

A Proud King Week 1

Point to Emphasize: We should be humble about what we have and not show off.

Reference Reading: Esther 1:1-8

Memory Verse: When pride comes, then comes dishonor; But wisdom is with the humble. (Proverbs 11:2)

Story Sample

We just wrapped up our stories about Nehemiah, and now I'd like to tell you a story from another book in the Old Testament, the book of Esther. It's a story about a king, a king named Ahasuerus. He was a king in Persia during the time that all the Jews had been captured out of Jerusalem. Now, he was in Susa, which was the capital of Persia. And he was a very powerful king. He ruled all the way from India to Ethiopia. Isn't that a lot of land to rule over? He ruled over 127 provinces! Wow!

King Ahasuerus was very proud of his kingdom. His kingdom was very wealthy and very powerful. And he wanted everyone to know just how wealthy and powerful he was. Rather than being humble about what he had, he decided to show off.

When I was growing up, I had a neighbor girl who had a lot—she had the best toys, the best school supplies, the best clothes. And she loved to show off every time she got something new. When she got the newest bike that was out—the one with 5 speeds, rearview mirrors, a horn, and bike rack—what did she do? She came right to my house to show off and point out that my bike didn't have any of those things—plus it was an old hand-me-down from my cousin. And I always felt bad. When we show off, often we are really doing it to show that we are better than others. Did having the greatest bike make the girl better than me? NO! What is another way she could have presented her great bike with me? (She could have come over as a friend to let others ride her bike.)
[Storyteller: Give your own example of someone showing off what they have or can do.]

King Ahasuerus decided to have a banquet to show off all he had. He invited his princes, servants, the army, the nobles, and all the princes of the provinces he ruled over. He showed them all of the glorious wealth of his kingdom and all of his majesty. He really wanted them to be impressed. The Bible says that he did this for 180 days. So, for nearly sixth months, half a year, he made a show of what he had. That's a long time! After that, he had another banquet for seven days for all the people in the city of Susa to show them all he had. He even decided to show off the queen. This king was so proud of having all these things that he did so much to show off and impress everyone.

[Storyteller: Use remaining time to discuss the children's own examples of showing off and how it makes others feel.]

A Disobedient Queen Week 2

Point to Emphasize: We should obey and honor authority and know that there are consequences for our disobedience.

Reference Reading: Esther 1:8-12

Memory Verse: Obey the ones leading you and submit to them... (Hebrews 13:17b)

Story Sample

Last week our story ended with King Ahasuerus wanting to show off the queen, because she was so beautiful. So he ordered his servants to bring the queen to the banquet.

As a king, he was the ruler over the whole kingdom. This was a position (or job) you had to honor, respect and obey. It was like he was the boss and whatever he said, you had to do. So when he commanded his servants to go get the queen, they honored his request and went to get the queen.

But the queen was busy having her own banquet for the women. She **refused** to come to the king's banquet. Not only had she disobeyed her husband, but she did not honor the king! She put herself higher than the king.

I know a little boy who sometimes disobeyed his mom, especially when it came to cleaning up his toys. When she asked him to clean up his toys, he refused. He answered her with a very loud, "NO! I am too busy! I am busy playing with my friends!" I was always so disappointed when I heard him do this, because it really showed that he did not honor his mom and thought what he was doing was more important than what she wanted him to do. When his friends heard him talk like this, they started to follow him and before too long, they were also saying "NO!" to their moms. This was not right, and his mom was very upset about this.

So, one day, when he refused to clean up his toys, his mom loaded them in a box and gave them to the little boy who lived down the street. He learned that day that there are consequences for being disobedient. *[Use your own example.]*

King Ahasuerus was also very upset with his wife, Queen Vashti. He knew she would also influence all the other women and they too would begin to disobey. So he issued a royal proclamation that the queen could no longer come before him, and also that she had her estate taken from her. That was a very big consequence! She lost everything! The whole kingdom needed to hear this proclamation, so that all the wives would honor their husbands as well.

[End the time by talking about the ways we honor and obey our parents, teachers, policemen, and others who are in authority.]

Brought Up by Mordecai to have Good Habits Week 3

Point to Emphasize: The habits we develop now are the habits we have later.

Reference Reading: Esther 2:7, 20b

Memory Verse: Teach me, O Jehovah, Your way; I will walk in Your truth...
(Psalm 86:11a)

Story Sample

There was a young woman named Esther who lived in the city of Susa. Even though she was living in the same city as the king and the queen, her life was much different than theirs. She had become an orphan when she was young. Her older cousin, Mordecai, had adopted her as his own child. Both Mordecai and Esther were Jews, God's people. She was not at all like the queen.

I am not sure how the queen who disobeyed the king had been brought up, but it is possible that she was used to disobeying. If you often disobey when you are growing up, then it is easy for you to disobey when you are older. It becomes a habit. When I was young it was a HORRIBLE thing to lie to my mom. She felt that lying was the WORST thing. So I grew up trying to always tell the truth to her even when I did something naughty. But I had friends at school that lied so easily to the monitors of the playground and the lunch area. Those monitors would see something naughty going on and would ask, "Did you do that?" My friends would lie like it was nothing. It had become their habit to lie. *[Storyteller: Give your own example.]*

Of course, sometimes I did lie; but I felt so bad about it that I would usually go and tell on myself. I am afraid that those who lied so easily as children can easily lie as adults.

It might be that as a child, this queen may have had the habit of disobeying, otherwise she could not have done it so easily as an adult. BUT the Bible says that when Esther was growing up she did what Mordecai said. She obeyed him. Her obeying Mordecai since childhood became important when she grew up to be a young woman. She had acquired the habit of doing as Mordecai said.

[End this time by discussing with the children some of the good habits they have that will help them later in life.]

Mordecai was Noble Week 4

Point to Emphasize: We can be generous and kind.

Reference Reading: Esther 1:5-7

Memory Verse: But the noble man devises noble things; And upon noble things he stands. (Isaiah 32:8)

Story Sample

We have seen that the queen was disobedient and Esther was obedient. But what can we say about Mordecai? *[Let the children recap from last week]* That is right! When Esther became an orphan, he took her in as if he was her father.

But what does that mean? What do your parents do for you? *[List what the children say]*

They buy our food.

They make our meals.

They drive us to school.

They help us with homework.

They work so that we can live in a house or apartment.

ETC!!

Our parents do so many things for us just because they are our parents. Mordecai was willing to do all the things parents do; yet Esther was not even his real daughter. Was there a law saying that since he was a relative he must take care of her? NO! He could have let her be an orphan and have someone else take care of her, BUT he decided that he would become like a father to her. Mordecai was noble (considerate). That means he was so generous and caring that he would invest his time, his money and his attention to raise an orphan.

I do not think that many of us have done anything like that yet.

Even though we have not made that kind of big commitment yet, I think some of us may have already made little ones. I know of a boy who would always take out his neighbor's trash can to the curb side. He would do this because he had seen the neighbor having a hard time trying to move the can out into the street. The boy could do the job very easily, so each week he would go and take the neighbor's can to the curb on trash collection day. Was he asked to do it? Did he get paid for that? Did he brag to others about being such a great boy? NO! He just helped out every week. *[Storyteller: Give your own example.]*

[Wrap up this time with a discussion about what kind of things they did last week that showed they were willing to give their time and energy to something that was for the benefit of others.]

God Works Things Out Week 5

Point to Emphasize: We must honor our God who works out what He wants.

Reference Reading: Esther 2:7, 20b

Memory Verse: I know that whatever God does, it will be forever... (Ecclesiastes 3:14a)

Story Sample

Due to her disobedience, the queen was dethroned, removed from her position. But the king knew that the kingdom needed a queen. He needed to find a good queen that would be suitable. Esther was chosen to be the queen. However, no one knew her relatives or her people. Nor anyone knew that she was a Hebrew, an Israelite, a Jew. Esther had not told anyone about her ancestors because Mordecai had told her not to. In those days the Jews were not in their own land. They had been carried away from their own land and were dwelling among other people. They were captives in another land, and some of these people did not like Jews.

Let's retrace Esther's story. She became an orphan and was cared for by her cousin, Mordecai. Is this the story of someone who is destined to be queen? NO WAY!! She did not come from a royal family. She did not have the upbringing that would get her ready to be a queen!

So, HOW did it all happen? How did an orphaned Jew become the queen? Well, behind the scenes God was working things out! Our God is amazing! He works things out without anyone even noticing. When I was little I lived all the way across the country in a small town. Growing up as a child I never even thought that someday I might move. However, after I finished college I moved all the way across the country to a much larger town far away from my grandparents and aunts and uncles. If you would have asked me when I was a small girl if I could ever move away I would have said it was impossible. But God had a plan! I moved from one situation to a much better situation. Then eventually I got married, had children, and even got a house. And many of the brothers and sisters come over, and we enjoy the church life together. As a young girl this may have seemed impossible, but our God is amazing and works things out according to what He wants. *[Storyteller – share a personal example of how God was working behind the scenes in your life.]*

This is exactly how Esther went from a Jewish orphan to being queen. God had been working things out for His people.

[Wrap up this time with asking the children if they can think of a time when they thought something was going to turn out differently than it did. Discuss how God can work behind the scenes, and we might not even realize it until later.]

Being TOO Angry Week 6

Point to Emphasize: We should not take out our anger on others.

Reference Reading: Esther 2:21-23

Memory Verse: A fool utters all his anger, But a wise man holds it back. (Proverbs 29:11)

Story Sample

After Esther became queen, Mordecai remained in the king's gate. He was not allowed any closer because common people were not permitted to go beyond that point. So he sat in the king's gate. Maybe he wanted to stay in touch with Esther, to make sure she was all right.

While he was sitting in the king's gate, there were two eunuchs at the gate. A eunuch is a palace guard, and these two were responsible for the threshold or gate of the king's palace. Their job was to work for the king. But, they were not happy with the king. In fact, they were quite angry. They were so angry that they began to plot how they might lay their hands on the king and do him harm.

You may say, "WOW, that is really bad! How could they plan to hurt the king?"

I remember once when I got so angry at my sister that I shouted at her and then went to my room and slammed the door and threw my pillow! Of course, I was not like those eunuchs wanting to hurt someone, BUT I was so angry and I could not control it. That kind of anger is not good. It is never good to be that angry. *[Storyteller - share your own experience that includes regretting and saying you were sorry.]*

When we are angry we say and do things that we later regret. Have you ever been like this? Did you feel bad and regret that you had spoken that way? Did you go and say you were sorry like I did?

Some people grow up like these eunuchs in the story. They think that they have a right to be soooo angry with others. But we don't have that right. We need to learn not to take out our anger on others.

[Wrap up this time by discussing with the children some other more positive ways that they might react in different situations when they are angry.]

Reporting a Wrong Week 7

Point to Emphasize: We should report when something wrong has been done.

Reference Reading: Esther 2:21-23

Memory Verse: Only, fear Jehovah and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you. (1 Samuel 12:24)

Story Sample

[Review last week for 5 minutes.]

The eunuchs should have thought of other ways to let their anger out at the king. But they didn't. They were angry, and they were plotting against the king. Because Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, he found out about this, and he knew what they were about to do was wrong. But what could he do? He could not go before the king. But, he knew someone who could. Who was that? Right! The queen could! So Mordecai told Esther about the wrong that was being done, and she went to the king on Mordecai's behalf to report to him.

Have you ever seen anyone cheating in class? I know, when I was in school, I did many times. And one time it was my friend that did it. Oh, it was so hard for me to decide what I should do. If I told the teacher, my friend would be really mad and maybe never play with me again. But what she was doing was wrong! So, in the end, I knew the right thing was to tell the teacher. *[Storyteller - tell your own example of reporting a wrong.]*

Mordecai did the right thing. He knew the king should be honored, and it was not right to plot against him. The king did not just take his word for it though. He had the matter investigated first to be sure it was the truth.

This is what my teacher did too. After I told her, she investigated by asking some other children in class, and even the girl who cheated. She wanted to be absolutely sure it was the truth before she punished her.

When the king found out that it was true, he punished the two men for what they were planning to do. And the report was written in the king's records, so that all would know and remember what they had planned to do and that a man named Mordecai had sent a message to the king to let him know the plot against him.

[Use the remaining time for the children to give examples of reporting a wrong.]

A Noble Deed Week 8

Point to Emphasize: We can be happy just to do the right thing.

Reference Reading: Esther 2:21-23

Memory Verse: ...Take forethought for things honorable in the sight of all men.
(Romans 12:17b)

Story Sample

[Review last week for 5 minutes.]

By reporting what he had heard, Mordecai saved the king's life. We might think that once this report proved true and the two eunuchs were punished that Mordecai would be honored or rewarded. But he was not recognized in any way. His life went on the same as it had before.

One time I was getting out of my car and noticed something laying on the street next to the neighbor's car. I went over and checked it out. Sure enough it was a wallet. So right away I went and knocked on the neighbor's door. Finally he came to the door, and I gave him the wallet. He was so grateful. He did not even know that it had dropped on the street the last time he got out of his car. He had not even missed it yet. Then I went home and that was it.

Some people would have expected a reward. Some may feel like that neighbor should have given me some of the money from his wallet as a "thank you." But that never crossed my mind. I did what needed to be done. And that made me feel good. I did not need a reward. But I have seen others who expect a reward. They expect that if they do the right thing they will get something. *[Storyteller - insert your own story about doing the right thing but being disappointed that you were not acknowledged or rewarded.]*

I do not think that Mordecai expected some kind of reward or honor. He had done what needed to be done. I think he was probably very satisfied by that.

Because he was an honorable person, he just did what needed to be done. He saw a wrong was about to happen and he needed to do something. He was not looking to get a reward, he was just happy to do the right thing.

[Wrap up the time by helping the children talk about how good they feel when they return something that is not theirs, etc.]

Deliberately Getting Mordecai into Trouble Week 9

Point to Emphasize: We do not need to tattle on others.

Reference Reading: Esther 3:1-2, 4

Memory Verse: Do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.
(Exodus 23:1b)

Story Sample

Reporting a wrongdoing is very different from tattling. If I see someone opening a candy box at the store and taking some out, I can (and should) easily report it to the store. To tattletale is to tell a tale about someone to get them in trouble.

I know a kindergarten teacher and she tells me that kindergarteners are the “**best**” at being a tattletale! Every day, she has someone come up to her and say something like, “Teacher, Johnny made a face at me;” or, “Teacher, Sally said something mean to me.” Usually, it’s just because they are mad at the other child, and sometimes it is even because they made a face at Johnny first. But it’s always because they like to get others in trouble! *[Storyteller: Use your own example of tattling and how it is usually meant to get others in trouble. At the end you could make emphasis on being biased and negatively motivated]*

Our next story involves some tattling.

In the king’s palace there were people who got promoted, meaning they got a better or higher position. One day the king promoted a man named Haman. The servants at the king’s gate were required to bow down to Haman and pay homage (show reverence or extreme respect) to him whenever he came in or went out. This probably made Haman feel important. He really liked having them bow down to him.

Now who else was at the king’s gate? (Mordecai) Right! We know that Mordecai sat by the king’s gate. And Mordecai did not bow down as Haman went in or out. We’ll talk about why Mordecai did not bow down next week. Haman did not even notice that Mordecai was not bowing to him. But the king’s servants did notice it, and it made them unhappy that they had to bow down but Mordecai did not. So, they tattled. They wanted to get Mordecai in trouble. Therefore, they went and told Haman about Mordecai not bowing to him so that Mordecai would get in trouble.

[Use the remaining time to have the children give examples of the difference between reporting a wrong and tattling. Remind them of the story of Mordecai reporting the eunuchs who plotted against the king in week 8 as an example of reporting a wrong.]

Mordecai Not Bowing Down to Worship Another Week 10

Point to Emphasize: We should not idolize others.

Reference Reading: Esther 3:1-2, 4

Memory Verse: You shall have no other gods before Me. (Exodus 20:3)

Story Sample

Review last week's story.

After Haman was promoted by the king, all the king's servants were bowing down to pay homage to Haman. Notice that they were paying homage to Haman, not respect. There is a big difference between respect and homage. Some of you may never even have heard this word "homage" before.

You all know what it is to respect someone, don't you? It is to admire and show honor to someone. When I taught school in another country the students would all stand up and say "good morning" to me as the teacher. This was to show respect. In the U.S. we would stand up if a very important person, like the principal, were to come to visit our classroom. We would all turn facing the front of the room and sit up straight in our chairs, right? This shows our respect. *[Use your own personal example.]*

But in the story of Haman, they were bowing down to pay homage. What does that mean? To bow down and pay homage is close to worshipping. The dictionary gives the definition: "respect or **reverence** paid or rendered." It is nearly to idolize someone. To idolize someone is to think that they are so much higher or better than anyone else. It is to treat them like they are SOOO ABOVE others, so SUPER! It sounds kind of silly saying that, doesn't it? But it happens a lot.

We may be a big fan of the President of the U.S., but would we prance around in a crowd screaming for his autograph??? *[You can use a picture from a political rally to show this.]* See how silly that sounds. This is what people do when they idolize someone. They nearly worship him. It is sad that today some famous singers, sports figures, and actors are idolized by so many of their fans.

Mordecai refused to bow down and pay homage to Haman, because he would not agree to worship a man. Haman was only a man. He was not God. Since Mordecai was a Jew he would only honor and worship God by bowing. We need to learn from Mordecai. No person should ever be lifted way above others. No person should be idolized. A person may be very good at this or that - maybe even the best. BUT they are still only people. We should only worship our God.

[To end the time, have the children discuss their own examples of who they idolize - perhaps games/cartoon characters, sports stars, or movie stars, etc. and how it is better to worship God.]

Haman Reacted in Rage Week 11

Point to Emphasize: We can act sensibly, without anger.

Reference Reading: Esther 3:5-6

Memory verse: He who is quick to anger will deal foolishly. (Proverbs 14:17a)

Story Sample

When Haman was told that Mordecai did not bow down and pay homage to him he went into a rage. He expected everyone to bow down to him. Just to be sure, the next time he passed through the king's gate, Haman watched and saw that Mordecai did not bow down. His anger went wild.

He decided that it would not be enough just to punish Mordecai....no, that would not be enough! He would devise a plot to destroy all of Mordecai's race, all the Jews who would only honor and worship God and not man. He would devise a way to destroy all the Jews living in the king's empire. That would be the punishment for not bowing down and paying homage to him.

WOW! What an evil reaction! Surely there are other ways to deal with situations like this! What might be a sensible way to handle this? *[Lead the children in a discussion of possible solutions.]*

How we react when we get angry is important. Sometimes you might get angry with your brothers or sisters (or maybe even a friend) when they are treated in a special way while you are being ignored. We all like to think that we are the most important one in the world. I had an uncle who would come visit us when we were young. And because he had his favorite niece among us girls, whenever he came for a visit he would always bring her a special gift. This would make me so mad! I got tired of being neglected. One time, after my uncle had given my sister the neatest toy, I grabbed it and threw it against the wall and broke it. That wasn't sensible at all, was it? My sister was going to share it with all of us, but because I broke it, no one was able to play with it. That day I learned it's not a good thing to be so angry that you end up losing control. *[Serving one – use your own example.]*

[End this with discussion on how we can act sensibly when we are angry.]

Haman Plots against the Jews Week 12

[Serving ones: do not tell the children any details of Haman's plot]

Point to Emphasize: Don't trick others into doing what you want.

Reference Reading: 3: 5-15

Memory Verse: All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. (Proverbs 8:8)

Story Sample

Last week we shared with you about how Haman became enraged due to the fact that Mordecai did not bow down to him. He was so angry he came up with a plot to get revenge on Mordecai. His plan wasn't to just get back at Mordecai, he plotted to destroy ALL the Jews. And how would he do this? In a very sneaky way. He would do it by tricking the king!

Haman spoke to the king and told him about the Jews, how there were many of them in his kingdom, and how they refused to keep the king's law. He told the king it wasn't right for them to remain in the kingdom. He was very clever. He never mentioned to the king that he was mad at Mordecai and wanted to get back at him. No, he presented it in a way that made it seem like he was just concerned for the king. He was not really concerned for the king. Haman just wanted to get back at Mordecai.

I'm sure we have all done something like this at some point. We influenced others in a clever way to get them to do what we wanted. Once my older sister wanted to go somewhere to see her friends, and she knew that my mom wouldn't let her borrow the car just to go see her friends. So she talked me into asking mom if she could take me to Foster's Freeze for an ice cream. Since I loved ice cream, she knew mom would say yes to me. So in the end, she got her way by tricking me into asking mom for the car.
[Storyteller - use a personal example.]

So Haman requested that the king put in writing and make a proclamation that all the Jews would be destroyed. Haman also told the king that for doing this he would put 10,000 talents of silver into the king's treasury. (One talent is about 34 kg, which is about the weight of an average 10-year-old child, so the total = 340,000 kg or the weight of 10,000 ten-year-olds in silver!) The king agreed. Then a decree was written in the name of the king and sent to all the provinces. Haman was about to get his revenge against Mordecai!

Good Deeds are Remembered Week 13

Point to Emphasize: Others take notice of our good deeds.

Reference Reading: Esther 6:1-2

Memory Verse: Jehovah is righteous; He loves righteous deeds. The upright man will behold His face. (Psalm 11:7)

Story Sample

Use a few minutes to review the previous weeks: Haman's evil plot to destroy the Jews because he was angry that Mordecai did not bow down to him.

One night the king could not sleep. He ordered the book of the kingdom's official records to be brought and read before him. The king kept detailed historical records of the happenings and events under his rule.

As these records were being read to the king, it was found written that Mordecai had reported the two guards planning to harm the king. *[Check with the children to see how much they remember about that story.]* The king asked if anything had been done to honor Mordecai for this good deed. The servants who attended to the king said that nothing had been done.

Recently I was in an office and saw two girls that I had known when they were in elementary school. They had a day off from school and they had come to help. That really impressed me. Two high school girls were using their day off to volunteer. Wow! Whenever I think of these two girls, I always remember what they did. *[Storyteller: Use your own personal example of noticing the good deeds of others.]*

Sometimes when we do something that is thoughtful or worthy of honor, it is not recognized right away. But don't think your good deeds will not be remembered. Our God remembers them. Even some people who witnessed what you did will remember it.

So when the king saw that Mordecai had saved him from being harmed by the guards, he wanted to honor him.

Haman Thinks He is the Best Week 14

Point to Emphasize: We should not think too highly of ourselves.

Reference Reading: 6:4-6

Memory Verse: For I say...to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded...
(Romans 12:3a)

Story Sample

The king was so impressed by what Mordecai had done, saving him from the plot against him. When he learned that nothing had been done to honor Mordecai for what he did, the king wanted to thank Mordecai by honoring him. As the king was considering what he should do to reward Mordecai's good deed, Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" The king was thinking of Mordecai, but Haman thought otherwise.

Right away Haman assumed that the king MUST be planning to honor him. He could not think of anyone who deserved to be honored more than himself. WOW!!! How proud!! Haman really thought that there was NO ONE who deserved to get honor from the king more than he. He really thought that HE was the BEST!!!

Well, none of us have ever been before a king but most of us know what it is like to be honored. Have you ever been in a classroom where the teacher is selecting students to be the "weekly helpers"? This is quite an honor. Some students may get to be the "ball monitor" during recess, or perhaps the "line monitor", or maybe even the "Principal for a Day". We all know that it is an honor to be chosen. Once I knew a girl who always thought she should be the monitor. Week after week she was unhappy because she was not chosen to be the monitor. In her thinking she was the only one that deserved to be monitor. But of course, she was not the only one. There were lots of other students in the class who deserved to be monitor. But she did not see it that way. *[Storyteller: Use your own personal example of someone thinking too highly of themselves.]*

This is exactly how Haman thought of himself. He thought he was the best and should get the honor. He thought too highly of himself. And we'll find out next week that sometimes, if we think too much of ourselves, we'll be very disappointed.

[Finish the time by having the children share experiences about times when they felt they should have been honored when they didn't really deserve it.]

Haman's Disappointment Week 15

Point to Emphasize: We are often disappointed because our expectations are unrealistic.

Reference Reading: Esther 6:7-13

Memory Verse: The wise will inherit honor, but fools increase their own disgrace.
(Proverbs 3:35)

Story Sample

Haman was so excited that the king had asked him about honoring someone! He was convinced that he was the person that the king wanted to honor, so he answered the king's question according to the treatment he wanted for himself.

Haman told the king that one of the royal robes and a royal horse should be given to the man to be honored. In addition, a royal crown should be set upon his head and that this man should be paraded through the street of the city. The king agreed with Haman's advice—but then he said that Mordecai was the man he wanted to honor.

Can you imagine how Haman must have felt? He must have been so shocked! He was so sure that he was going to be the one to be honored. But it was Mordecai instead! And then, what made it even worse was that Haman had to help the king carry out the honors for this other man. This must have been so disappointing to Haman. The Bible even says that he was mourning with his head covered.

Have you ever had an experience like this? I was in a spelling bee when I was younger, and I was sure that I was going to win. So before the spelling bee had even started, I was planning where I would put my trophy and imagining how I would feel. But you know what? Someone else beat me – on the last word! I felt horrible! I could hardly hold back the tears, not to mention how embarrassed I was. I couldn't look anyone in the eye. I just wanted the school day to end so I could run home and cry to my mom. I didn't even congratulate the boy that won.

This was because I thought I was so much better in spelling than everyone else. I had unrealistic expectations of myself and also of others. If I had been more realistic about it, I would have seen that other students were good spellers, too. I wouldn't have assumed I was the only good speller, and I would not have built myself up so high. I also would not have been so crushed with the disappointment of not winning first place.
[Storyteller: Use your own personal example of being disappointed after having unrealistic expectations.]

[End the time by having the children share examples from their own experience.]

Esther Stands Up for Her People Week 16

Point to Emphasize: We should stand up for God's people.

Reference Reading: Esther chapters 7, 8

Memory Verse: ...and I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33b)

Story Sample

Last week we heard about Haman's disappointment over Mordecai being honored. Today we will see how his plot against the Jews was finally brought to the attention of the king.

Queen Esther had requested a banquet with the king. She also asked that Haman be invited. At this banquet she revealed to the king that she was a Jew and that there was a plot against her and her people, the Jews. This was the first time the king heard she was a Jew. He was angry to find out about such a plot against her and the other Jews.

[Do not tell the children the details of Haman's end!]

But it was not enough just to have the plot uncovered. Now the wrong needed to be corrected. So Esther asked the king to send out another proclamation to reverse the first order which was to destroy the Jews.

We need to learn how to stand up for what is right. Sometimes at my workplace, some people would make fun of others who loved God. They would tease them and say mean things about them behind their back. Even grownups do things like that! Since I had just started working there, I could have saved myself from being teased by just not telling anyone that I was a Christian. But I couldn't do that. So when they would make fun of the others, I told those people that I was a Christian too and if they were going to tease the others, they had better tease me too. It wasn't the easiest way, but it was the right way. *[Storyteller, tell your personal example of a time you stood up for what was right.]*

Sometimes it might be easier not to let our friends and schoolmates know that we are in a family that loves God, but it is always the best if we let others know.

Because Esther spoke out at the right time the Jews were saved! It was a time of gladness and joy for all the Jews, and they celebrated in every city.

We are Well Regarded when We Care for Others as We Should Week 17

Point to Emphasize: Having a lot of things is not what matters

Reference Reading: Esther chapter 10

Memory Verse: For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus and great among the Jews and well-regarded by the multitude of his brothers, one who sought the good of his people and who spoke for the welfare of all his seed. (Esther 10:3)

Story Sample

Review last week

The Jews had real cause to celebrate! They had gone from being a despised people to a people who were honored. And all of this happened because Mordecai and Esther loved their people and even stood for them. Esther had gone from an orphan child to a queen. Mordecai had gone from a Jew not even able to enter the palace, to second in command only to the king. And all the time, regardless of their position, they honored their people, the Jews.

I have a friend who lived in poverty when she was a child. Her family never had much. They lived in a simple apartment, she barely had enough to eat, and she didn't have fancy clothes or a lot of extras. But she had friends and family. She loved her family and friends! When she grew up, she had a very good job and became quite wealthy. She can now buy a fancy house, eat at any fancy restaurant, drive an expensive car, and go anywhere she wants to. But she still loves her friends and family the best. She works with very rich people and some of them have become her friends, BUT her really good friends are the ones she grew up with when she had nothing. *[Storyteller: Give your own personal example of how having a lot of things or not having a lot should not change our heart toward others.]*

You see, Mordecai and Esther started off quite poor but one became the Queen and the other an officer of the king. BUT their position did not change their heart toward God's people.

The book of Esther ends with Mordecai being well-regarded. The last verse of the book of Esther ends with a verse that speaks of him being well-regarded by his brothers not because of the high position he attained but because he sought the good of his people. The last verse also says that he spoke for the people's welfare. By caring for Esther as an orphan and guiding her to have a proper heart toward God and His people, Mordecai through Esther, saved all the Jews from being destroyed. What a wonderful way to end the story of Esther!

[Finish with the children's experiences of taking care of others.]