

**HEROES**

**OF THE**

**FAITH**

Ordinary Men and Women . . .  
Super Ordinary Power

**28**

**ESTHER RISKS HER LIFE TO SAVE HER PEOPLE**

**HEROES OF THE FAITH CURRICULUM—2012**

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# 28

## **ESTHER RISKS HER LIFE TO SAVE HER PEOPLE**

### **Memory Verse:**

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3 NLT)

### **Lesson Goals:**

#1 - Understand how ordinary Esther was

#2 - Discover what faith led Esther to do

#3 - Desire to let God do extraordinary things in the life of the ordinary student

### **Audience:**

Young, un-churched learners

Adaptable for all ages, including adults (See **For more training** on Activities page)

### **Scripture to Study:**

Esther 3-10

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

**Our heroine:** Esther

**Her Heroic Feat:** Puts Others First

Putting others first may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

Do you remember learning in our last lesson that Mordecai saved the king's life? Well, after that, rather than honoring Mordecai, King Xerxes honored someone else. He honored a man named Haman. We aren't even told why Haman was honored, but the king ordered that people bow down before him.

Mordecai wouldn't bow down to Haman; Mordecai wouldn't bow down to anyone but God. This made Haman very angry, so angry that he wanted to hurt Mordecai. But Haman "thought of himself as too important to try to kill only Mordecai. . . . so he looked for a way to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, in all of Xerxes' kingdom." (Esther 3:6 NCV) Haman went to King Xerxes and told him that there was "a certain group of people" in his kingdom who didn't obey the king's laws. Haman suggested that they destroy them and the king agreed, saying "Do with them as you please." (Esther 3:11b NCV) So Haman rolled dice to choose a day and set his plans in motion. Announcements were sent to every province in every language imaginable.

When Mordecai heard about the new law, he tore his clothes and put on rough clothes to show how sad he was and then he sat in the city square. When Queen Esther heard what Mordecai was doing she was upset and sent clothes for him to change into. When he wouldn't change, she sent one of her servants to find out what was wrong. Mordecai told the servant everything. "And Mordecai told him to order Esther to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and to plead with him for her people." (Esther 4:8b NCV)

Queen Esther wasn't so sure about the idea. You see, anyone who entered the king's presence uninvited could be in danger of death, unless the king pardoned them by holding out his golden scepter. Esther added that the king hadn't even called for her for thirty days now. The queen's cousin was very firm with her, queen or not! "He sent back word to Esther: 'Just because you live in the king's palace, don't think that out of all the Jewish people you alone will escape.'" (Esther 4:13 NCV) Mordecai added, "If you keep quiet, God will save his people, but our family will die. And who knows, maybe this is why you became queen."

It was then that Esther agreed. She asked for him and all the Jewish people in the capital to fast and pray. They wouldn't eat or drink for three days, but they would pray. Esther and her servant girls would do the same and after three days Queen Esther would go to the king. Esther knew that it was against the law, but she said, "If I die, I die." (Esther 4:16 NCV) "On the third day, Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner courtyard of the king's palace, facing the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the door-

way." (Esther 5:1 NCV) The king saw Esther standing there and was pleased! He held out the golden scepter to her, then wanted to know what she wanted and offered up to half his kingdom. Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet that day.

The king and Haman rushed off to Esther's banquet. While they were there, the king asked again, "What would you like to ask me? I'll give you up to half of my kingdom." And Esther invited them to another banquet the following day. It was then that Esther intended to ask the king to save her and her people, but it was that afternoon that some very unusual things began to happen.

Haman left the palace very happy and full of pride, but once again, when he met Mordecai, Mordecai refused to bow down to him. He couldn't hold his anger any longer and built a platform in his backyard so that Mordecai could be hanged on it!

Then, "that same night the king could not sleep. So he gave an order for the daily court record to be brought in and read to him." (Esther 6:1 NCV) It was then that the king realized nothing had ever been done for Mordecai when he uncovered the plot to kill the king. The king wanted some ideas on how to honor Mordecai and guess who happened to be in the courtyard, but Haman! Instead of revealing his plans to have Mordecai hanged, Haman was chosen to parade Mordecai around the capital city announcing, "This is what is done for the man whom the king wants to honor!" (Esther 6:9 NCV)

By then it was time to attend Queen Esther's banquet. The king and Haman went. When the king asked what Esther wanted she said, "If you are pleased with me and if it pleases you, let me live. This is what I ask. And let my people live, too. This is what I want." (Esther 7:3 NCV) The king was shocked. He wanted to know who would plan such a thing! Then Esther told the king that it was Haman! That very day Haman was punished with the very punishment he had planned for Mordecai. And Mordecai was put in charge of everything that had been Haman's.



### **YOU CAN BE A HERO, TOO!**

When you live a life of faith in Jesus Christ, you don't have to leap tall buildings to be a hero. Queen Esther put others first.

Our memory verse says, "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3 NLT) Queen Esther was willing to die to save her people. She thought of them as better than herself. How can you put this verse into practice this week?

# PRE-SCHOOL!

## LESSON

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

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Mordecai wouldn't bow down to Haman. This made Haman very angry, so angry that he wanted to hurt Mordecai. But Haman thought he was so important that just hurting Mordecai wasn't enough. He wanted to hurt all of the Jewish people in King Xerxes kingdom. Haman went to King Xerxes and told him that there were people in his kingdom who didn't obey the king's laws. Haman suggested that they destroy them and the king agreed.

When Mordecai heard the news, he tore his clothes and put on rough clothes to show how sad he was. Mordecai asked Queen Esther to talk to the king. She didn't want to at first because it was dangerous. The king had the right to kill anyone who came to him without being asked to come. Mordecai told Esther that maybe this was why she became queen.

Esther finally agreed. She and Mordecai and all the Jewish people in the capital didn't eat or drink for three days, but they prayed. And on the third day, when Queen Esther went to see the king, he was happy to see her. Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet that day. At that banquet she invited them to a banquet the next day.

The king and Haman went to the queen's second banquet and the king asked what Esther wanted. Queen Esther said, "If you are pleased with me and if it pleases you, let me live. This is what I ask. And let my people live, too. This is what I want." (Esther 7:3 NCV) The king was shocked. He wanted to know who would plan such a thing! Then Esther told the king that it was Haman! That very day Haman was punished and Mordecai was put in charge of everything that had been Haman's.

# ACTIVITIES!

- Memory Verse Activity - Make a memory verse poster. Encourage your students to color and decorate their poster. For older students, suggest that they include "U > I" (You are greater than I am) across the top of their posters.
- Continue adding heroes' names and heroic feats to your "Heroes Banner."
- Sing "I Will," "Trust and Obey," Babbie Mason's "Trust His Heart," "How Great is Our God" or other praise songs related to the lesson.
- Reenact the lesson. Make robes from paper bags, crowns from construction paper, and scepters from paper towel rolls.
- **For more training:** Read 1 Samuel 15. This is necessary background to understand the depth of the problems between Haman and Mordecai. Look again at 1 Samuel 15:8, 33 and Esther 3:1. Who was Haman a descendant of? (King Agag) Now look again at 1 Samuel 15:1-7 and Esther 2:5-8, then look at 1 Samuel 9:1-2. Whose family was Mordecai from? (King Saul's) Discuss the implications.
- **For more training:** Read Esther 9:18-32 and 3:5-11. Discuss the Feast of Purim and God's protection of the Jewish people in Persia.
- **For more training:** What do you do when you have a big decision to make. Have you ever thought of following Esther's example? Read Esther 4:6-16.
- **For more training:** Review the memory verse. Contrast Haman (Esther 3:5-6, Esther 6:6-9) and Esther (Esther 4:6-16). Read Philippians 2:1-18. Discuss practical ways to practice humility.

Don't be selfish;  
don't try  
to impress others.

Be humble,  
thinking of others  
as better than  
yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

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# ***HERO IN TRAINING***

Esther Risks Her Life to Save Her People

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# HERO TRAINING!

**Scripture:** Esther 3-10

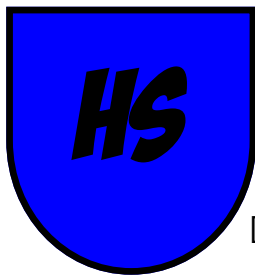
**Memory verse:**

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3 NLT)

**Our Heroine:** \_\_\_\_\_

What did our heroine do that was so heroic? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to be a **Hero of the Faith**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



What power do Heroes of the Faith possess?

Do you have the power? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Esther 4:6-16. How did Esther put others first?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?  
 What does it mean to be humble? Decipher the code below and  
 write your answers in the spaces below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Don't be selfish;  
 don't try to impress others.

Be humble,

-----  
 20 8 9 14 11 9 14 7 15 6 15 20 8 5 18 19

-----  
 1 19 2 5 20 20 5 18 20 8 1 14 25 15 21 18 19 5 12 22 5 9

(Philippians 2:3 NLT)

WORD

SEARCH!

B S M C G N A L P L I V E  
D M O A N A L O U K M E X  
P E R S I M A D T I C H A  
H S D N K A S N O N L U B  
E P E H T H E N T G U Q E  
Y E C W S D W O H X N O D  
C R E H T S E N E E U Q N  
I S I K I N G X R R X E S  
T I R I A C E D S X M L G  
I A C E D R O M F E D O O  
S I P H A H C A I S E M N  
F A S T A N D P R A Y I N  
V T R E O R F A S D I U E  
G N T N L V I C T O R Y H  
H T S U P T F T O G P L C

- Persia
- King Xerxes
- Queen Esther
- Haman
- Mordecai
- evil plan
- fast and pray
- put others first
- victory

# HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Answer Page

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?  
 What does it mean to be humble? Decipher the code below and  
 write your answers in the spaces below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Don't be selfish;  
 don't try to impress others.

Be humble,  
thinking of others as better than yourselves.

20 8 9 14 11 9 14 7 15 6 15 20 8 5 18 19 1 19 2 5 20 20 5 18 20 8 1 14 25 15 21 18 19 5 12 22 5 19

(Philippians 2:3 NLT)

# WORD

# SEARCH!

Answer Page

B	S	M	C	G	N	A	L	P	L	I	V	E
D	M	O	A	N	A	L	O	U	K	M	E	X
P	E	R	S	I	M	A	D	T	I	C	H	A
H	S	D	N	K	A	S	N	O	N	L	U	B
E	P	E	H	T	H	E	N	T	G	U	Q	E
Y	E	C	W	S	D	W	O	H	X	N	O	D
C	R	E	H	T	S	E	N	E	E	U	Q	N
I	S	I	K	I	N	G	X	R	R	X	E	S
T	I	R	I	A	C	E	D	S	X	M	L	G
I	A	C	E	D	R	O	M	F	E	D	O	O
S	I	P	H	A	H	C	A	I	S	E	M	N
F	A	S	T	A	N	D	P	R	A	Y	I	N
V	T	R	E	O	R	F	A	S	D	I	U	E
G	N	T	N	L	V	I	C	T	O	R	Y	H
H	T	S	U	P	T	F	T	O	G	P	L	C

- Persia
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