

date: **3/26/17****Bible Passage: Esther 1—10**  
(Esther)

## God Saves, Part 2

### REMEMBER VERSE

The **LORD** your God is with you, the  
Mighty Warrior who saves.

Zephaniah 3:17a

### Inspire

*Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

A few years ago, I was living in Denver, Colorado, going to graduate school and planning my next career move. Then I met a Canadian boy, and everything changed. We decided to get married, and it made the most sense for me to move to Canada. We had so much to learn about the joys of international visas and residency!

I accepted a job in Canada, and we expected a three-month wait for visa approval. Instead I spent the next nine months waiting and living out of a suitcase at a friend's place. The wait felt long. The constant setbacks felt discouraging. And hope felt far away. But eventually the wait was over, and in God's perfect timing He showed up, ready to save and put all the pieces in place.

We know that God saves, but in the waiting it can be hard to remember. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for 400 years while waiting for God to save them. Their wait was long, but when God showed up, it was in a greater and more powerful way than they imagined.

Wherever you are today, remember that God saves. It is always in His time, which is not always ours. But He will show up, He will come through, He will save.

*Denise Morris*  
CrossRoads Church

### Equip

*Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

There are many details that make the book of Esther a triumphant story. None is as amazing as the way God wove

every event together to bring about His plan. As you read through this narrative, you will notice the name of God is not mentioned once. However, His presence is strong.

At this time in The Big God Story, Judah was a territory of the Persian Empire and the people its subjects. Although King Cyrus, who preceded King Xerxes, had decreed the Jewish captives be allowed to return to their homeland, many chose to stay in Babylon. God's people had become prosperous and held positions of influence, which made the thought of returning to the destroyed and desolate Jerusalem unappealing for many. After a falling-out between King Xerxes and Queen Vashti, the king commanded a search be made among all the young virgins (women of marrying age) of his empire for the woman who would take Vashti's place as queen. A young Jewish woman from Susa, named Esther, won his favor and was crowned queen. Esther continued to gain favor not only with the king, but also with everyone she met.

Haman, one of the king's officials, devised a plan to annihilate all the Jewish people within the king's territory. (At this time the Persian Empire stretched from India to modern-day Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Judah was in exile within the Persian territory. Because God's promised Messiah was to come from the line of Judah, if they were at risk for being destroyed, so was The Promise.) Esther realized she needed to act so her people wouldn't be destroyed and went bravely before the king, revealing Haman's plan. God had gone before Esther, and the Jewish people were saved. God used Esther to help preserve His promised Savior within the line of Judah.

## Support

*Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

When have you cried out to God and seen Him save you? We see it all throughout the Bible: God's people—Moses, Esther, David, Joshua, Jonah, and others—cried out to Him, and He saved them. Countless times the Israelites groaned in their slavery and repented of their sin, and God always came to their defense as their strong tower and Savior.

Take time this week to read Psalm 116 and meditate on its message. Write down what stands out to you in this passage. Note the words and phrases that remind you of God's salvation. Write down situations in your life where you need God to show up and save you. He can, and He will.

Throughout the week, consider reading this chapter once a day to be reminded of these truths: God bends down to hear us; He is gracious and righteous. Because God has proved Himself as Savior, we can call on Him for as long as we live. He will continue to save.

## EXPLORE:: 10 min.

### Small Group Leaders

*Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.*

## Option 1: Getting Ready

When Esther was taken for consideration to replace Queen Vashti, she underwent months of preparation and beauty treatments before she ever met King Xerxes.

**SUPPLIES** (per small group)

- Children's dress-up crowns (1 for every 3–4 children)
- Costume jewelry and jewels
- Robes (1 for every 3–4 children)
- Fabric (velvet or jeweled)
- Bin

**SET UP**

Place all the items in the bin and set on the table.

**RELATE**

As children arrive, encourage them to interact and play with the items in the bin. **Who would use all these items? I wonder ... what are some ways you can use these pretty jewels? Who wears a crown? Why do they wear a crown?** Children may choose to dress up in the items or simply play as they explore. Encourage them to ask questions and engage in conversation. For example: **What does the oil smell like? How do you think the oil is used? I wonder what all these things have to do with The Big God Story today.**

**DISCOVER::** 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

*Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.*

**Ponder Point****God Saves, Part 2****Chloe's Rules**

Host/Worship Leader

**SUPPLIES**

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)

**RELATE**

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

**Mail Time**

Host/Worship Leader

**SUPPLIES**

- [Mail Time intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)

### PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

### RELATE

*Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image.* Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the “Seeker” close her eyes while the “Hider” finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out “hot” and “cold.”

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

### REMEMBER VERSE

**The LORD your God is with you, the  
Mighty Warrior who saves.**

**Zephaniah 3:17a**

### REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

**Mighty Warrior:** A name for God that means He is powerful in battle.

### REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

**The LORD your God:** Make “L” with right index finger and thumb. Move the “L” from right shoulder to left hip.

**is with you:** Put both hands in front of body and pull close to chest.

**the Mighty Warrior:** Make fists and flex to show muscles.

**who saves:** Make fists and fold arms across chest, then open arms.

## Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

### SUPPLIES

- What’s!t: Crown (see optional image in Resources)
- Wardrobe of Wonder

### What’s!t: Crown

God had a plan to save His people and preserve the line of the Messiah. God used an unlikely young woman to become queen and save her people from destruction. The crown helps us to remember that God saves.

**RELATE**

*Tech:* Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* intro clip and image. Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What’sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* sound effect. Have him whisper the identity of the What’sIt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What’sIt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What’sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

**ASK**

(Child’s name), **why do you think the What’sIt is a crown?** Interact with volunteer’s suggestions. **Friends, who wears a crown?** Children respond. **Why do they wear a crown? I wonder how the What’sIt is going to appear in The Big God Story today. Let’s find out because it’s time for ...**

# The Big God Story

**Esther 1—10****God Saves****Storytelling Technique: Character Masks****SUPPLIES**

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What’sIt: Crown \(see optional image in Resources\)](#)
- [Character Mask cutouts \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect \(see Resources\)](#)
- Craft sticks (4)
- Tape or glue

**PREPARE AHEAD**

Print or copy the Character Mask cutouts and cut out the masks (including the eye and mouth holes). Attach each mask to a craft stick with tape or glue. Whenever the story line shifts to a new character, you’ll change the mask. Try using a different voice when a new character begins to speak. (Prompts are only given for initial character appearance.)

**RELATE**

*Tech:* Cue *The Big God Story* intro clip and image. **Hello, friends! It’s so good to see you here today! Before we hear this part of The Big God Story, let’s stop and ask God to teach us.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

**A very long time ago, in the land of Persia, there lived a king named Xerxes.** Put King Xerxes mask in front of your face or simply hold it up. **Can you say that with me?** Children repeat ZERK-sees. **This king was looking for a new queen. So he sent a message to all the people in the land announcing his search for a queen.**

**Leader Tip**

If you’d like to have more child participation, choose four volunteers to stand next to you and hold up the masks every time you say their character’s name.

**Out of all the young women brought to the palace, one stood out among the others. She was a young Jewish**

woman named Esther. Use Esther mask or just hold it up. **Mordecai** (use Mordecai mask or just hold it up), **Esther's** cousin, had raised Esther ever since she was a little girl, because she didn't have a mother or a father. She loved Mordecai like a father. As she grew, she became a beautiful and kind young woman. As soon as King Xerxes saw her, he knew Esther was the young woman he wanted to be his new queen, and he gave her a beautiful crown to wear. *Tech: Cue Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect and What'sIt image. Wait a minute! Did you hear that? I think we just found our What'sIt from the wardrobe! Our What'sIt is a crown.*

While Mordecai was at the king's gate one day, he heard two of the king's officers talking and making a plan to kill the king. He knew he had to get this message to Esther right away! She needed to warn her husband, the king. So Mordecai hurried to Queen Esther and told her everything he'd heard. God worked through Mordecai and Esther to save the king's life.

Soon after King Xerxes's life was saved, he gave one of his officials, named Haman (use Haman mask or just hold it up), a very important job. So the king commanded that everyone bow down to honor Haman each time he passed by. One day, as Haman was walking, he passed by Mordecai. But Mordecai didn't bow to Haman. Friends, why do you think Mordecai wouldn't bow to Haman? Interact with responses. Those are all good ideas. Let's see what happened. When Haman heard that Mordecai refused to bow to him he was *very angry!* He knew Mordecai was Jewish and worshipped God alone. Haman wanted to get rid of Mordecai. But he didn't want to get rid of just Mordecai; he wanted to get rid of *all* the Jewish people! So, Haman came up with a very sneaky plan. He went to the king and told him really bad things that just weren't true about the Jewish people. Sadly, the king believed Haman and told him he could do whatever he wanted to God's people.

How do you think the Jewish people felt when they heard this news? Show me with your faces. Children respond. Yes, they were probably sad and very frightened. Something had to be done! So Mordecai sent a message to Esther in the palace. He begged Esther to go to the king and ask him to have mercy and stop Haman and his evil plan. Esther was sad and afraid. She told Mordecai it had been a long time since she had seen the king, and she didn't think she would be allowed to see him yet. Mordecai reminded Esther who she was—she too was Jewish. He told her she was the queen for a very important reason at a very important time! God could use her to save His people!

So Queen Esther went to the king and asked if she could make a special dinner for the king and his servant Haman. The king agreed. When the king and Haman came to dinner, Esther told the king about all the horrible things happening to her people. The king asked who would make such an evil plan. When she told him it was Haman, the king was furious! Haman tried to beg the queen to help him, but it was too late. The king ordered Haman to be taken away. Haman was never seen or heard from again! Then the king made a new law that would keep the Jewish people safe. God saved His people!

Friends, God knew the evil plans Haman had to destroy the Jewish people. But was He going to let that happen? Children answer. **No ... He wasn't! Who made sure Esther became queen out of all the other young women?** Children answer. **God did! Who made sure Mordecai heard the soldiers' plans to hurt the king?** Children answer. **God did! Who made sure Mordecai's messages got to Queen Esther?** Children answer. **God did! Who saved the Jewish people?** Children answer. **God did! God chose to use Mordecai and Esther for His big plan, and He made sure they had everything they needed to play their parts in His big story. God used Esther and Mordecai to save the Jewish people, and He can save us too when we call to Him for help.**

## RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

*Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.*

## Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

**SUPPLIES** (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

**RELATE**

Today in The Big God Story, we heard how God chose to use Esther for His big plan to save His people from harm.

I wonder ... How did Esther know it was time to help her people?

I wonder ... What does it feel like to be chosen for a big plan?

I wonder ... Why does God save me?

I wonder ... How does it make me feel to know that God saves?

## BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

*Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.*

**SUPPLIES** (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [HomeFront Weekly: Lesson 5 \(see Resources\)](#)

**RELATE**

Invite children to sit on the floor with you during this time of blessing. As you read the following Scripture over them, encourage them to close their eyes. They can also hold out their hands, palms up as if cupping water, to show that they're ready to receive from God.

**Let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance (Psalm 32:6–7).**

Ask children to open their eyes as you bless them as a group:

**Children, may you realize how blessed you are, because you are the children of the God who saves.**