



LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is Working Even When We Can't See It

SCRIPTURE: Esther 1–5; 8

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 13:5b

“That was a total God thing.” I heard that phrase as a woman told a story about her granddaughter, who had run into an old friend from church at a coffee shop and now is considering coming back to church. I could have told her it was just a coincidence that the two teenage girls happened to go to the same coffee shop, but as a believer in the providence of God, I see it too. Running into a girl who would point her granddaughter back to her roots in the church at the perfect time in her life would indeed appear to be “a God thing.”

As Christ followers, we can see God’s providential hand in each and every interaction throughout our days. We praise Him for the little things, like a close parking spot on a rainy day, and the big things, like a friend being healed of cancer after years of treatment. We do this because we know God is working even when we cannot see it.

Read the book of Esther and look for God to be named—you won’t find it. If you were to read it without context, you could say each event was random, complete coincidence, without divine intervention. But the author would have us search and find where God is working, and in doing so, consider our own lives and how God might be working, creating “God things” in every moment.

—**Courtney Wilson**

Children’s Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Esther is a Persian name meaning “star,” derived from the name of the Babylonian deity, Ishtar. Esther’s Hebrew name is *Hadassah*, which refers to the myrtle plant. Her parents died when she was young, and she was adopted and raised by her cousin Mordecai.

WHAT?

The narrative of Esther offers a peek into God’s work behind the scenes in the days of Israel’s exile. Esther rises to the level of queen during a vital moment. A man named Haman tries to eliminate all the Jews in the land. However, Queen Esther intervenes by asking the king to save her people.

WHERE?

Susa was one of the oldest cities in the world. It was the ancient capital of Elam and later, Persia. It was situated on a plain near the Zagros mountains and had a temperate climate. Many Jews, including Esther and Nehemiah, lived there and became prominent during exile.

WHEN?

King Xerxes reigned 486–465 BC. The events of the book of Esther probably took place during 483–474 BC. During this period, King Xerxes and the Persians were involved in multiple campaigns against the Greeks, including at Thermopylae and Athens.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Purim is a Jewish festival celebrating the story of Esther. It is joyous time of remembering when God worked behind the scenes through Esther to overturn Haman’s plot to destroy the Jews. In the same way, God has worked through Jesus to overturn Satan’s plot to destroy all humankind.

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Curiosity Activity: Hidden Message

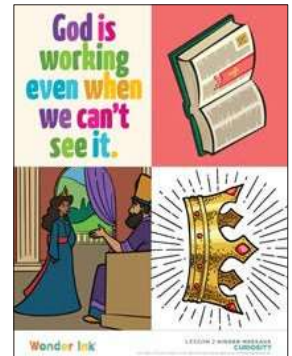
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Hidden Message Sheet

Before kids arrive, print the Hidden Message Sheet. Place a blank sheet of white printer paper over the top of the Hidden Message Sheet and set out a flashlight nearby. You might want to glue the edges of the pages together, so they don't slip apart as you're doing the activity. Place the papers on a table, with the white paper on top. If your printer paper is thin or if it's very bright in your room, try dimming the lights. This will help "hide" the hidden pictures underneath the blank paper.

Gather kids around the sheets of paper. Point at the white sheet of paper. **I have a special picture! What do you see?** Kids should not be able to see anything on the paper. **It's just a white sheet of paper. We can't see any picture. But we're going to see a hidden message revealed! I have a flashlight here that will help us see the secret message.** Turn the flashlight on and shine it on the front of the paper carefully, without allowing the kids to see the hidden picture underneath (or see that you have another paper underneath).. **Do you see a secret message?** Kids should still not be able to see anything on the sheet of paper. **That didn't work! Let's see what happens if we put the flashlight behind the paper.** Pick up both sheets of paper from the table, being careful to keep them stacked together, and shine the flashlight through the papers from behind both papers. The secret pictures should appear. Shine the flashlight alternating on top of and behind the papers. Shine the light on each picture of the Hidden Messages Sheet, starting with the Bible. You can also cut apart the pictures and show each picture one at a time.

Wow! Our hidden pictures appeared! The first picture is a Bible, which reminds us that this story is in the Bible. The second picture is a crown because we're learning about a king and queen. Then we can see a picture of a woman—that's Queen Esther. And the last picture says "God is working even when we can't see it." That is our Wonder Truth for today. And it has a picture of someone on it. That's a special clue for our part of God's big story for today. Whom do you think is in this picture? Allow kids to guess and then share with them that her name is Esther.

Our paper had a special message for us even though we couldn't see it at first. And in God's big story today, we'll learn how God was working in Esther's life even when she didn't realize it! God is working even when we can't see it.





Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, sometimes we don't realize that You're working in our lives even when we can't see it. Help us see what You're doing in our lives today and help us hear from You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? The Bible

Ask: Why is the Bible special? Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.

Tell the Bible story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 240-246

The Brave Queen

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Whom did King Xerxes choose to be queen? (*Esther*)
- What did King Xerxes say that all the people in the kingdom had to do to Haman? (*kneel down to him*)
- What brave thing did Esther do? (*She spoke to King Xerxes and asked him to save her people.*)
- Have you ever had to be brave to do the right thing?
- Can you think of a time when God has worked in your life, even if you didn't know it at the time?
- What would you like to see God do in your life?

Sometimes doing the right thing can be hard or scary. However, the story of Esther shows us that God is always working, and we can trust that He is with us when we need to be brave. Let's talk to God now in prayer!

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

God has said, "I will never leave you."

— Hebrews 13:5b

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **Has there been a time when you felt like God was not with you?**
- **How do we know God is with us even we can't see Him?**



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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Make a Crown

SUPPLIES: cardstock (1 sheet per kid), scissors (prep only), tape, coloring utensils, jewel stickers (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Crown Sheet (1 per kid)

Before the kids arrive, print a copy of the Crown Sheet onto cardstock for each kid and cut out the crown shape and the strips. Tape one strip to each side of the crown. Set out coloring utensils nearby.

King Xerxes and Queen Esther probably wore crowns on their heads to show that they were king and queen. Mordecai told Esther that maybe God had allowed her to be queen just to save her people. Let's make our crowns so we can remember how God worked in Queen Esther's life and how He is working in our lives too!

Give each kid a Crown Sheet that you previously prepared and allow the kids to color their crowns. For added fun, you could let kids add jewel stickers to the crowns.

Once the kids are done decorating their crowns, use tape to attach the two narrow strips to the sides of the crown if you haven't already done so. Then secure the two narrow strip ends together with tape so that the loop can be placed on each kid's head.

