Esther Becomes Queen

Bible Lesson: Esther Becomes Queen (Esther 1:1 – 2:20)

Main Teaching: God wants you to trust His plans are best.

Word Up: God's plans are Good!

Supplies:

- Word Up Booklet – Word Up (Resource Pack)
- Recording for "His Name is Jesus" and "I Look to You" - Worship (Sing About the King 2 CD)
- Optional Song Visual for "His Name is Jesus" and "I Look to You" – Worship (cefpress.com)
- Tall plastic water cup filled 1/3 with water - Object Lesson
- Flashcards for Bible Story "Esther Becomes Queen" – Bible Lesson 1
- Royal Treasure Hunt Game Cards – Review Game (Resource Pack)
- 2 papers that say "Good News" – Missionary Story
- Color Sheet – Small Group (Resource Pack)
- Quiet Time Guide Week 1 – 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

A good story usually has an interesting plot with twists and turns, maybe a surprise ending, a hero, a villain, and a little romance. The story of Esther has all this and more. But more importantly, it is the story of the great God who saves His people. Even though His name is not mentioned once in the book, His hand is all over the events of this story. Through this **growth narrative** Bible lesson and series, God's sovereignty is taught and emphasized to the children. God kept His promise to preserve His people and send the Savior. This is something to celebrate!

SMALL GROUP

Plan a Trip

Let's pretend we are all going to go on a special trip. First, we need to make plans. Where should we go? How are we going to get there? What are we going to do? *(Allow responses.)* There are many other things to consider as we plan our trip: When should we go? Where are we going to stay? What do we need to take? It's a lot of work to plan a trip. Even with all our planning, sometimes our best plans don't work out. God has plans too but they aren't for taking a trip. He has plans for the whole world. And His plans always work out.

WORSHIP

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

"His Name is Jesus"
"I Look to You"

RULES

If you were driving in a car, what would be important to follow? Right, the directions, or rules. What would happen if you didn't follow the rules when you are driving? You would get into an accident and people would get hurt. When we are at Good News Club, we have rules so everyone will stay safe and have fun. They are called the Ups rules. "Sit Up, Look Up, Hands Up, Listen Up and Zip Up". There is one more rule that isn't on our chart. It is "Have Fun!" In Good News Club we have lots of fun learning about Jesus!

WORD UP!

"God's plans are good!"

Have you ever built or made anything where you had to follow the plan or recipe in order to make it correctly? *(Allow response.)* I've made *(share something you made that required following a plan).* People often make plans, but God has the best plans. Because God is so good, kind, and awesome, you can trust His plans for the world and for your life are good. You can trust God's plans! **WORD UP!**, **"God's plans are good!"** *(Say with children.)*

OBJECT LESSON

Upside Down Cup

Sometimes we think we have a great plan. Things are going along smoothly, and our plan is working out great. It's kind of like this cup of water. (Show a cup that is 1/3 filled with water. Walk around a little with the cup to show that the water is staying right where it should be in the cup.) This water is staying right in the cup. It isn't making a mess; things are calm, and life is good. But what happens with something unexpected happens. What if I turned this cup upside down? Would the water stay in the cup, or would it make a big mess? (Allow kids to answer.) Sometimes our life doesn't go smoothly. Something really scary happens, like a parent loses their job, or something sad happens like your friend has to move away. Our life gets turned upside down. (Start to shake the cup a little so the water moves around.) We think God isn't in control anymore – like maybe He forgot about us. But God is always in control. His plans are good. And even when life seems to be turning upside down, God keeps us safe. His plans are never a mess. He is always in control. Just like this. (Hold the cup with your hand gripping the top edge and swing your arm quickly in a complete circle like you are doing a swimming backstroke. The cup will turn upside down as you swing it, but no water will come out. I would suggest practicing this outside to get the hang of it before you do it in club.) Here is a video demonstration:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNXyLtRKdb4

BIBLE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Raise your hand if you've ever gone to a party. What kinds of things did you do at the party? *(Allow responses.)* Touch your nose if you had cake. Touch your ears if you played games. Touch your head if your friend opened presents. Put your hands on your hips if the party lasted six months! *(Allow responses.)* It probably didn't last six months, did it? The Bible tells us about a party that lasted six whole months. What a party!

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

King Ahasuerus *(ah-has-you-EH-rus)* was king of the Persian Empire—one of the largest empires in the world. He and his beautiful queen, Vashti *(VASH-tie),* lived in a grand palace in the capital city of Shushan *(SHOO-shan).*

Flashcard 1-1

After King Ahasuerus had been king for three years, he decided to have a celebration for his princes and other leaders who worked for him. For six months he showed them his riches—gold, silver, precious jewels, and other expensive items—to impress them.

Then at the end of the six months the king had another party that lasted for seven days. Everyone in Shushan was invited. Some of them were probably Israelites. The Israelites, also known as the Jews, were God's chosen people. They were in Shushan far from their home in Israel because many of them had turned away from God to worship idols (false gods). God had allowed Israel's enemies to capture them and take them away from their homes. The people of Israel had sinned against God.

You also sin against God by turning from His way and going your own way. You were born wanting to do wrong things like getting angry and pouting when you can't have your own way or disobeying your parents and teachers. God says, *(read Romans 6:23).* The punishment you deserve for your sin is death—separation from God forever—because He is holy (without sin). But God, who created you, also loves you! He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus, to take the punishment for your sin and mine. As God had planned, His perfect Son bled and died for you. *(Read 1 John 1:7b.)* It is through Jesus' death that our sins are forgiven. Jesus willingly took your place when He gave His life's blood so you could be made clean from your sin. Jesus was buried, but on the third day He came alive from the dead! He is alive in Heaven today, ruling as Lord over all. Because of what Jesus did, you can have your sin forgiven. You sin against God by turning from God's way.

The people of Israel had sinned against God. Because they turned away from Him and worshipped idols, God allowed their enemies to capture them and take them to Persia. Many of them lived and worked in Shushan. Now all the men in Shushan were enjoying a grand banquet with the king. Queen Vashti and the women were also having their own party in another part of the palace. Everyone stand up and act like you are putting on your fanciest clothes. *(Do with children.)* Now pretend you're eating delicious food! *(Do with children.)* Then on the seventh day the king had an idea—he would show off his beautiful queen! "Bring Vashti to me!" the king commanded.

Flashcard 1-2
How do you think the queen felt when she heard the king's command? *(Allow response.)* The queen refused. The king's servants returned and told Ahasuerus that Queen Vashti refused to come. The king was furious!

Flashcard 1-3
The king gathered his most trusted advisors and asked them, "What should I do about the queen because she has disobeyed?"

His advisors suggested that he make a new law, banishing Queen Vashti forever. A law in Persia could never be changed—not even by the king. King Ahasuerus liked the idea and sent messengers all over the empire to tell about the new law. People all over the kingdom must have been surprised to hear that Vashti would no longer be queen. Can you show me your surprised face? *(Do with children.)*

After a few years, the king wasn't angry at Vashti anymore and wished he hadn't banished her. The king's advisors told him it was time to find a new queen. "Let the most beautiful, unmarried, young women from throughout the kingdom be brought to the palace," they said, "and let the king choose the one that pleases him. She will be queen instead of Vashti." The king liked this idea. He told his officers to find the most beautiful women and bring them to the palace.

Flashcard 1-4

Esther was a beautiful, young woman who lived in Shushan. She lived with her older cousin Mordecai, who had raised her since her parents had died when she was a little girl. Esther was one of the beautiful, unmarried women who was taken to the palace. Before she was taken to the palace, Mordecai told Esther not to tell anyone she was Jewish. What a big change for Esther! We don't know if she was excited or afraid. How would you feel if you were Esther? *(Allow response.)* Why did God allow this to happen in her life? What was God doing?

Maybe sometimes you wonder what God is doing in *your* life. Many changes can happen in families—a parent might lose a job, a grandparent may die, or a brother or sister may become very sick. You don't understand what God is doing or why He allows these things to happen. But if you have believed on Jesus as Savior, **God wants you to trust His plans are best.** *(Read Isaiah 55:8.)* You can never know all that God knows. God's thoughts and plans are great because God is great. Let's consider why God is so great. God is sovereign—He is in control of all things. He is all-powerful—He created the whole world, including you! He knows everything and nothing surprises Him. He knows about lost jobs, sickness, and even death. God knows what is happening to you and your family. God is love and He cares about what you think and how you feel. He wants to help you.

WORD UP!, **"God's plans are good!"** *(Say with children.)* **God wants you to trust His plans are best** even when you don't understand what is happening.

Sometimes things happen in life that don't make sense. That's what happened to Esther. She didn't know why God was allowing this to happen.

Flashcard 1-5

After months of preparation, she would meet the king. If he chose her, she would remain in the palace as the queen. If he did not choose her, she would go to live in a different part of the palace with the rest of the women the king did not choose. She would live there the rest of her life, never to return home, get married, or have a family of her own. This was probably all very scary to Esther. She must have wondered what would happen to her. God's plan seemed hard to understand.

But God knew what was happening to Esther and His plans for her were best. God caused the king's servant to like Esther best of all. He gave her the best of everything! For a whole year the servants prepared Esther and the other women by softening their skin with sweet-smelling lotions and oils, perfuming their hair, dressing them in beautiful robes, and giving them sparkling jewels to wear. Esther had never been treated like this before! She remembered her promise to Mordecai. *(Read Esther 2:10-11.)* Esther had kept it a secret that she was a Jew. Because Mordecai was one of the king's servants, he was able to visit the palace every day and find out how Esther was doing. Although Esther didn't understand all that was happening, God provided others near her to encourage her.

Esther waited and wondered as one by one the women went to King Ahasuerus. Finally, it was Esther's turn. Although Esther was probably nervous and maybe even afraid as she went to meet the king, she could trust God's plans are best.

If you have believed on Jesus as your Savior, **God wants you to trust His plans are best.** You may never understand why God lets hard things happen in your life. When your mom or dad lose their job, your grandparent dies, or your brother or sister become very sick, you can trust God. He is sovereign, all-powerful, and all-knowing. God's thoughts and plans for you may not make sense at the time. But because He loves you and cares about what you are feeling, you can trust His plans are good and right.

WORD UP!, "God's plans are good!" *(Say with children.)* Whenever you don't understand what God is doing, remember to *say* and *pray. Say* Proverbs 3:5. *(Quote Proverbs 3:5 with children.)* And *pray* to God. Thank Him that He loves you and knows all about what is happening to you and ask Him to help. You can also talk to an adult you trust. Sometimes God uses other people to help us when hard things happen. **God wants you to trust His plans are best,** even when you don't understand.

Flashcard 1-6
Although Esther was probably nervous and afraid as she went to meet the king, she could trust that God's plans are best. She went to the king and the Bible says he loved Esther more than all the others!

CLIMAX

The king chose Esther to be the new queen!

CONCLUSION

He placed the sparkling crown on her head. She was now Queen Esther! King Ahasuerus invited his officials and servants to a banquet in Esther's honor. God planned for the king to choose Esther as queen. This amazing true story of God's sovereignty and love is not over yet! Actually, the book of Esther is the only book in the whole Bible *(hold up Bible)* that doesn't even mention God's name!

But as we learn more about Esther, we will see God's sovereignty—His control over everything that happened. God was working out His plan, but at this point in our story Esther did not know what would happen next.

INVITATION

You can't know what God has planned for you, but you can know that God's plans are always good! God planned the way for you to become His child. If you've not believed on Jesus, the most important thing you can do is to trust Jesus died on the cross and rose again for you. God's Word says, ***(read John 1:12)***. If you receive Jesus (accept His way of forgiveness as your very own) and believe on Him by trusting in Him alone to save you from your sin, He will forgive you and make you God's child. You will be a part of God's forever family, have a friendship with Him now, and someday you will live with Him in Heaven. **Will you believe** on Jesus to forgive your sin and make you God's child? Please **bow your head** and close your eyes. If you want to believe on Jesus, will you **show me** by looking up at me? *(Acknowledge responses.)* You may all open your eyes. If you looked up at me, **meet me** *(designate time and location)* so we can talk more, and I can show you from God's Word what it means to believe in Jesus.

REVIEW GAME

Royal Treasure Hunt

Have the children pretend to search for royal treasure as you review what they learned about Esther becoming queen and moving into the royal palace. Prepare brightly colored paper jewels with point values on the back and distribute them throughout your teaching area ahead of time with the point side facing down. When a child correctly answers a question, he picks up one of the jewels and adds it to his team's "pile of treasure" at the front of the room. *Variation:* In certain situations, it may be better to simply put the jewels in a container and have the children draw them out rather than allowing them to search for treasure.

1. What did King Ahasuerus do to show he had a lot of money? *(He threw a six-month party; he showed his riches; he provided lots of food.)*
2. What did the king want Queen Vashti to do? *(He wanted her to come to the banquet so he could show off her beauty.)*
3. Why was King Ahasuerus angry with Queen Vashti? *(She didn't obey him.)*
4. What does it mean that God is sovereign? *(God is in control of everything that happens.)*
5. What did the king's advisors tell him to do about Queen Vashti? *(He should banish Queen Vashti; choose another queen instead.)*
6. What did Jesus do so we don't have to be punished for our sins? *(He bled and died on the cross to pay for my sins.)*
7. Why was Esther taken to the palace? *(She was taken to see if the king would choose her as the new queen.)*
8. Who was Mordecai? *(Mordecai was Esther's cousin who had raised her.)*
9. What did Mordecai tell Esther not to do? *(He told her not to tell anyone she was a Jew.)*
10. If you have Jesus as your Savior, what can you do when hard times happen? *(Pray, thanking God that He loves me and knows all about what is happening; pray, asking God for help.)*
11. What did you learn today that showed God's sovereignty? *(Answers will vary.)*
12. Who did the king choose to be the new queen? (*Esther*)

MISSIONARY STORY

Good News About Jesus Relay

Divide the kids into two lines with an even number of kids in each line. Have the kids all face the front (looking at the back of the head of the person in front of them). Have one teacher at the front of each line with a paper that says, "Good News". When you say "Go" the teacher will give the paper to the first student in line and say, "I have some Good News to share with you". The first student will pass the paper over their head to the person behind them. That person will grab the paper and pass it through their legs to the person behind them. The next one will pass the paper over their head and students will keep alternating over and under until the paper reaches the end of the line. The person in the back will take the paper and run to the front of the line and say to the first student in line "I have some Good News to share with you" and give them the sheet of paper. The next student in line will pass it over their head to the person behind them. That person will grab the paper and pass it through their legs to the person behind them and they will continue alternating with the last person running to the front until you get back to the student who was originally first in line.

Have kids sit down and talk about how two teachers each shared the Good News with one person, and everyone kept sharing until the whole class got to hear the Good News. That is what a missionary does. They tell people the Good News about Jesus. This session we are going to hear about a missionary named Robert Foster. Robert's parents

were missionaries in Africa. I wonder what it would be like to be born in Africa? We will find out all about Robert starting next week in Good News Club.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Esther Becomes Queen color sheet and discussion

Have the kids color the Esther color sheet as you have them tell you what they remembered from the Bible story. You can ask questions to prompt them if needed. (How do you think Esther felt growing up without any parents? How did God provide someone to take care of Esther? Why did Mordecai tell her not to tell the king she was a Jew? Do you think people today might want to hide their nationality? Why? How did God protect Esther and help her have a great life?

DISMISSAL

Hand out a Quiet Time Sheet (Week 1 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 looking for God's good plan this week, even when things don't go like they thought they would.

Esther Becomes Queen

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

Lesson Outline

I. **INTRODUCTION**
Raise your hand if you've ever gone to a party. What kinds of things did you do at the party?

II. **PROGRESSION OF EVENTS**
King Ahasuerus was king of the Persian Empire—one of the largest empires in the world. (Esther 1:1-2)

A. **Flashcard 1-1** (Esther 1:3-11)
1. King Ahasuerus had a celebration for his princes and other leaders that lasted for six months.
2. The king had another party that lasted seven days. Everyone in Shushan was invited.
   You also sin against God by turning from God's way and going your own way. [Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:7b]
3. The king decided to show off his beautiful queen.

B. **Flashcard 1-2** (Esther 1:12)
The queen refused to come and the king was furious!

C. **Flashcard 1-3** (Esther 1:13—2:4)
1. The king gathered his most trusted advisors and asked them what he should do.
2. Later the king's advisors suggested he choose a new queen.

D. **Flashcard 1-4** (Esther 2:5-8)
1. Mordecai's cousin, Esther, was one of the women taken to the palace.
   God wants you to trust His plans are best. [Isaiah 55:8]
2. Esther did not know why these things were happening.

E. **Flashcard 1-5** (Esther 2:9-17a)
1. After months of preparation, Esther would meet the king.
2. God caused the king's servant to like Esther best of all.
   Remember to say and pray. [Proverbs 3:5]

III. **CLIMAX**
Flashcard 1-6 (Esther 2:17b)
The king chose Esther to be the new queen!

IV. **CONCLUSION** (Esther 2:18)
The king had a banquet in Esther's honor.
God wants you to trust His plans are best. [Proverbs 3:5]
The most important thing you can do is to trust Jesus died on the cross and rose again for you. [John 1:12]

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