8, 7:1–6; 8:1–8 (using a preschool Bible or kid-friendly Bible translation) or you may choose to use the script below.
- **Narrator:** Welcome, everyone, to the final showing of our play at Behind-the-Scenes Theater! It's time to watch the final scene in this amazing story about Queen Esther.
- *[Enter Haman.]*
- **Haman:** Esther? No, this is my story. Do you remember me? I'm Haman. I'm so mad at Mordecai for not bowing down to me. He's disrespecting the king! And me! It's like he's making fun of me. I will not stand for this. I already talked to the king, and I have something special planned for Mordecai and all his little friends! *[Evil laugh.]*
- **Narrator:** That's right, Haman had a terrible plan that would hurt Mordecai and his people, the Jews. Mordecai asked his cousin, Queen Esther, to help. She said she would do everything she can, even though it would be dangerous for her.
- *[Enter Esther and Xerxes.]*
- **Esther:** Dear king, thank you for seeing me today.
- **Xerxes:** My dear Queen Esther, it's always a pleasure to see you. Now, tell me why you've come.
- **Esther:** Well, king, I was wondering if I could throw a big dinner party at the palace. I'd like to invite Haman to come, too.
- **Haman:** A dinner party with the king, queen, and me? Count me in!
- **Xerxes:** That sounds like a wonderful idea! Do what makes you happy, my queen.
- **Narrator:** So, they had a wonderful dinner together. But Esther wasn't ready to ask the king what she really wanted yet. So she invited the king and Haman to a second party.
- **Haman:** You see how important I am around here? The queen holds a special dinner party for just me and the king. And not just once. Two times! And soon Mordecai and all the Jews will be gone, too. Everything is going my way for once!
- **Narrator:** But at the second party, Esther says something that shocks everyone.
- **Esther:** Your majesty. I need to ask you to help me stop a truly bad thing from happening. Someone out there is trying to hurt me and my family. You see, I'm a Jew.
- **Xerxes:** What? Who dares hurt you and your loved ones, my queen? Who is it?
- **Esther:** Actually, it's Haman, King Xerxes. Haman tricked you into passing a rule to hurt my people.
- **Haman:** What? Little ol' me? Um . . . Ahh! Save me! *[Runs off stage.]*
- **Xerxes:** Come back here! *[Chases after Haman.]*
- **Narrator:** So, King Xerxes put an end to Haman's mean plan immediately. Queen Esther was so brave and she trusted God, even though she was afraid. Because of what she did, Esther, Mordecai, and all the Jews were at peace . . . they didn't need to be afraid anymore!

BIG IDEA | God gives us peace behind the scenes.

- God helped Esther feel calm even though she was feeling scared on the inside. That's what it means to feel "peace."
- Our Big Idea reminds us that God gives us peace and helps us to feel safe. **When do you feel at peace?**
- **Let's learn these motions together to help us remember today's Big Idea:**
 - **God gives** (use both pointer fingers to point up on both words)
 - **us** (point to self with both thumbs)
 - **peace** (peace sign with both hands)
 - **behind** (point back behind yourself with both thumbs)
 - **the scenes.** (spread arms out in front of you)

VIDEO | Behind the Scenes, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | Peace Parachute

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Spread out a parachute or a large sheet on the floor. Place the kids around it and have them lift it gently. Have the kids make gentle, peaceful waves with the parachute or blanket. Toss a small stuffed animal onto the blanket as they're making the waves.
 - ❖ **TODDLER HACK:** Instead of using a parachute or blanket, give each toddler a small stuffed animal to hold gently and ask them how they show soft, gentle care to their stuffed animal.
- **How can we take care of this stuffed animal as gently and peacefully as possible?**
- **Who needed peace in today's story?**
- **Did they get peace?**
- **Who gave them peace?**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for being our safe place. You show us what peace looks like in how you care for us. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Intermission!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a handful of Goldfish crackers to the kids. Before they begin eating, have them form the shape of a heart on their plates or napkins out of the crackers.
- **Does the heart on your plate remind you of God's love for Queen Esther and her people?** It should remind you that God loves you, too!

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Bring in an item to share with the kids that represents God's peace to you. Maybe a picture of your family, a special Bible or gift that was given to you, a picture of a sunset, or your favorite place in nature. Begin your circle time by showing how God's peace is real in your life as their leader. You can pass it around as you review today's story.
- **Who did Queen Esther go and ask to help save her people from Haman?**
- **Show me on your face and using your body how you think Queen Esther felt about talking to the king.**
- **Show me how you think the king felt when he saw Queen Esther come into the room.**

- **Show me on your face how you think Haman felt when he found out the queen knew everything!**
- **Show me how you think the Jews felt when they heard Esther saved the day!**
- God's peace was with Queen Esther as she asked King Xerxes for help. And in the end, God used her to help save all the Jewish people.

ACTIVITY | Magnificent Marionettes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this video](#) to recap the story of Esther. Next, have the kids create their own puppets using popsicle sticks, glue, coloring utensils, and scissors (or cut out all the materials beforehand). Check out these puppet templates ([here](#) and [here](#)) for examples to replicate. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#) (See a worked example [here](#).)
- ✖ **TODDLER HACK:** Have all the puppets pre-made and give toddlers easy-to-grip crayons to color them (or use fingerpaints!). Help kids remember who each puppet is. Make sure you make your own set to show them. Then as you play the video, pause it each time a character comes on and help toddlers identify the puppet version.
- In today's story, we heard all about how God helped Esther feel calm and peaceful even when she was afraid.
- These puppets will remind us of our Bible story and how God is always with us to help us be peaceful and brave!
- **God gives us peace behind the scenes.**

MEMORY VERSE | Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

- **"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids repeat each chunk of the memory verse after you in the different voices indicated, or make up your own!
- **For it is God** [Normal voice.]
- **who works in you** [Really low voice.]
- **to will and to act** [Opera voice.]
- **in order to fulfill** [Chipmunk voice.]
- **his good purpose.** [Robot voice.]
- **Philippians 2:13** [Normal voice.]

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute the coloring page along with crayons or markers. As the kids color, you can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse.

ACTIVITY | Stick Figure Spotlight

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out [Wiki Sticks](#) to the kids and have them create their own Queen Esther and King Xerxes. Make an example for the kids to see ahead of time before they begin. (See a worked example [here](#).)

ACTIVITY | Peaceful Scene

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Fill a large tub with kinetic sand for kids to free play in. Add some small beach toys, buckets, and shovels for the kids to play with.

WEEK 4

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God gives us peace behind the scenes.

BIBLE

Scene IV. Esther Talks to the King:
Esther 5:1-8, 7:1-6; 8:1-8

QUESTIONS

Begin your circle time by showing how God's peace is real in your life as their leader by sharing a personal item that represents God's peace to you. You can pass it around as you review today's story.

- Who did Queen Esther go and ask to help save her people from Haman?
- Show me on your face and using your body how you think Queen Esther felt about talking to the king.
- Show me how you think the king felt when he saw Queen Esther come into the room.
- Show me on your face how you think Haman felt when he found out the queen knew everything!
- Show me how you think the Jews felt when they heard Esther saved the day!

God's peace was with Queen Esther as she asked King Xerxes for help. And in the end, God used her to help save all the Jewish people.

ACTIVITY

Scan the QR code for a recap of the story of Esther. Next, have the kids create their own puppets using popsicle sticks, glue, coloring utensils, and scissors (or cut out all the materials beforehand). Choose the puppet template (see Shop & Prep list) you want to replicate for your group.



In today's story, we heard all about how God helped Esther feel calm and peaceful even when she was afraid.

These puppets will remind us of our Bible story and how God is always with us to help us be peaceful and brave!

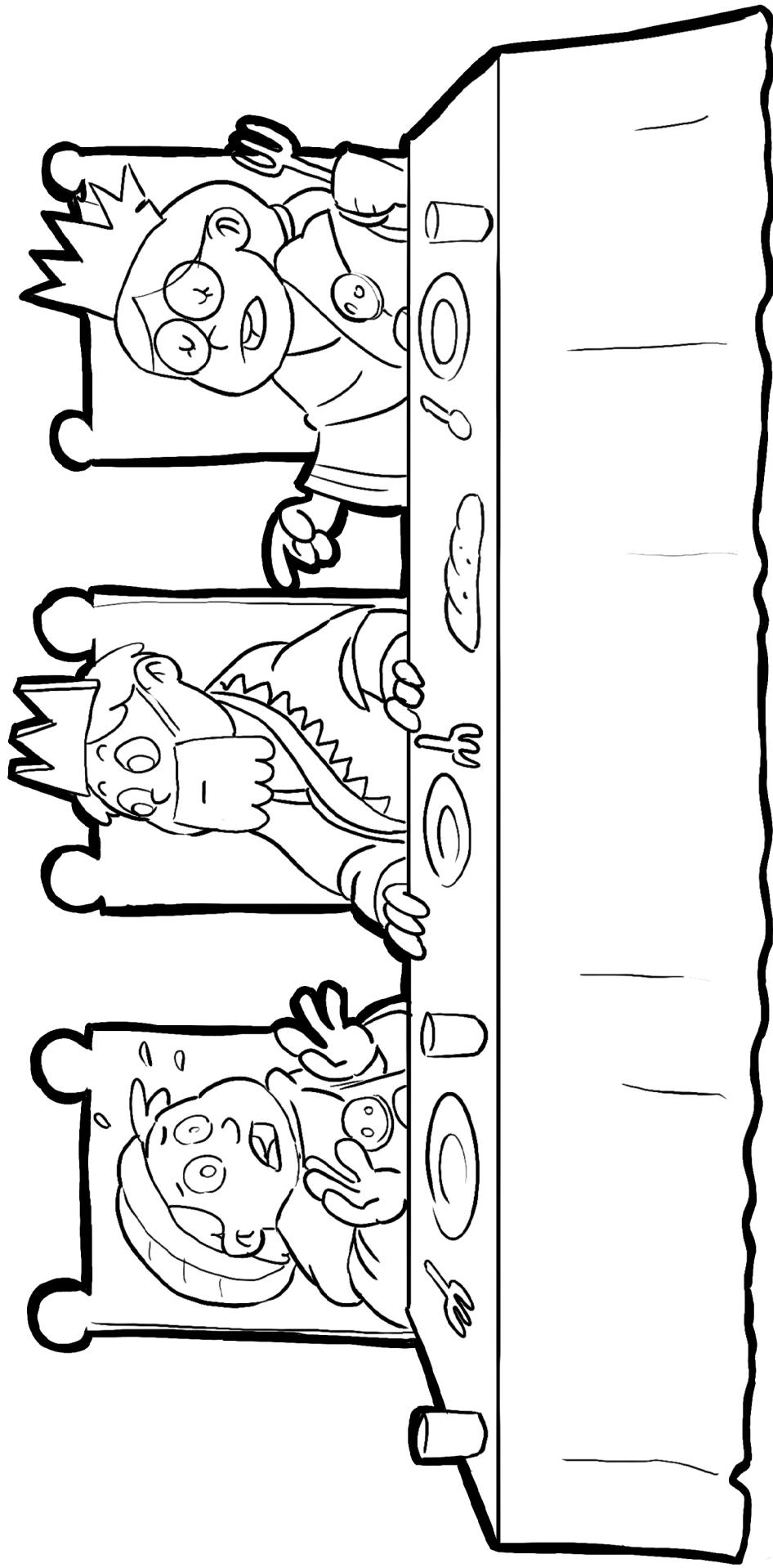
God gives us peace behind the scenes.

MEMORY VERSE: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."
— Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

[Click here](#) for a memory verse sign language tutorial video you can share with your families and volunteers!

BIG IDEA: God gives us peace behind the scenes.

BIBLE: Scene IV. Esther Talks to the King:
Esther 5:1-8, 7:1-6; 8:1-8





MARKETING CHECKLIST



BEFORE THE SERIES

✓ TO DO

	Print your Series Promo Poster and Series Promo Cards and display them where families and volunteers can see them.
	Customize your Volunteer Hub and Parent Hub web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the Parent Email for this series.
	Send the Volunteer Email for Week 1 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.
	Review the suggested Social Media Posts and Captions for this series.
	Post the Bumper Video on social media with this caption: We're starting a new series on Esther this week called Behind the Scenes. Check your email for all the details!

AFTER WEEK 1

✓ TO DO

	Post the Teaching Video for Week 1 on social media with this caption: Did you miss our conversation yesterday? Catch up with this week's teaching video! Remember, God works behind the scenes.
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption: Week 1 of Behind the Scenes is in the books! We talked about who Esther was, and how she became queen. Here was the Big Idea: God works behind the scenes.
	Send the Volunteer Email for Week 2 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓ TO DO

	<p>Post the Teaching Video for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Need a reminder about what we talked about yesterday? Check out this week's teaching video for a recap! Here's a hint: God helps us do good behind the scenes.</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>This week in our series Behind the Scenes, we looked Esther 3 and how Mordecai and Haman became bitter rivals. Here was the Big Idea: God helps us do good behind the scenes.</p>
	<p>Send the Volunteer Email for Week 3 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 3

✓ TO DO

	<p>Post the Teaching Video for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember what we talked about yesterday? No? That's okay — this week's teaching video will remind you! Speaking of which... God gives us support behind the scenes.</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In Week 3 of Behind the Scenes, we looked at Esther 3 & 4 and talked about why Mordecai asked Esther to help the people of Israel. Here was the Big Idea: God gives us support behind the scenes.</p>
	<p>Send the Volunteer Email for Week 4 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 4

✓ TO DO

	<p>Post the Teaching Video for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Yesterday, we talked about how Esther talked to the king about her people. Not ringing a bell? Get the full recap with this week's teaching video!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>It's our final week of Behind the Scenes! It's been a great conversation with your kids. We closed with a conversation about God's peace. Here was the Big Idea: God gives us peace behind the scenes.</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS



Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each week, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.

BEFORE THE SERIES



BUMPER VIDEO

We're starting a new series on Esther this week called Behind the Scenes. Check your email for all the details!

AFTER WEEK 1



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 1)

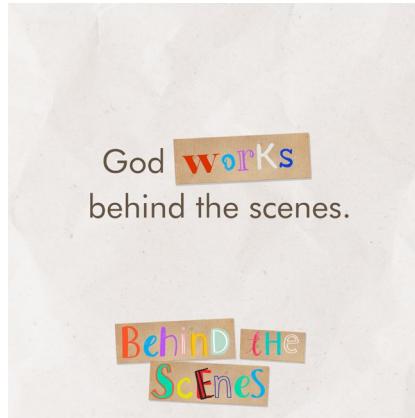
Did you miss our conversation yesterday? Catch up with this week's teaching video! Remember, God works behind the scenes.

AFTER WEEK 2



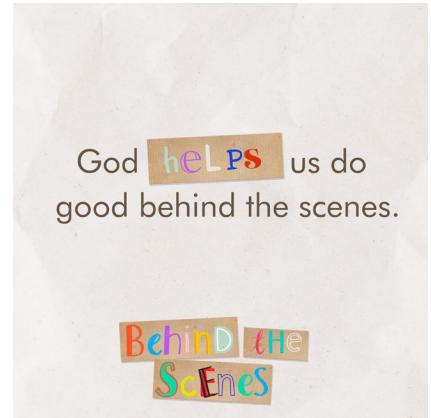
TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 2)

Need a reminder about what we talked about yesterday? Check out this week's teaching video for a recap! Here's a hint: God helps us do good behind the scenes.



BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)

Week 1 of Behind the Scenes is in the books! We talked about who Esther was, and how she became queen. Here was the Big Idea: God works behind the scenes.



BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)

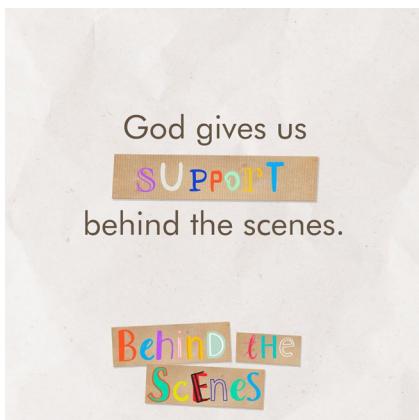
This week in our series Behind the Scenes, we looked Esther 3 and how Mordecai and Haman became bitter rivals. Here was the Big Idea: God helps us do good behind the scenes.

AFTER WEEK 3



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 3)

Remember what we talked about yesterday? No? That's okay — this week's teaching video will remind you! Speaking of which . . . God gives us support behind the scenes.



BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)

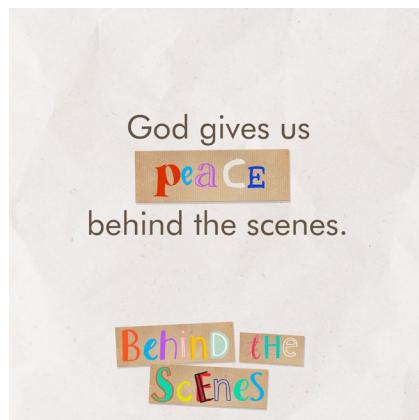
In Week 3 of Behind the Scenes, we looked at Esther 3 & 4 and talked about why Mordecai asked Esther to help the people of Israel. Here was the Big Idea: God gives us support behind the scenes.

AFTER WEEK 4



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 4)

Yesterday, we talked about how Esther talked to the king about her people. Not ringing a bell? Get the full recap with this week's teaching video!



BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)

It's our final week of Behind the Scenes! It's been a great conversation with your kids. We closed with a conversation about God's peace. Here was the Big Idea: God gives us peace behind the scenes.

**What We're
Teaching**



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

**What We're
Teaching**



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

**What We're
Teaching**



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

**What We're
Teaching**



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE