



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.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: royal dress-up items such as robes, crowns, jewels, scepters, etc.; coloring utensils;

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Esther Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Royal Dress-Up

Set-up: Set out royal dress-up items such as robes, crowns, jewels, scepters, etc. Consider cutting a door in a large cardboard box and letting kids decorate it to look like a castle.

Play: Encourage kids to pretend they're queens and kings by dressing up in robes and crowns

Play Station: Esther Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a crown.



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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.

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

Game: Race to Find the Heart

SUPPLIES: medium or large buckets (2–3); paper (1–2 sheets); scissors (prep only); small plastic balls, beanbags, or blocks (several)

Leader Tip: If you don't want to make this a competition, you could use just one bucket and have kids work together to empty the bucket and find the hidden object.

Cut out two or three medium-sized hearts from the paper. Set out two or three buckets and place a paper heart in the bottom of each bucket. Fill the bucket with small plastic balls, beanbags, or blocks to cover up the heart. Make sure the same number of items are used in each of the buckets. Split kids into teams based on the number of buckets you prepared and have each team line up. Place a bucket about five feet away from the first person in each line.

We're going to have a race to see which team can find the hidden object in our buckets first! Each person will run to their team's bucket and take out one item and set it on the ground next to the bucket and then run back and tag the next person in line on their team. The second person will run to their team's bucket and remove another item. If you run to the bucket and there aren't any items left, you'll see a heart that was hidden! Pick it up and bring it back to your team. The first team to take everything out of their bucket and bring the heart back to their team wins!

Allow teams to play as time allows. **We couldn't see the hearts at the bottom of our buckets at first, but they were there! Sometimes we can't see what God is doing, but we know that He is working even we can't see it!**

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Responding in Worship: Worship through Color

SUPPLIES: thick paper towels (6), black permanent marker, washable markers (3 colors), tray of water

Ahead of time, stack two paper towels, one on top of the other. Make sure the paper towels are lined up exactly. A sheet of paper underneath can help protect your table from marker transfer. Draw a heart on the top sheet with a black permanent marker. The black ink should soak through the top paper towel lightly onto the bottom paper towel. On the bottom paper towel, use one of the colored washable markers to color inside the heart outline that transferred over from the top sheet. Stack the towels back on top of one another so that only the black outline heart on the top sheet is visible. The hearts should line up. Repeat with two more sets of paper towels and different colors of washable markers. Set a tray of water out nearby.

Today we're learning how God is working even when we can't see it. Let's spend some time thinking about what God might want to do in our hearts and lives. Hold up one stack of paper towels so that only the white heart with a black outline is visible. Ask the kids what color the heart is. **This heart is white, but I think it has some hidden colors inside! I'm going to put it in this tray of water. When you see the color of the heart, think about how God wants to help others through you, just like God worked through Esther to help her people.**

Let the kids help you place the stacked paper towels in the tray of water. The colorful ink on the bottom sheet should begin to soak through and fill in color inside the heart on the top sheet. Encourage kids to think about how God wants to work through them to help others. After the kids have time to think, tell them that you're going to repeat the experiment again.

This time, when the colors appear, we're going to think about how God can give us courage to do the right thing even when it's hard. Repeat the experiment again and encourage kids to think about how God gives us courage to do the right thing.

We're going to discover color on one more heart! This time, when the color appears, pray and thank God for working even when we can't see it. Repeat the steps one more time and encourage kids to pray and thank God for working even when we can't see it.

