

Welcome to the story of Esther! As the caring leader of your small group of kids, you are an important part of their Spark experience. You also support the other Rotation leaders by being a consistent and friendly presence with your group. Use these Small Group Builders, Conversation Sparks, and Transition Tips to generate conversation and build relationships with your kids. Have fun as you grow in faith together!

## Small Group Builders

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Try these tips to build relationships, trust, and friendship with your small group of kids when you have a few minutes at the beginning of Sunday school or between activities.

- **Pass the Ring**

The king gave Mordecai, Esther's uncle, his big ring to show that Mordecai was favored. Say your name and then throw a swim ring across your small group circle. Yell the name of who should catch the ring next. Repeat until everyone has caught the ring.

- **No Telling**

Esther's uncle told her not to tell the other women that she was really Jewish. Talk about if you have ever had to keep a secret. Share how it felt to keep the secret. Share how it felt when the secret was told.

- **Family Ties**

Mordecai was Esther's favorite uncle. Talk about your extended family. Tell your friends about your grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and others. Tell each other if you have a favorite family member.

## Conversation Sparks

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Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- Esther was an orphan who went to live with her uncle Mordecai. How do you think Esther felt about her new home?
- Esther then moved to the king's palace and waited for a year to be seen by the king. When do you have patience like Esther? Why does God make us wait?
- How did Esther feel when the king said that her Jewish people would be killed?
- The king and Mordecai loved Esther. Talk about who loves you and why.
- Mordecai's royal robe was blue and white. If you had a royal robe, what would it look like?
- If you could be king or queen for a day, what edict would you pronounce for the world?

## Transition Tips

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As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **All Rise**

The servants and Esther spent lots of time standing up and then sitting back down when they spoke or when the king passed. Try moving forward as a group by first sitting and then standing. The person in the front of the line will yell "Sit" or "Rise" to give directions to the entire group. Giggling is definitely allowed!

- **127 Letters**

There were no computers in the time of Esther. The king's secretaries wrote by hand 127 letters that allowed the Jewish people to assemble and defend themselves. As a group, pretend to write those 127 letters now! Count to 127 as you write furiously and see if you can get all 127 letters written before you reach your destination.

- **Saddle Up**

The king's messages were taken to other countries by fast royal horses. Saddle up your horses and gallop to the next location.

- **King's Gate**

The entrance to the palace was a gate. At the gate, all those entering bowed down before the king in respect. Pretend the doors that you pass are the King's gate. As you walk, bow down at each door you pass.

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- **Esther's Banquet**

After the King made Esther the queen, he had a banquet, or big dinner party, for her. If someone had a big dinner party for you, what kinds of food would you like to have at your party? Share in your group all your favorite banquet foods.

- **The Golden Scepter**

King Ahasuerus passed the golden scepter to Esther. A scepter is a staff that shows who is in charge. Esther got to be in charge for long enough to change the future of the Jewish people in Persia. Pass a chopstick, wand, or baton from one person to the next. Whoever has the scepter may make one proclamation.

- **Family Favor**

Mordecai and Esther won favor with the king. Talk about some ways to win favor in your family. Name some of the things that make your family show their appreciation for you as a unique creation of God.

## Conversation Sparks

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- Esther had seven maids. Think about what she might need those seven maids to do.
- How would you feel if you had to wear a crown everywhere you went?
- Why do you think Mordecai told Esther not to reveal her Jewish heritage?
- Name four ways the culture indicated who was the king. Why are these important?
- Describe what you think "cosmetic treatments" might be in the time of Esther.
- Imagine the women who were in the harem waiting for the king's approval. How do you think they felt?

## Transition Tips

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As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Bow and Go**

The king's servants always bowed when he passed. As you move forward, bow to everyone you pass. Bow at the waist and try to keep moving forward as you go.

- **Parade Wave**

Esther was considered a beauty. Pretend you are walking in a parade and wave as you move to your next destination. Remember the parade wave: palms open and wave from the wrist.

- **Mordecai's Walk**

While Esther was in the court, her uncle Mordecai walked each day to the court to check on her. The leader of the line is Mordecai. Follow the leader wherever they walk.

- **Weeping and Pleading**

Pretend you are Esther who fell at the king's feet weeping and pleading with him to save the Jewish people. As you move to the next location, stop three times to weep and plead for something. "Oh, Pastor John, I plead for pizza and pop in church!"

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- **Message, Message, Who's Got the Message**

The message from the king went to 127 different places. Stand in a circle with your hands behind your backs. One person stands in the middle. Those in the circle will pass a small piece of paper back and forth in their hands behind their backs. The person in the middle gets to guess who has the message. As soon as they guess correctly, another person takes over the job of guessing.

- **Signet Sign**

A signet ring is like a class ring. During the time of Esther, it was a royal seal that was placed on letters. A small blob of wax would be put on the folded letter, and the ring would be pressed into the warm wax to seal the letter. Share with each other what your symbol would be if you had a signet ring.

- **Holiday Happenings**

When the Jewish people heard the edict and were allowed to celebrate and have a festival, they were filled with gladness. Choose a favorite holiday as a group. Each person can share three things that happen at their home on that holiday.

## Conversation Sparks

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Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- If you were one of the secretaries who had to write 127 letters in many languages, how would you feel about your job?
- Why would the king give the Jewish people the right to defend themselves?
- The king said the Jewish people could take revenge on one day. What do you think God thought about that?
- Vashti was the Persian king's first queen. How do you think she felt when Esther replaced her? Remember that Esther was not Persian, but Jewish.
- Do you think that because of her beauty, Esther was popular? Why or why not?
- Imagine a palace in the time of Esther. What might it look like?

## Transition Tips

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As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Esther Cheer**

Use this cheer as you move from place to place. "Esther, Esther, you're the one. And from you we've learned a ton. Yay, Esther!"

- **Patient Pace**

Esther was very patient as she waited a year to see the king. Take long, slow paces and move to the next place, being very patient as you go.

- **Twelve, Thirteen**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, the king gave the Jewish people permission to destroy attacking armies. As you go to the next place, count to 13 first and then count to 12, until you have reached your destination. Work together to count as you go.

- **Expression Express**

You are an express train going forward with these expressions from our story. Each person should choose an emotion to show on his or her face. Joy, honor, weeping, gladness, fear, pleading, disapproval, and love are the names of the cars on the train. Move that train with your facial expressions.