



Are you excited
to join God?

What does He
expect of you?

Message from Karen



*Photo by: Grace:
my "bundle of sunshine"
granddaughter*

Esther is a book filled with excitement. There is that "Oh no!" moment where you hope everything will be okay. There is a bad guy who you want to be found out and stopped.

The thing that I like the most about the book of Esther is that I can see God moving. God was moving even when it doesn't seem that people knew He was. Maybe everyone knew and saw it, but I think they probably didn't.

If someone set a date for you to be killed because you are a certain race, there would be a lot on your mind. You would be praying, but if you weren't in the circle of the king's household, you didn't see God working in Esther's life. You might not have known that Esther was the one God would use to talk to the king and change things for you.

But, when Esther sent out the call for everyone to fast and pray, maybe they knew. Maybe then they thought there is hope and maybe, just maybe God will move and do something. Prayer and fasting. Of course I will do that.

Hope! Hope is something that everyone needs and that is what we see in this beautiful story of God's love. It is a window into the way God moves us to step forward into His job for us. It is a window into the life of an obedient woman who followed the guidance of the man who raised her. Her obedience brought hope to a group of people who had no hope.

God moved through Jesus as well. Jesus brought hope to anyone who believes in Him. We are condemned to die because of our sin. Through Jesus' obedience, we have hope for a life with Him for eternity. Hope is what we believe for even though it is not seen, heard, or felt. Hope brings us the peace and joy that nothing else can. It is our brighter days ahead that lead us into this life called being a Christian.

A Christian relies on Jesus' sacrifice to receive forgiveness and eternal life with Jesus in Heaven.

Esther made a sacrifice and took a chance that could have ended her life. She was willing and obedient.

God has a grand plan for your life as well. Are you lovingly obedient?

Submissions

If you have a lesson, activity, craft, or other item that you would like to submit for consideration for publishing in a future issue, please download the submission form on our website and send it with your submission.

There is no monetary compensation for submissions; but if your submission is selected for a publication, you will be listed as a contributor for the issue in which your submission is published.

We are also accepting submissions for Parent's Corner - A column for parents to send in their funny stories, parenting ideas, or other helpful ideas they want to share.

For consideration for publication in a future issue for Parent's Corner, please download the submission form on our web site and send it with your submission.

You can find the form on our web site: www.ChristianConceptsForKids.com

Credits

Author/Publisher

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Editor

Susan Shami

The Way I See It

Sarah Lawlor

Great Quotes

Charles Spurgeon

Alexander MacLaren

Bob Jones, Sr.

Thank you!

This issue would not be possible without you.

Great Quotes!

"Faith is the fountain, the foundation and the fosterer of obedience." - Charles Spurgeon

"Love is the foundation of all obedience." - Alexander MacLaren

"The acid test of our love for God is obedience to His Word. The greatest ability is dependability. The test of your character is what it takes to stop you. Trust God as if it all depends upon Him, and work as if it all depends upon you." - Bob Jones, Sr.

Family Fun Activity: Family Flags

Flags represent nations, seasons, holidays, religions, and interests. This activity allows each family member to share his or her interests with a unique handmade flag.

Making Our Flag

Items Needed:

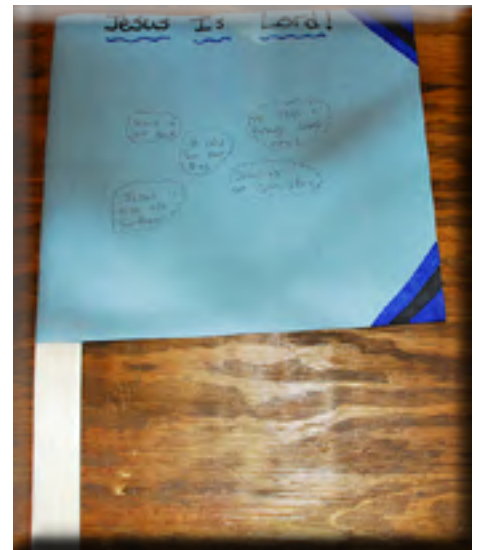
- General: Crayons or Markers, Scrap Paper, Miscellaneous Decorations, Glue, and Tape
- Per Family Member: 1 Small US Flag (optional), 1 Paint Stirrer (paint stores may be generous), and 1 Sheet of Construction Paper

Instructions:

- Give each family member the supplies.
- Explain that they will each create a flag that represents him or her.
- Examples: their trust in Jesus, their faith in God, loving others, being obedient, and other things that are important to them.
- Using the supplies, they will each decorate a flag.
- The flag will be glued or taped to the paint stirrer.
- Allow the children to march around with their flags and show others what is important to them.
- Get your neighbors involved and have a neighborhood Flag Parade.

Variation:

- Use 1 felt sheet with a wooden dowel for the flag and scrap pieces of felt and fabric paint pens for the decorations.
With adult supervision, fasten the felt and wooden dowel with a low-heat hot glue gun.



Devotional Doodles

God's View: Draw a picture of you joining God in His work.



The Challenge!

Can YOU memorize these verses?

Jeremiah 33:1-3

“While he was still confined in the guard’s courtyard, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time: “The LORD who made the earth, the LORD who forms it to establish it, Yahweh is His name, says this: Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and incomprehensible things you do not know.”

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

“6 So, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight, 8 and we are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless.”

Verses taken from The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version. (2009). (Es 4:13–14). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.”.

Find the Words

O	B	E	D	I	E	N	C	E	D
L	L	V	E	S	A	T	O	O	N
O	S	O	T	A	N	I	U	S	D
V	T	U	N	P	L	A	N	S	E
I	A	K	C	H	O	I	C	E	S
N	G	E	M	A	L	A	I	H	I
G	O	D	L	Y	L	A	L	S	R
O	A	R	A	B	R	A	H	A	E
P	L	A	S	E	S	T	H	E	S
O	S	X	G	E	S	T	H	E	R

Loving

Obedience

Esther

Godly

Council

Choices

Desires

Goals

Plans

The Way I See It

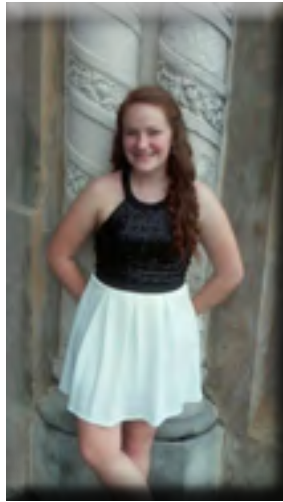
Obeying Him in the Storm

Written by: Sarah Lawlor

It's been kind of a crazy month. Change has always been something with which I've had a hard time dealing. It's like I finally learn how to live my life, and then it changes just when I figure it out. There is no denying it - I do not like change.

Some of my most recent life changes include the worship leader of both my youth and Sunday worship team moving to Argentina to marry his fiancé. He has been not only a great mentor, but a true friend of mine, so this hasn't been easy. Also, in a few weeks, my sister Amanda is moving to Germany with her husband in the military. We have always been very close, so even just the thought of her leaving makes my heart heavy. She, along with my brother-in-law, is one of those people you just can't help but love along with my brother-in-law. If that weren't enough of the staple people in my life moving, in about a month-and-a-half, my best friend is moving to Chicago to attend an amazing Bible college. She is one of the most genuine, talented, and hilarious girls I have ever met. It's hard to realize that I won't have her and her bubbly personality around any more.

I can honestly say that I couldn't be any happier for each and every one of these people who are leaving. But I noticed I was beginning to feel left out, not only by my friends, but by God. I couldn't understand why great things were happening to my friends and not me. The thing is: God didn't forget about me. I realized that I had stopped going to God for the answers to my prayers, and I had started going to the people around me, asking them what God wants me to do. God had to get me to a place where I would rely solely on Him. Being the new worship leader, I have to be able to trust Him with every ounce of my being. This doesn't mean it's going to be easy; but I know that with God, it will be worth it.



July's Theme: "Esther"

In This Issue . . .

Esther Overview

Lesson: Esther Overview discusses God working for and among His people and outlines the story of Esther who worked with God to save her people.

Craft: "Esther" Poster

Indoor Activity: What's in the Bag?

Outdoor Activity: The Shepherds

God Moved

Lesson: God Moved discusses the ways God positioned people and events so that His people could join Him in His work.

Craft: I Am Jesus' Sheep

Indoor Activity: The Lost Sheep

Outdoor Activity: Courage Charades

Godly Council

Lesson: Godly Council explains what Godly council is and the people from whom we might receive it.

Craft: Godly Council for Me

Indoor Activity: Bible Drill

Outdoor Activity: Remember This

Esther's Choice

Lesson: Esther's Choice discusses the things that helped her to make a right decision and will also help us to make right decisions.

Craft: Special News

Indoor Activity: Newspaper Delivery

Outdoor Activity: Find the King

God's Desires, Goals, and Plans

Lesson: God's Desires, Goals, and Plans explains some of the instructions God has given us in order to live lives that please Him.

Craft: "We Care" Packages

Indoor Activity: My Reputation

Outdoor Activity: Context Game

Lesson: Esther Overview

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available and ask for volunteers to read.

Lesson

Say:

- The book of Esther is the last of the Old Testament History Books.

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Who can name the twelve Old Testament History Books? *If needed, hint that they begin with Joshua.*

Say:

- The twelve Old Testament History Books are: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
- Old Testament history gives us a picture of God working with the nation of Israel, its leaders, the Israelites, and the people of other nations, and working in the lives of individual people.
- There are cycles throughout these books: each cycle starts with a close relationship with God; then there are turn-aways, which lead to a life apart from God.
- This is followed by God moving, so people turn back to Him, which brings back a close relationship with Him.
- God is loving enough to do what is necessary to turn people and nations back to Himself.
- God loves us and knows what each of us needs to have a closer relationship with Him.
- The book of Esther shows us a view of God working in the lives of the people of Persia, the Israelites, King Xerxes, Queen Esther, and Esther's cousin Mordecai.
- This book takes place during the same period of time as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- God is not mentioned in this book, but the book shows God working and people joining Him.
- Loving obedience allows us to join God in His work.
- When we join God, He works through us for His desires, goals, and plans to be completed.
- This book introduces us to a woman named Esther.
- Esther's family was taken captive and brought to this foreign country.
- Her parents died when she was young; so Mordecai, Esther's cousin, adopted and raised her.

- She loved and trusted Mordecai so much that she obeyed his instructions, even though she was afraid.
- This book tells of a plan by a man named Haman to kill the Jewish people.
- Esther knew that Mordecai only wanted what was best when he told her to go to the king about the plan to kill all Jewish people.

Read: Esther 4:8

Say:

- This orphan who was raised by her cousin, Mordecai, became queen of Persia!
- She also helped save her family, the Israelites.
- Because of Esther's loving obedience, God worked through her to accomplish His desires, goals, and plans.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What do you think God has in store for you if you are obedient?
- Will you follow God's guidance and commands?
- Are you going to step into your God-job?

Say:

- God has a job for each of us.
- When you know that it is your time to join God and perform your own God-job, be ready to step out and into your job.
- Then, be amazed by all God will do through you.
- Esther's courage and loving obedience brought salvation to the Jewish people.
- There is a courageous and obedient person who brought salvation to the entire world.

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Do you know who I am talking about? *Jesus*

Say:

- Jesus loved and trusted God so much that He obeyed His instructions, even though it was hard.

Read: Luke 22:42

Say:

- Jesus knew that God only wanted what was best and He lovingly obeyed.

Final Thought:

Sometimes God has a God-job for us that is easy, and we are happy to do it. There are other times when God has a job for us that may be scary or hard or far away. When God lets you know what your God-job is, will you take that step like Esther did?

Activities: Esther Overview

Craft: "Esther" Poster

Items Needed:

- General: Poster Boards, Tape, Crayons or Markers, Miscellaneous Decorations, Old Magazines, Glue, Construction Paper, Pencils, Erasers, and Scissors
- Per Child: 1 Sheet of White Paper and 1 Poster Board

Instructions:

- Give each child the supplies.
- They will each use the supplies to decorate their posters with a story from Esther.
- Tell them to use the white paper to draw what they want, make changes, and get it as close to perfect as they can.
- When they each know how they are going to decorate their poster, they will use their white paper drawings as a guide to put their creations on the poster boards.
- Each child should write the title "Esther" on his or her poster.
- When they have finished their posters, each child will tell everyone about his or her poster.
- Each child will find a special spot on the wall to decorate the room with his or her poster.



Indoor Activity: What's in the Bag?

Items Needed:

- 1 Sheet of Paper for Each Child, 1 Pencil or Pen for Each Child, 1 Bag (that you can't see through), and Different Items to Put in the Bag (cookie cutters, small toys, lollypops, spools of thread, etc.)
- Place items in the bag prior to the activity so the children don't know what is in the bag.

Instructions:

- Have each child take a turn reaching his or her hand into the bag to feel the items, while everyone counts slowly to 10 or 15.
- They cannot look in the bag.
- When his or her time is up, he or she will write down what he or she thinks is in the bag.

Variation:

- If there are younger children, you can allow them to draw pictures.
- You can partner a younger child with an older child who can write down the words. They can both reach their hands in the bag.

Outdoor Activity: The Shepherds

Items Needed:

- 1 Brown Coat or A Piece of Brown Material (large enough to wrap around one child)

Instructions:

- Choose three children to be the "shepherds" and one child to be the "wolf."
- The "wolf" will wrap the brown material around himself or herself.
- The rest of the children are the "sheep."
- The "shepherds" need to guide the sheep to fresh water and grassy fields, while watching out for the "wolf."
- If the "sheep" see the "wolf," they will start making worried sheep sounds to call out to their "shepherd" about the danger.
- When the "wolf" gets close to the "sheep," the "shepherds" will get rid of the wolf by tagging him or her.
- When the "wolf" tags one of the "sheep," that sheep will go to a designated area for "lost sheep."
- When the "wolf" tags three "sheep," open a discussion about how tough it is to be a shepherd and how Jesus is our shepherd and takes care of us.
- To begin a new game choose different children to be the "wolf" and the "shepherds."

Lesson: God Moved

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available and ask for volunteers to read.

Lesson

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What do you think of when I say “God Moved?”

Say:

- We might remember times God moved in the Bible.
- We might remember things that happened when God moved around us.
- We might WANT God to move around us.
- We might even think, “I will join God when I see Him move around me!”
- The book of Esther doesn’t mention God by name, but we can see God moving in this excitement-filled book.
- God placed on the Persian throne a king who made decisions quickly without thinking about them.
- The king made a decision about his wife, Queen Vashti.

Read: Esther 1:8-2:2

Say:

- The king made a quick decision while he was angry.
- This opened the way for a new queen to be chosen.
- They brought women in and he chose the ones he liked best.
- God moved and Esther was chosen as one of these women.

Read: Esther 2:5-11

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Do you think God knows everything?

Say:

- God does know everything!
- God knew Esther’s parents would die and she would be raised by her cousin Mordecai.
- God knew she would obey her cousin who raised her.
- God also knew that she would do the RIGHT thing, not the EASY thing.
- God moved and put Esther in her place as Queen of Persia.
- God placed Mordecai as a palace official.
- God also made sure Mordecai was in the right place at the right time to hear about a plan to kill the king.

Read: Esther 2:21-23

Say:

- God made sure this plan was not carried out.
- Mordecai told Queen Esther, who told the king.
- God moved and things happened!
- God moved when Haman plotted to kill ALL of the Jewish people in the land.
- Haman told the king about a group of people who were not obeying the law.
- He added that these people shouldn’t be tolerated.
- He tricked the king, and the king made a quick decision without checking into what was said.

Read: Esther 3:8-11

Say:

- Giving Haman the signet ring was giving him authority to do what he wanted, a quick decision that had large consequences.
- The signet ring certified things as being from the king; it was like having the king’s signature.
- Remember, God gave King Xerxes this reign.

Read: Romans 13:1

Say:

- Later in the book, the king realized Haman tricked him.
- The king used his God-given authority to make sure the Jewish people could defend themselves against any attacks.
- When we see opportunities that God places in our path, we can join Him.
- And we can be part of God’s work!
- We will watch God remove obstacles in our way.
- God will guide us to achieve what He wants done.
- It is amazing to be able to work with God!
- Let’s keep an eye out for the God-given opportunities that He puts before us.

Final Thought:

In this book, we see God moving. God placed people in positions so they could do His work. God gave people authority to make things happen. God made things happen at just the right time so His desires, goals, and plans would happen! God has special plans for each of us as well. Let’s keep an eye out to see God moving around us and lovingly do our best for Him.

Activities: God Moved

For Further Study:

Research people in the Bible who were placed in a position by God to complete His desires, goals, and plans. Examples: David chosen to be king, Moses chosen to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land, and Paul chosen to bring the Gospel to the gentiles.

Craft: I Am Jesus' Sheep

Items Needed:

- General: Glue and Crayons or Markers
- Per Child: 1/2 Sheet of Black or Brown Construction Paper and a Child's Handful of Cotton Balls

Instructions:

- Give each child the construction paper and cotton balls.
- Tell the children to trace one of their hands on their paper and cut it out.
- After they have finished cutting out the hand, they will glue the cotton onto the palm of the hand cutout.
- The thumb of the cutout is the sheep's head, so they need to give the sheep facial features on the thumb.
- While they work, discuss what Jesus does for them as their shepherd.

Indoor Activity: The Lost Sheep

Items Needed:

- Several Sheep Cutouts or Toy Sheep (Prior to class, hide them around the room.)

Instructions:

- Tell the children that there are lost sheep in the room and they are the shepherds who need to find the sheep as fast as they can.
- Divide the children into two teams.
- One team is the "shepherds" and one team is the "wolves."
- The "shepherd" team needs to find as many of the "lost sheep" as they can before the "wolves" find them.
- When all of the "lost sheep" have been found, the team with the most sheep wins the game.

Outdoor Activity: Courage Charades

Items Needed:

- Write the names Esther, Daniel, Noah, Moses, Jesus, John, Peter, and Paul on strips of paper.

Instructions:

- Divide the children into teams of 2 to 4 children.
- Tell them that each group will either draw one of the names or choose someone in the Bible who showed courage.
- They will work together to act out their Bible character.
- The other children will guess who their Bible character is.
- The child who correctly guesses will have the next turn with his or her team.



Lesson: Godly Council

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available and ask for volunteers to read.

Lesson

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What comes to your mind when I say “Godly council”?

Say:

- I will make a few statements and you tell me if each one is Godly council or not.

Action:

- After each statement, allow time for discussions about whether it is or is not Godly council and why.

Say:

- God wants you to share the message about Jesus saving us from our sins. *Yes! See Mark 16:15*
- If someone picks on you, you should not pray for him or her. *No! See Matthew 5:43-48*
- It’s okay to lie to get out of trouble. *No! See Leviticus 19:11*
- Always remember to love God first and most. *Yes! See Luke 10:27*

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Where can you find Godly council? *The Bible*

Read: Joshua 1:8-9

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Is there someone who shares Godly council with you?
- Can you name someone who shares with you what the Bible says?

Say:

- Our preachers, pastors, and priests share Godly council when they share the Gospel.
- Our parents or stand-in parents give us Godly council when their guidelines align with God’s guidelines.
- One of the special blessings God gives us is when He puts someone in our life who shares Godly council.
- Esther had someone in her life who shared Godly council with her.

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Do you know who shared Godly council with Esther? *Hint that he was her cousin and her step-in parent.*

Say:

- Mordecai was the person who stepped in to raise her when she became an orphan.
- Her parents died and this godly man adopted her and raised her like she was his own daughter.

Read: Esther 2:5-7

Say:

- Esther trusted her cousin’s suggestions, council, and wisdom.
- Esther knew that Mordecai loved and trusted God and sought God’s desires, goals, and plans.
- These godly traits influenced his council to his adopted daughter.

Read: Esther 4:14

Say:

- The council that Mordecai gave to his daughter guided her to become Queen of Persia and save the lives of her extended family, the Israelites.
- God knows that we all need His council.
- He places people in our lives who fill that role.
- He also sent the Holy Spirit after Jesus left this Earth.

Read: John 14:25-26

Say:

- The Holy Spirit is our guide and we can always trust His Godly council.

Final Thought:

There are times in our life when we need wisdom and guidance, times when we need to know what to do. When we seek Godly council, make sure it is with someone who seeks God’s desires, goals, and plans. When we seek council that comes from God, we can be at peace knowing that God’s always does what is best.

Activities: Godly Council

Craft: Godly Council for Me

Items Needed:

- General: Crayons or Markers
- Per Child: 1 Sheet of White Copy Paper

Instructions:

- Give each child one sheet of white paper.
- Have them each draw their portrait on the paper, leaving about 2 inches of room at the bottom of the paper.
- After they have finished their portraits, have them write a few statements that are Godly council on the bottom of their own portrait.
- While they are working, open a discussion about Godly council that we find in the Bible.

Variation:

- Have the children pass their portraits around the room for other children to write Godly council for each other on the bottom of the portraits.



Indoor Activity: Bible Drill

Items Needed:

- Per Child: 1 Bible

Instructions:

- Have the children line up side by side and facing the leader.
- Each child will hold the Bible upside down with the spine facing up.
- The leader will call out a book, chapter, and verse from the Bible; they will flip over their Bibles and search for the verse.
- When they find the verse, they will step forward.
- The first child to find the verse wins a point.
- The child with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Variation:

- The search can be for a certain book or chapter, depending on age and experience.

Outdoor Activity: Remember This

Instructions:

- Have the children stand in a circle.
- Choose one child to start the game.
- The child who starts the game will do something such as pat his or her head, twirl around in a circle, jump up and down, etc.
- The child next to him or her will repeat the action and do something else.
- The next child will repeat the first two actions and do something else.
- This will continue around the circle.
- If a child can't do all of the actions, he or she is out of the game.
- The last child to do all of the actions wins the game.

Lesson: Esther's Choice

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available and ask for volunteers to read.

Lesson

Say:

- Joining God's work requires love.
- A love that puts God first and makes Him the most important influence in our lives.

Read: Matthew 22:37-38

Say:

- This kind of love: loving God with every part of us, brings loyalty.
- Joining God in His work also requires love for others.

Read: Matthew 22:39

Say:

- This kind of love for others puts their needs right up there with your own.
- God working in and through us also requires obedience.
- Jesus said *if you love me, obey me*.

Read: John 14:15-18

Say:

- Obedience is a display of respect, loyalty, and love.

Say:

- The book of Ruth shows us lovingly obedient people who are worked with God.
- Loving obedience is a key to pleasing God.
- Loving obedience shows that we trust Him.
- It shows our faith in Him.

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Who else, other than God, should we lovingly obey and honor? *Lead them to the idea that we should lovingly obey and honor our parents.*

Read: Proverbs 6:20

Say:

- We should lovingly obey and honor our parents.

Read: Ephesians 6:1-3

Say:

- The book of Esther introduces us to a woman named Esther, an orphan who was raised by her cousin Mordecai.
- Esther loved and trusted her cousin and adopted dad, so she followed his instructions.
- She loved and trusted Mordecai so much that she obeyed his instructions, even though she was afraid of what might happen.
- Mordecai found out about a plot to kill all of the Israelites and told Queen Esther to go to the king.
- He wanted Queen Esther to approach the king without being summoned.
- Going to the king could mean trouble for her, so she was afraid.

Read: Esther 4:10-14

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What do you think Queen Esther did?

Read: Esther 4:15-17

Say:

- She requested that everyone fast and pray for three days and then she would go to the king.
- It all worked out in the end.
- God answered the prayers of the people and God was with Queen Esther.

Read: Esther 5:1-3

Say:

- When we work with God, we see amazing things!
- God loves for us to have faith in Him and to trust Him enough to join Him in His desires, plans, and goals.
- In fact, without faith, we can't please Him.

Read: Hebrews 11:6

Final Thought:

God has a job for each of us, just like He had a job for Esther. When you know that it is your time to join God and perform your own God-job, be ready to step out and into your job and be amazed at what God does through you. Loving obedience allows us to join God in His work. When we join God, He works through us for His desires, goals, and plans to be completed.

Activities: Esther's Choice

Craft: Special News

Items Needed:

- General: Crayons or Markers and Pencils or Pens
- Per Child: 3 Sheets of White Copy Paper

Instructions:

- Give the children the paper and tell them to fold each piece in half.
- They will each make a newspaper with special news in it.
- They will each choose and write a verse on their own newspaper.
- A good one is "John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
- They will decorate their newspapers and deliver them to some people who need to hear the news.
- Open a discussion about Jesus' command to share the Gospel, their choice to obey, and how this craft allows them to obey this command.

Indoor Activity: Newspaper Delivery

Items Needed:

- Newspapers from Craft

Instructions:

- Have the children go around and deliver their newspapers.
- They can deliver them to neighbors, in a store, or in church.
- Tell them the arrival of their special news may help someone know Jesus better.

Outdoor Activity: Find the King

Instructions:

- Choose one child to be "The King."
- Tell the rest of the children to hide their eyes and count together to 50, while "The King" hides.
- After the children count to 50, they will go find "The King."
- When a child finds "The King," he or she will remain with "The King" and hide with him or her.
- The last child to find "The King" becomes "The King" for the next game



Lesson: God's Desires, Goals, and Plans

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available and ask for volunteers to read. Have a list of the Ten Commandments or the Bible opened to Exodus 20. Print or have available the second page of this lesson. If possible print a copy for each child.

Lesson

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Do you think God will always get His way?
- Why or why not?

Say:

- His desires, goals, and plans will happen!
- It is up to us to lovingly obey God so we can join Him in His work.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What are some things that God says not to do that we should obey?

Say:

- The Ten Commandments are ten things God doesn't want us to do.

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Can you name some of the Ten Commandments?

Action:

- Show the children the Ten Commandments, either the list or Exodus 20.
- Read a few of them.

Say:

- These are things God does NOT want us to do.
- They are not part of His plan for us.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What are some things that God says we SHOULD do?

Action:

- See the To Do List: God's Desires, Goals, and Plans on the next page.
- Choose a few verses to read and ask what each one means.

Say:

- God has given us guidelines to live our life.
- He wants what is best for us and knows that there are things we should and should not do.
- When we follow his commands, we are better able to please God and join Him in His work.
- We will discover our God-job and He will help us be successful in achieving His desires, goals, and plans.
- Loving obedience shows God that we love and trust Him.
- There is a courageous and obedient person who was lovingly obedient and brought salvation to the entire world.

Ask: *Allow time for answers.*

- Do you know who I am talking about? *Jesus*

Read: John 3:16

Say:

- Jesus loved and trusted God so much that He obeyed His instructions, even though it was hard.
- Jesus knew God only wanted what was best.

Final Thought:

God works in each of our lives with the gifts He has given us. Whether it is our authority, location, position, or resources, He wants us to choose loving obedience: obediently loving Him first and most and loving others as we love ourselves.

To Do List: God's Desires, Goals, and Plans

Joshua 1:8-9 - "This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Proverbs 6:20-23 - "My son, keep your father's command, and don't reject your mother's teaching. Always bind them to your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk here and there, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; when you wake up, they will talk to you. For a command is a lamp, teaching is a light, and corrective discipline is the way to life."

Proverbs 10:17 - "The one who follows instruction is on the path to life, but the one who rejects correction goes astray."

James 1:25 - "But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but one who does good works—this person will be blessed in what he does."

John 14:23-24 - "Jesus answered, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. The one who doesn't love Me will not keep My words. The word that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me.'"

John 15:16-17 - "You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. This is what I command you: Love one another."

1 John 3:21-24 - "Dear friends, if our conscience doesn't condemn us, we have confidence before God and can receive whatever we ask from Him because we keep His commands and do what is pleasing in His sight. Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us. The one who keeps His commands remains in Him, and He in him. And the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit He has given us."

2 John 1:6 - "And this is love: that we walk according to His commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: you must walk in love."

1 Corinthians 15:58 - "Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Luke 6:27-28 - "But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Luke 10:27 - "He answered: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Luke 11:28 - "He said, 'Even more, those who hear the word of God and keep it are blessed!'"

Romans 13:1-7 - "Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have its approval. For government is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong. Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of your conscience. And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor."

Romans 12:1-2 - "Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

Verses taken from The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version. (2009). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

Activities: God's Desires, Goals, and Plans

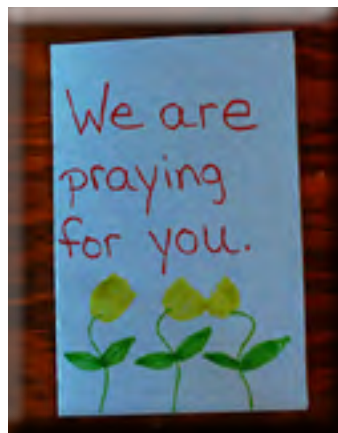
Craft: "We Care" Packages

Items Needed:

- General: Crayons or Markers, Care Package Items (These will be different depending on which group you will send them to. For example: deployed military, those in boot camp, people in nursing homes, college students, etc.)
- Per Child: Paper Lunch Bag and 1 Sheet of Construction Paper

Instructions:

- Give each child a paper lunch bag and a sheet of construction paper.
- Explain that they will make care packages for whatever group you determine you want to send them to.
- Tell them to make cards with the construction paper and decorate the bags.
- After they have decorated their bags, tell them to put the card in the bag.
- Allow them each to choose which care package items they want to place in the bag.
- After they have finished their care packages, pray for the recipients, and send the packages to the group you have chosen.
- While they are working on their packages, talk about how their work is showing love to other people.



Indoor Activity: My Reputation

Items Needed:

- General: Scissors, Markers or Crayons, Miscellaneous Decorations, and Glue
- Per Child: 1/2 Sheet of Construction Paper, 6 Large Craft Sticks, and 1 Craft Magnet

Instructions:

- Give each child the construction paper and the craft sticks.
- They will each use the craft sticks to create a frame on the construction paper.
- They will write their name on the frame and decorate it.
- They will each write "I like you because" on the top of the construction paper.
- Each child will pass his or her frame to the child on the right.
- When the children receive their neighbor's frame, they will write something that they like about the person whose name is on the frame.
- They will continue passing the frames to the right and writing what they like about the person whose name is on the frame, until the frame returns to the owner of the frame.
- They will each glue the magnet to the back of the top craft stick of the frame, so they can hang their frames on their refrigerators.
- While they are working, discuss how people gain reputations and what type of reputation they would like to have.

Outdoor Activity: Context Game

Items Needed:

- 4 Pieces of Paper, 1 Bag, and 2 Beanbags (different colors)

Instructions:

- Write Before {color of beanbag} or After {color of beanbag} on a sheet of paper (example: Before Red, After Red, Before Blue, After Blue), and place in the bag.
- Have the children stand in a circle, and give one beanbag to one child and the other beanbag to a child who is on the other side of the circle.
- Call out "start," and they will pass the beanbags until you call out "stop."
- You will pull out a sheet of paper.
- If the paper says Before Blue, for example, the child who is before the child with the blue beanbag is out.
- If it says After Red, for example, the child who is after the child with the red beanbag is out.