

## Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
<b>Lower Elementary</b>		
<p><b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> God can make ordinary people heroes and leaders!</p> <p><b>KING MAY I?:</b> Kids play a version of "Mother May I?"</p> <p><b>BIBLE BEAN-BAG TOSS:</b> Kids play a game of bean bag toss to learn the names and places of our story.</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> None</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Bean bags, masking tape, paper, markers</p>
<b>Upper Elementary</b>		
<p><b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> We can celebrate together!</p> <p><b>ESTHER WORD SCRAMBLE:</b> Kids race to unscramble the words of our story to learn more about Esther.</p> <p><b>COSTUME CONTEST!:</b> Kids explore the festival of Purim by having a Costume Contest.</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> None</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Masking tape, envelopes, index cards, marker or pen, costume supplies (clothing, jewelry, hats, fabric, etc.), containers to hold costume supplies</p>
<b>All Kids</b>		
<p><b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> We can be everyday heroes for God!</p> <p><b>WHO IS ESTHER?:</b> Kids play a game to figure out who Esther is.</p> <p><b>BIBLE VERSE TREASURE HUNT:</b> Kids find hidden Bible verses and place them in the correct order.</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> None</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Small pieces of paper or sticky notes in a variety of colors, marker</p>



Visit [www.sparksundayschool.org](http://www.sparksundayschool.org) for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation's story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.



**Workshop Focus:** God can make ordinary people heroes and leaders!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit [www.sparksondayschool.org](http://www.sparksondayschool.org) to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### Queen Esther Storytelling

As kids arrive, welcome them into your space. Sit down together around tables or on the floor. **Welcome to Bible Skills and Games today. I hope you're ready to have fun. Today we are going to be hearing the story of Queen Esther. Queen Esther was a woman who saved the lives of all the Jews. She did the important work of God and saved her people. But she wasn't always queen, and she didn't always have the power to make decisions. Queen Esther was a Jew, and the Jews had been captured and forced to live far away from their homes.**

**But two Jews—Esther and her cousin Mordecai—worked together to help save their people. Let's read the story together.** Distribute copies of the Spark Story Bible. Help kids find the story of Queen Esther on pages 152-157. Read the story aloud, using an animated voice. Encourage kids to follow along as they are able.

Following the story, take time to discuss. Allow time between each question for kids to respond. **How did Esther save the Jews from Haman?** (*She was honest with the king and convinced him to save them. She courageously spoke the truth about Haman's plot.*)

**Spark Resources**  
Spark Story Bibles

**Supplies**  
None

**Many people become heroes when they think they are just ordinary people. Esther was just an ordinary person, but God helped her become a leader and hero!**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### King May I?

---

**God can and often does, use regular people to become heroes. God called Esther to be faithful at a very particular time when her people needed help. Esther may not have ever imagined she would be Queen, but because she became Queen she was able to protect her people from Haman's evil plot to kill them.**

Spark Resources  
None

Supplies  
None

**Esther saved her people by telling the king about Haman's evil plot. Esther was very courageous.**

**In our first game, we are going to play a game called King may I. To start I need a King. The rest of us are going to be Esther and will ask the king if we can move across the room. Let's practice being Esther. When you ask the King to move forward try different ways of asking. How would you ask in a kind way? How would you ask in a firm way? How would you ask in a courageous way?**

#### Get ready to play

1. Choose one child to be the king.
2. Have the king stand on the opposite end of the room from the rest of the kids, who will be Esther.

#### Play the game

1. One at a time, have kids who are Esther ask, "King, may I take (1, 2, or 3) steps forward?" Encourage them to ask in different ways in a kind way, in a firm way, and in a courageous way.
2. After each question, the king replies with yes or no.
3. If a child's question is answered yes, they can take that number of steps forward. If a child's question is answered no, the next child takes their turn.
4. Kids continue to ask questions, in turn. (Note: If the king continues to say no, create a rule that the king must give two yes's for every no to ensure the game moves along.) Also, make sure the king does not "favor" anyone!
5. As game play continues, invite kids to use variations on the question, including the following:

King May I . . .

- take (#) giant steps forward?
  - take (#) baby steps forward?
  - take (#) frog hops forward?
  - take (#) bunny hops forward?
  - run forward for (#) seconds?
6. When the first person touches the king, declare him or her the winner.  
**Congratulations! You won! You are the Queen. You were able to work with the king to get help for your people!**
  7. The winner of the round becomes the new king.
  8. Continue to play as long as time allows.

### Bible Bean-Bag Toss

**Set Up:** Using masking tape, create five different shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, diamond) on the floor at one end of the room. Space shapes 1-2 feet (30-61 cm) apart. Make a throwing line with masking tape a couple yards (91-183 cm) from the shapes.

Make 5 signs, each with one of the following story characters: the king, Esther, Mordecai, Haman, God. Tape a label near each shape.

**Kings have a lot of responsibility to care for the kingdom and the people in the kingdom. The King has to make sure the people can eat. The King has to protect the people. The King in our story did not protect the people because he listened to Haman. It was Queen Esther who courageously told the king about Haman’s evil plot. She was a hero. Let’s practice our knowledge of the story by playing a Bible Bean-Bag Toss.**

**Get ready to play**

1. Divide the group into two equal teams. As you divide the kids, be mindful of age so that your groups are equally matched.
2. Give each child 1 bean bag. Each team should have bean bags of the same color.
3. Ask the teams to stand together in a huddle.

**Spark Resources**

None

**Supplies**

- Bean bags (2 colors, enough for one per child)
- Masking tape
- Paper
- Markers

## Play the game

1. With the 2 teams in a huddle, ask the team a question. Sample questions are listed below.
2. Give the kids a minute to decide which answer they think is correct. Their options are: the king, Esther, Mordecai, Haman, God.
3. When the teams have decided their answer, each team chooses one team member to stand behind the throw line and throw his or her bean bag toward the correctly labeled shape across the room. The teams should throw simultaneously.
4. The bean bag that lands inside the correct shape counts as one point to that team. If the bean bag is on the tape of the shape, it counts as in.
5. Add the up the teams' points from the round, and have each team collect their bean bags for the next question.
6. Continue with the other questions, keeping track of the points.
7. The team with the most points at the end wins.

The questions for the game are as follows:

1. **Who married Esther?** (*The king*)
2. **Who is Esther's cousin?** (*Mordecai*)
3. **Who did not bow down to Haman?** (*Mordecai*)
4. **Who was the only one Mordecai would bow down to?** (*God*)
5. **Who hated the Jews?** (*Haman*)
6. **Haman asked who for permission to kill the Jews?** (*The king*)
7. **Who convinced the king to save the Jews?** (*Esther*)
8. **Who got Haman's job?** (*Mordecai*)
9. **Who did the king love?** (*Esther*)

**Wow! You guys really know that story well. Let's add up our scores. You all did great. Thanks for playing our Bible game with me.**

# Send (5 minutes)

## Wrap Up

---

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received them, and come together for Wrap Up.

**Thanks for the great day, kids. The story of Esther is really a special one in the Bible. It teaches us that any of us may find ourself in the role of a hero. God turned ordinary Esther into a leader and a hero who saved the Jewish people. God may use us to be heroes and leaders, as well.**

**Sometimes we think that heroes must be famous people, but that isn't true. Some of the real heroes are people like our teachers, parents, and others who help make the world a better place. Think of someone who is a hero in your life. I want you to go home today and tell him or her that he or she is a hero to you. Can you do that? Great!**

## Prayer Time

---

**Let's pray before we end our time together.**

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for being with Esther and helping her be brave. Help us to listen to you and be heroes to others. Thank you for the heroes in our own lives. In Jesus' name we pray.**

**Amen.**

### Spark Resources

Family Pages



### Supplies

None





**Workshop Focus:** We can celebrate together!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit [www.sparksondayschool.org](http://www.sparksondayschool.org) to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### Queen Esther Storytelling

As kids enter your space, greet them enthusiastically. Invite them to sit together on the floor or around tables. **Hi, kids! Welcome to Bible Skills and Games! I hope you are ready to have some fun today. We're going to learn the story of a woman who became a hero.**

**Let's open our Bibles and read her story together.** Invite the kids to open their Spark Bibles. **Let's find the book of Esther in the Old Testament and read Esther 2:5-7; 3:1-6; 8:1-8, 10-17 starting on page 534.** Encourage the kids to use their Spark Bible Stickers as they desire. **Esther was just a normal Jewish girl, and she became queen and helped save her whole people, and today, Jewish people everywhere celebrate Queen Esther with a festival called Purim!**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

#### Supplies

None

# Activate Faith (25 minutes)

## Esther Word Scramble

---

**Set Up:** On index cards, copy the following puzzles, 1 per card. Place each card into an envelope, and seal the envelope. Create multiple sets of puzzle envelopes, enough for 1 set for every 6 kids. Don't include the answers on the cards.

**Esther 2:7—IDCOARME** had a very beautiful cousin named. (Answer = Mordecai)

**Esther 2:10—**Mordecai had **NAWRDE** Esther not to tell anyone that she was a Jew, and she obeyed him. (Answer = warned)

**Esther 3:1—**King Ahasuerus promoted **MNAAH**, the son of Hammedatha, to the highest position in the kingdom. (Answer = Haman)

**Esther 3:5—**Haman was **IUOUSFR** to learn that Mordecai refused to kneel down and honor him. (Answer = furious)

**Esther 8:8—**"I now give you permission to make a law that will save the lives of your people. You may use my **NGIR** to seal the law, so that it can never be changed." (Answer = ring)

**Esther 8:17—**In every province and city where the law was sent, the Jews had parties and **DTBECLEREA**. (Word letters = celebrated)

Using masking tape, create a starting line on one end of the room. Tape the sets of envelopes onto the wall opposite the starting line. Space the sets 1-2 feet (30-61 cm) apart so that each set is distinct.

### Activity Instructions

**Esther was an amazing woman. It takes a lot of courage to stand up to a king and ask him to protect your people. Let's play a game called Esther Word Scramble to work together like Esther and Mordecai did.**

### Get ready to play

1. Split your group into teams. Each team should have no more than 6 kids. Make sure you mix ages in your groups, so that the teams are equally matched.
2. Line the teams up in single file lines behind the starting line.
3. **In this game, we are going to unscramble parts of the story.**

### Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

### Supplies

Masking tape

Envelopes

Index cards (small enough to fit in the envelopes)

Marker or pen

**Play the game**

1. One child from each team runs down to the other end of the room and retrieve one of the team's envelopes.
2. Once that person returns to their team with an envelope, the team must open the envelope and solve the word scramble inside.
3. If the kids need help, they can look up the verse in their Bibles for assistance in unscrambling the word.
4. When team members think they know the answer, they must consult either you or a Shepherd to confirm they have the right solution.
5. If the answer is confirmed, then the next child from the team runs down to the envelopes, continuing the process.
6. The first team to unscramble all seven words wins.

Following the game, take time to debrief with the group. **That was a fun way to practice our Bible skills and learn the story of Queen Esther better. It took both Mordecai and Esther to save the Jewish people, just like it took all of us to unscramble our letters. God has called us to work for God's world, just like Esther and Mordecai did. Let's give ourselves a round of applause because we know this story better now!**

---

## Costume Contest!

**Set Up:** Set containers filled with costume supplies around the room—one container per team of 3-5 kids.

**Activity Instructions**

**In our story, the Jewish people were far from their homeland and living in a foreign culture. Mordecai asked Esther to keep her identity a secret because he knew there were people who didn't like the Jews. Ultimately, Queen Esther revealed her identity to the king, saved her people and they celebrated! Purim is a holiday celebrated each year as Jewish people remember Queen Esther and what she did for them. During Purim celebrations, kids often dress in costumes—sometimes they dress as Queen Esther or Mordecai, sometimes they dress as another biblical character, and sometimes they wear a costume of a favorite storybook character, animal, or superhero.**

Have a Purim costume contest with your group! Invite kids to search through the costume supplies you provide and choose some of them to wear as a Purim costume.

**Play the game**

1. Gather the kids in a circle, and divide them into teams of 3-5 kids.
2. When you say "Go!" each team will have 10 minutes to run to the costume supplies area, choose the supplies they want to use to create a costume, and dress one of their team members in the most creative Esther or Mordecai costume they can put together.

**Spark Resources**

None

**Supplies**

Costume supplies for teams of 3-5 kids to costume one kid. Costume supplies might include clothing, jewelry, hats, fabric, anything you can think of! Containers to hold the supplies—one container for each team of 3-5 kids

3. After 10 minutes, everyone has to stop where they are, and the kids in costumes will line up so the large group can choose the most creative costume.
4. Play again, with kids dressing up as a favorite biblical character, and if time allows, play again with kids dressing as any character they want to—storybook, animal, superhero, or anything else!

Following the game, take time to discuss some of the favorite holiday traditions of the kids in your group. What do they celebrate? What kinds of games do they play?

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

---

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received them, and come together for Wrap Up.

**Thank you for joining us today, kids. I hope you had fun. Like Queen Esther, we all have an identity: we are boys and girls, we are students in school, family members, and all of us are God's people! We have a lot to celebrate!**

Spark Resources  
Family Pages



Supplies  
None

### Prayer Time

---

**Let's pray together as we end our time today.**

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for giving us Esther's story to learn from. Be with us as we learn, grow, and celebrate together.**

**Amen.**

**Workshop Focus:** We can be everyday heroes for God!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit [www.sparksondayschool.org](http://www.sparksondayschool.org) to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### Queen Esther Storytelling

As kids enter your space, welcome them and invite them to have a seat around a table or on the floor. **Welcome to Bible Skills and Games, kids. Today we're going to talk about heroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?** Invite kids to share. **What are their powers?** Allow time for kids to respond.

**Superheroes aren't the only heroes out there. Ordinary people can be heroes, too! Who are some heroes in our world?** (*fire fighters, doctors, teachers, etc.*) **The nice thing about these heroes is that they can be anyone. We all have a chance in our life to be a hero. It may be by helping people when they are in trouble like a police officer does. It may be by listening to people and helping them feel better. It may be by something we'll never even know we did that was important to another person.**

**God uses all of us to be heroes in the world. When we live as God wants us to, we can be heroes for God. Our Bible story today is about an ordinary girl who became a hero. Her name is Esther. Let's read her story together.**

Invite the kids to take out their Spark Bibles. Distribute extra copies as needed. Invite kids to open their Bibles to Esther 2:5 on page 534. Read or ask a volunteer

**Spark Resources**  
Spark Story Bibles  
Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

**Supplies**  
None

to read Esther 2:5-7; 3:1-6; 8:1-8, 10-17. If your group is made up of primarily younger kids, use the Spark Story Bible and read Queen Esther (pages 152-157), instead. Allow time for older kids to mark the Bible with a Spark Bible Sticker.

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Who Is Esther?

---

**It is good to know that we can all be heroes for God. Queen Esther was an ordinary girl who did extraordinary things! Let's play a game called Who is Esther? to see if we can figure out who among us is Esther.**

Spark Resources  
None

#### Play the game

Supplies  
None

1. Have the kids sit in a tight circle on the floor.
2. Choose one person to play the part of the "detective." Send the detective and the Shepherd out of the room (out of eye and ear shot).
3. Instruct the kids to close their eyes. **I will tap one person on the head. That person will be Esther. Esther will smile at people in the circle. If Esther smiles at you, you must fold your hands and put them in your lap. But, watch out, Esther doesn't want the detective to figure out who she is, so Esther, don't let the detective see you smile!**
4. Once an Esther has been chosen, invite the detective and Shepherd to return.
5. The detective stands in the middle of the circle as Esther smiles at other members in the circle. Once kids are smiled at, they fold their hands and put them in their lap.
6. The detective gets to make three guesses as to who Esther is.
7. After three guesses, or after the identity of Esther has been figured out, Esther becomes the detective, and the old detective gets to choose the new Esther.
8. Continue the game as long as time allows.

Following the game, take time to discuss. Allow time between each question for kids to discuss. **Was it easy or difficult to figure out who Esther was? All of us can live faithfully, like Esther! All of us can stand up for others and be kind. All of us can share a smile with another person! How can you share kindness with other people every day?**

## Bible Verse Treasure Hunt

**Set Up:** On small pieces of paper, write the following words and phrases from Esther 8:17, 1 word or phrase per piece. Create one complete set for each team of 3-5 kids. Use a different color paper for each team. Hide each piece of paper someplace in the room you are in, or around the church building and outside if that works in your setting.

1. Esther 8:17
2. In every province
3. and in every city,
4. wherever
5. the king's command
6. and his edict came,
7. there was gladness
8. and joy
9. among the Jews,
10. a festival
11. and a holiday.

### Activity Instructions

**Now let's go on a treasure hunt to find one of the important verses from Queen Esther's story. We'll work in teams because sometimes it is easier with help from others. Esther didn't have to be a hero alone. She had Mordecai to help her, and so we'll have teammates to help us, too.**

### Get ready to play

1. Divide your group into teams of 3-5 kids. Be mindful of age as you divide, making sure that your groups are equally matched.
2. Assign each team of kids a color and ask them to search for 11 pieces of paper that are their assigned color.

### Play the game

1. On go, each team begins searching for their colored pieces of paper.
2. When each team has 11 pieces of paper, instruct them to return to your gathering place and race to put the Bible verse in the correct order.
3. The first team to put the verse in the correct order wins the game. (*Esther 8:17—In every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict came, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a festival and a holiday.*)

### Spark Resources

None

### Supplies

Small pieces of colorful paper  
(sticky notes would work well)  
Marker

4. Following the activity, take time to discuss. **That was fun. Just like our everyday heroes can work in teams, and Esther and Mordecai worked together, it is easier for us to be heroes in the world if we work with other people. Work together as a team now and come up with a way to help God's world today.** Celebrate the kids' answers and give them some ideas if they need help. It can be as simple as recycling or being nice to everyone, or something more complex. Help the kids think creatively!

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

---

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received them, and come together for Wrap Up.

**Thank you, kids, for playing Bible games with me today. What did you learn from this lesson?** Take the kids' answers. **One thing that I learned is that we all can be heroes. Esther was a young woman. God helped her to be courageous and she helped save her people.**

**God also can use us in the world. Let's think about the things we decided as a team to do to help God's world today. Elect one spokesperson from your team to share one of your ideas as we close in prayer.** If no child wants to be the spokesperson, you can pray for that team's idea or ask the Shepherd if he or she is willing to speak for the group.

### Spark Resources

Family Pages



### Supplies

None

### Prayer Time

---

**Dear God,**

**Help us as we try to be everyday heroes in your world. Give us strength and courage as we work together to change the world for the better.** Have the kids pray for their teams' ideas here. **Be with us as we go into the world, and guide us as we work for you. In Jesus' name we pray.**

**Amen.**