God has special plans for us to help others.

Bible Verse
“The Lord will work out his plans for my life” (Psalm 138:8a).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Children will
■ discover that Esther bravely helped the Jews,
■ learn that God wants us to help others,
■ teach Pockets that it’s important to help, and
■ explore ways to help each other.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
■ Esther confronts King Xerxes.

Esther 5:1-8; 7:1-7, 10
When Esther realized what the king’s decree really meant, her response was to fast and to have all the Jews in the city fast as well. Though prayer isn’t mentioned here, the intent of the fast was to seek God’s favor and direction. Esther then proceeded with her plan to inform Xerxes of Haman’s plan to destroy the Jews.

Certainly it was not a coincidence that Xerxes was unable to sleep the night before the second banquet. And it was not a coincidence that he was reminded that Mordecai had exposed the plot to assassinate him. God was clearly directing these events. All that was needed was for Esther to stand up and tell the king of Haman’s plot. After Haman was hanged, there was still a problem: The edict to kill all the Jews couldn’t be withdrawn. However, Xerxes commanded Esther and Mordecai to write a new decree superseding the old one. Esther was obedient in serving God where he had placed her, and God used her actions to preserve his people!

Prayer
• Read Jeremiah 29:11-13.
• How do these verses apply to Esther’s situation? to yours?
• Pray: Lord, thank you for your good plans. Please give me the courage to participate in the work you have for me as I help others by…

Before the Lesson
■ Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use. Refer to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies columns to determine what you’ll need.
■ Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned…” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
■ Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.
### Lesson 12

#### This Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Children Will Do</th>
<th>Classroom Supplies</th>
<th>Learning Lab Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcome!</strong>—Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.</td>
<td>“Stone Tablet Name Tags” (p. 27), markers, pins or tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Get Started</strong></td>
<td><strong>Option 1: Good King, May I?</strong>—Play a game, and learn that Esther had to ask the king something important.</td>
<td>Blindfold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Option 2: Who Did It?</strong>—Sneak to “It” and take the jewel ball.</td>
<td>Construction paper, crayons, paper plates, napkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Option 3: A Royal Banquet</strong>—Prepare a banquet table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pick Up Our Toys</strong>—Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.</td>
<td>CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bible Story Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Setting the Stage</strong>—Work in pairs to help each other find a heart or a star.</td>
<td>Bible, construction paper, scissors, CD player, basket or box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bible Song and Prayer Time</strong>—Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.</td>
<td>Bible, CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hear and Tell the Bible Story</strong>—Cheer for Esther and boo for Haman as they listen to the story from Esther 5:1-8; 7:1-7, 10.</td>
<td>Bible, CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Do the Bible Story</strong>—Discuss their special gifts, sing about Esther, and talk about helping others.</td>
<td>Bible, CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lending a Hand</strong>—Teach Pockets the importance of helping others.</td>
<td>Flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Help a Friend</strong>—Help a friend do the motions to an action rhyme, and then enjoy a banquet.</td>
<td>Banquet table from Option 3, snack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.*
Welcome Time

Welcome!

SUPPLIES: “Stone Tablet Name Tags” handouts (p. 27), markers, pins or tape
• Bend down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
• Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
• Thank each child for coming to class today.
• As children arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into practice. Ask questions such as “Who worked with Queen Esther to save the Jews?” and “Who did you work together with to do something difficult?”
• Say: Today we’re going to learn that God has special plans for us to help others.
• Hand out the stone tablet name tags children made in Lesson 1, and help children attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout at the end of the first lesson.
• Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.

Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed, and direct children’s conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “How can you help people around you?” or “Who helps you at home? at school? at church?”

Option 1: Good King, May I?

SUPPLIES: none

Before children arrive, link the linking hearts and stars together to make a crown. Choose one person to be the “Good King” or “Good Queen,” and have him or her sit in a chair at one end of the room. The Good King or Good Queen should wear the crown and hold the groan tube like a scepter. Instruct the other children to take turns calling out, “Good King [or Good Queen], may I come closer?” The Good King or Good Queen must answer, “Yes, good servant, you may.” Then have the king or queen tell how many and what kind of steps the player may take, such as three baby steps, two large steps, or one hop.

The first person to reach the throne becomes the new king or queen. As children play, explain that Esther had to ask the king for something important.
Option 2: Who Did It?

SUPPLIES: blindfold

Have children scatter around the playing area and then sit down. Choose one child to be “It.” Instruct It to stand in the middle of the room and hold the jewel ball on his or her outstretched palm. Blindfold It; then walk around the room, and tap a child on the head. Motion for that child to sneak to It, take the jewel ball, and find a new place to sit. Then clap your hands, and allow It to remove the blindfold and guess who took the jewel ball. Whether or not It guesses correctly, allow the child who took the ball to be the next It. As children play, tell them that Haman was trying to be sneaky, but Esther knew about his evil plot.

Option 3: A Royal Banquet

SUPPLIES: construction paper, crayons, paper plates, napkins

Invite the children to help you prepare a banquet table to use for a celebration. Set out paper plates, napkins, construction paper, and crayons. Have some children make place mats by drawing on sheets of construction paper. Be sure children make a place mat for each child in class. Other children can set paper plates and napkins around the table. You will use the banquet table for the Closing activity. Tell children that Esther made a special meal for the king and Haman.

When everyone has arrived and you’re ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they’re doing and get ready to clean up.

Pick Up Our Toys

SUPPLIES: CD player

Lead children in singing “Pick Up Our Toys” (track 2) with the CD to the tune of “Skip to My Lou.” Encourage the children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

If you want to include the names of all the children in your class, sing the song without the CD and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the CD, vary the names you use each week.

We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys
And put them all away.

There’s [name] picking up toys.
There’s [name] picking up toys.
There’s [name] picking up toys,
Putting them all away.

(Repeat.)
**Bible Story Time**

### Setting the Stage

**SUPPLIES:** none

Tell the children you’ll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap, the children are to stop what they’re doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Encourage children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities you’ve planned.

Before this activity, hide links from the *linking hearts and stars* around the room. Have children form a circle, and then say: "I’ve hidden the hearts and stars around the room. Let’s see if you can find them. Close your eyes, slowly walk around the room, and try to find a heart or a star. If you find one, open your eyes and come back to our circle. Remember—no peeking! Ready? Go!"

Encourage children to walk slowly so they don’t bump into one another. After a minute, allow children to open their eyes and return to the circle.

Say: "That was pretty tricky! We’ll play again, but this time you’ll have a partner who can see." Form two groups, and have each child find a partner from the other group. Each member of Group 1 will keep his or her eyes closed, but people from Group 2 can keep their eyes open. With your partner, try again to find a heart or star. If you and your partner find one, return to the circle. Ready? Go!

After everyone returns to the circle, collect the links from the *linking hearts and stars*. Then ask:

- **What was the game like the first time we played?** (Hard; no fun; impossible.)

- **What made the game better the second time?** (I had a helper; I got to help someone; we found a heart.)

Say: "You might have felt frustrated at first, but that changed when someone helped you. God has special plans for us to help others, too. When we work together and help each other, we can accomplish God’s great plans. Let’s get ready to hear about God’s plan for Esther to help her people."

### Bible Song and Prayer Time

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, construction paper, scissors, basket or box, CD player

Before class, make surprise cards for this activity by cutting construction paper into 2x6-inch slips. Prepare a surprise card for each child, plus a few extras for visitors. Fold the cards in half, and then stamp the *crown stamp* inside one of the surprise cards. Bookmark *Esther 5:1-8, 7:1-7, 10* in the Bible you’ll be using.

Have the children sit in a circle. Say: "Now it’s time to choose a Bible person to bring me the Bible marked with today’s Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, I’ll pass out surprise cards. Don’t look inside your surprise card until the song is over."
Lead the children in singing “Read God’s Book” (track 3) with the CD to the tune of “The Muffin Man.” As you sing, pass out the folded surprise cards.

**SING**

Now it’s time to read God’s book,  
Now it’s time to read God’s book.  
Let’s hear a Bible story.  
(Repeat 3x.)

After the song, say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the picture of a crown stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible person for today.**

Identify the Bible person, and then have the rest of the children clap for him or her. Ask the Bible person to bring you the Bible. Help the Bible person open the Bible to the marked place and show the children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible person sit down.

Say: [Name] was our special Bible person today. Each week we’ll have only one special Bible person, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we’re all learning that **God has special plans for us to help others.**

Let’s say a special prayer now and ask God to show us how to help others. I’ll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, “God, teach me how to help other people.”

Pass around the basket or box. When you’ve collected everyone’s surprise card, set the basket aside and pick up the Bible. Lead children in this prayer: **God, thank you for the Bible and all the stories in it. Teach us today that you have special plans for us to help others. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

### Hear and Tell the Bible Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, CD player

Have children form a circle. Point to the Bible and say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Esther.** Hold up the Bible Big Book: Esther. **Our Bible Big Book shows us pictures of our Bible story. Before we hear more about what happened to Esther, let’s see if you remember what’s been happening to her.**

Connect the links from the linking hearts and stars together to form a ring, and then place the ring in the middle of the circle. Hold up the jewel ball and say: **We’ll take turns gently tossing this jewel ball into the ring. If you throw the ball and it bounces inside the ring, tell us something you remember about the story of Queen Esther.**

After each child has had a turn, return the linking hearts and stars and the jewel ball to the Learning Lab.

Say: **During the holiday of Purim, Jews still tell the story of brave Queen Esther. They cheer when they hear Esther’s name and boo when they hear Haman’s name. Let’s do that as we listen to our story today. We’ll need to keep our cheering and booing short so we can hear this exciting story!**
Open the *Bible Big Book: Esther* to pages 4 and 5, and hold it so children can see the pictures. Play “Brave Queen Esther” (track 18) on the CD, and lead children in cheering and booing. Turn the page at the sound of the chimes.

When the track ends, turn off the CD player, and put the *Bible Big Book* away and out of sight.

Ask: • **How did the king show that he liked Esther?** (By holding out his scepter; by saying she didn’t have to die; by going to the special dinner she made.)

• **Who did Esther help?** (The Jews; her people; Mordecai.)

• **How did Esther tell the king about Haman’s plan?** (She had a special dinner; she told him when Haman was right there; she told the king that she was Jewish, too.)

Say: **Because Esther was very brave, she helped save the Jews from Haman’s plot. Esther risked her life to help her people—that was part of God’s plan.** God has special plans for us to help others, too. Our Bible verse for today reminds us of that. It comes from Psalm 138:8a, and this is what it says: **“The Lord will work out his plans for my life.”** As we move to our next activity, think of some ways you can help people.

---

**Do the Bible Story**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, CD player

Have the class sit in a large circle in the middle of the room, and then join them on the floor. Hold a *woolly frog* in your hand. Say: **God gives us special gifts and talents and bodies to help other people.**

Look at this *woolly frog*. He has four feet instead of two! He can use his special feet to walk to the nursing home and give his grandma a hug.

Encourage the children to think of gifts or abilities that God has given each of them that could be used to help others. Start by sharing your own example, such as “I have two hands, so I can help my neighbor carry her groceries.” Then gently roll or toss the *woolly frog* to a child in the circle. Encourage the child to state his or her gift and a way he or she can help someone this week with that gift. Continue to roll the *woolly frog* in a random pattern around the circle until each child has had a chance to share. Examples might include: “I have two ears, so I can listen to my friends when they need to talk,” “I have a mouth, so I can tell my friends about Jesus,” and “I have two arms, so I can help my dad rake leaves.”

Open your Bible to 1 Corinthians 12:14-18, and read the passage aloud.

Ask: • **What does God mean when he says we are like a body?** (We have different parts; we have to work together.)

• **Why does God make us special and different from other people?** (So we can help other people; so he doesn’t get bored with us; so we can work together.)

Say: **Like the parts of a body, each person has a special function that no one else can quite do the same way. God made everyone different and special because each of us has something special to offer.** God has special plans for us to help others with the different gifts he’s given us, and there are lots of ways we can help others. Find some friends who will help you make a star.

Help children form groups of four or five, and have each group sit in a circle. Show children how to stretch apart their legs so their feet touch the feet of the children sitting next to them as shown on the next page.
Say: **Stars remind us of Esther because her name means “star.”** Esther helped her people even though it was scary for her. Let’s sing about Queen Esther. In this song, we’ll pretend that we are Esther telling someone else the story. In your star group, pat your legs to make drums to go along with our song.

Lead children in singing “Esther’s Song” (track 19) to the tune of “Ten Little Indians” with the CD.

**SING**

When Mordecai told me the news  
That Haman planned to kill the Jews,  
I knew right then that I must choose  
To do a scary thing!

I bowed before King Xerxes’ feet  
And asked if he would come and eat  
A feast with Haman and with me,  
And the king said he would come.

I told the king of Haman’s plan  
To kill the Jews in all the land.  
Guards took away the wicked man,  
And my people were saved that day!

When the song ends, turn off the CD player, and have children remain in their star groups. Hold up the **star sponge** and say: **Each time I ask a question, I’ll give you a few seconds to talk about it in your star group. Then I’ll set this star on someone’s head. That person’s star group may share their answers with us.**

Ask:  
• **Whom can we help?** (Mom; Dad; friends; teachers; neighbors.)  

• **How can we help others?** (Taking out the trash for my mom; helping Dad make dinner; making a picture for my friend when she’s sad; helping my teacher put the colored markers away.)  

• **How do people feel when we help them?** (Glad; happy.)

Say: **Say the name of one person you’ll try to help this week.** Pause while children share. **Remember that God has special plans for us to help others.** Link your pinkie fingers with your neighbors’ pinkie fingers in your star group. Now let’s pray. Pray: **Dear God, thank you for giving us friends, teachers, and family members we can help each day. Show us how to help them. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

Return the **star sponge** and the **woolly frog** to the Learning Lab.

---

**Closing**

**Lending a Hand**

**SUPPLIES: flour**

Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo with a bit of flour dusted on her nose, and go through the following script. When you finish the script, have kids wave goodbye and then put Pockets away and out of sight.
Pockets: I’m so glad it’s time to visit again! Please, please, please, please tell me what happened to Esther! Did she see the king? Was he glad to see her? Did Haman’s bad plan come through? Tell me, tell me, tell me!

Teacher: We’ll tell you what happened. But first, can you tell us what happened to you? You have flour all over your face.

Pockets: Oh, that. I helped my mom bake chocolate chip cookies for my class at kangaroo school. Mom said I was a good helper, too. (Sighs.) But I wish she hadn’t said that.

Teacher: Why? It’s good to be a helper.

Pockets: Because my dad heard her and said he could use a good helper to weed the garden. I don’t like weeding, so I didn’t want to help. Dad sent me to my room until I could be a good helper for him, too.

Teacher: God has special plans for us to help others. Sometimes it’s fun to be a helper, like when you’re baking cookies. But sometimes it’s a little harder. Let’s finish our story about Queen Esther, and then maybe you’ll see why it’s important to help. Children, who can tell Pockets how Esther was a good helper?

(Please allow children to tell Pockets that Esther risked her life to speak to the king and then accused Haman of a wicked plot. Be sure children explain that Esther helped save her people from death.)

Pockets: Wow! If Esther hadn’t helped, all those people might have died.

Teacher: That’s right, Pockets. It wasn’t easy for Esther to help, but she knew that was what God wanted her to do.

Pockets: Helping others really is important…even when it’s kind of hard.

Teacher: I think you’ve got it now. So what do you think about helping your dad in the garden?

Pockets: I think I’d better hop to it and lend a hand! See you next week!

Permission to photocopy this handout from Group’s Hands-On Bible Curriculum®, Pre-K & K, granted for local church use. Copyright © Group Publishing, Inc., 1515 Cascade Avenue, Loveland, CO 80538. group.com

Help a Friend

SUPPLIES: banquet table from Option 3, snack

Say: I think Pockets has the right idea. Let’s get hopping with some of our own ways to help others. Last week we learned an action rhyme that reminded us to work together and to help each other. Find a friend to help you with the motions to our rhyme.

Help children form pairs, and then have partners stand side by side. Have each child place one arm around his or her partner’s shoulder or behind his or her back. Lead children in the following action rhyme.
You need two hands to give a hug (wrap free arm around partner),
To clap and cheer (clap hand with partner’s hand),
Or to catch a bug. (Cup hand over partner’s hand.)

You need two feet to walk a mile (walk in place),
To skip and hop (hop forward and then backward),
Or to dance awhile. (Wiggle and dance in place.)

You need two friends to work as one (link index finger with partner’s index finger)—Helping each other (shake partner’s free hand with your free hand)
To get things done. (Give high fives.)

Say: It’s fun to help our friends and family. I’m glad that God has special plans for us to help others. One way we can help our friends is to tell them about our most special friend, Jesus. God had special plans for all of us when he sent his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. If we put our faith in Jesus, we will celebrate Jesus at a special banquet in heaven one day. Doesn’t that sound wonderful? But for today, let’s close with a special banquet to remember the meal Esther made for King Xerxes and Haman.

Have children gather around the banquet table from Option 3. Distribute a snack, such as cookies or fruit, and then pray: Dear God, thank you for your special plans. Show us how to help others and to serve you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Allow children to enjoy feasting on their snacks as they talk about the story of Esther.

Collect name tags for next week’s use before children leave.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Today I Learned…” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week’s topic.
Lively Learning: A Helping Hand

Have children form two groups, and ask the groups to line up at opposite ends of the room from each other. Instruct children to sit down. Have the first person in Group 1 hop to Group 2 and pull up the first person in that line. Have the two children link arms, skip back to Group 1, and then pull up the next person in that line. Then those three children may link arms and hop back to Group 2. Continue until the entire class is linked together. As children play, remind them that Esther gave the Jews a helping hand when she saved them from Haman’s wicked plot.

Make to Take: Helping Hand Door Hangers

Before this activity, make enough photocopies of the “Helping Hand Door Hanger” handout (at the end of this lesson) for each child to have one. Distribute the handouts, and set out crayons and scissors. Have children form pairs. In each pair, have one partner place a hand on his or her door hanger while the other partner traces around the hand. Then have partners switch roles. Let the children color their handprints, decorate the door hangers, and then cut them out. Tell children to hang their Helping Hand Door Hangers on the bedroom door of someone they want to help. Remind children that God has special plans for us to help others.

Treat to Eat: Lend-a-Hand Necklaces

Set out bowls of fruit-flavored O-shaped cereal and 18-inch lengths of yarn. Have children form pairs. In each pair, have one partner hold a length of yarn while the other partner strings cereal on the yarn. Then have partners switch roles. As children work, talk about ways we can help others.

Story Picture: Esther Accuses Haman

Hand each child a photocopy of the “Today I Learned…” handout. Set out crayons, cotton swabs, and cups of purple punch. After children color their pictures, allow children to use the cotton swabs and purple punch to paint the glasses pictured on the table. Remind the children that it was part of God’s plan for Esther to help her people.

For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.
Helping Hand Door Hanger

Photocopy the handout. Have each child trace a handprint on his or her door hanger, color the hanger, and then cut it out.
Today I learned...

Today your child learned that God has special plans for us to help others. Children discovered that Queen Esther trusted God and helped save her people. Children explored ways to help each other.

Verse to Learn
“The Lord will work out his plans for my life” (Psalm 138:8a).

Ask Me...
● What did Queen Esther ask the king to do?
● Who is someone you can help?
● How can our family help others in need?

Family Fun
● Create a “Happy Helper” poster to hang on your refrigerator. Draw a large heart in the center of a piece of paper. Each time a family member helps someone else, allow the helper to put a sticker inside the heart. Try to fill in the entire heart this week!

Esther Accuses Haman (Esther 5:1-8; 7:1-7, 10)