

Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

## Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Crown</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Soap, water, towels, 4 shallow bowls, sharp knife, cutting board, parchment paper, scissors, cookie sheets, oven, oven mitts, napkins, towels, sugar sprinkles, refrigerated sugar cookie dough</p>
Upper Elementary	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Soap, water, towels, gummy candy rings</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Soap, water, towels, baking sheets, scissors, spoons, mixer, measuring spoons, 2 or 3 rings, oven, metal spatula, napkins, dish soap, towels, refrigerated crescent rolls, cream cheese, powdered sugar, strawberry jam, dried fruit rolls</p>
All Kids	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Index cards, markers</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Soap, water, towels, mixing bowl, serving spoons, rolling pin, round cookie cutter, muffin pans, fork, oven, oven mitts, knives, can opener, plates, napkins, spoons, vanilla pudding, pineapple chunks, refrigerated pie crusts, strawberries, blueberries, Maraschino cherries, ice cream topping</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:** Queen Esther uses her position as queen and her God-given gifts to save God's people.

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.sparksundayschool.org](http://www.sparksundayschool.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

Put on a crown and greet the kids by name. **Welcome to the kingdom, friends! I am so glad you stopped by the palace today!** Pretend play that you are at a party for royalty. **Before we move into the royal kitchen, let's sit on our royal thrones and introduce ourselves. My name is Queen/King (your name)! I am the ruler of (your favorite thing)!** (For example, "My name is Queen Joanna! I am the ruler of all things yellow!")

Pass the crown to each kid. Let them announce what they rule: ice cream, smiles, skateboards, rainbows, anything they want. **What is your name, King/Queen? Over what do you rule?** Allow time for answers. **All hail the Queen/King!**

When the crown returns to you, open your Spark Story Bible to the Queen Esther story, page 153. **We are surrounded by royalty! Today we will read about Queen Esther, a special queen from the book in the Bible named after her. God saved many people through Esther's position as queen and through her faithfulness. Let see how!**

Read the story. Show the engaging illustrations. **God used Esther's gifts to save God's people. All hail, God, our King!** Bow down.

Spark Resources  
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies  
Crown

# Activate Faith (25 minutes)

## Crown Cookies

---

Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

### Ingredients

- Sugar sprinkles (blue, pink, yellow, green)
- Rolls of refrigerated sugar cookie dough, cut into ¼" sections (.5 cm), (one for each kid)

**Set Up:** Cut the parchment paper into squares of work space for each kid, about 6" x 6" (15 x 15 cm). Preheat the oven according to the cookie dough package.

### Activity Instructions

1. **Scrub your hands before we get to work in the royal kitchen!** Wash hands.
2. Gather around four shallow bowls. **The gems in Esther's crown are so important to God. The sparkle on Esther's crown and in Esther's eyes comes from her God-given gifts. What gifts did Esther use in the story?** (*wisdom, kindness, honesty, bravery*)
3. As you name each of the four gifts, have kid helpers pour one color of the sprinkles into each bowl: Pour the blue sprinkles. **Esther was a smart cookie! She learned a lot of new things when she moved into the palace with her cousin. She outsmarted Haman when she made a plan to change the king's mind about hurting the Jews. Esther used her gift of wisdom.**
4. Pour the pink sprinkles. **Esther was kind-hearted. She wanted to show kindness to her people. Esther used her gift of kindness.**
5. Pour the green sprinkles. **Esther was honest. She did not hide that she was a Jew from the king, but she told him the truth. Esther used her gift of honesty.**
6. Pour the yellow sprinkles. **Esther was a hero to the Jews. She was willing to put herself in danger to save them from the mean hands of Haman. Esther used her gift of bravery.**
7. Gesture to the sprinkles. **These are the gems in Esther's crown.**
8. Slice a roll of refrigerated sugar cookie dough into ¼" (.5 cm) thick slices. Give 1 to each kid on a piece of parchment paper. **Tear your dough into 4 pieces and gently roll them into small balls.**
9. Show the kids how to cover the dough balls by making a sample cookie. **Roll each dough ball into a different bowl of sprinkles, so each is coated with a different color. As we cover the dough with gems, let's thank God for the gifts that Esther used.**

### Spark Resources

None

### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Four shallow bowls  
Sharp knife  
Cutting board  
Parchment paper  
Scissors  
Cookie sheets  
Oven  
Oven mitts  
Napkins  
Cleaning towels  
Spatula

- Roll one piece of dough in the blue sprinkles. **Thank you, God, for Esther's gift of wisdom.**
  - Roll one piece of dough in the pink sprinkles. **Thank you, God, for Esther's gift of kindness.**
  - Roll one piece of dough in the yellow sprinkles. **Thank you, God, for Esther's gift of honesty.**
  - Roll the last piece of dough in the green sprinkles. **Thank you, God, for Esther's gift of bravery.**
10. Lead the kids to slightly flatten the balls of dough and push them together in a row to form a crown shape. **Ta-da! Esther's crowns of God's gifts are complete!**
  11. Move the Crown Cookies to the baking sheets. Bake the cookies according to the cookie dough package instructions, approximately eight to ten minutes in a 375° F (190° C) oven.
  12. As the cookies bake, name the different gifts that you see in each other. **All of us are not kings or queens, but we all have gifts from God! In our time together, I see God's gifts shining in you! I see joy, love, patience, and sharing. What gifts do you see in each other?** (*kindness, helping, taking turns, leadership, listening, etc.*)

When the cookies are baked and cooled, pass them out on napkins. **All hail, Lord God!** All bow to God one final time, as you did in the Open the Bible activity.

## 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.

Sum up the session and close with a prayer. **God gave Esther many gifts to be a great queen and a hero to her people. She saved them by using those gifts. You can use your gifts to show God's love to the world.**

Spark Resources  
Family Pages



Supplies  
None

## Prayer Time

---

Pray for leaders around the world. **God gave the people Queen Esther to lead them with God's love. In our prayer, you will have a chance to pray for our leaders. Who are some of our leaders?** (*teachers, parents, community leaders, coaches, etc.*)

**Please pray with me.**

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for the many gifts you give to each of us.**

**Thank you for the people who are our leaders. Now we pray for . . .** (queens, kings, presidents, principals, teachers, pastors, community leaders, coaches, other world leaders).

**Give these leaders the gifts to lead with Your love.**

**Lead us to use our gifts to show Your love.**

**Amen.**

Send the kids off with joy. **Thanks for using your cooking gifts! Good-bye!**

**Workshop Focus:** God's seal on each of us can never be erased!

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

*Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

As the kids arrive, usher them to the sink to wash their hands. **We need clean, cooking hands today. Scrub those hands!**

When they have clean hands, slip a gummy candy ring on each kid's finger. **This is a very important ring, a king's ring. Take good care of it, and wear it well. You will learn more when we read today's story about a king, and more importantly, his queen.**

Read the story of Esther from the Spark Bible. **Turn to the book of Esther, page 534. Esther is a special woman, as you may have guessed. She is a queen. She is also a Jew, and many people in the country of Persia did not like Jews. So at first, Esther's cousin Mordecai told Esther not to tell the king that she was a Jew. But, when an evil man named Haman threatens to kill all the Jews, Esther gathers her courage and confronts the king.**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

#### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Gummy candy rings (1 per kid)

**Now read verses 2:16-18, 3:5-6, 8:3-8. Every time you hear Esther's name in the story, kiss your ring. If you listen carefully, you will learn why the ring is so important.**

Discuss the importance of the King's ring. **What role did the king's ring play in the story?** (*The king used his ring to seal his words and they could never be changed.*

*The king's ring sealed the letter to the Jews informing them they would be saved.*)

**Esther used her God-given gifts and God saved her people. With her gifts of compassion and courage, Esther talked the king into writing a letter to the Jews. That love letter was sealed with the king's ring and was like a love letter to the Jewish people.**

**Now you may eat your ring! Yummy!**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Saving Seal Sweets

---

*Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

#### Ingredients

- Package of refrigerated crescent rolls (1 roll per kid)
- Softened cream cheese (1 tsp per kid)
- Powdered sugar (1 tsp [2.5 grams] per kid)
- Strawberry jam (2 tsp [10 ml] per kid)
- Strawberry-flavored dried fruit rolls (2-3" [5-7 cm] piece per kid)

**Set Up:** Pre-heat the oven according to crescent roll dough's package instructions. Pre-cut the dried fruit into 2-3" (5-7 cm) circles (one per kid).

#### Activity Instructions

1. Have the kids wash their hands again. **This will sound familiar. Let's wash our hands! I know we already washed them once today, but we have been smooching our ring fingers, so off we go to the sink to do it again!**
2. Open the crescent rolls, unfold the dough, and give one to each kid. **The story of Esther unfolds in the Old Testament, a long time ago.**
3. Pass around a few pairs of scissors. Lead the kids to snip off the ½" (1 cm) tip of the crescent rolls, then snip it in half to make two triangles. Hold them up to your head, like horns. **Haman, a bull of a man, wanted to have all of the Jews killed.**
4. Put the cream cheese and powdered sugar in a mixing bowl. Blend them together with the mixer. Scoop 1 teaspoon of the sweet mixture into the widest

#### Spark Resources

None

#### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Baking sheets  
Scissors  
Mixing bowl  
Spoons  
Mixer  
Measuring spoons  
2 or 3 rings with distinct designs  
Oven  
Metal spatula  
Napkins  
Dish soap  
Dish towels



part of the open crescent roll. Pass the bowl for the kids to follow suit. **Esther was smarter than Haman. She used her God-given gifts of courage and compassion to whip up support for all of God's people in the kingdom.**

5. Scoop 2 teaspoons (10 ml) of strawberry jam on top of the cream cheese mixture. Use a spoon to shape the jam into a heart. **The king loved Esther, so he loved the Jews, her people, too. He put Esther's Jewish uncle in charge of delivering the good news. "Write a love letter to your people," said the king.**
6. Fold in one side of the widest part of the crescent roll, then the other. Complete forming the envelope of dough by bending the long tip down and over the filling. Pinch it closed to seal it shut. **"Fold it up and send it to them right away," he said.**
7. Give each kid a circle of dried fruit roll. Press a ring into the dried fruit to leave an impression from the ring's design. Push the seal onto the crescent roll envelope. **The king continued by saying, "Your people will know it is truly from me when they see the seal on the letter, made by my king ring."**
8. Bake the sweets for 8-10 minutes. Clean up while you wait. **While we are awaiting our mail delivery, let's clean up the kitchen.**
9. When the cleanup is complete, put on some dance music and let the celebration begin. **When God's people received the news, they celebrated with music, feasting, and dancing.**

When the pastries are cooled, serve them on a plate with a napkin. **Beware of the sticky insides; they could be very hot. Let's feast!**

## 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.

Sum up the session and close with a prayer. **Queen Esther used her gifts to secure the king's seal of support for God's people. Esther is a hero!**

#### Spark Resources

Family Pages



#### Supplies

None

# Prayer Time

---

Give each kid an envelope, paper, pen, and a heart sticker. Write the prayer below on a sample piece of paper. Encourage the kids to use the prayer as a guide. **Write a prayer on a card and seal it in the envelope with the heart sticker. Write your name on the front of the envelope.**

Sample prayer:

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for the gifts you gave Esther.**

**Thank you, God, for the gift of \_\_\_\_\_ you gave me.**

**Help me use my gifts to \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Thank you that your seal upon me is forever!**

**Amen.**

Repeat the last line of the prayer aloud when all of the kids have finished.

**Dear God, Thank you that your seal upon me is forever! Amen.**

**Watch your mail for a love letter from the king!**

Wait a few days and send the envelopes to the kids.

## Spark Resources

None

## Supplies

Paper

Pen

Heart sticker

Envelope

**Workshop Focus:** God's gifts to us to help us shine.

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

Greet the kids by name as they arrive. **Hello, friends!** Sit in an uncomfortable place (*in the sun, blocking the doorway, too close together, or in a closet*). **Let's sit here! No, I've changed my mind. Let's move.**

Move to a new spot. **I just changed my mind about where we should sit. Has anyone ever changed your mind about something? What happened?** Allow time for sharing. **Today's story is from the book of Esther. Esther uses her gifts to change the king's mind about something.**

Read the story aloud. If your group is mostly younger kids, read Queen Esther from the Spark Story Bible, page 153. If your group includes mostly older kids, read the story from the Spark Bible, found in Esther, using these verses: 2:16-18, 3:5-6, 8:3-8. Before reading, say:

**Esther is a queen. She is also a Jew, and many people in the country of Persia did not like Jews. So at first, Esther's cousin Mordecai told Esther not to tell the king that she was a Jew. But, when an evil man named Haman threatens to kill all the Jews, Esther gathers her courage and confronts the king.**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible  
Spark Bibles

#### Supplies

Index cards  
Markers

Get out the supplies. **Who changed his or her mind in the story?** (*the king*) **What God-given gifts did Esther use to change the king's mind? Write the gifts on the cards.** (*compassion, courage, honesty, wisdom, beauty*)

**Esther changed the king's mind about her people, the Jews. She saved their lives with these gifts. Esther shines in the memory of all Jews and in our memory, too. Use these cards to make the shape of a heart.** Allow time for them to work together to make a heart. **Good leaders like Queen Esther can inspire us to use our God-given gifts in the world.**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Change of Heart Tarts

---

*Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

#### Ingredients

- Sugar (1 spoonful per kid)
- Vanilla pudding (a spoonful per kid)
- Pineapple chunks (2 or 3 per kid)
- Refrigerated pie crusts (each kid will use a 4" [10 cm] diameter circle cut from the crusts)
- Strawberries, cut (several pieces per kid)
- Blueberries (several per kid)
- Maraschino cherries (1 per kid)
- Hardening chocolate ice cream topping (just a "squirt" per kid)

**Set Up:** Make the pudding ahead of time, so it is set and chilled. Pre-heat the oven according to the pie crust package. If your time is limited, pre-bake the tart crusts ahead of time, too.

#### Activity Instructions

1. **We need clean hands for cooking. Wash up!** Wash your hands.
2. Make the tart crowns, one for each kid. Roll out the pie crusts on a lightly floured surface. Let the kids cut a circle, about 4" (10 cm) in diameter, from the crust with a round cookie cutter or drinking glass. **Push your circle into the muffin pan, prick it several times with a fork, and sprinkle it with a little sugar. You've just made a crown for Queen Esther!**
3. While the tarts bake (approximately 6-8 minutes or until lightly browned), prepare their filling. Give each kid a small paper plate. **As the crowns bake, we must get ready to fill them up, just as God filled up Esther with gifts for saving God's people.**

#### Spark Resources

None

#### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Mixing bowls  
Serving spoons  
Knives  
Flour  
Rolling pin  
Round cookie cutter (4" [10 cm] diameter or drinking glass with 4" [10 cm diameter top])  
Muffin pans  
Fork  
Oven  
Oven mitts  
Small paper plate, 1 per kid  
Can opener  
Plates  
Napkins  
Spoons

4. Prepare the strawberries. **Clean and cut the strawberries into small chunks and place them in a bowl. Be careful with the knives! The strawberries are the gems of kindness in Esther's crown.**
5. Prepare the blueberries. **Clean the blueberries and place them in a bowl. These blueberries stand for the stones of bravery in Esther's crown. She was a courageous leader, putting her life in danger to stand up to the king.**
6. Prepare the pineapples. **Open and drain the can of pineapples. Pour them into a bowl. The pineapples are the tangy jewels of compassion in Esther's crown.**
7. Prepare the cherries. **Drain a jar of maraschino cherries. The cherry on top is the crown jewel in Esther's crown of gifts, her wisdom. Esther knew just when to speak up to the king. She outsmarted Haman to change the heart and mind of the king.** When the crowns are baked and cooled, give one to each kid on a plate, with a spoon and napkin.
8. Stir the pudding as you speak. Plop a heaping spoonful on each crown tart as you say the word, "plopped." **Esther had to take action to save the Jews of her land. She made a plan. It involved food! Esther prepared a special meal for the king, and while he ate, she plopped the news before him. "I'm a Jew, too. Please don't hurt my people," she said.**
9. Allow the kids to add fruit to the crowns. Place a spoon in each bowl of fruit as you remind the kids what each means. **Top your crown tarts with the fruit jewels: strawberries of kindness, blueberries of bravery, pineapples of compassion, and a cherry of wisdom.**
10. Show the kids how to drizzle the top of the fruit jewels with hardening chocolate topping, in the shape of a heart. **Add a heart to your tart. Esther's firm heart of faith changed the king's heart. Jews throughout the land were saved!**
11. Raise your Change of Heart Tarts to cheer. **Hurray for Queen Esther! Praise be to God!**

# 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.

Sum up the session and close with a prayer. **Queen Esther saved the Jews by using her God-given gifts. Even though she was surrounded by a whole kingdom that didn't believe in God, Esther stood firm in her faith and changed the king's mind. Esther was a hero!**

### Spark Resources

Family Pages



### Supplies

None

## Prayer Time

---

Stand in a circle around the cards from the Open the Bible activity. **Look to the person on your left. Take a moment to think of one of this person's God-given gifts. The cards may be helpful for ideas. Let's pray.**

**God,**

**Thank you for Queen Esther and her gifts. She saved the Jews by boldly using the gifts you gave her.**

**We will go around the circle now to thank you for the gifts you have given to our friends. Thank you for the gifts of . . .** (allow time for each kid to add a gift).

**Help us to use our gifts to share your love with others.**

**Amen.**

**God's gifts go with you on your way!**