

# LESSON 5

## QUEEN ESTHER

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### The Medo-Persian Empire

King Ahasuerus was also known as Xerxes the Great. He was Persia's fifth king and ruled from 486 BC to 465 BC. The kingdom consisted of 127 provinces, incorporating Media, Persia, as well as the previous empires of Assyria and Babylon. Ahasuerus ruled from Susa (Shushan), the administrative capital of the empire.

Esther's story took place about 100 years after Nebuchadnezzar had taken the Jews into captivity (2 Kgs 25). The events of Esther's life occurred between the first return of the exiles back to Jerusalem, led by Zerubbabel, and the second led by Ezra.

#### Esther

Esther lived in the kingdom of Persia. Her parents had chosen not to return to Jerusalem. When her parents died, her cousin Mordecai adopted Esther as his own daughter. She was obedient to Mordecai (Esth 2:20), who was a godly man.

Mordecai brought her up to worship God, even though they were exiles living in a foreign land. Eventually, her beauty captured the heart of the king and she was crowned queen over the banished Queen Vashti.

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

It is easy for your students to feel proud about their achievements or abilities because they are constantly encouraged by their family and friends.

A healthy dose of pride gives people the necessary self-esteem and confidence they need. However, too much pride can cause people to become boastful and self-serving, making it harder and harder for them to be humble.

Your students need to understand that every accomplishment is given by God. They should never feel like they are better than someone else. They need to follow the example of Esther.

Esther was certainly a person who could have boasted about her good fortunes. But she did not. Even though she became the Queen of Persia, she remained obedient to her adopted father, Mordecai. She listened to all of his instructions and humbled herself. She realized that if it had not been for God, she would not have been crowned queen.

Instead of letting pride become a weakness for your students, turn the situation around. Ask them to think about their abilities and what they excel in. Ask them how they can use their abilities to serve God and their brothers and sisters in the church. This way, they can repay God for His grace. By developing this kind of attitude, they will grow up being good servants of God.

### BIBLE TEXT

Esther 1-2:18

### BIBLE TRUTH

God blesses all those who obey Him.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To obey God so that we can enter the heavenly kingdom.

### MEMORY VERSE

"You are my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep Your words."

(Psalm 119:57)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for taking care of us every day. We know that we need to listen to Your words and be obedient children. We pray that You will help us walk on this heavenly pathway so that we can enter Your heavenly kingdom. May all the glory be Yours. Hallelujah! Amen.

## VOCABULARY

**noble:** a person of high rank

**edict:** an official order

**reveal:** to make known

## REVIEW

Last week, we learned about a good king named Josiah. How old was Josiah when he became king of Judah? (Eight years old.) He was a good king because he worshipped and obeyed God. He was very different from his father and grandfather, who were evil and had worshipped idols.

While he was king, Josiah got rid of idols and repaired the temple that Solomon had built. While the reconstruction was going on, the high priest found the Book of the Law. He showed it to the king's scribe, Shaphan, who then brought it to the king.

When King Josiah learned about the laws that God had given to Moses many years before, he realized that the people had not been obedient. They had not been following God's commands.

After consulting a prophetess, Josiah gathered all the people at the temple and decided to read the laws aloud to everyone. All the people promised to follow God's laws.

We learned that Josiah was a very good king. Even though he was young, he tried very hard to serve God and obey His words. We should follow Josiah's example.

## BIBLE STORY

### Esther and Mordecai

The kingdoms of Israel and Judah had been led by wicked kings. Because the people disobeyed God and worshipped idols, God was angry and punished them by letting the Babylonians capture them and force them out of their homeland to live in exile. Many years later, the Babylonian Empire was conquered by the Medes and Persians.

At the time that the Israelites were living in the land of Persia, a good Persian king rose to power and allowed the Israelites to go back to their homeland in Jerusalem. Some of the Israelites chose to return but others chose to remain behind.

One person who decided to stay in Persia was called Mordecai. He was a man who feared and worshipped God. He also had a cousin named Esther, who was very beautiful. When her parents died, Mordecai took care of her and even adopted her as his own daughter. Even though he was not her biological father, Esther obeyed Mordecai and also worshipped God.

### King Xerxes Gives a Feast

During the time of Esther, the Persian king who ruled the people was Xerxes. He was a very powerful king. One time, he decided to give a big feast for the princes and nobles in his kingdom. The feast lasted for 180 days, and there was a lot of food and drink.

After that feast was over, the king held another feast for the people of Shushan. The people who attended the feast had a wonderful time, and King Xerxes was so happy that on the seventh day of the feast, he wanted to find a

special way to entertain his guests. He thought for a while and came up with an idea.

King Xerxes had a beautiful wife whose name was Vashti. The king thought that everyone would love to admire her beauty, so he quickly summoned his servants to bring her to him.

### Queen Vashti Disobeys the King

The servants went and delivered the king's message to the queen. It so happened that the queen was also giving a banquet to the women in the royal palace.

When she heard the message, she told the servants to let the king know that she would not be coming. The servants went back to the king and reported the queen's words.

The servants said to Xerxes, "The queen refuses to come."

King Xerxes became very angry! How dare the queen disobey his orders! He was so mad that he asked his wise men what he should do. The wise men thought for a while and one, the prince Memucan, told the king the solution.

"The queen has disobeyed you," he said. "If you don't punish her, all the women in the kingdom will follow her example and stop honoring their husbands. Send an edict that says she can no longer see you. The queen's royal position shall be given to someone who is better than her."

This advice sounded good to King Xerxes, so he made the proclamation among all the people of the land.

### The Search for a New Queen

After all the festivities were over and Xerxes' anger had died down, the king's servants began to search for a new queen to replace the banished Queen Vashti.

Many beautiful women were selected throughout the land and brought to the palace. They lived there for a year, eating royal food and receiving beauty treatments so that they could look their best for the king. Among these chosen women was Esther.

When Mordecai found out that she had been summoned to stay in the palace, he told her not to reveal her identity. He didn't think it was necessary to tell anyone that she was Jewish right away, because it might put her in a dangerous situation.

Esther was obedient to Mordecai and didn't reveal her background to anyone. Now, everyone who saw Esther liked her very much because she was a good person, and

she won the favor of all those who came to know her.

### Esther Crowned Queen

After one year of preparation in the palace, one by one the women went to see the king. If the king was not pleased with a woman, then she would return to the harem, the part of the palace where these women stayed.

When it came time for Esther's turn, she was ready and looked very beautiful. On her way to see King Xerxes, everyone who saw her thought that she was the most beautiful woman they had ever seen.

When the king saw her, he was immediately pleased with her and wanted to make her the new queen. King Xerxes set a royal crown on Esther's head and made her queen of the Persian kingdom. Afterward, he was so delighted that he ordered a feast and invited many officials and servants to celebrate with him.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

### Fill In the Blank/True or False

1. The king's name was called \_\_\_\_\_ (Xerxes).
2. Mordecai was Esther's \_\_\_\_\_ (cousin).
3. Mordecai took care of \_\_\_\_\_ (Esther) when her parents died.
4. Queen Vashti was banished from seeing the king again because she was ugly. False; she had disobeyed the king's orders.
5. Esther was obedient to Mordecai and promised not to tell anyone that she was Jewish. True.

### Questions to Think About

6. Who did King Xerxes consult when Queen Vashti refused to obey him? What did they suggest? He consulted his wise men. They suggested that he remove Vashti as Queen and find someone to replace her.
7. What was required of the women who were chosen to stay at the palace before seeing the king? They had to prepare themselves with beauty treatments, eat royal food, and look their best.
8. How long were the women required to prepare themselves?  
One year.

## MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"You are my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep Your words." (Psalm 119:57)**

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## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

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### I. Understand Who Esther Is

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Students, did you know that Esther was a little orphan girl? Her parents died when she was little, and her cousin adopted her. Do you remember the name of her cousin? [Let students answer.] His name was Mordecai. He took Esther into his home and raised her as his own child. Even though he was in a foreign land, he remained a God-fearing man. He taught Esther to fear God, to understand her Jewish background, and to recognize that God could use her in any circumstance. In the next few lessons, we will continue to learn about Esther and Mordecai and how they bravely and faithfully served God in Persia.

We are all like Esther—we are orphans until we are adopted into God’s family. This does not mean that our biological parents are not our parents, but rather that we become children of our heavenly Father. Do you remember what you had to do to become a child of God? [Let students answer.] You were baptized into Christ in the name of our Lord Jesus! Before we were baptized, we were all sinners. Our hearts were dirty on the inside, which means that we were separated from God. But Jesus did something amazing for us. God knew that there was only one way to get to heaven when every one of us has sinned, and that is to be cleansed. Therefore, Jesus died on the cross for all the sins that we have committed. He died for us! It was not for anything that He had done wrong. This is why, through the Lord Jesus Christ, we are no longer called orphans. We have all gained favors from our King because, through Him, we can very proudly call God our own father!

### II. Understand Inner Beauty

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Another thing that we learned about Esther today was that she possessed incredible beauty. But at the same time, we also learned that Esther was beautiful on the inside. God looks at how beautiful we are on the inside rather than on the outside. Let’s see what the Bible says! Turn to 1 Samuel 16:7b [ask a student to read aloud].

“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” We know that God loves all of us. He is fair and He doesn’t show more favor to a certain type of person. This is the same with our appearance—God doesn’t look at how beautiful or handsome we are on the outside but whether or not we have a good heart. What does a good heart mean? Let’s look at another verse. Turn to 1 Peter 3:4 [have another student read aloud].

“Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” Here, the Bible tells us that a good heart is so beautiful that it is very precious in the sight of God. How beautiful? It has the “incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.” In other words, God looks into our hearts and searches for a gentle and quiet spirit. If a woman is very beautiful on the outside, but she always gets angry and argues with other people, do you think God would still be pleased with her? No, because her heart is not gentle and quiet. Likewise, if a man has a very handsome face, but he always fights and uses foul language, is this how God wants us to be? No! God cares about our attitude and heart more than our outward appearances. Let me share two examples with you so that you can make a comparison.

1. Ryan is blessed with a very handsome face. He dresses with style and always gets compliments for it. Since Ryan only sees his church friends once a week, he’s especially picky when it comes to choosing his clothes on Saturdays. He always wants to wear the most stylish clothes he has to church. Almost every Saturday morning, Ryan is late to church because he spends so much time picking his clothes and shoes. When he arrives at church, all he thinks about is whether or not his friends will say anything nice about his outfit. After RE class, instead of cleaning up the classroom, Ryan leaves the classroom right away so that he can walk around the church more to seek compliments before everyone leaves. Because of this, Ryan’s friends have an impression that Ryan is lazy and not helpful.
2. Margaret is not the most beautiful girl in class. She dresses in simple clothes and doesn’t spend much time choosing trendy clothing. However, when people think of Margaret, they always think of an angel. This is because Margaret is a very kind and loving person. Whenever her friends need help, Margaret is always the first to be there. Even when her friends didn’t mention a word, if Margaret knows that she can offer help, she will do it without asking for anything back. She’s also very gentle and sweet. When she goes to

goes to church, she always greets people and helps clean. In RE class, she's always helping others do arts and crafts. Whether in school or at church, everybody loves Margaret.

### Discussion Questions

- 1. Do you think God is pleased with Ryan's attitude when he goes to church?** No, because he cares too much about his outward appearance and too little about his attitude. He puts more weight on other people's compliments than on serving God.
- 2. How do you think God views Margaret?** God is very pleased with her because she loves to help others. She's kind and loving towards others, which makes her beautiful on the inside.
- 3. Is it more important to have outward or inward beauty in God's sight?** Inward beauty is more precious in the eyes of God. God doesn't judge us on our outward appearance, and He loves every one of us equally.

### III. Understand Obedience

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The story of Esther teaches us that we need to be obedient. Boys and girls, can you think of ways to demonstrate and show that you are obedient to God? What can we do to show that we are obedient to God? [Let students answer. Examples may be obeying our parents, being kind to others, sharing with others, studying hard in school, etc.] Have you ever felt that it is difficult to obey God? Why is it so difficult?

John 14:15 tells us that if we love God, we will obey His commands. When we love someone, it is very natural for us to do what that person asks us to do. For example, when we love our parents, we will help them when they need us, and we will do it happily with a willing heart.

Sometimes, we may find it difficult to obey God because of peer pressure or because we are afraid people will laugh at us. But the Bible reminds us that we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength (Phil 4:13). We need to remember that God will help us when we decide to obey Him, and He will bless us just as He blessed Esther.

Esther was obedient to Mordecai: she listened and did what Mordecai told her to do. From today's story, we learned to listen to and be obedient to our parents. Have you ever been in a situation where you found it difficult to obey your parents? How did you feel and why?

Sometimes, listening to and obeying our parents requires us to make sacrifices. For example, our parents may ask us to finish our homework or to help with the housework before we go out to play. When this happens, we need to sacrifice our playtime in order to obey our parents.

The Bible tells us that if we are obedient and honor our parents, God will bless us, just as He blessed Esther (Eph 6:1-3). Let me share an example with you.

Florence's grandmother is sick. Since she lives by herself, Florence's mom has been going over to her house every day to take care of her, from cleaning her house to cooking her food. Florence's mom is exhausted. One day, she says to Florence, "Grandma is going to need my help for a while. Sometimes, I cannot come home on time to put your little brother to bed. Do you think you can help me with that?" Putting Florence's little brother to sleep is not an easy task. Not only does it take forever for him to get ready for bed, he also wants to hear at least three stories before he's willing to close his eyes and sleep. As much as Florence doesn't want to put her little brother to sleep, she loves her mom and really wants to take part of the burden off her shoulders. She answers her mom, "Of course! I'll be glad to help. God teaches us to be obedient and honor our parents and you set a very good example for me by taking care of Grandma. I'll do my best to help you, Mom!" Florence's mom is very touched to know that she has such an obedient daughter who loves her very much.

**Students, do you love your parents? If you do, what can you learn from the story of Florence?** To obey my parents and help them with a willing heart.

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**IV. Understand God's Omnipresence**

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In the book that bears Esther's name, God is never mentioned. However, that doesn't mean that God was not with Esther. On the contrary, God was everywhere in Esther's life and in the life of His people. Today, even though we may not see God in our own eyes, we know that God is with us. How do we know? We can feel His grace, power, and mercy through our faith, just as Esther and Mordecai did! Let me share a testimony with you.

Last year, Alex's dad lost his job. At that time, he was the only breadwinner in the family; without his job, it meant that his whole family had no source of income. When everyone else was concerned, Alex and his family weren't least worried. Their faith in God was so strong that they found peace in knowing that God will provide for them. Every day, Alex and his family prayed together to ask God for help. A few months later, with God's grace, Alex's dad finally got a new job. Not only did this job have better pay, it also gave Alex's dad more flexibility so that he wouldn't have to miss Friday night Bible studies like he had to before because of his demanding job. There was another time when Alex's mom suddenly became very sick in the middle of the night. But she was healed after praying to God. She didn't even need to go to the doctor. Alex himself has also experienced God many times. For instance, he was in a car accident once when riding his school bus. However, he didn't get hurt at all. In fact, everyone in his school bus was safe!

Even though Alex has never seen God with his own eyes before, he knows that God answers prayers and directs his life. In a way, He is visible everywhere. Whenever Alex's family is going through a difficult time, they will always kneel down and pray together. Alex cannot recall one time when God didn't answer their prayers! Because of all the experiences Alex and his family have had with God, they have great faith that God is with them, everywhere and at all times. They cannot help but thank God for all the wonderful things He has done for them!

Students, do you remember all the wonderful things God has done for you and your family? The Bible teaches us to always count our blessings. These experiences will serve as a reminder to us that God is with us, even though we may not see Him in person!

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**V. Understand God's Grace**

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"The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti" (Est 2:17).

Today, have we all obtained grace and favor from our King and our Savior, Jesus? Do we have a beautiful heart that is precious in God's sight? Let us learn from Esther's story and become the kind and loving person God wants His children to be!

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**HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY**

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1. Persia
2. They were in exile; God was punishing them for worshipping idols, so He let the Babylonians capture them and force them out of their homeland.
3. He wanted others to admire her beauty.
4. She was holding her own feast.
5. He decided to ban her from seeing him and to search for a new queen.
6. He had beautiful young women gathered from all over the kingdom.
7. Because Esther was Jewish.
8. No; Esther was blessed by God because she was obedient to and worshipped God.
9. God blesses us when we are obedient to Him.
10. Answers may vary.

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 ACTIVITIES
 

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**1 I Will Obey**

**Objective:** To help students become familiar with a Bible verse about obedience.

**Instructions:** Queen Esther was obedient to Mordecai and to God. Are you obedient? See if you can put the Bible verse in order by cutting out the individual words and putting them in order. After you have put the words in order, read the verse aloud and write down one thing you can do to obey God. Record it in the blank space below and complete the prayer.



Dear God,

Help me to obey You by \_\_\_\_\_

Hallelujah! Amen.

John	love	keep	you	Me,	commandments."	14:15	"If	My
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## 2

**Obedience and Love**

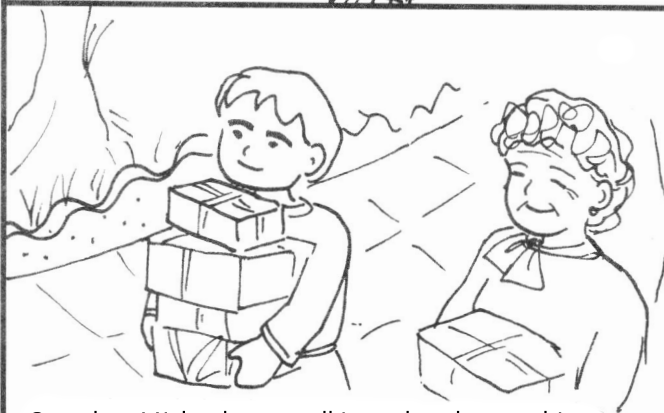
**Objective:** To help the students identify ways to obey God.

**Instructions:** Read the caption in each picture aloud to the class. Ask the students to identify the ways the student is obeying God. Encourage them to follow these examples and be obedient.

It was a bright and sunny day, and Adam was playing outside his house. He noticed that the driveway was very dirty, so he went to get a broom and started sweeping the driveway to clean it up.



Mark was leaving for school in the morning. As he opened the front door to go out, he noticed that the morning newspaper was still lying on the porch. Mark brought the newspaper into the house before heading off to school.



One day, Michael was walking when he saw his neighbor Mrs. Allen nearby. Mrs. Allen was holding many packages in her arms. Michael quickly went over and helped her carry some of the packages. Mrs. Allen was very grateful and thanked him afterwards.



One afternoon, Edward saw a little girl fall down on the street. The little girl began to cry. Edward ran to her quickly to help her get up. He comforted her, and she stopped crying. The little girl was touched by his kindness.



E1 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 5—Queen Esther

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** God blesses all those who obey Him.

**Lesson Objective:** To obey God so that we can enter the heavenly kingdom.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Psalm 119:57)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Homework Assignment

*Understanding What You Have Learned*

## Short Answer

1. What was the name of the foreign land that Mordecai and Esther lived in? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why were the Israelites living in a foreign land?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did King Xerxes summon Queen Vashti during the feast?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Queen Vashti refuse to go to the king?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did King Xerxes decide to do when Queen Vashti refused to obey him?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did King Xerxes do to search for a new queen?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why did Mordecai instruct Esther not to reveal her identity?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Esther was certainly beautiful. Do you think that was the reason she was blessed by God and selected to be the queen? What was the real reason she was blessed by God?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What happens when we are obedient to God?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Life Application

10. In this coming week, write down on another piece of paper a list of things that you can do to show that you are obedient to God. Share with the class next week about what you did to show your obedience to God, and share the difficulties you also faced in accomplishing this task.