

The Jews Rejoice And Declare A Feast

Esther 9:18-32

## **MEMORY VERSE**

PSALM 126:5

“Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

One round lollipop for each child in your class, construction paper, markers and glue.

One straw per child, pinto beans and four quart-size bowls.

Snack crackers, cheese, apple slices or popcorn.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

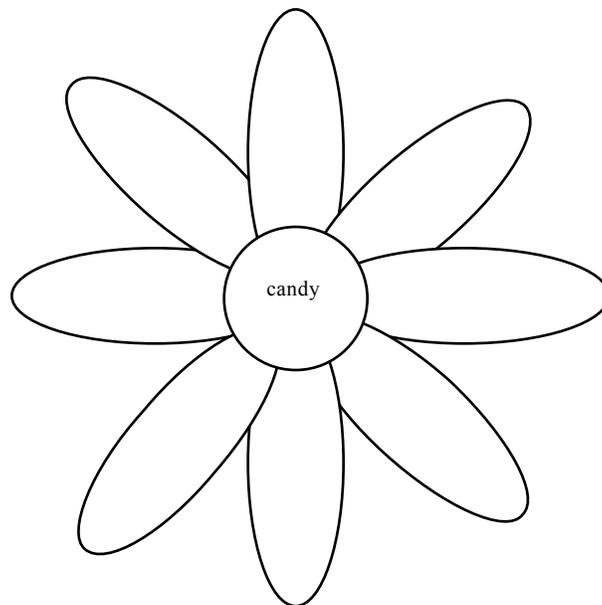
### **Grow Where You Are Planted!**

The Jews in the book of Esther were living in a land other than Israel. Even though Esther and Mordecai were not “home,” they were still fruitful in the place they were. God wants us to grow in the place He puts us. This craft will help us to remember that and will also give you a treat to enjoy later.

You will need one round lollipop for each child in your class, construction paper, markers and glue. Have the children cut out “flower petal shapes” from their construction paper. They should cut out 8-10 shapes depending on the size they choose to go with. Once they have cut out their shapes have them put their petals together to form a flower. They should lay them flat on a table to make a round shape. The hole in the center should be very small (just big enough to fit the lollipop stick through). To hold together the petals may be taped or glued (with a glue stick) together as they overlap.

Next hold the petals and insert the lollipop through the hole. The round top of the lollipop should rest on top of the petals and the

stick through the other side. Glue the flower to the lollipop (make sure the lollipop is still wrapped!). Set aside for the glue to dry until the end of class. Optional: Write “Grow Where You Are Planted” or the Memory Verse on the various petals. See example below.



## LESSON TIME!

Note: You may want to structure your class today in such a way that you can have a celebration. Perhaps have a blanket on the floor, like a picnic blanket and have the children sit around it. For some ideas see “Queen Esther’s Celebration Feast” below.

With today’s lesson we have now come to the end of the story of Esther. In the book of Esther, God has given us a story about a very special girl placed in a very special position to help her people. Even though Esther was frightened at times, she still obeyed God and did what was right.

Esther is a story of a girl willing to help people in their time of need. We read about danger, a murder plot, and people fighting to

defend themselves. Esther is a story of victory, rejoicing, and celebrating that victory! It is a story to remind us that God's people need to join together in order to fight the spiritual war we are still in today against the devil.

The story of Esther has taught us to not be afraid and to stand up for what's right. We have learned that we should not be afraid to say something when we need to. When we obey God, we can give glory to Him for any victory that comes. In our lesson today we will learn about the time when the Jews celebrated their deliverance and salvation. Then we will also learn that **God wants us to celebrate our salvation!**

### ESTHER 9:18-22

But the Jews who were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar with gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus,

to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,

as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy,

of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

In these verses we find the Jewish people setting aside the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Adar, the last month on the sacred calendar to celebrate their being saved from Haman's wicked plot. To celebrate, they give presents to one another. This was to celebrate a time when sorrow was turned to joy; mourning into a day of celebration. The Jews had a lot to be thankful for.

The Jews in Susa, where King Xerxes and Queen Esther lived, fought for two days and then celebrated their victory on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. Mordecai recorded all of the events and sent letters. What a fun way to celebrate, by giving food and presents to each other. Does that remind you of any of our holidays that we celebrate? What is it that we are celebrating?

This victory was very important to the people wasn't it? They had prepared, fought hard, been victorious and now they were ready for a little celebration. The Bible does not say exactly, but they were probably worshipping and thanking God for helping them. **God wants us to celebrate our salvation!**

**ESTHER 9:23-28**

So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them,

because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that is, the lot), to consume them and destroy them;

but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letter that this wicked plot which Haman had devised against the Jews should return

on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,

the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written instructions and according to the prescribed time,

that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

As you will recall from previous lessons, there had been a plan to destroy the Jewish people by a man named Haman. He was filled with pride and hatred for anyone who did not bow down to him. Mordecai refused to bow to Haman so he wanted to destroy Mordecai and all of his people, the Jews. The Jews would only worship one God and would not bow down to men. This threatened Haman, so he wanted to kill them all.

The Pur is the casting of lots. Kind of like people that play with dice today. In these days people would cast lots in order to help them to make decisions. It was like chance in that whatever the outcome of the lot was the decision that would be made. God wants us to seek Him for wisdom, and we have the Holy Spirit today to make decisions, but sometimes we see in the Bible that

God used lots to accomplish what He wanted. He could control how they came out.

Haman used lots in order to set the time that he would destroy the Jews. Here we see God in control of this situation. The lot landed on the last month of the year. This gave the Jews almost an entire year to prepare for this evil plan that Haman came up with.

This whole situation came to the king's attention through Esther. Then the king stepped in and helped Esther. He commanded that Haman be executed on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai. And his sons were hanged with him. Is it not sad that Haman's sin fell on his sons as well? Our sin does not just affect us, but also the ones we love. We can hurt the ones we love when we choose to turn away from God. Later we see where Esther writes a new decree allowing the Jews to fight back on the day they were supposed to be destroyed and thereby being saved.

So the Jews began to celebrate and have a big feast. Mordecai logs everything as official history for the kingdom. Everyone was excited and filled with joy because they have been saved from Haman's wicked plan. They decided to call this time of celebration "purim" based on the word pur, or lot. And it is amazing that Jews still celebrate this feast even to this day.

And it is amazing how that this story is such a picture of Jesus. He delivers us from the evil plan of our destruction. Satan wants us to never believe in Jesus and he wants us to spend eternity separated from God, but God has provided victory of Satan's evil plan through sending His son Jesus. Jesus paid the price for our sin. So we can be saved when we believe on Jesus. We can also rejoice and celebrate because of the victory we have been given in Jesus. **God wants us to celebrate our salvation!**

## Running the Race

You will need one straw per child and four quart-size bowls. Split up your class into two teams. Have them line up at one end of the room. Have a starting line using tape. At the beginning of each line have one bowl filled with pinto beans. At the other end of the room have an empty bowl.

When you say, “go!” have the first child in each line get on their hands and knees over the bowl with their straw. Have them get a bean at the end of the straw and have them suck so that the bean will hold at the opposite end of their straw. Here is the catch. The children may not use their hands or touch the bean in any way. They may hold their hands under the bean just in case it falls, but they must pick it up again with the straw. Hold the bean at the bottom of the straw by suction. Have them go to the other end of the room as fast as they can. Drop the bean into the bowl on the other side of the room. The child should run back to the line and tag the next child in line. Then the next child can do the same thing.

For younger children, you may allow them to use their hands, or take a small piece of tape and wrap it so all sides are sticky. Stick one side to the end of the straw and the other side can stick to a bean.

The first team that is done (and/or has the most beans in a given period of time) is declared as the winner. They will then have the privilege of serving during the “Queen Esther Celebration Feast.”

### ESTHER 9:29-32

Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting.

So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

After all these things, we see Queen Esther and Mordecai in a place of authority and honor. They have become good leaders of the people. They wanted to record all of these things officially so that the people would never forget what God had done for them.

It is good for us to write down ways that God has been faithful in our lives. Some people call this journaling. We see in the Bible throughout the Old Testament times when God showed Himself faithful in the lives of His people. They would build memorials that were made of stone. These altars would help the people remember the awesome things that God did.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: You may want to give the children some paper and ask them to begin a journal by writing down some ways that God has been faithful in their lives. You can also use construction paper and/or other craft items and markers in order to decorate their journals. They can take them home and continue to log the ways that God shows Himself faithful in their lives.

One very special way that we remember, and even celebrate the salvation that Jesus has provided to us is through communion. Jesus told us that as often as we take of the bread and the juice that

we would remember His body that was broken for us and His blood that was shed for us. What a special time for us to remember our Lord and Savior Jesus. **God wants us to celebrate our salvation!**

## **The Queen Esther Celebration Feast**

Really this is called the Feast of Purim. God's people were celebrating His faithfulness and deliverance. Bring to the class snack crackers, cheese, apple slices or popcorn. Please make sure to notify parents before class that you are serving food. This way they can let you know about any possible allergies or other problems that their children may have with the food you are serving.

We will simulate what the Jews continue to do today to celebrate the Feast of Purim. They will read the entire book of Esther (you could just read today's passage if you like). Every time the name "Mordecai" is read the crowd will cheer. Every time the name "Haman" is read the crowd "boos." Every time Queen Esther's name is read the crowd will go "Ahh." Then they will play games (you could bring some games to allow the children to play) and have snacks.

You may also, as an option, decide to serve communion in your classroom in order to remember what Jesus has done for us.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to always be thankful for our salvation. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.