



Esther Saves Her People

(based on Esther 4–7)

Many years ago in Persia, a great king named Ahasuerus (uh-hahs-yoo-ER-uhs) was married to Queen Esther. Queen Esther came from a Jewish family, but the king and the people in his court did not know this.

The king's chief officer, Haman (HAY-muhn), was a cruel and proud man. Haman was determined to see all Jewish people destroyed. He told many lies.

"O great king," Haman whispered. "People are living in your land who refuse to obey your laws. You should have them killed before they cause too much trouble."

The king trusted Haman. "Go ahead," he replied. "Do whatever you want."

Haman was delighted. He rubbed his hands together in glee as he went to give the order. "Now I can get rid of them all," he gloated.

Now it happened that Queen Esther had a cousin named Mordecai (MOR-duh-kye), who heard what Haman planned to do. He sent a message to the queen that said, "Please help us. You are the only one who can save us now."

When Esther heard what Mordecai wanted her to do, she was afraid. In those days, there was a law that said no one could go to the king without permission. Esther sent word to Mordecai telling him about the law.

"I could be killed," Esther explained.

Mordecai asked Esther to be brave. "Please speak up," he begged. "It could be that you were made queen so that you could save us at this terrible time."

The queen decided to speak out for her people. "I will pray for three days before I go to the king," she declared. All the Jewish residents in the city prayed with her.

Finally, Queen Esther was ready. She invited the king and Haman to a special meal. The king was very impressed. "This has been a wonderful meal," he declared. "Now it is my turn to give you a gift. I will give you anything you want."

The time had come to save her people. Esther took a deep breath. "O great king," she pleaded. "Please save my people."

The king was outraged. "Who would dare to harm you or your people?" he thundered.

Esther pointed to Haman. "That man!" she cried.

Haman gulped and spluttered. He was in big trouble. The king had him arrested and taken away. The Jewish people were saved.

When Mordecai heard the news, he was overjoyed. He sent word to all the people that they had been saved. What a party they had. Everyone sang and danced and gave thanks to God for saving them.

Every year since that time, the Jewish people have gathered together on Purim (POOR-im) to tell the story of how brave Queen Esther saved the day.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Tell a story about each child in your family, and how he or she did something helpful for others.
- Ask your children about times they have been helped by someone else. Ask them how it feels to be helped, and if they would like to share that feeling with others.



Responding to God's Grace

- Agree as a family to pray three days for a group who, like Esther's people, needs God's help. Place a reminder to pray on the refrigerator door, the bathroom mirror, or your smartphone.
- What service activities does your church participate in that your family could join, to help someone at risk in your community?
- Search YouTube for the song "Brave" by Sara Bareilles. Enjoy hearing the song together.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- When someone in your family is helpful in a big way, be sure to celebrate as a family. Give thanks to God for that person's help. Remember how each person in your family has been helpful.
- Plan a family banquet where everyone helps prepare and serve the meal. After the meal, let everyone ask a favor that would benefit someone else. Talk about the responses. Does the meal make it easier to say yes to the favor?
- Pray:

God, I want to be brave like Queen Esther, to be willing to help others when I can. Amen.