Mordecai's Choice

Bible Lesson: Mordecai's Choice (Esther 2:21-4:3)

Main Teaching: God will give you courage to honor Him.

Word Up: God gives courage!

Supplies:

- Word Up Booklet – Word Up (Resource Pack)
- Paper and marker for each child – Small Group
- Recording for "Trust in the Lord" and "I Look to You" - Worship (Sing About the King 2 CD)
- Optional Song Visual for "I Look to You" – Worship (cefpress.com)
- Water bottle, clear cup, piece of cardboard – Object Lesson
- Flashcards for Bible Story "Mordecai's Choice" – Bible Lesson 2
- Robert Foster Flash Card Visual 2 – Missionary Story (Resource Pack)
- Zonk bag – Review Game (Resource Pack Zero game)
- Color sheet and crayons – Small Group (Resource Pack)
- Quiet Time Guide Week 2 – Dismissal (Resource Pack)

Schedule at a Glance (75 min club):

15 min – Small Group
10 min – Worship / Rules / Word Up
10 min – Object Lesson
15 min – Bible Lesson
10 min – Review Game
5 min – Missionary Story
10 min – Small Group

INTRODUCTION

What's a good story without a villain? In this **growth narrative** Bible lesson, the spotlight falls on one main character, Mordecai, and introduces the story's villain, Haman. Mordecai dramatically saves the king's life but also makes a powerful enemy. Mordecai refused to bow to Haman, a choice that put a target on his back and his life in danger. Haman was an Agagite—a descendant of the people who were Israel's enemies but who were not totally destroyed because of King Saul's disobedience. Some commentators believe Mordecai's refusal to bow was because of the ancient "bad blood" between the Jews and Agagites. Knowing Haman was a wicked man with a wicked heritage, Mordecai stood for the honor of his people and the honor of His God. His stand precipitated the next events in the book of Esther, furthering Satan's evil plot to destroy the people God loved.

SMALL GROUP

Say Memory Verse

Have kids say their memory verse from last week to their small group leader.

Heroes and Villains Discussion

Who's your favorite superhero or hero? *(Give time for each child to share.)* Do you know who the villain or bad guy is that fights against that superhero? *(Allow responses.)* In stories, superheroes have special powers they use to fight against villains who cause trouble. These stories are fun, but they aren't true. In reality, there is someone greater than any superhero. He is the only one who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and in control of

everything. Who is this strongest hero of all? *(Allow responses.)* God is! When others cause trouble and try to get you to do the wrong thing, God can give you courage to obey and honor Him. Today we will hear about a villain who planned to hurt God's people. Did someone have the courage to stand against him?

WORSHIP

To learn songs and motions, go to YouTube and type in CEF and the name of the song in the search bar.

"Trust in the Lord"

"I Look to You"

RULES

Go over the Up Rules – Sit up, Look up, Listen up, Hand Up, and Zip Up.

WORD UP!

God gives courage!

Have you ever been scared to do the right thing? *(Allow response.)* It can be hard to stand up to a bully, show kindness to someone who is mean, or refuse to follow friends who want to do bad things. Sometimes it can be scary to do the right thing even though you know you need to. That's why you need courage—the ability to overcome your fear and do what you know is right. God is strong and mighty. When you know Him as your Savior, He gives His strength to you so you can have courage to do the right thing. **WORD UP!** Say with me, **"God gives courage!"** *(Say with children.)*

OBJECT LESSON

Bottoms Up

Supplies: a Bottle or pitcher of water, a clear cup and a piece of cardboard big enough to cover the opening of the cup

What is something that kids your age are afraid of? (You can make a list, or just have kids answer. Be sure to be dramatic and act like everything they say is very scary.) That is a lot of scary things. Life can be very scary. I need a volunteer who is brave. Come stand right next to me. I'm going to take this glass and put it over your head and turn it upside down. Are you scared yet? (No, because there is nothing in the glass. Bring the glass back in front of you.) Now, remember those fears you had? This water is going to represent those fears. (Hold up the bottle or pitcher of water. As you name fears that the class described, pour water into the cup until it is almost full.) There were snakes, and the dark, and thunder, and being bullied. We can be afraid of needles, and germs and sickness.

All of those are things we can be afraid of. The Bible says, “In this world we will have trouble”. But, we know what we can do when we are afraid. We learned what to do in our memory verse last week. Instead of being afraid and wasting our time worrying, we can trust God. Our verse said, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart”. We know God is in control and He is going to take care of us. (Hold up the cup of water.) Remember how I held up this cup and turned it upside down over your head - no big deal, right? What do you think would happen if I did that now? Would you be afraid of getting wet?

What are we supposed to do when we are afraid? (Trust in the Lord - pray to Him instead of worrying.) Let’s pretend this little piece of cardboard here is our prayers. We can take our prayers and put them right over the top of our fears. (Put the piece of cardboard over the glass.) Now let’s see what happens - do you have courage? (Hold on to the cardboard and turn the glass upside down. Then take your hand off the cardboard. The cardboard will stay over the glass and the water will stay in the glass. A little water may drizzle out, but the water will stay in the glass. Hold the glass over the child’s head.) You don’t have to be afraid. You can pray and trust God instead.

This doesn’t mean that nothing bad is ever going to happen, but we can trust that God will protect us from our fears. He always wants what is best for us. God gives courage!

Find demonstration at
https://www.google.com/search?q=courage+object+lesson&oq=courage+object+lesso&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAYgAQyBwgAEAAYgAQyBggBEEUYOTIICAIQABgWGB7SAQg2MjkzajBqN6gCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:4c8d670a,vid:KJngx1XET1Q,st:0 or search YouTube Object Lessons Be Brave

BIBLE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Some people write down things they want to remember in a special book. *(Show a journal, notebook, or history book.)* But can you imagine writing something in your journal that would save the lives of thousands of people? Long ago many kings had people write down in record books the important things that happened during their reign. The Bible tells about a time when God used a record book to do an amazing thing!

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

Flashcard 2-1
One night, Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate. Do you remember who Mordecai was? *(Allow response.)* He was Queen Esther’s cousin who had helped raise her. That night at the gate Mordecai heard two guards planning to kill the king. He knew he must warn the king, so he told Queen Esther about the two guards who wanted to kill the king.

When Esther received Mordecai’s message, she immediately sent word to the king that Mordecai had uncovered a plot against him. The king had the two guards arrested. They were found guilty and sentenced to death. God was in control of this situation. Do you remember what word we use when we talk about God being in control? *(Allow response.)*

We use the word *sovereign.* God made sure that Mordecai was in the right place at the right time to hear the plot and save the king's life.

The entire account, including Mordecai's name, was written down in the king's record books by his scribes (special writers who worked for the king). Let's take a pretend pen and use it to write down what Mordecai did in the record book. *(Do with children.)* The king had no idea that writing this down would save people's lives. But God is sovereign—He is in control—and in the next few weeks we're going to learn how God used this.

Flashcard 2-2
Sometime later King Ahasuerus promoted one of his officers named Haman *(HAY-mun)* to second in command of the empire. Haman was a very proud and wealthy man and now he was also one of the most powerful men in the kingdom. When the king promoted Haman, he ordered all the royal officials working in the gate to bow to Haman and show respect to him. Haman must have enjoyed coming and going through the gate while all the king's officials bowed low before him. Everyone stand up and walk in place like Haman with your head held high. *(Do with children.)* Haman didn't notice that one official didn't bow—Mordecai.

Flashcard 2-3
But the other officials noticed. "Why do you disobey the king's command?" they asked.
"Because I am a Jew," Mordecai replied. He knew the history of Haman's people, who had treated the Jews terribly. We don't know exactly why Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. He had a choice to make, and in that moment he made the choice that he felt was right and honoring to God and to his people, the Jews.

Do you choose to do what is right and honoring to God? Every day you will have opportunities to do things that will honor God or that will not honor God. If you have believed on the Lord Jesus as your Savior, **God will give you courage to honor Him**.

WORD UP!, **"God gives courage!"** *(Say with children.)* You may be at school or in your neighborhood when another kid is being bullied or needs help. Will you help even though you might be made fun of or bullied too? Maybe a friend invites you to do something fun but it's the same time as church or *Good News Club.* Will you honor God with your choice? It may be hard for you to clean your room without being told or be kind to your siblings without your mom reminding you. In those times, where can you go to know what God wants you to do? *(Allow response.)* God has given you His Word, the Bible, so you can know what He says is right and wrong. This is how God helps you know the right thing to do. Doing the right thing isn't always easy but God says, *(read Joshua 1:9a).* God tells you to have courage. Courage is overcoming your fear by choosing to do what is right even though you are afraid. You can honor God every day by courageously obeying His Word even when it is easier to say or do nothing, or when others around you are not following God. Trust God to help you choose what is right and honoring to Him.

Mordecai chose what he thought was right and honoring to God and refused to bow before Haman. Every day the other officials urged Mordecai to bow to Haman, but Mordecai refused.

Some of the officials told Haman about this man who refused to bow. How do you think Haman felt when he heard this? *(Allow response.)* Proud Haman was angry that anyone would refuse to bow to him. He was powerful enough to make life hard for Mordecai.

Flashcard 2-4
Haman saw Mordecai standing while all the other officials bowed low to the ground. Haman was angry! He remembered the officials telling him that Mordecai refused to bow because he was a Jew—one of God's people. Haman knew there were many of God's people in the kingdom of Persia. Hatred grew in his heart toward *all* of them.

I'll destroy this Mordecai and all of his people! Haman thought to himself. Haman is not the only person who has wanted to destroy God's people. God's enemy, Satan, has used many people throughout history to try to destroy the Jews. But nothing could stop God's plan to use the Jews as part of His great rescue plan to save people from sin.

Thousands of years before Haman and Mordecai were even born, God said He would use the Jews to bring the Promised Savior into the world. Many years later Jesus, God the Son, was born as a Jew to save people from sin. All people are born wanting to sin and disobey God. You sin when you disobey God in what you think, say, or do. When you are unkind or hate others because they are different from you, you sin. God created and loves all people. He calls hatred and unkindness sin. Your sin separates you from God now, and if you die with your sin, you'll be separated from God forever. But God made you and loves you. He made a way for you to be saved from sin. *(Read 1 John 4:14.)* God sent His only Son, Jesus, to be the Savior. Jesus was born on Earth, lived a perfect life, and when He was an adult, He willingly bled and died on a cross to pay for your sin and mine. Jesus' life, death, and coming alive again are what make it possible for you to no longer be separated from God. Jesus is alive in Heaven today, ruling overall. He fulfilled God's plan to use the Jews to bring the Promised Savior into the world.

Nothing could stop God from using the Jews as part of His great rescue plan. But this didn't stop Satan from using Haman to try to destroy the Jews.

Flashcard 2-5
Haman gathered his advisors to help him choose the best day to carry out his evil plan. The Bible says that they "cast lots," which is like throwing dice or drawing straws.

The day that was chosen was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—one year away. Haman superstitiously believed that fate or chance had decided the date. He didn't realize that it was not fate but God who was controlling these events.

Mordecai's choice to stand for his beliefs seemed to bring about a terrible situation for the Jews.

God is sovereign and is always working, sometimes in unseen ways, for His people's good.

Do you think God is at work today for the good of His people, even for your good? It may be hard to trust God, especially in the midst of hard times, but if you have believed on Jesus as your Savior, **God will give you courage to honor Him.** It takes courage to speak up for those who are being bullied, or go to church or *Good News Club* when it's easier not to, or even to do what's right when no one is watching. But God is with you and will help you! *(Read Psalm 31:24.)* God will give your heart courage to do what is right even when it's hard or you're afraid.

WPRD UP!, **"God gives courage!"** *(Say with children.)* Trust God to help you choose what is right and honoring to Him. Here are three things to help you. **First**, remember who God is—He is strong and He can give you His strength to do what is right. **Second**, spend time reading God's Word every day so you can learn what God says is right and wrong. **Third,** acknowledge God as the greatest authority you should obey. When you acknowledge God in the things you do in your life, He will help you be wise and do, say, and think things that honor Him. Let's say our memory verses together. *(Quote Proverbs 3:5-6 with children.)* You can also say Proverbs 3:5-6 to yourself every day or write it out and put it somewhere you will see it. You could even put it beside your bed to look at every morning and evening to remind you. God is always with you. When you acknowledge Him, you are admitting He is God, and you need His help. God is working, perhaps in unseen ways, for your good.

God was working in unseen ways for the good of His people, the Jews, even though Mordecai's choice seemed to have put them in a terrible situation.

Haman believed that fate had decided the date that the Jews would be destroyed. He now had to see the king and make his plan official. Haman told King Ahasuerus he should kill a group of people in the kingdom. Haman even offered the king millions of dollars' worth of silver to pay the men who would kill these people.

King Ahasuerus didn't ask any questions or want more information. He trusted Haman.

"Do what you want," he said, handing his signet ring to Haman. The king's ring was pressed into clay or soft wax to put the royal seal on official documents, making them law. Now Haman had authority to make whatever law he wished.

Haman had the king's scribes write his new law. The law stated that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all Jews throughout the kingdom would be destroyed—men, women, and children—and all that they owned would be taken away. Copies of the law were made in the languages of the people and sealed with the king's ring, making it a law that could never be changed. Messengers took the copies and hurried throughout the kingdom to make the law known. Let's pretend to be messengers and ride out to the kingdom. *(Do with children.)* Now stand up and say loudly, "Hear the king's message!" *(Do with children.)*

CLIMAX

Flashcard 2-6

The official decree of death to all Jews went out to every province in the empire!

CONCLUSION

The people of Shushan were confused when they read the terrible words of the law. They couldn't imagine what the Jews had done to deserve such severe punishment. It may have seemed like God had abandoned His people—but He had not! God was still in control and was caring for them even in this terrible situation. We will find out in the next Bible story what happened to the Jews. And if you can't wait to find out, you can read about it in your own Bible in the book of Esther, chapter 4.

INVITATION

In order to honor God, you must first have a relationship with Him. Jesus died on the cross and rose again for you. You can be saved and have a friendship with God today when you believe on Jesus. The Bible says, ***(read Acts 16:31).*** When you believe on (put your trust completely in) the Lord Jesus, God promises you will be saved from the punishment for your sin. That means all your sins are forgiven.

He will be with you to help you in every part of your life. **Will you believe on Him** and be saved today? Please **bow your head** and close your eyes. **If you want to believe on the Lord Jesus** to save you, will you **show me** by standing quietly by your chair? *(Acknowledge responses.)* You may all open your eyes. If you are standing, **meet me** *(designate time and location)* so I can show you what God's Word says about believing on Jesus.

REVIEW GAME

Zonk

Prepare cards with various point values on them. Put the cards in a bag along with several cards that have "ZONK" written on them. When a child correctly answers a question, allow him to reach into the container and pull out a card to win points for his team. He may continue to reach in and pull-out cards as many times as he wants, but if he gets a "ZONK" card, his team loses all points from that round and his turn is over. Put all the cards back into the container and continue playing, alternating between the teams. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

MISSIONARY STORY

Robert Foster Week 2

Do you remember who we were talking about in our missionary story? *(Allow response and briefly review part 1.)* After living at the Gowans Home for nine years, Harold and Bob were expecting special visitors. On the count of three, shout out who you think was coming to visit them. *(Allow response.)*

"There they are! It's mom and dad!" Can you imagine how excited 13-year-old Bob was to see his parents after nine years? Charles and June Foster had come home from Africa for a one-year stay. When the year was over, his mom and dad returned to Africa again. This was the same time World War II began in Europe and Asia. Many men were away from their homes serving as soldiers—including many of the men around the school in Canada where Bob lived. There weren't enough men to keep up on all the repairs needed at the school. Soon a neighbor named Otto, who hadn't gone to the war, taught Bob how to fix things around Gowans Home. Bob kept the furnaces going through the long, cold winter and often helped Otto do jobs at other places too.

After Bob graduated from high school, he worked in a shipyard operating big machinery. The third night on his job he caught his fingers in a machine and crushed them. It looked like they would have to be cut off! As nurses prepared him for the operation to remove his fingers, Bob thought, *How can I become a missionary doctor now?* But God did something amazing! The doctorwas able to repair the damaged fingers instead of cutting them off.

"God can make my fingers strong again," Bob told his friend, "I will still be a missionary doctor one day." Bob knew if God wanted him to be a missionary doctor, he would be able to be one.

Bob faced another challenge when it was time to begin college. He found a place to live and a job to pay for his food, but he didn't know how he was going to pay for his books and other fees. College is expensive! But he believed God wanted him to learn to be a doctor and he trusted God would provide. He went to register for classes even though he didn't have any money to pay for them. When it was his turn, the registrar told him that his bill had been paid! Bob had won a scholarship because of his high school final exams; all of his fees for the whole year were paid off! Bob was learning he could trust God to take care of him. He studied hard to be ready for the next step in God's plan.

One day, at a missionary conference, Bob listened to Mr. Shank, a missionary to Africa. Mr. Shank didn't know Bob was in the audience but he spoke about the very place Bob's parents were serving

God. Mr. Shank reported, “The Africans in Mukinge *(Moo-keen- gay)*, Zambia have told me they’ve been praying for a doctor for 27 years! They said, ‘The mission has never sent us a doctor. We just get sick, die, and nobody cares. If you really want to help us, send us a doctor.’” Mr. Shank asked, “Is there someone here who will go?”

Would Bob be willing to go to Africa? Come back next week to find out!

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Color Sheet and Discussion

As children color the picture, talk about who needed courage in our Bible story today. (Mordecai and all of the Jews.) What do you think is going to happen to the Jews? Have you ever had a time when you were scared and things didn’t seem fair?

DISMISSAL

Hand out a Quiet Time Sheet (Week 2 in the Resource Pack) to each child. Encourage them to fill it out and bring it back next week. As children are getting picked up, try and connect with the parents and let them know the kids are working on having courage this week.

God Will Give You Courage to Honor Him – Mordecai’s Choice

This page has been designed for you to photocopy and place in you Bible as a ready reference.

Lesson Outline

I. INTRODUCTION
Some people write down things they want to remember in a special book.

II. PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

A. **Flashcard 2-1** (Esther 2:21-23)
1. Mordecai heard two guards planning to kill the king.
2. Esther sent word to the king.
3. The guards were arrested and sentenced to death.
4. The account was recorded in the king’s record books.

B. **Flashcard 2-2** (Esther 3:1-2)
1. The king promoted Haman.
2. The king ordered all the officials working in the gate to bow to Haman.
3. Mordecai didn’t bow.

C. **Flashcard 2-3** (Esther 3:3-4)
1. Mordecai told the officials he didn’t bow because he was a Jew.
   - **God will give you courage to honor Him.** [Joshua 1:9]
2. Some of the officials told Haman that Mordecai refused to bow.

D. **Flashcard 2-4** (Esther 3:5-6)
1. Haman saw that Mordecai didn’t bow.
2. Haman determined to destroy Mordecai and all the Jews.
3. Satan has used many people to try to destroy the Jews.
   - When you are unkind or hate others because they are different from you, you sin. But God made you and loves you so He made a way for you to be saved from sin. [1 John 4:14]

E. **Flashcard 2-5** (Esther 3:7-11)
1. Haman and his advisors cast lots to choose the day to destroy the Jews.
   - God will give you courage to do what is right even when it’s hard. [Psalm 31:24]
2. The king gave Haman permission to destroy the Jews.

F. **Flashcard 2-6** (Esther 3:12-15)
The scribes wrote the law and messengers took copies throughout the kingdom.

III. CLIMAX
The official decree of death to all Jews went out to every province in the empire!

IV. CONCLUSION
The people of Shushan were confused.
- Will you honor God this week? [Psalm 31:24]
- In order to stand for God, you must first have a relationship with Him. [Acts 16:31]

Scripture verses in parentheses are background text.
Bracketed verses should be quoted or read from God’s Word.

God Protects His People: The Life of Esther Coloring Sheet, Lesson 02