

ESTHER COMPUTER WORKSHOP

PASSAGE

Story: Book of Esther

Key/Memory Verse: Esther 4:14b

PURPOSE

There comes a time and place in every person's life to stand up against evil, even if it means risking your position or life. God is on our side in those times.

Esther's story also tells us that God does not approve of singling out a race of people or an ethnic group and treating them with anything less than respect. There are many examples in today's world where we need to speak out like Esther against racism and "ethnic cleansing."

Objectives for Computer Workshop

Students will be able to:

- Retell the story of Esther in their own words
- Understand that both Vashti and Esther are heroes -- not because they were beautiful, but because they did what was right.
- Understand that "doing what is right" is risky, but know that we can ask God and others for courage and help.
- Understand that no ethnic or racial group deserves poor treatment.

PREPARATION

Materials List

- Bibles & scroll of Esther (Megillah Esther)
- Butcher paper or poster board
- Computer Software (See options under "Advance Preparation.")
- Copier
- Markers
- Paper (Reflection Activity)
- Pencils or pens
- Pictures of characters in "Esther" story
- Prizes such as sticks of gum
- "Reflection" Activity

- Tacks or tape

Advance Preparation

1. Read the Bible Background and know the story!
2. Preview the software.

The story of Esther has A LOT of d-e-t-a-i-l-s and two major plot twists. It has several scenes and four main characters, along with several minor ones. Getting the story pieced together and straight should be a major objective.

Bibleland.com: has "homepages" for Esther, Haman and Mordecai, with lots of readable text. Each shares its character's particular insights. There are several "read aloud" Scripture sections you can click on. These are nicely done and even have background music.

Awesome Bible Stories: has story portions with questions, an Esther quiz, a look at today's celebration of Purim, and a Haman vs. Mordecai game. This lesson is largely based on the bibleland.com software but you could load Awesome Bible Stories on half the screens and have the children switch between the two, especially if they are younger and therefore likely to be put off by lots of reading! Or the latter software could be the "reward" for having done the former (see lesson plan below).

Rationale for the Lesson Plan:

1. Bibleland.com CD contains a wealth of very readable information about the details of this story. It is the objective of this computer lab lesson to take advantage of this CD's text -- by having the kids read Esther's, Mordecai's and Haman's "homepages."
2. It is recommended that the computer workshop appear later in the rotation so that the children have a good story foundation before going in to the homepages of *Bibleland.com*. The homepages tell the story from each character's perspective. Their homepages will be better understood with the basic story already known.
3. Decide how to set up the Game Show with prizes for everyone!

The Game Show: This can be done the old-fashioned way with teams sitting at tables, using the bells (in the Oasis). Offer them sticks of gum as prizes to certain key questions (such as every third question). An alternative to the Game Show is offered.

4. Prepare a "Persian Palace" by drawing it on poster board. Include pictures and names of the main characters of the story. Display the poster on a wall.

5. Duplicate a copy of the closing "Reflection" activity for each participant.

PRESENTATION

Open - Introduction

Introduce the main characters of the story by posting their pictures and names on the wall against a "Persian Palace" drawing you have made. The Palace will need a banquet hall, and ...

Read a summary of the story using the scroll of Esther (Megillah Esther).

Option: There are several "read aloud" narrations of various key Esther passages which can be found in *Bibleland.com*. The narrations are dramatically done with background music.

Haman Diaries: Esther 3:8-18 - Haman gets the king to proclaim a law against the Jews.

Esther the Queen: Esther 9:18-32 - The Jews win and begin the Purim feast.

Mordecai's Home page: Esther 4:14 - Mordecai convinces Esther to speak to the King.

- Point out the fact that this story contains TWO female heroes. That's pretty unusual for a Bible story. Note that in both cases, these women noted for their beauty used their brains to do what was right.

Dig - Main Content

Give the students about 10 to 15 minutes to read through the three home pages in *Bibleland.com*. Allow them to take notes if necessary. Then as suggested above, use "Amazing Bible Stories" as your leverage to get them to do the bibleland work. The section about celebrating Purim can be left out – you will see that it is not very helpful, although it does show contemporary Jewish people looking silly and having fun!

Game Show

Play a short Game Show with about 20-25 multiple choice questions on Esther. For younger children, the questions can be read aloud and fewer possible answers given.

The following information was gleaned from *Bibleland.com* home pages of Esther, Mordecai and Haman.

Sample Questions

I am second-in-command of the Persian Empire. (Haman)

This man won't bow down to me. (Mordecai)

I was the wife of King Xerxes and Queen of Persia (Vashti)

My husband held a banquet and asked me to attend, but I refused because he just wanted to show everyone how beautiful I was. (Vashti)

I refused to obey the King. (Vashti)

My spies found out that Mordecai was a Jew. (Haman)

I talked the King into having the Jews killed because they would not worship him or obey his laws. (Haman)

I am the son of Hammeda the Agagite. (Haman)

I had a special gallows built to have Mordecai hanged. (Haman)

I hid my true identity from the King. (Esther)

I grew up an orphan. (Esther)

King Xerxes was looking for the most beautiful woman in the kingdom. The beauty contest lasted _____ year. (One)

Esther's close friend in the royal court was a eunuch called _____. (Hegai)

When he heard the trickster had been Haman, he ordered Haman killed on the gallows which Haman had constructed for Mordecai. (King Xerxes)

Then King Xerxes enacted a law allowing the Jews to _____ for he could not withdraw the earlier law that said people could kill the Jews and take their property. (Defend themselves against their attackers)

We are cousins. (Esther and Mordecai)

I was offended because a low-level official would not bow down to me. (Haman)

Mordecai told me I was the only one close enough to the King who could stop the attacks against the Jews. (Esther)

Mordecai told Esther "who can say but that you have been _____ for such a time as this?" (Elevated to the palace)

The Jews had been brought to Persia by the Babylonians as _____. (Slaves)

We Persians conquered the Babylonians and allowed the Jews to live _____ among us. They prospered. (As equals)

In 586 BC the _____ conquered and enslaved the Jews. (Babylonians)

In 530 BC King Cyrus conquered the Babylonians and sends some of the Jews back to rebuild _____. (Jerusalem)

In 486 BC _____ became King of the Persians. (Xerxes)

I once overheard a plot that the Babylonians were going to assassinate Xerxes. I told Esther who told the King. (Mordecai)

This was the good deed I did for the King and years later Esther would tell the King it was I who saved his life. I was appointed second in command in Haman's place. (Mordecai)

To celebrate the saving of the Jewish people from being killed we began an annual feast called "_____." (Purim)

Reflect - Closure

Stop the Game Show with plenty of time to do the following Reflection Activity. Pass around slips of paper with the reflection activity copied there and pencils or pens to each student and have them circle responses to the following statements, then discuss.

1. I am proud to be a Christian and do not hide it from anybody.

YES NO SOMETIMES

(Are you proud enough to say "I'm sorry, I can't play this morning. I have to go to church."?)

2. When I see someone being mistreated, I step forward and try to stop it, or get some help to stop it.

YES NO SOMETIMES

(Give some examples of situations appropriate to your group. What is the best way to handle a situation like this? Who are some of the people you can name in history and today who speak up for others?)

3. When someone tells a racist joke or puts down another group of people who are different than me I feel _____.

(What are some of those groups? How should you speak up when you hear such talk?
Why didn't Esther speak up when she first heard about Xerxes' new law?)

4. I am willing to do what is right, even if it gets me in trouble.

YES NO SOMETIMES

(Give examples to see how far they'll go. Name examples of people who have taken risks
to do what is right.)

5. Before doing risky things I check with: (check all that apply)

MY PARENTS MY FRIENDS MY PASTOR/TEACHER GOD-PRAY MY _____

(Ask about things they've done to protect others/stand up for beliefs.)