



The Bible Reaches My Friends

Big Idea: God touches my friends when I share the Good News about Jesus' love and forgiveness.

#5

Bible Text: Esther

Students Will:

- Know**
- God put Esther in a certain place so that she could help save His people.
 - God puts them in situations where they can help save people.
 - The Gospel includes these elements: God's love, people's sins, Jesus' death, and personal faith.
 - *New Testament Structure & Authors*: five history books tell what God has done in the past.
- Feel**
- Compassion for those who still need to believe in Jesus.
 - Inspired to let God use them to reach their friends.
 - Confident to share the Good News about Jesus' love and forgiveness.
- Do**
- Select ways that they can become God's instruments to others.
 - Tell a friend about Jesus' love and forgiveness.



Pray for Wisdom

Lord, help me to see the world of potential in training my students to share their faith with other children and their own families.

Your Gospel is the power of God for salvation for all people—may we all broadcast that news to the ends of the earth! In my Savior Jesus' name, amen.

Lesson Summary

It isn't easy being a child. Children are required to make many difficult adjustments. Often, a child must adapt to a new situation, having been given little or no say in the matter. New schools, new teachers, new neighborhoods, new friends, and even new families are some of the tough adjustments children must struggle through.

For Esther, life was a series of difficult adjustments. Her Jewish family lived as foreigners in a different culture. Both of her parents died when she was very young, so Esther had to move in with her older cousin, Mordecai. As she approached adulthood, she was taken from her home and made to live in the king's palace with a large group of women. From among all of these women, Esther was selected to be the king's new bride, making her queen of the entire kingdom of

Persia. Eventually, she understood that God was with her all along, ordering the experiences of her life so that He could use her in His mighty work. God put Esther in her royal position so that He could speak to the king through her. Because she was willing to be a mouthpiece for God, her friends and countrymen were saved.

This lesson helps students understand that God wants to use them to share His love with others right where they are. If they are willing to be a mouthpiece for God, their friends may also be saved.



Sing with Joy

Special Songs

Two songs have been created to reinforce the learner targets for this unit. Lyrics and music are printed in this Teacher's Guide.

- *Treasure Expedition* (Mark Chase, 1998) Theme song for Level 2—motivates students to treasure the Bible and read it regularly.
- *God's Great, Wonderful Word* (Mark Chase, 1999) Theme song for Unit B—challenges students to share the Good News about Jesus with others.

Esther



The Bible Reaches My Friends

God wants us to be His tools or instruments. That means He wants to speak to our friends through us.

When we tell our friends what the Bible says, they hear God's beautiful message.

What beautiful words from the Bible do your friends need to hear?

God loves you
(John 3:16).

God wants to forgive
your sins (1 John 1:9).



Jesus died for you
(Romans 5:8).

If you believe in Jesus, you will have
eternal life life (1 John 5:13).



Alternate Passage:

Psalm 19:7-14 (learned through the entire unit).

Pray for Power

Pray that your students would know with conviction that taking a stand for God is the wisest stand anyone can take—and that any other stand is foolish.



Spark Interest

You will need: an instrument that has a removable mouthpiece, such as a trumpet, flute, or recorder. Make sure that you are able to play a strong note on it.

Before class, remove the mouthpiece from the instrument and set it aside where it is hidden from view. Show the instrument (without the mouthpiece) to the class. Ask:

- What is your favorite musical instrument?
- How many of you have ever played an instrument?

Musical instruments are very important. People enjoy the wonderful music that comes from them. For years, musical instruments have also been used for another job. They have helped to send important signals or messages. A long trumpet blast might tell an army that the enemy is about to attack. A fast song played on a bugle tells sleeping soldiers that it's time to get up.

Different instruments give different messages playing different notes. Listen to me play my instrument, and see if you can figure out what the message is. (Begin to play your instrument without the mouthpiece.) After failing to make a distinct and pleasant sound, comically ask: Does anyone know what that

Using the references above, guide students through the salvation message that all people need to hear.

Memorize Bible Verse

Use your favorite translation to teach and rehearse:

Topic: The Bible Reaches My Friends

Reference: Esther 4:14

Suggested Memory Activity:

Circle Build Up

Tell the students you are going to play a game with the verse. Have them gather in pairs or in circles. Practice the memory verse in this manner: The first person says the first word of the verse. The second person says the first and second word. The next student adds another word, and so on. Be sure to attach the reference to the verse, as well.

message was? I think it meant that I forgot my mouthpiece!

As you take your time searching for the mouthpiece, describe the mouthpiece and its importance. Explain that you can never send out a clear message without a mouthpiece. Locate the mouthpiece and put it in place, saying: Now that I have my mouthpiece in the right place, I can give my message. (Sound a loud note or two.) And what message is my instrument giving? That it's time for a story from the Word of God!

Explore Scripture

Either tell the story of Esther in your own words or read the following account:

Esther lived far away from her homeland. She was an Israelite, or Jew, but she did not live in Israel. In fact, her parents had never lived in Israel either. Even her grandparents probably never saw the land of Israel. Many years before Esther was born, the Jewish people were forced to leave their beautiful homeland and live in another country. Esther was born in a country called Persia. Even though Esther lived in Persia all her life, it never really seemed like home. This is because Esther was raised to obey Jewish laws and customs and worship the God of Israel, the only true God. But Persians had many different customs and worshiped many false gods. Because of their differences, some Persians didn't like Jews.

Ask students to describe how they think Esther may have felt being raised differently than many of the children around her. Discuss "fitting in."

When Esther was very young, her parents died. The sad, little girl could not take care of herself, so she moved in with a cousin who would care for her. This cousin was much older and seemed more like an uncle to Esther. His name was Mordecai and Esther grew to love him very much. Mordecai provided a safe and loving home for her. Esther grew into a beautiful young lady. Mordecai was very proud of her.



• Queen Esther's people were in danger. But she knew that if she spoke up to help them, she would be in danger.

If you were Queen Esther, what would you have done?

Though it would be very hard, I would do what God asked of me.



What did God do when Esther spoke up for her friends? **Evil was blocked and her friends were saved.**

Draw a line from each reason some Christians are afraid to tell their friends about Jesus to the picture that completes it.

Maybe their friends will...

They are afraid their friends will ask...

What if their friends just won't...



Using the story of Esther, help students see themselves as God's mouthpieces to their friends.

One day, the king of Persia became very upset with his queen. He was so upset that he decided to take the crown from her and give it to another woman who would be a better queen. But how does a king find a new queen? He decided to have young women from all over the kingdom brought to the palace. After meeting them, the king would choose his new queen.

So, many Persian women were brought to the palace where they were trained and made ready to meet the king. Esther was one of these women. No one knew that she was Jewish because Mordecai had told her to keep that a secret. Whom do you think the king chose to be his new queen? That's right, Esther became queen.

Become God's Instrument

God wants to use you to tell your friends about Him. Here are some ideas to help you get His message to them. Check the ones that you can do. Then write an idea of your own.

- Tell a friend what Jesus did for you.
- Give a Bible or a book about Jesus to a friend as a gift.
- Offer to give a friend a ride to church or to another Christian activity.
- Listen to Christian music while you play together.
- Invite a friend over to watch a Christian video that tells how to know Jesus.
- Your idea:



Name a friend that you can do one of these things with.



The Bible Reaches My Friends

Esther 4:14



friends, family, and relatives might be destroyed?

No words could describe just how sad Mordecai and the rest of the Jewish people in the kingdom felt. They tore their clothes. They put on sackcloth and poured ashes on their heads to show how terrible they felt. They prayed. They stopped eating. They cried and cried. Esther heard how sad Mordecai and her people were, and she wondered what was wrong. Mordecai sent a message explaining Haman's plan. He asked Esther to speak to the king and beg him to show mercy to the Jewish people.

Now Esther faced difficult problem. It was against the law to go to the king without being called. The punishment for doing this was death. She knew that the only way she would be allowed to live was if the king were glad to see her. But he hadn't called for her in thirty days. Esther was so afraid! She didn't want to die. Mordecai believed that God wanted to use Esther as His mouthpiece. He told her that maybe this was the reason God had put her in the palace and made her queen. Esther thought and thought. Should she risk her own life to try to save others? (Encourage responses.)

Tell students that sin is destroying many peoples' lives. God wants to use them as mouthpieces. If they will speak up with His message about Jesus' love and forgiveness, He will use them to save people. Why don't some Christians speak up? What could happen if they don't speak God's message?

Esther did go to the king. As she stood in the entrance of the throne room, she waited to see what the king would do. Slowly, he raised his royal scepter toward her. This meant he was pleased to see her! Esther was able to tell the king about Haman's plan to destroy all the Jewish people in the kingdom. Because she brought this message to the king, her people were saved.

Have students complete pages 17 and 18 of their student workbooks.

Discuss how Esther might have felt. Probe students' thoughts about why God put Esther in this position. Explain that God had a purpose for putting her in the exact place He wanted her. God was putting His mouthpiece in place so that He could deliver a very important message.

The king's most powerful officer was an evil man named Haman.

Haman hated the Jewish people. He tricked the king into ordering all the Jews in the kingdom to be killed. Remember that neither Haman nor the king knew that Queen Esther herself was Jewish. Can you imagine how Mordecai felt when he found out about Haman's wicked plan? What would you do if you heard that all your

Inspire Action

Esther decided that her message was so important that she was willing to risk her life to give it. Ask students why their message from God is so important. Briefly discuss the elements of God's message of salvation. Tell them that the message is found in the Bible. Page 19 of the student workbook will get them thinking of ways they can share that message with others. Before praying together, remove the mouthpiece from your instrument once more. Show them again how the message is silent without the mouthpiece. Holding up the mouthpiece, remind them that they are God's mouthpieces. If they share the Good News about Jesus with their friends, they will hear the message that can save them. Play one final steady note on the instrument.

Pray for Life-Change

Reflect with the children about their various environments, especially in school, in activities with other kids, and in their neighborhoods. Help them to identify their opportunities—not just to speak up for Jesus, but to lead others to Him.


Pray that your students will have a heart for friends who don't know Jesus yet. Ask God to lay on their hearts the friends He wants to reach through them. Pray that He will give them both an opening to share and the loving confidence to speak up about Jesus to their friends.

Pray for the personal requests of students. Encourage children to voice their prayer concerns. Be sure to pray for each one.

N.T. Structure & Authors


This section will help your students understand how the New Testament books fit together. They will also identify who wrote each New Testament book.

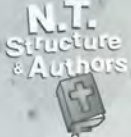
Review the five history books. Explain that the four Gospels are different accounts of Jesus' life



✓ I have read Daniel 5.
Match the words of the message with Daniel's interpretation (see Daniel 5:25-28).

MENE	TEKEL	PERES		You have failed God's test.	Your land is given to others.	God will end your reign.
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History books tell about what God has done in the past.

The first four history books are called **Gospels**. The **Gospels** tell about the life of Jesus.


The Book of **Acts** is the other New Testament history book.

Acts tells about what happened in the early Church.
(Say the name of each book and the person who wrote it aloud.)

Author Key

★ = name of book and author is the same

L = written by Luke



Encourage students to complete this page before the next lesson.

written by four different people who lived when He did.

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1. Snack Idea

(10-15 minutes)

Serve orange slices or sections.

2. "Hidden People" Profile

Most people would have fun handing out hundred-dollar bills to poor people on the street. Yet, every Christian has the opportunity to do something infinitely more valuable than handing out money. Through the message of the Gospel, we have the opportunity to distribute eternal life! Jesus had a passion to spread His grace and told us to preach the Gospel to all people (Mark 16:15).

The World Changers packet gives you an opportunity to open your students' eyes to this great need. It includes profiles about three hidden (unreached) people groups. Encourage students to participate in activities from the profiles, to help them comprehend Jesus' love for people everywhere. Suggestion: Focus on one people group during lessons 1-4, another during lessons 5-8, and the third in lessons 9-12.

3. Gospel Role Play

(20-30 minutes)

Have the children practice sharing and receiving the Good News about Jesus. They can use a Gospel bracelet or a wordless book to help them through a presentation. Demonstrate the process in front of the class, then allow them to practice in pairs.

4. Make A Gospel Bracelet

(25-30 minutes)

From a craft store, purchase enough leather lace for each student to make a bracelet. About six inches for each should be enough. Also get a set of colored beads for each student. Have them make bracelets with the materials and put the beads in a specific order to help them share the Gospel. Teach them that each of the colored beads has the following meaning:

- Green: God created all life to be good.
- Black (or Scarlet): People ruined their lives by disobedience, and their hearts became sinful.
- Red: Jesus died for our sins and rose again to forgive us.
- White: When we receive God's gift of salvation, He cleans our hearts and gives us a new life.
- Blue: The Holy Spirit fills our hearts to guide us in a holy life.
- Gold: One day we will go to heaven and walk on the streets paved with gold.

Challenge the students to wear the bracelet this week and watch for opportunities to share the message. They can simply start the conversation by asking: "Do you know what each of these beads means?" "Do you want me to tell you the greatest secret in the world?"

(Note: Call your local Christian bookstore to see if they sell Gospel bracelet kits.)

5. Gospel Bag

(10-15 minutes)

This is a derivative of the Gospel bracelet exercise above. Have students gather together items of the same colors as the bracelet and have them use those items to share the Good News. (Examples: a green leaf, a scarlet or black ribbon, a red piece of paper, a white piece of cloth, a pen filled with blue ink, a gold ring.)

Teacher Tip

The test of learning is not what a student can recite back to the teacher. It is a changed heart lived out in everyday life—the goal is for the character of Jesus to shine ever brighter through the students. God will do His part in this process!

6. Thank You Cards

(15-20 minutes)

Provide colored paper, pens and a model card to help students write a thank you card to the person who shared the Gospel with them. The model might go something like this:

Dear _____,

You were the first person to tell me about Jesus, and because of you, I have trusted Him as my Savior. Thank you for pointing me to Jesus. That's the best thing anyone has ever done for me. I'll never forget you!

Love,

(Note: This is only a model and should be read to the students as an example. Encourage them to use their own words in their thank you card.)

Supply Checklist

General Supplies:

- Bibles, student workbooks
- pencils or pens
- "Hidden People" Profiles

Spark Interest

- a musical instrument with a removable mouthpiece (trumpet, recorder, flute, etc.)