

AMO[®]
TEACHER GUIDE
AND RESOURCES

BOOKS OF RUTH
AND ESTHER

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Mary Britt, Illustrator

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- Vocabulary Cards
- Memory Verse Cards
- Parent Prayer and Blessing Cards
- Esther Wellspring Presentation

Books of Ruth and Esther

Reading for Reasoning Overview

Lesson	Reading	Principle	Vocabulary	Memory Verse	Record
1	Student: Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7-12	God fashioned woman in His image, which bestows dignity and worth upon her.	Imago Dei	I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well (Psalm 139:14).	Ruth and Esther title page Imago Dei graphic organizer
2	Student: Genesis 2:15-25	Man and woman have equal value but have unique and different roles in life.	role		Imago Dei graphic organizer
3	Student: Proverbs 31:10-20	Biblical femininity flows from the heart of the woman who radiates the beauty of Christ.	femininity	Your beauty should not come from outward adornment . . . Rather it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:3, 4, NIV).	Biblical Femininity graphic organizer
4	Student: Proverbs 31:21-31	Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but the woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.	vain		Biblical Femininity graphic organizer
5	Teacher: Ruth Overview Student: Ruth 1:1-5	God's eternal plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind included both Jew and Gentile.	redemption	"Where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16b).	Ruth title page Overview of Ruth graphic organizer
6	Student: Ruth 1:6-18	God's people radiate His light and the knowledge of Him to those who do not know Him.	radiate		Overview of Ruth graphic organizer

Lesson	Reading	Principle	Vocabulary	Memory Verse	Record
7	Student: Ruth 1:19-2:7	Our lives are the outworking of God's eternal purpose to which He has called us and provided victory even in the most trying times.	called	"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap" (Luke 6:38a).	Portrait of Naomi graphic organizer
8	Student: Ruth 2:8-17	The measure with which we give to others is the measure we will receive in return.	generosity		Portrait of Boaz graphic organizer
9	Student: Ruth 2:18-3:5	Boaz was a type of Jesus Christ, the eternal Kinsman Redeemer of all who believe.	type	Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14).	Portrait of Boaz graphic organizer
10	Student: Ruth 3:6-18	A woman of virtuous character is a model of biblical femininity.	virtuous		Portrait of Ruth graphic organizer
11	Student: Ruth 4:1-10	A man of virtuous character is a model of biblical manhood.	character	"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart" (Luke 6:45).	Portrait of Ruth and Boaz graphic organizers
12	Student: Ruth 4:11-22	Jesus, the Messiah, has both Jew and Gentile in His earthly family lineage. God purposed in eternity that salvation and redemption were for all who believe.	Messiah		Messianic Lineage graphic organizer

Books of Ruth and Esther

Reading for Reasoning Overview

(continued)

Lesson	Reading	Principle	Vocabulary	Memory Verse	Record
13	Teacher: Overview of Esther Student: Esther 1:1-12	In God's providence, He calls, prepares, and uses both individuals and nations to forward Christ, His Story, the Gospel.	providence	For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).	Esther title page Overview of Esther graphic organizer
14	Student: Esther 1:13-22	Submission for a Christian is based on a reverence for God and a respect for those in authority over him or her.	submission		Portrait of King Xerxes graphic organizer
15	Student: Esther 2:1-11 Teacher: Esther 2:12-18	When truth and kindness guide our words and actions, we attain favor with God and man.	favor	Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart (Proverbs 3:3).	Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizer
16	Student: Esther 2:19-3:6 Teacher: Esther 3:8-15	He who seeks good, seeks favor; but evil will come to the one who seeks it.	evil		Portrait of Haman graphic organizer
17	Teacher: Esther 4:1-8 Student: Esther 4:9-17	God positions those whom He has called and prepared, but each one must choose whom he will serve.	choose	Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).	Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizer
18	Student: Esther 5	God quickly brings about justice for His people who cry to Him day and night.	justice		God's Providence graphic organizer

Lesson	Reading	Principle	Vocabulary	Memory Verse	Record
19	Student: Esther 6	God exalts the humble and brings low the proud.	humble	Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).	Portrait of Haman graphic organizer
20	Student: Esther 7	God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.	cause		Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizer
21	Student: Esther 8:1-10 Teacher: Esther 8:11-17	God is the sovereign ruler over all individuals and nations.	sovereign	The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation (Psalm 33:11).	Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizer
22	Teacher: Esther 9:1-11 Student: Esther 9:12-19	When God delivers His people, mourning gives way to joy and gladness.	deliver		Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizer
23	Student: Esther 9:20-32 Teacher: Esther 10	God commanded that history be recorded so His people would remember His wondrous acts and celebrate His love and mercy.	celebrate	We celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness (Psalm 145:7).	God's Providence graphic organizer
24	<p>Celebrate the Feast of Purim</p> <p><i>So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants (Esther 9:28).</i></p>				

Books of Ruth and Esther

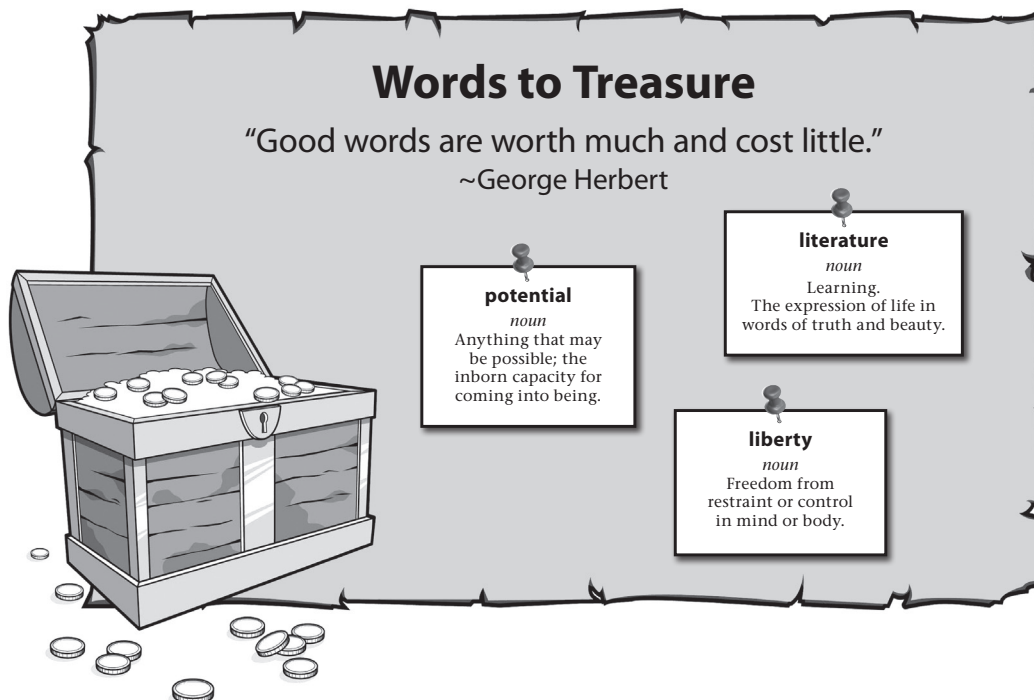
Treasure Chest of Words

Words are the keys that unlock the treasure chest of ideas!



Words are the building blocks of ideas. Man cannot think without words. As Christians, we need a noble and biblical vocabulary that will guide our reasoning and decision making, as well as our ability to communicate in the marketplace and persuade others with our words of faith, just as Jesus and the apostle Paul did in the first century. Words are spirit, Jesus said (John 6:63). Words have the power to create or destroy (Proverbs 18:21). Through the study of the Word of God, a child's vocabulary is greatly enhanced as you, the teacher or reader, mediate the language and begin using the words to create new realities (Numbers 14:28).

Following are the Key Student Vocabulary Words from the reading lessons of the books of Ruth and Esther. Definitions are taken from many dictionaries. They are to be used in the curriculum by pinning the Key Word that you have printed for each lesson onto the Treasure Chest Bulletin Board. Leave all the words on the bulletin board until the next lesson—the Bible reading word, the literature word, and the Christian history word. We have printed ours on card stock, but plain paper works just as well. Use these words throughout the weeks as you speak to the children. Help build the children's thinking and reasoning skills by asking them to include these words in their conversation and as they answer questions.



Words to Treasure

"Good words are worth much and cost little."
~George Herbert

potential
noun
Anything that may be possible; the inborn capacity for coming into being.

literature
noun
Learning.
The expression of life in words of truth and beauty.

liberty
noun
Freedom from restraint or control in mind or body.

The bulletin board features a central title, a quote by George Herbert, and three pinned cards with definitions for 'potential', 'literature', and 'liberty'. To the left is an illustration of an open treasure chest filled with coins, with several coins scattered on the floor in front of it.

Words to Treasure

1. **Imago-Dei** (n.) “Image of God” in Latin; the biblical principle that man and woman are created in God’s image and both mirror and represent God.
2. **role** (n.) The purpose or influence of someone in a particular situation.
3. **femininity** (n.) Qualities and traits traditionally associated with a woman or a girl.
4. **vain** (adj.) Conceited; having a high opinion of one’s beauty or accomplishments.
5. **redemption** (n.) The deliverance of sinners from the bondage of sin and the penalties of God’s violated law on the basis of the obedience and shed blood of Christ.
6. **radiate** (v.) 1). To shine or issue rays of light. 2) To enlighten; to illuminate.
7. **called** (adj.) Summoned or appointed for a particular duty.
8. **generosity** (n.) A quality of the heart motivating a person to give liberally or to bestow favors.
9. **type** (n.) A sign; a symbol; a figure of something to come; as the paschal lamb was a type of Christ.
10. **virtuous** (adj.) Acting and speaking in conformity to moral goodness from a sincere love of God and His laws.
11. **character** (n.) The internal moral and mental qualities, impressed by habit, that distinguish an individual.
12. **Messiah** (n.) The Anointed One; the Christ.
13. **providence** (n.) The continual care and guidance God provides His creatures as part of His plan and purpose.
14. **submission** (n.) Obedience; the act of voluntarily yielding to the authority and governance of another.
15. **favor** (n.) An act of gracious kindness shown by word or deed.
16. **evil** (n.) That which is morally wrong in principle and practice, according to God’s laws.
17. **choose** (v.) To select; to decide to act in a certain way.
18. **justice** (n.) Conformity to moral rightness in action or attitude.
19. **humble** (adj.) Lowly, modest, meek, or submissive.
20. **cause** (v.) 1) To bring into existence; to produce. 2) To effect by power or influence.
21. **sovereign** (adj.) Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion over all.
22. **deliver** (v.) To free; to set at liberty, as to deliver one from captivity or bondage.
23. **celebrate** (v.) To praise, extol, or honor by ceremonies and marks of joy and respect.

Using the Binder

Overview

The notebook approach,¹ developed by Rosalie Slater co-founder of the Foundation for American Christian Education, employs the four natural or biblical steps of learning: *research, reason, relate* and *record*. This is an old method of reflective study, one used by many of the world's greatest thinkers and writers throughout history. It is as old as God instructing Moses to "write in a book what He was saying to him and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua." (Exodus 17:14) God has always placed great value on the written word and written records, of which there are hundreds of references in the Bible.

The notebook approach is both a biblical tool for teaching and learning, as well as a method for guiding reflection and reasoning with truth. It introduces the teacher and student to the study of the subject through the nature and character of God as the author of that subject, and it lays the foundation for thinking and reasoning with the life and truth of God's Word. It opens the subject through its vocabulary and biblical principles and enlightens the pathway of thinking and reasoning to guide the student toward mastery of the subject. The notebook approach cultivates strong writers, Christian scholarship and character, and a permanent record of learning for teachers, students and parents to evaluate and reference over and over again. The student produces his own "book of remembrance." (Malachi 3:16) Over time, this method liberates the student to become an independent learner who is able to take responsibility for his own education and give an account.

In the AMO Program, both teacher and students need a ringed binder with four dividers marked:

1. Literature
2. History

3. Reading
4. The Arts

A title page is made and filed in the front of the binder, and a title page is made for each component.

Instructions for how to use the Lesson Plan Format follow. They will enable both teacher and student to derive the greatest benefit of the notebook method.

Objectives

1. Introduce the notebook approach and the four steps of natural learning for a permanent record of study in the AMO Program.
2. Develop the lifelong habits of personal study, reflection, recording principles and reasoning in both teacher and children.
3. Build Christian imaginations and consecrated minds for fresh vision, renewed thinking, and biblical reasoning.

AMO's Lesson Plan Components

The top portion of the Lesson Plan contains the following:




1. **Time:** This component indicates the length of time for the lesson. It is based on AMO's weekly schedule. You can alter this to suit your program.
2. **Reading:** This component relates the reading assignment. In the history and literature components, the teacher reads aloud. In literature, the whole classic is read aloud to the children. Do not let them read it. The teacher should read with animation and know the vocabulary before reading the classic. In the Bible Reading lessons, the children read aloud.
3. **Review:** All good lessons begin by reviewing the principle and the main idea or theme of the last lesson. Ask the children if they can remember the principle from the last lesson. If no one

¹ Slater, R. (1965). *Teaching and learning America's Christian history: The principle approach*. San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education.




can remember, ask them to turn in their binders to the record of the last lesson or point to the Key Vocabulary Word for that lesson located on the bulletin board to help them recall.



4. **Goal of the Lesson:** This is the primary target of the lesson and what the children should understand at its conclusion. The student vocabulary word, the principle and Scripture, as well as the reasoning questions are all directed toward the goal of the lesson.
5. **Principle:** Each lesson is governed and guided by a biblical principle, which lays truth as the foundation and provides structure for teaching the whole lesson. This is antithetical to most teaching methods, which either require children to memorize information and parrot back the “right” answer or “entertain” them.
6. **Scripture:** Each principle is undergirded with a biblical reference. The Word of God is alive. (Hebrews 4:12) It not only produces life in the teacher’s spirit and in the lesson plan, but it illumines and guides the children’s thinking, reasoning, and application of the principle to their own lives.

The remainder of the Lesson Plan is divided into two columns. The left column is for edifying the teacher and the right column is for engaging the students.

1.  **Teacher Vocabulary:** Difficult words and key words are defined biblically for the teacher’s enlightenment and for use with older students and adult literacy programs.
2.  **Preparation to Teach:** These are the instructions for preparation as well as the tools and supplies teachers must gather before entering the classroom to teach.
3.  **Teaching Plan:** This is the subject content of the lesson to build the teacher’s confidence. Generally, everything he or she needs for teaching the lesson is provided and should be reviewed before teaching the lesson. It contains all the elements that he or she will need to teach the lesson to the children. NOTE: Background information and often a great deal of content for the TEACHER’S EDIFICATION are provided. The teacher is NOT to read all of this material to the children. It is there to provide information and enrichment to the teacher, as

he or she works with the principle and the reasoning with the children.

4.  **Key Vocabulary Word:** Every lesson has a student vocabulary word that relates to the principle and the goal of the lesson. This word, which is printed on card stock and pinned to the “Treasury of Words” bulletin board each day, should be emphasized in each lesson. Use this word in your teaching and encourage the children to learn its meaning and use it in their conversation. Remove the vocabulary card from the board in the next class period and store in the Treasure Chest and pin up the new word from the lesson. Many teachers print out a copy of each word and have the children file in their binders. If you are using this in an academic setting, you can have the students put a divider in their binders marked “Vocab” and they can copy the word and the definition into their binders. They can be tested on the vocabulary definitions and are certainly encouraged to use these words in their writing and in their verbal communication.
5.  **Reason Questions:** Reason questions are provided to guide biblical reasoning and oral discussions and to help children relate the principle or theme of the lesson to their own lives. In an academic setting, this can be assigned as written class work or as homework.
6.  **Notebook Record:** Everything the children copy onto their graphic organizers is found in the lesson plan. The teacher writes these phrases on the chalkboard, and the children copy them onto their graphic organizers. In literature the graphic organizers are based on the settings, characterizations and themes in the classic. The phrases are the author’s words, which is why they have quotation marks around them. In other subjects, the notebook record contains the essence of the lesson so the children have a permanent record of what they are learning. For the academic setting, older children can find additional phrases to write on these graphic organizers. These phrases are helpful when assigning composition work. Have the children open their binders to the appropriate graphic organizer so they can use the phrases and vocabulary words to inspire and guide their descriptive or expository writing.

7.  **Oral Work:** This is a summary of the lesson that was taught to the children, that the teacher says and the students repeat out loud before the close of the lesson. It reinforces the principle that undergirds the lesson.
8.  **Memory Verse:** There is one Scripture verse for the children to memorize every two lessons. Post the Memory Verse Card on the bulletin board and drill the verse with the children throughout the day. Keep a record of their ability to memorize each verse and acknowledge and reward those who do a good job at the end of the lessons.

Other components that accompany the Lesson Plan:

1. **Graphic Organizers:** These are designed to organize and limit the amount of writing children must do in an after school, Sunday school or literacy program. Some children are illiterate and unable to write. These children will still have a record of learning with the coloring pages provided. All the children will build their language skills. If you are using this program in an academic setting, you can assign more note taking by writing the content being taught on the chalkboard and having your students copy into their binders.

Graphic organizers for the literature units are designed to record these literary elements:

Characterizations: Four or five of the main characters in the classic are chosen to study in depth. They soon learn that God looks at the internal man (1 Samuel 16:7) and that the internal is causal, it gives rise to the external. *As a man thinks within himself, so he is (Proverbs 23:7).* This helps children examine their own character.

- **Internal:** Record the internal qualities of the heart, mind, soul, attitudes, will, and spirit **using the words of the author.**

- **External:** Record the physical features of the literary character **using the words of the author.**

Setting: The main setting(s) of each classic has been chosen, and if actual geographic settings are in the classic, such as the Swiss Alps and Frankfurt, Germany settings found in *Heidi*, the children complete map work and study the culture of the settings.

Theme: This is the message the author conveys. Each classic is different. *Heidi* has many themes.

2. **Vocabulary Card:** The Key Vocabulary Word, which is defined Biblically, is printed on this card and pinned onto the “Treasury of Words” bulletin board where it remains until the next lesson. All cards are stored in the Treasure Chest of Words, so the children will soon learn that words provide a treasury of wisdom and understanding.
3. **Coloring Pages:** Beautiful coloring pages have been created by talented illustrators for the delight and enrichment of the children. Have the children use colored pencils to color them. Pencils produce beautiful pages for the children to cherish. Many children are visual learners, so they will glean many details of the story from the coloring pages. These become part of their permanent record and are filed in their binders.
4. **Memory Verse Cards:** This card holds the weekly Bible verse from the Bible Reading lesson to be memorized by the children. It is printed and pinned onto the “Treasury of Words” bulletin board.
5. **Parent Prayer and Blessing Cards:** These cards are part of the Bible Reading lesson plans. One set is printed weekly for each child to take home to his parents so they can pray and bless their children every day.

Suggested Assignments for the Academic Setting

1. Write introductory facts and inspiring information from the lesson plans on the chalkboard and have the students copy into their binders on a sheet of paper labeled "Introduction" for each component studied. (i.e.: historic and literary background of the book being studied; author of the book; literary background, genre, and elements of the classic being studied; timeline of key events, key individuals, and key documents in the Christian history units; etc.)
2. Have students create a divider labeled "Vocabulary" and insert in their AMO® binders for each component studied. On a sheet of notebook paper, have them copy the daily "Key Vocabulary Word" and its definition. After they have copied the word, have them write a sentence using the new vocabulary word.

Hold students responsible for the correct spelling of the word, its definition, and the ability to use the word accurately in a sentence on quizzes and on the final examination.
3. Have students create a divider labeled "Principles" and insert in their AMO® binders for each component studied. Have them write out the daily principle and then write a paraphrase as classroom work or as homework. Ask them to apply the principle to their own lives, as well. Be certain to read each one and make comments.
4. Have students create a divider labeled "Memory Verses" in the AMO® Bible reading component and insert in their AMO® binders. On a sheet of notebook paper, have them copy the weekly memory verse. Ask them to paraphrase it and apply its truth to their own lives.
5. Have students create a divider labeled "Reason and Relate" and insert in their AMO® binders for each component studied. Write the "Reason Questions" found on the lesson plan (and any you would like to add) on the chalkboard. Have students copy the questions onto a sheet of notebook paper and write out their answers in complete sentences either during class or for homework. Correct, grade, and return them to the students to be filed in their binders. Discuss some of the inspired answers.
6. Create writing assignments from the literary phrases and information the students record on their graphic organizers, such as:

Write two paragraphs that describe the Swiss Alps. Use as many of Johanna Spyri's beautiful phrases as possible. You may use your notes from class.

Contrast life in the Swiss mountains with life in the German city, Frankfurt.

Describe the individuality of Switzerland.

Compare and contrast the internal and external characters of Heidi and Peter.
7. Prepare students for all final examinations by seeing that their binders are complete and in order and by reviewing the principles, historic events and individuals, and literary elements of the classic. Take class time to do this collectively.
8. After the final examination, collect and grade each student's binder, and average his binder grade with his other academic assignments. The binder grade reflects the student's character, not his academic achievement.
9. Sample Heidi Final Exam (3rd grade and above/ age 8+): Be certain to write in complete sentences.

Why is the Bible the highest model of language and literature?

Who was the author of Heidi? Write two sentences that describe her individuality.

Write the definition for each of these vocabulary words:

literature	friendship
conscience	providence
individuality	virtue
prudence	principle
repentant	reason (v.)

Label the map of Switzerland using the names found on the legend.

Write a descriptive paragraph about life in the Swiss Alps in the late 1800s. Tell why you would or would not have wanted to live there.

Compare and contrast the internal and external characters of Heidi and Peter.

What were Heidi's most distinctive character qualities? Why did everyone like her? How did Heidi overcome life as an orphan?

Why did the author describe Uncle Alm as the "Prodigal Son?" Tell what happened to him in the story.

Paraphrase this principle from chapter 10: "Being able to read brings great liberty to one's life."

Extra credit: Sketch your favorite scene from the classic Heidi in the space provided.

10. Sample Proverbs Final Exam (3rd grade and above/age 8+):

Using complete sentences, describe four attributes of God's Word, the Bible.

Write the definition for each of these vocabulary words:

gospel	integrity
proverb	honor
discern	character
wisdom	diligent
folly	leader

Who wrote the Book of Proverbs? Tell why this book is so important for a young person to meditate upon.

Contrast the wise child and the foolish child in the following areas of daily life:

- Listening
- The words of one's mouth
- Making friends
- Making decisions
- Work habits

List three qualities of a godly leader.

List three qualities of a godly woman.

Paraphrase the following principle, "The conduct of a young child builds the man or woman."

Extra credit: Write out two of your favorite memory verses from the Book of Proverbs.

As teachers work with our AMO® lesson plans, you will be inspired to create your own reflective writing assignments. **Remember, handling the noble vocabulary of the subject, reasoning with the principles, and daily writing assignments produce mastery of the subject.** The sooner children are taught the rudiments of composition (which should begin in kindergarten/first grade), they should be writing in every subject every day by the third grade.

Remember: You cannot ask children to write a descriptive paragraph if you haven't taught your students the rudiments of writing a descriptive paragraph. The same principle goes with comparing and contrasting two items or characters. The teacher has to teach the rudiments of all the various forms of composition and then have their students practice, practice, practice. Writing is not a gift from God that some are blessed to have and others are not blessed. Writing is a skill best learned as a young child in order to form lifelong manners and habits of excellence in Christian scholarship. This produces Christian thinkers and leaders in every field of endeavor. By employing the notebook method, teachers will eventually become confident to develop and write their own curriculum. This method produces writers and Christian thinkers among teachers, as well.

For additional help, email info@amoprogram.com.



**BIBLE READING FOR
REASONING LESSON PLANS**

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet

And a light unto my path.

~ PSALM 119:105 ~

RUTH AND ESTHER

1

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7-15

Principle: God fashioned woman in His image, which bestows dignity and worth upon her.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

complement (n.) Something added that brings completion.

culture (n.) 1) Civilization. 2) The set of ideas, customs, morals, and traditions that express the totality of a particular society's human work and thought. (v.) To cultivate or grow.

dignity (n.) The quality or state of being worthy of esteem and honor.

identity (n.) 1) Sameness of essential or generic character in different instances. 2) Individuality; the distinguishing character or personality of an individual.

initiator (n.) One who begins; one who sets into motion by taking the first step.

role (n.) The purpose or influence of someone or something in a particular situation.

steward (v.) To manage or care for the property of another.

woman (n.) The female of the human race; "out of man"; "man with a womb."

worth (n.) 1) Value; the quality that renders something or someone important. 2) Excellence; virtue; usefulness.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read the instructions for the closing festival (Ruth and Esther lesson plan 24) so you can begin planning your celebration.
2. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Be certain to understand them in the context of this lesson.
3. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

STUDENT



Key Word:

Imago-Dei (n.) "Image of God" in Latin; the biblical principle that man and woman are created in God's image and both mirror and represent God.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passages silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How did God create man? In whose image was man created?
2. Where did God place man after He had created him, and what was man's role?
3. What does "Imago-Dei" mean?
4. In whose image were you made? What does that say about you?
5. Identify your valuable and worthy attributes.

Principle: God fashioned woman in His image, which bestows dignity and worth upon her.

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. In it we learn how God created everything in the universe. God's last act of creation was the creation of woman:

Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them (Genesis 1:26, 27).

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said,

*"This is now bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh.
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:21-23).*

What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:4-6).

God proclaimed that all His creation was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). God created both male and female in His image ("Imago Dei"). Imago-Dei is the doctrine that asserts that both man and woman have equal value and identity apart from their God-given function or role. To be made in the image of God is to possess divinely endowed attributes that have great value. As image bearers, both man and woman possess an immortal spirit and are gifted with qualities that reflect the very nature and character of God. Man's and woman's dignity and significance emanate from their reflection of Imago Dei.

Human life is both sacred and significant: *sacred* because of who we are (Imago-Dei) and *significant* because God made us for His unique purpose and eternal plan.

God created man and woman with equal value but with unique biological differences and roles. These differences cause man and woman to complement one another. When God created Adam, He placed him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and steward it. (This is what is meant by building culture. *Cultivate* and *culture* have the same Latin root word: *cult*, which means "to till or to dwell." Read Psalm 8.) But, alas, Adam was lonely and needed a companion and a helper to cultivate the land and build a culture that would glorify God. So God fashioned woman from the rib of Adam



Notebook Record:

1. Write your name and date on your Ruth and Esther title page. Color the image with your colored pencils and file in your binder.
2. Record the following on your Imago-Dei graphic organizer:

Man:

- Created by God from the dust of the ground
- Initiator
- Ruler and governor
- Protector
- Co-builder of culture



Memory Verse:

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well (Psalm 139:14).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

to be his helpmate. She was lovely. She looked different from Adam, and God purposed a different role for her from that of Adam.

Man's role or function is to serve as the "head"—the one who initiates, rules or governs, and protects; the loving servant-leader of his wife and children. Woman's function is to serve as the "heart"—the one who helps, guides, bears children, and nurtures; the loving, respectful helper of her husband and nurturer of their children. God, or *Imago-Dei*, is both. Together, the man's and woman's roles complement each other's, and these roles provided all that Adam and Eve needed to co-cultivate the garden and co-build culture with God.

4. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, Ruth and Esther title pages, Imago-Dei graphic organizers, the memory verse card, and parent prayer and blessing cards.



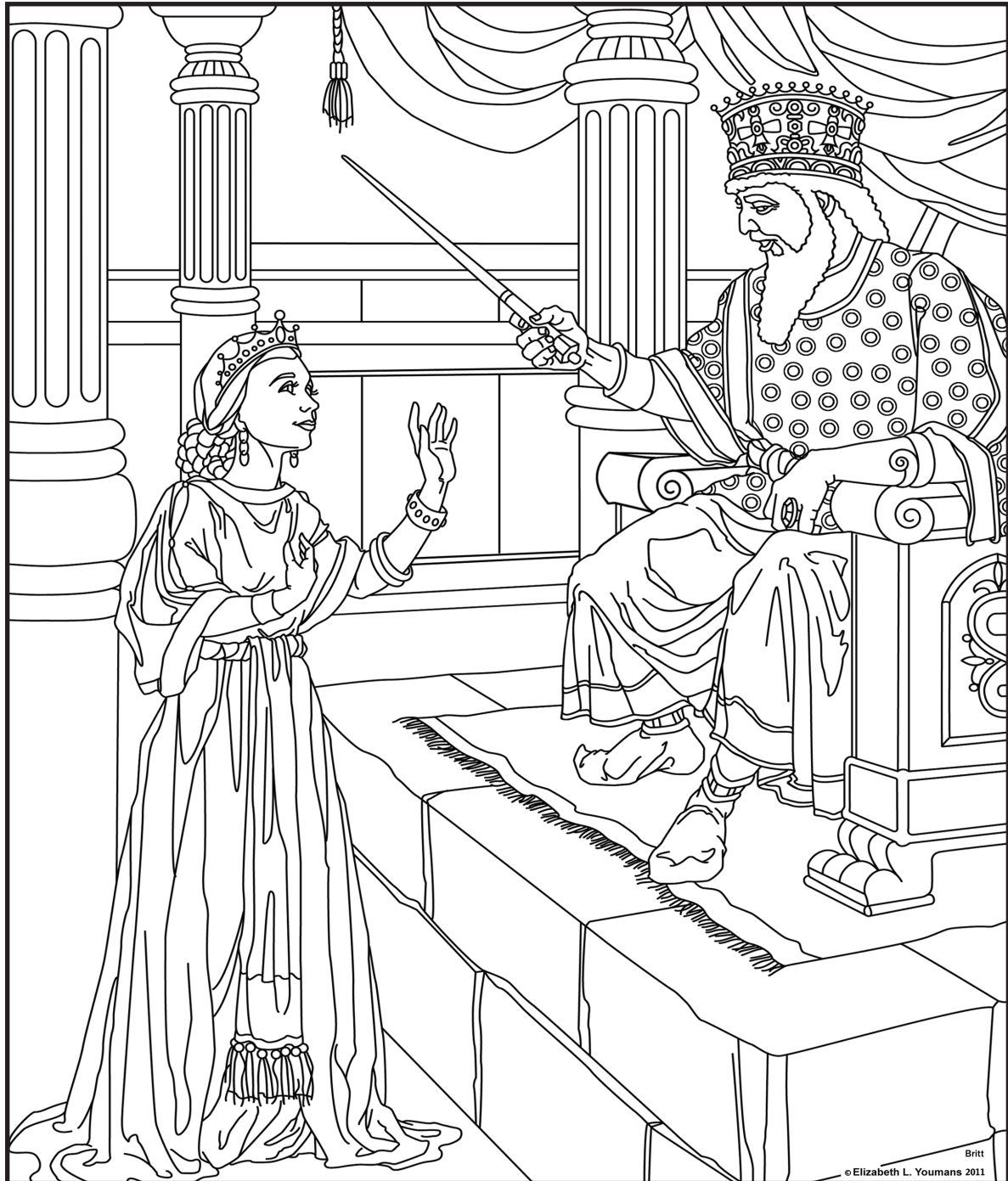
Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders and Ruth and Esther title pages. Ask the children to write their names and the date on their Ruth and Esther title page. Have them color the image and file it in their binders. Explain that this image is that of Esther and king Xerxes of Persia, taken from the second book of the Bible we will read in this unit.
3. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
4. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
5. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently (if time) and then orally.
6. Ask the reason questions and have children respond orally.
7. Have the boys and girls in the class pair up and say aloud to one another: "_____ (name the person), you are made in God's image and have great worth and value. You reflect Imago-Dei."
8. Distribute the Imago-Dei graphic organizers. Write the Imago-Dei notes for "man" on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Imago-Dei graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent prayer and blessing cards home for the week.

The Books of Ruth and Esther

NAME _____

DATE _____



“Who knows but that you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

RUTH AND ESTHER

2

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Genesis 2:15-25

Review: God fashioned woman in His image.

Principle: Man and woman have equal value but have unique and different roles in life.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

atom (n.) A unit of matter; the smallest unit of an element, consisting of a nucleus surrounded by a system of electrons.

fashion (v.) To form; to give shape or figure to; to mold.

helpmeet (n.) A helpful partner.

steward (v.) To manage and care for the property of another.

unique (adj.) One of a kind.

woman (n.) The female of the human race.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Be certain to understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: Man and woman have equal value but have unique and different roles in life.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18).

Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living (Genesis 3:20).

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2).

STUDENT



Key Word:

role (n.) The purpose or influence of someone in a particular situation.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How did God create woman?
In whose image was woman created?
2. Where did God place the woman after He had created her? What was her role?
3. What roles do man and woman share in common? How are they different?
4. If woman's role has equal value to man's role, how should women and girls be seen and treated by men and boys?
5. Describe how women and girls are viewed and treated in your culture. Is this your view as well? Explain your answer.

Both man and woman were created in God's image, which endows each with equal value and worth; however, each has unique and different roles in life. The high view of woman and the wonder of womanhood were God-given at creation according to His eternal plan and purposes.

For thousands of years women have been devalued and treated quite harshly by some men. This view is rooted in most religions around the world. Following are some examples:

- Atheists believe that women are a meaningless grouping of atoms, and that men are free to oppress and enslave them.
- Muslims view women as property to be used for man's pleasure, exploitation, and abuse.
- Hindus see women as a liability, which gives men the freedom to mistreat, abuse, and even kill them.
- Many Asian cultures have such a low view of women that unborn girls are aborted before birth or baby girls are left to die after birth.

God did not create man with this low view of women. It came about after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden. Sin caused all things to become corrupted, particularly mankind's reasoning ability. It is Jesus Christ who redeemed God's view of woman. He viewed women as having equal value with men. He never belittled, disgraced, reproached, or stereotyped women as being inferior to men. He accepted the gifts and loving service of women who offered them to Him. He imparted one of His greatest teachings to the woman at the well (John 4). While no other rabbi of Jesus' day is known to have included women among his disciples, Jesus included women among His followers, even women of questionable backgrounds. In fact, it was to women that Jesus first appeared after His resurrection.

Sadly, not all Christians around the world view girls and women through this biblical, Christian lens. In many cultures men believe the lie that they are superior to women. Therefore, men look down on women and count them as being of little significance. Many Christians view the status of women according to their pagan, cultural, or tribal traditions and oppress them, treat them unfairly, and often abuse and harm them. These behaviors are the result of spiritual strongholds that must be brought down by fasting and prayer and by studying God's Word and principles for the renewing of the mind.

In nations where men are seen as superior to women, poverty abounds at every level—spiritual, physical, financial, etc. God created woman to be a partner with man in subduing and ruling the earth (Genesis 1:28). She was created to help man steward the land and build a godly culture, one that would glorify God, the Creator. She was created to nurture the health of her family and community, which



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Imago-Dei graphic organizer:

Woman:

- Fashioned by God from Adam's rib
- Helper
- Nurturer
- Household manager
- Co-builder of culture



Memory Verse:

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well (Psalm 139:14).

ultimately affects the health of her nation. (Families are the building blocks of nations.) When women are oppressed and abused, they are unable to fulfill God's purposes. God's blessings are withheld at the individual, family, community, and national levels, which produces poverty. Ideas certainly have consequences.

As Christian parents and teachers, we must first model and then train our children to respect, honor, and celebrate the glory and uniqueness of both womanhood and manhood while they are young! The biblical, Christian view of womanhood and of how to respect and honor girls and women should be taught to and applied by all youth.

God created man and woman with different roles. Since women and girls bear the marks and attributes of God's image, they are commissioned by Him to live according to the way He has designed them. In order to accomplish this, they need the love, affirmation, support, and protection of their fathers, brothers, husbands, uncles, and pastors.

3. Gather resources: Bible and student vocabulary card.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the creation account of man and woman and the meaning of "Imago-Dei."
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have children respond orally.
8. Write the Imago-Dei notes for "woman" on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have children copy onto their Imago-Dei graphic organizers. Compare man's and woman's God-given roles.
9. Before completing the lesson, have children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

3

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Proverbs 31:10-20

Review: Man and woman have equal worth but different roles in life.

Principle: Biblical femininity flows from the heart of the woman who radiates the beauty of Christ.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

beauty (n.) 1) Adornment. 2) A particular grace, feature, ornament, or quality that reflects the excellencies and virtue of the Creator God.

gentle (adj.) Kind; calm; meek; not rough, harsh, or severe.

quiet (adj.) 1) Being in a state of rest; content. 2) Peaceable; not giving offense; not exciting controversy, disorder, or trouble.

virtue (n.) 1) Moral goodness; the practice of moral duties and the abstaining from vice. 2) A particular moral excellence, such as chastity, charity, temperance, etc.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: Biblical femininity flows from the heart of the woman who radiates the beauty of Christ.

Let not your adornment be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

STUDENT



Key Word:

femininity (n.) Qualities and traits traditionally associated with a woman or a girl.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How do you define beauty?
2. Compare the way the world defines beauty and femininity with the way God has defined them in His Word.
3. If you are a young girl, describe the qualities and virtues that define your beauty.
4. If you are a young boy, describe the qualities and virtues that define the beauty of your mother and sisters.
5. From our Scripture reading today, name the qualities of the Proverbs 31 woman that describe her beauty.

God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised (Proverbs 31:30).

Thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14).

As a man thinks within himself, so he is (Proverbs 23:7).

What we believe to be true about the nature of man and woman is the foundation for how we view and judge others, as well as how we see ourselves and make our daily choices. The world looks at the outward appearance of others—their physical attributes, clothing, and material possessions—and makes a judgment about their value and worth. Sadly, many Christians do this as well. Beauty and value are not based on one's outward appearance and material wealth. We need the Christian view of womanhood and manhood. We need God's vision of what is valuable, beautiful, and worthy of praise.

God looks at our heart. He looks within at our inner man and our motivations. He examines our priorities and where we spend most of our time. It is important for young children to be taught that beauty and virtue come from within. "The King's daughter is all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13). As the Scriptures teach us, how we think about and view ourselves is how we project ourselves to others (Proverbs 23:7).

The first step to being beautiful is to invite the Lord Jesus Christ to live within our hearts. We must be born again in the Spirit and receive the beauty of the Lord within. Isaiah 61:3 relates that when we receive Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer, God turns our ashes into beauty. He takes those things in our lives that are ugly and transforms them into something worthy of praise.

The second step to being beautiful is to read and meditate upon God's Word every day and to obey His commands and precepts. As we grow in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, we become more like Jesus and thus grow more beautiful every day.

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, Biblical Femininity graphic organizers, memory verse card, and parent prayer and blessing cards.



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Biblical Femininity graphic organizer:

- Is the daughter of the living God
- Fears the Lord
- Places her home and family first
- Rises early to serve her family
- Has many profitable businesses
- Is industrious and energetic
- Gives to the poor



Memory Verse:

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment . . . Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:3, 4, NIV).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle that man and woman are equal in value but were created with different roles.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write the Biblical Femininity notes on the whiteboard or chalkboard and have children copy onto their Biblical Femininity graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent prayer and blessing cards home for the week.

RUTH AND ESTHER

4

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Proverbs 31:21-31

Review: Biblical femininity flows from the heart of the woman who radiates the beauty of Christ.

Principle: Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but the woman who fears the LORD shall be praised (Proverbs 31:30).

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

charm (n.) That which gains the affections of others; that which delights and attracts the heart.

deceitful (adj.) Given to cheating or deceiving; deliberately misleading.

emanate (v.) To proceed or flow from.

enterprise (n.) A business or project that is undertaken or attempted.

fear (v.) To reverence; to have a reverential awe.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Be certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but the woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.

The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, honor and life (Proverbs 22:4).

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their

STUDENT



Key Word:

vain (adj.) Conceited; having a high opinion of one's own beauty or accomplishments.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What is the central theme of Proverbs 31:10-31?
2. Where does the woman of virtue primarily invest her time and effort?
3. What role do her business endeavors play in her success?
4. What does our Scripture reading teach us about the virtuous and beautiful woman?
5. What character qualities define her internal beauty?

husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored (Titus 2:3-5).

The Proverbs 31 woman is a model for all women. The key to her internal beauty is the wisdom she has gleaned from knowing God and His Word. In addition, she has intentionally invested her time and talents in nurturing and serving her family and providing for their needs at home, practices that produce healthy families and ultimately healthy nations.

She conducts most of her activities from her home setting. Her various businesses are profitable, and she invests her earnings in her family and their welfare, as well as in the needy and poor around her. She cares for those who work for her as well, so that none around her are in want.

Her spirit of enterprise and her industriousness enable her financial success. She is kind, especially guarding and caring for her relationship with her husband, "for his heart trusts in her."

The blessings poured out by God on her enable her to smile at the future. She rests in His providence and diligently works and invests the gifts and talents God has bestowed upon her. Her family is a light in the community, and no doubt many come to her for advice. She enjoys a good relationship with her children, who rise up and bless her. All of these attributes and virtues provide her with the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. Let each of us make it our goal to become a model of godly virtue and internal beauty, first at home and then with the children in our AMO® Program.

3. Gather resources: Bible and student vocabulary card.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle that Biblical femininity flows from the heart of the woman who radiates the beauty of Christ.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.

6. Describe the qualities and deeds of a virtuous woman that you know personally. Write her a note or a poem and bless her with your description.



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Biblical Femininity graphic organizer:

- Sews beautiful clothes for her family
- Emanates strength and dignity
- Smiles at the future
- Teaches with wisdom and kindness
- Gains her husband's trust
- Is blessed by her children
- Is praised in the community



Memory Verse:

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment . . . Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:3, 4, NIV).

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write the Biblical Femininity notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have children copy onto their Biblical Femininity graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

Overview of Ruth

The Book of Ruth:

The book of Ruth is the third of twelve history books in the Old Testament that precede the poetical or wisdom literature. The 39 Old Testament books are placed into four groups:

- 1) The books of Moses or the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- 2) The historical books or the history of God's people, Israel: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- 3) The poetical or wisdom books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- 4) The prophetic books are divided into:
 - Major prophets (longer books): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
 - Minor prophets (shorter books): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Ruth was written for the Israelites. The events in this short book take place in Israel's history during the dark and rebellious period of the judges, and the narrative relates Israel's difficult times in the midst of this time of apostasy. A famine in Israel caused many Israelite families to immigrate to neighboring countries to find food. Such was the case of Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons, who had originally lived in Bethlehem of Judah.

Ruth is a love story, one of the most beautiful ever told. Ruth was born a Moabitess and came to know the living God through her first husband or her mother-in-law, Naomi. She became the great-grandmother of King David, the ancestor of Jesus Christ. The book of Ruth relates the beginning of the Messianic family within the Messianic nation into which Jesus the Messiah would be born over a thousand years later. This true account of kinsman-redeemer Boaz and his sacrificial love for Ruth

foreshadows the great sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, who became our Kinsman Redeemer.

God chose a beautiful pagan girl, Ruth, to be a part of the bloodline of the Messiah. This reveals God's providence and lovingkindness for those He has elected in His eternal plan for the salvation and redemption of both Jew and Gentile. How God overrules events and circumstances to His own glory is clearly visible in this great Old Testament narrative!

Ruth is the book in the Jewish Scriptures that is always read at Pentecost, the harvest festival for the Jewish people. The significance of Pentecost for Christians is, of course, different, but the original Jewish holiday was the same.

Date Written:

The exact date is unknown, but sometime between 1046 and 1011 B.C. King David is mentioned, so many Bible scholars believe this book was written during his reign.

Author:

Unknown; tradition names the prophet Samuel as the author.

Historical Background:

Remembering God's Hand in Israel's History:

1450 B.C. God miraculously delivered His people from 430 years of bondage in Egypt and birthed the nation Israel. Moses led the millions of Hebrews out of Egypt to Canaan, the Promised Land. During this time God gave Moses the Law and instructions for ritual worship, which Moses recorded for posterity. The journey to Canaan took 40 years because of the murmuring and unbelief of the Hebrews! None of the generation that murmured against God survived to enter

the Promised Land except for Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who came back with a faith-filled report.

- 1410 Joshua led the Hebrews across the Jordan River into Canaan and directed its occupation and conquest. He also governed the division of the land among the tribes of Israel. Unfortunately, the sons of Israel did not heed God's commandment to destroy all of their enemies (Deuteronomy 7:1, 2). That disobedience led them to marry pagan women and worship their gods. These practices contributed to Israel's spiritual and moral degeneration.
- 1380 After Joshua's death the Israelites were governed by a series of judges and military leaders. This was a period of Israel's history filled with disobedience, idolatry, and violence. It is said of this period that "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).
- 1150 The approximate time during which the events of Ruth took place.
- 1050 Saul was anointed by Samuel as the first king of Israel, which ended Israel's season as a theocracy.

Setting:

The geographic setting of Ruth begins in Bethlehem of Judah; moves to Moab, a neighboring pagan country to the northeast of the Dead Sea; and then returns to Bethlehem, which was located on the road to Hebron about six miles south of Jerusalem. The village was first mentioned in Ruth, and it became the birthplace of King David and eventually also that of King Jesus, the Christ. It is of providential interest to note in introducing the family of the lineage of Jesus that it is primarily in this town that the story of Ruth takes place.

The spiritual setting of the book is found in the book of Judges. During an age of idolatry and immorality, the story of Ruth unveils the godly character of both Naomi and Boaz and shows us that, despite the prevailing apostasy of the nation, there were individuals seeking to govern their lives

according to the Law of Moses. The character and piety of Boaz are exemplary. God never leaves Himself without a witness, even in the darkest of times.

Key Characters:

1. Naomi ("pleasant, lovely"): A widowed Israelite woman whose husband and sons died while living in a foreign land
2. Ruth ("lifelong friend"): The Moabite widow and daughter-in-law of Naomi, who followed Naomi back to Judah, married Boaz, and gave birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David and an ancestor of Jesus
3. Boaz: A wealthy, older Israelite who married Ruth the Gentile and generously provided for her



This image of Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz is from a painting by Thomas Matthews Rooke (1842-1942). It is part of a triptych on the central events of Ruth, called "The Story of Ruth" (1876).

Key Events in the Book of Ruth:

1. Elimelech and his family travel from Judah into Moab, seeking food during a time of famine. Elimelech dies.
2. The widow Naomi's sons both marry Moabite women and continue to live there with their mother and wives until 10 years have passed from the time of their emigration.
3. Both sons die, leaving the three women to care for themselves.
4. Naomi exhorts her daughters-in-law to return to their families, and she departs for Bethlehem.
5. Ruth proclaims her love for Naomi and Naomi's God and insists on following her back to her home.
6. Upon their arrival, Naomi remembers that her husband has a wealthy kinsman in Bethlehem named Boaz.
7. Ruth meets Boaz as she gleans barley from his fields.
8. Boaz graciously protects and provides for Ruth.
9. Naomi suggests that Ruth present herself to Boaz (as a potential wife) at his threshing floor.
10. Boaz is struck by her choice, since he is much older than many of the other men.
11. Boaz seeks the nearer kinsman of Naomi, who publicly gives him permission to redeem Naomi's land and property, including Ruth.
12. Boaz becomes Ruth's kinsman redeemer and takes her as his wife. She bears him a son, who becomes the grandfather of King David and an ancestor of Jesus Christ.
13. Ruth, a Gentile, enters the lineage of Jesus the Messiah by the election and providence of God.

Themes of Ruth:

1. God's great love and mercy for sinful humanity are illustrated by the sacrificial acts of the kinsman redeemer, Boaz.

Boaz, a relative of Naomi, acted upon his duty as outlined in the Mosaic Law to redeem a relative from poverty (Leviticus

25:25, 47-49). This act of Boaz foreshadows the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who redeemed the spiritually impoverished, both Jew and Gentile, from the slavery of sin.

2. Personal choices and actions, not circumstances, build godly character within.

Through the lives of Boaz and Ruth, the difficulty of living a godly life when wealthy is contrasted with the difficulty of living a life of faith when poor. Each of these characters makes righteous and faith-filled choices, which cultivate godly character in them.

3. Victory is rooted in faith.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is the principle that takes hold of God and appropriates His resources. Each of the main characters of this book—Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz—exercised his or her faith in the living God and received His provisions and blessings.

4. God's eternal plan from the foundation of the world has always included the redemption of both Jew and Gentile.

In this beautiful love story, Ruth the Gentile, through the providence and election of God, came into the lineage of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1-6).

Key Verse:

"Where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16b).

RUTH AND ESTHER

5

Time: 45 minutes

Teacher Reading: Book of Ruth Overview

Student Reading: Ruth 1:1-5 (NIV)

Review: Background of the Bible found in AMO® Proverbs Teacher Guide, lesson 1

Principle: God's eternal plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind included both Jew and Gentile.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

anarchy (n.) The lack of government; a situation in which there is no law or supreme power and individuals do whatever they please, without penalty or punishment.

apostasy (n.) A desertion or abandonment of one's faith or religion.

degeneration (n.) A decline or falling from a more excellent place to one of less worth, either in the natural or in the moral world.

emigrate (v.) To settle in another country from one's homeland for the purpose of residence.

Gentile (n.) 1) In the Scriptures, a pagan or a worshipper of false gods. 2) Any person who is not a Jew.

glean (v.) To gather grain that harvesters have left behind on purpose for the poor, as provided in the law (Leviticus 19:9; 23:32).

kinsman redeemer (n.) (Literally, to come to the help or rescue of.) A blood relative who possessed an obligation to 1] redeem his relative who owed a large debt; and 2] marry the widow of a kinsman to provide an heir.

redeemer (n.) 1) One who buys back or ransoms another. 2) The Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

theocracy (n.) The government of a state by the immediate direction of God. Theocracy in Israel lasted until Saul was crowned king of Israel.

STUDENT



Key Word:

redemption (n.) The deliverance of sinners from the bondage of sin and the penalties of God's violated law by the obedience and shed blood of Jesus Christ.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What type of literature is the book of Ruth?
2. Describe the settings (place, time, climate, environment, and society) of the book of Ruth.
3. What natural disaster in the land of Judah caused Elimelech and his family to emigrate to the pagan country of Moab?
4. Describe a time when you as a child lived through a natural disaster. In whom did your parents trust?



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: God's eternal plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind included both Jew and Gentile.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Gentile] (Romans 1:16).

I [Paul] stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22, 23).

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him (Romans 10:12).

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

The story of Ruth took place during the reign of the Judges when "there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). This was a time when the Israelites ignored God's Law and there were no absolutes. Indifference, apostasy, and anarchy prevailed in the land of Israel. As in all eras of degeneracy, there remained a remnant, a witness for God, represented in this case by Elimelech and Naomi, who proved faithful to God and His ways.

During a time of famine, Elimelech took his family east of the Jordan River into the country of Moab to find bread and to escape trouble. The Moabites, descendants of Lot, were pagans (Gentiles). Elimelech soon died, and the couple's two sons, Mahlon (whose name means "puny") and Chilion (whose name means "pining"), married Moabite women. In spite of the great sorrow of losing Elimelech and living in a spiritually dark society, this family maintained its faith in the one God of Israel. The light of God always shines brightest in darkness. Naomi's witness and daily practices were evident to her daughters-in-law.

Through the study of Ruth's life we learn that God had ordained for Ruth to be in the Messianic lineage; she becomes the great-grandmother of King David. It is through the election of this young Gentile believer that we come to

5. How did Elimelech and Naomi's sons come to have Gentile wives?



Notebook Record:

1. Write your name on the Ruth title page and file it in your binder.
2. Record the following on your Overview of Ruth graphic organizer:
 - Is one of the Old Testament history books
 - Was written for Israelites, perhaps by Samuel
 - Is one of the most beautiful love stories ever written



Memory Verse:

"Where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16b).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

understand that God had planned in eternity for both Jew and Gentile to receive eternal salvation and redemption in Jesus Christ.

3. Gather resources: Bible, map of ancient Israel and her neighboring countries, Ruth title pages, Overview of Ruth graphic organizers, student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent prayer and blessing cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the background of the Bible, how we got the Bible, and why there are two Testaments (or covenants). See background information on Proverbs lesson 1, found in the AMO® Proverbs Teacher Guide.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to listen for this principle in the readings.
6. Introduce the children to the book of Ruth. On a map, show the children where Moab is located in relation to Israel. Read aloud the Overview of Ruth that precedes this lesson.
7. Assign the short Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently and then orally.
8. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
9. Distribute the Ruth title pages to the children and have them write their names on them. Since we are studying two books of the Bible in this unit, there is a need for a title page for each book.
10. Write the Overview of Ruth notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Overview of Ruth graphic organizers. Have the children file their Ruth title page and their overview in their binders.
11. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week. This memory verse is found in our next reading and is the key verse in the book of Ruth. It is Ruth's response to Naomi when Naomi suggests that Ruth remain in Moab as she herself departs for Bethlehem of Judah.
12. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
13. Send parent prayer and blessing cards home with the children.

The Book of Ruth

NAME

“Where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge.
Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God”
(Ruth 1:16).

RUTH AND ESTHER

6

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 1:6-18 (NIV)

Review: Background and setting of Ruth; God's eternal plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind included both Jews and Gentiles.

Principle: God's people radiate His light and the knowledge of Him to those who do not know Him.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

idol (n.) 1) An image; a pagan deity. 2) Anything that usurps the place of God in the heart of an individual.

pagan (n.) A Gentile; an idolater; one who worships false gods.

selflessness (n.) The quality of being unselfish; having no regard for self; putting the needs of others before one's own.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain that you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: God's people radiate His light and the knowledge of Him to those who do not know Him.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (Daniel 12:3).

STUDENT



Key Word:

radiate (v.) 1) To shine or issue rays of light. 2) To enlighten; to illuminate.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What is a widow? How many widows are in our Bible reading? How are widows often treated in many societies? What have you done recently to help or encourage a widow you know?
2. What character qualities did Naomi exhibit in her departure for Israel?
3. Tell why you think Ruth was willing to leave her home and country to follow Naomi into a land that despised her people. What was her main priority? After whom or what are you

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:14-15).

Naomi and her family had lived for ten years in the dark, pagan nation of Moab among idol worshippers. Bereft of her husband and sons, Naomi was now a widow without anyone to care for her. Being a widow in the ancient world was a sentence to extreme poverty, as women were taken advantage of and ignored by society. In Israel, God had provided for widows in His law: the nearest relative of the dead husband was to care for the widow. However, Naomi had no relatives in Moab, and she had no way of knowing whether or not any of her relatives were still alive in Israel. But she learned that God had provided the Israelites with food, and she determined to return to her homeland.

Naomi gathered her courage and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, and began her journey homeward. At some point, though, while the three were still in Moab, Naomi evidently had second thoughts about taking her daughters-in-law into Israel. She remembered the great difficulties she had endured being a foreigner in a new land. She also knew that the Israelites despised the Moabites and would not readily welcome these two women into their society. The Moabites had not allowed the Hebrews to pass through their land during the exodus from Egypt (Deuteronomy 23:3, 4), and resentment still festered. Rather than being concerned for her own welfare, Naomi insisted that the two young widows remain behind in their own homeland and culture. She demonstrated great courage and selflessness and used all manner of persuasion to encourage them to remain in Moab.

Orpah agreed to go home, but Ruth loved Naomi, her godly demeanor, and Naomi's God, and she was unwilling to be left behind. For all those years Naomi's faith and trust in the living God of Israel had radiated among the Moabites around her and become a mighty testimony that had touched Ruth's heart. This Jewish family was like a beautiful constellation shining brightly in the dark sky of Moab's idolatrous culture. Ruth was willing to risk everything to follow Naomi into Israel. What a beautiful portrait of the sinner who forsakes all to follow Jesus Christ.

God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him (Acts 10:34b, 35).

3. Gather resources: Bible and student vocabulary card.

following? Does this represent a godly or a worldly influence in your life?

4. How does Ruth's departure from Moab and all that was familiar paint a portrait of the new believer who is willing to follow Christ wherever He leads?
5. Describe an individual who has been a bright star and radiated the love and knowledge of Jesus in your spiritual life. How has his or her witness impacted you?



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Overview of Ruth graphic organizer:

- Tells of the beginning of the Messianic lineage
- Teaches us that God's plan of redemption has always included both Jews and Gentiles
- Is still read today at Pentecost by the Jews



Memory Verse:

"Where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16b).



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the background and setting of Ruth, as well as the principle that God's eternal plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind includes both Jews and Gentiles.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently (if there is time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write the remaining Overview of Ruth notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Overview of Ruth graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

7

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 1:19-2:7 (NIV)

Review: God's people radiate His light and the knowledge of Him to those who do not know Him.

Principle: Our lives are the outworking of God's eternal purpose to which He has called us and provided victory even in the most trying times.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

barley (n.) A nutritious grain, used for food, that has been cultivated for thousands of years.

bitter (adj.) 1) Sharp; cruel; severe. 2) Painful to the mind. 3) Afflicted; distressed.

glean (v.) To gather the grain left behind by the harvesters. In ancient Israel the law required harvesters to do this specifically for the poor (Leviticus 19:9; 23:32).

good (adj.) 1) Promoting one's welfare or happiness. 2) Possessing moral excellence or virtue. 3) Complete; full.

kinsman (n.) One related by blood.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: Our lives are the outworking of God's eternal purpose to which He has called us and provided victory even in the most trying times.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His

STUDENT



Key Word:

called (adj.) Summoned or appointed for a particular duty.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What was Naomi's attitude about herself when she arrived in Bethlehem?
2. What season was it in Israel? What crop was being harvested?
3. From this reading, what did you learn about Boaz? How did he greet his reapers? Does he seem like a man for whom you would have liked to work? Explain your answer.
4. How did God's law for Israel provide for those who were poor?

purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28, 29a).

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation (1 Peter 4:12, 13).

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (2 Timothy 1:8, 9).

Since Naomi had departed Bethlehem for Moab over ten years earlier, she had experienced severe hardships. She had been married and secure prior to the famine and her family's leave-taking from Bethlehem, but upon returning she was a widow and in poverty. Upon arriving back home, Naomi (which means "pleasant") changed her name to Mara ("bitter") to express the depth of her suffering and pain. However, God was about to bless both women beyond their expectations. It was God who providentially directed both Naomi and Ruth to return to Bethlehem, for He was about to establish the Messianic lineage through them.

Often while in the midst of great suffering and anguish we cannot see that anything "good" will ever come of our trials and tribulations. But in His wisdom God uses them to direct the course of His Story, causing all things, in the lives of those who are called according to His plan, to work together for His moral purpose and for our eternal welfare and happiness. Even though we don't have this foreknowledge, over time we come to trust God and praise Him in the midst of hardships, for we know He never stops caring and providing for us. He desires to see us conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, through these experiences.

"Bethlehem," which means "house of bread" in Hebrew, was a small farming community located six miles southwest of Jerusalem. It enjoyed a moderate climate and was surrounded by beautiful fields and olive groves. The area had two harvests each year, one in the spring and a second in the fall. The barley harvest took place in the spring and was a time of plenty and renewed hope.

When the grain was ready to be harvested, reapers were hired to cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles. God's law required that the corners of the fields not be harvested and that any grain that was dropped be left for the gleaners, who gathered and used it for food. In this way God provided for the poor (Leviticus 19:9; 23:32).

It was at this time of the barley harvest that Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem. Ruth took the initiative,

5. What did Ruth decide to do after arriving in Bethlehem? Describe two of her character qualities that brought her success.
6. After reflecting on God's ways and promises, what do you believe God has called you to do, not in the future but right now?



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Portrait of Naomi graphic organizer:

- Israelite wife and mother
- Lost her husband and two sons, leaving her a widow in poverty
- Her faith drew others to worship the God of Israel.
- Courageous
- Selfless



Memory Verse:

"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap" (Luke 6:38a).



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requesting permission from Naomi to glean in the field of Boaz, a blood relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech. Even though the work was hard, she proved to be a diligent worker. She cast herself into the hands of Naomi's God and drew from His strength. Ruth's decision was about to change her life and give her a preeminent place in Christian history.

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, Portrait of Naomi graphic organizers, memory verse card, and parent prayer and blessing cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the effect of God's people, who radiate His light and the knowledge of Him, on those who do not know Him.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute the Portrait of Naomi graphic organizers to the children. Write Naomi notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent prayer and blessing cards home with the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

8

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 2:8-17 (NIV)

Review: Our lives are the outworking of God's eternal purpose to which He has called us.

Principle: The measure with which we give to others is the measure we will receive in return.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

ephah (n.) A unit of dry measure that converts to 22 liters or 3/5 bushel.

rebuke (v. 1) To chasten or reprove. 2) To silence or restrain.

refuge (n.) A place of shelter or protection from danger or distress.

reputation (n.) 1) The general estimation in which a person is held by the public. 2) Character by report, either good or bad.

riches (n.) In Scripture, an abundance of spiritual blessings: God's fullness of wisdom, power, mercy, grace, and glory.

sheaves (n.) Bundles of grain.

thresh (v.) To beat out the grain from the husk with a flail.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: The measure with which we give to others is the measure we will receive in return.

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return (Luke 6:38).

STUDENT



Key Word:

generosity (n.) A quality of the heart motivating a person to give liberally or to bestow favors.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. Explain why Boaz, who had just met Ruth and knew she was a Moabitess, quickly put together a plan of action for her to glean in his field.
2. What was the result of Ruth's obedience to her mother-in-law's instructions? How can her example inform and bless your life?
3. What character qualities did Ruth and Boaz have in common with regard to their reputations?
4. Describe how today's principle was in operation in the lives of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.

[H]e who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully . . . God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed (2 Corinthians 9:8).

The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered (Proverbs 11:25).

Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share (1 Timothy 6:18).

When Boaz met Ruth, he had already heard about her reputation for loving and caring for Naomi. Foreigners were not usually given a warm welcome in Israel, but Boaz discerned the heart attitude of Ruth. He laid out a plan that would provide a refuge for her and took personal oversight of her time in his fields to ensure that she gleaned plenty of grain for herself and her mother-in-law. He also sought her safety and protection and directed her to follow behind his reapers to glean the choicest grain.

Boaz lived amid people of privilege in a time of degeneracy and anarchy in Israel. He was a mighty man of wealth, able to live a life of ease and luxury. Yet he was a very generous and kind man, who was loyal to God in the midst of difficulties, as well as a man of faith in an age of faithlessness. He loved and honored God through kind and faith-filled words and deeds. Boaz was a cheerful giver, and God rewarded him according to His riches in glory. Man's generosity is always exceeded by God's generosity. It is said that man can never out-give God. Boaz provided Ruth more than the law required and pronounced a beautiful blessing upon her:

"May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge" (2:12).

Ruth was comforted by his blessing and generosity and was grateful that she had found favor with God and with Boaz in Israel. God rewarded her generosity and kindness toward Naomi through Boaz's generosity and kindness. This is a biblical principle worth learning and applying to our own lives. God is looking for generous and cheerful givers!

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, and Portrait of Boaz graphic organizers.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*

5. Are you a generous and cheerful giver? What can you give to others if you don't have money with which to purchase material gifts? What type of gift do you think has more value?



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Portrait of Boaz graphic organizer:

- A wealthy Bethlehem farmer and businessman
- Generous and kind in word and deed
- A man of honor and integrity
- Faithful to God's Law



Memory Verse:

"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap" (Luke 6:38a).

2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle that our lives are the outworking of God's eternal purpose to which He has called us and provided victory even in the most trying times.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures. You may want to demonstrate this principle using a measure and a bag of beans or rice, so the children can see the difference between simply filling a measure or pressing it down and letting it run over.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute the Portrait of Boaz graphic organizers to the children. Write Boaz notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

9

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 2:18-3:5 (NIV)

Review: The measure with which we give to others is the measure we will receive in return.

Principle: Boaz was a type of Jesus Christ, the eternal Kinsman Redeemer of all who believe.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

atone (v.) To stand as an equivalent; to make amends or satisfaction for an offense or crime, by which reconciliation is procured between the offended and offending parties.

kinsman redeemer (n.) (Literally, to come to the help or rescue of.) A blood relative who possessed an obligation to: 1] redeem family property that had changed ownership; 2] marry a childless widow to raise up children in her dead husband's name.

redeemer (n.) 1) One who rescues and sets free from captivity. 2) The Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

uncover his feet To remove his outer garment.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: Boaz was a type of Jesus Christ, the eternal Kinsman Redeemer of all who believe.

If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold (Leviticus 25:25).

STUDENT



Key Word:

type (n.) A sign; a symbol; a figure of something to come, as the paschal lamb was a type of Christ.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How did Naomi respond when she found out that Ruth was gleaning grain in the fields of Boaz?
2. Explain what a kinsman redeemer is.
3. Why was Boaz called Ruth's kinsman redeemer? Why is Boaz a "type" of Jesus Christ?
4. If you are a Christian, who is your kinsman redeemer?

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed (1 Peter 2:24).

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time (1 Timothy 2:5, 6).

When Naomi told Ruth that Boaz was their kinsman redeemer, this had great meaning for them both. In Ruth's day the kinsman redeemer avenged deaths, claimed inheritances for poor family members, and married the widow of a dead male relative to provide an heir. He fulfilled a role within his family that was very similar to the one Jesus Christ fulfilled for all of mankind.

The law of kinsman redeemer found in Leviticus 25:47-55 was enacted to protect the families of Israel. Property was to remain in the family and not be given away to others. If a person became poor and had to sell their inheritance, the kinsman was to come and buy it back so that it would remain in the family, preventing the poor relative from becoming destitute (Leviticus 25:25).

The definition of "kinsman" is "nearest male blood relative." The Hebrew word for "kinsman" is "ga'al." "Redeemer" is defined as "one charged with the duty of restoring the rights of another and avenging his wrongs." The Hebrew word for Redeemer is also "ga'al," and in biblical times these words were interchangeable. If a man was the redeemer of a family, he must have been a kinsman. And if he was a kinsman, then it followed that he was a redeemer for the family.

Boaz is a beautiful type of Jesus Christ. He points us forward to the New Covenant, to one better than himself who was to become the Kinsman Redeemer for all those who would trust in Christ for their salvation. Jesus willingly paid our debt so that we would not lose our inheritance. This was not a financial but a moral debt. He redeemed mankind from the penalty of sin by the shedding of His blood on the cross at Calvary. God the Father was not obligated to accept the payment of someone else to cover our breaking of His Law. Yet, in His grace and mercy, He sent His Son to purchase back our inheritance by paying the moral debt we owed God as covenant-breakers. Jesus became our substitute and took the penalty of death for us. In so doing, His atonement satisfied God's justice. Jesus achieved the victory over the power of Satan and sin through His death on the cross. He became the perfect sacrifice once for all time. He is the *true* Kinsman Redeemer, who gave His life as a ransom for many.

Note: When Naomi suggested to Ruth that she "uncover the feet" of Boaz, she was not proposing a seductive act. She was instructing her daughter-in-law to act in accordance



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Portrait of Boaz graphic organizer:

- Caring and protective toward those in need
- A willing kinsman redeemer for Ruth
- A type of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind



Memory Verse:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14).



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with Israelite custom and law. It was common for a servant to lie at the feet of her master and even share a part of his covering. By so doing Ruth was also proposing that Boaz become her kinsman redeemer—either to find someone to marry her or to marry her himself. This was not a romantic gesture but a familial custom. Ruth’s action was in accordance with the law, which required the initiative of the widow in seeking marriage. Later on in the history of Boaz and Ruth, they developed a deep respect and unselfish love for one another as husband and wife, based on their faith in the God of Israel.

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent prayer and blessing cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle of generosity, by which the measure with which we give to others is the measure we will receive in return.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson’s principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write the Portrait of Boaz notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Boaz graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent prayer and blessing cards home with the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

10

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 3:6-18 (NIV)

Review: Kinsman redeemer Boaz is a type of Jesus Christ.

Principle: A woman of virtuous character is a model of biblical femininity.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

character (n.) The qualities that comprise one's personality and distinguish him or her from others; one's reputation.

efficacious (adj.) Effective; producing the desired results.

excellence (n.) Showing qualities of high moral character, such as courage, generosity, or honor.

integrity (n.) 1) The state of being pure, whole, or complete. 2) Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code of conduct.

kindness (n.) An act of good will; benevolence; that quality within which delights in contributing to the happiness of others and which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes, supplying their wants, or alleviating their distresses.

noble (adj.) Virtuous; dignified; being above everything that can dishonor one's reputation.

startle (v.) To surprise, shock, alarm, or frighten.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: A woman of virtuous character is a model of biblical femininity.

STUDENT



Key Word:

virtuous (adj.) Acting and speaking in conformity to moral goodness from a sincere love of God and His laws.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. Upon what did Boaz base his promise to Ruth "to do for her all that she asked"?
2. Define "moral goodness."
3. How did Ruth's words and actions reflect the meditation of her heart?
4. How do Ruth's words and actions reflect our definition of biblical femininity?
5. What lesson(s) did you glean from the lives of both Ruth and Boaz in this reading? Explain how you will apply this wisdom to your own life.

And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman (Ruth 3:11, KJV).

Virtue is the efficacious power and force that should permeate the Christian's thoughts, actions, and relationships. It is cultivated by reading and meditating on the Word of God and applying His precepts to our lives. In Ruth 3:11 (NIV), Boaz refers to Ruth as a woman of noble character. In the King James and New Living translations this is translated "a virtuous woman." King Solomon wrote a description of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31, but Ruth is the only woman in the Bible who is called "virtuous," a high tribute to her character and reputation.

Boaz, a man of integrity and noble character himself, recognized in Ruth the qualities of excellence, virtue, and kindness. He blessed her for choosing him, as opposed to a younger man, as her kinsman redeemer. Boaz was probably closer to the age of Ruth's father-in-law, Elimelech. Both Ruth and Boaz were characterized by integrity and virtue, and they recognized the same qualities in each other.

Ruth was a woman who had learned to trust the God of Naomi, the one God of Israel. She was a woman of virtuous character qualities who gained this reputation in quiet and humble service. She attended her business with devotion and honor, making her a shining star, just as Naomi had been to her. She is truly a role model for all young girls and women desiring a noble and virtuous character.

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, and Portrait of Ruth graphic organizers.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the concept of kinsman redeemer and Boaz as a type of Jesus Christ.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Portrait of Ruth graphic organizer:

- A young, childless Gentile widow
- A worshiper of Israel's God
- Followed and served Naomi selflessly
- A woman of virtuous character



Memory Verse:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14)

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute the Portrait of Ruth graphic organizers to the children. Write Ruth notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Portrait of Ruth graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

11

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 4:1-10 (NIV)

Review: A woman of virtuous character is a model of biblical femininity.

Principle: A man of virtuous character is a model of biblical manhood.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

endanger (v.) To put into peril or danger.

estate (n.) All of the property and money that belong to someone.

good (adj.) 1) Uncorrupted; sound; not weak. 2) Having the moral qualities God's law requires; virtuous; opposed to evil and wickedness.

sanctification (n.) 1) The act of making holy. 2) The act of consecrating or of setting apart for sacred purpose. 3) The act of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

self-government (n.) 1) The Lordship of Jesus Christ in the believer that permits the laws and principles of God's kingdom to govern decisions and choices that affect the individual in every sphere of governance. 2) The internal and voluntary decision of the will that chooses the higher standard, permitting God and His Word to govern or rule in the heart of the believer.

witness (n.) One who speaks from personal experience about an event or individual.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: A man of virtuous character is a model of biblical manhood.

STUDENT



Key Word:

character (n.) The internal moral and mental qualities, impressed by habit, that distinguish an individual.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What did Boaz promise Ruth that he would do? Did he fulfill his promise? Explain your answer.
2. Name the character qualities of Boaz that describe biblical manhood.
3. Name the character qualities of Ruth that describe biblical womanhood.
4. Name the qualities you most desire to see cultivated in your own character. Explain why you chose these qualities.
5. What is your responsibility to see that these qualities develop within yourself?

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life (Proverbs 4:23).

As a man thinks within himself, so he is (Proverbs 23:7).

Let us choose for ourselves what is right, let us know among ourselves what is good (Job 34:4).

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart (Luke 6:45).

Boaz was a man of his word. In this lesson's reading, he fulfilled his promise to Ruth that "he would do for her whatever she asked" (3:11). He was careful to fulfill Israel's law regarding the kinsman redeemer by first locating Naomi's closest relative and offering him the opportunity to fulfill his familial duty before the elders of the city, divulging all of the existing circumstances. When the other man found that he was unable to accept the responsibility without jeopardizing his own estate, Boaz agreed to fulfill the role of kinsman redeemer. Handing over the sandal symbolized handing over the right of redemption to Boaz.

Boaz was a God-fearing man who knew God's laws and applied God's precepts and principles to his own actions and speech. As a result, his character was virtuous, as defined by God's biblical standard.

Read 2 Peter 1:2-11. In this passage of Scripture, Peter defines the qualities of the "divine nature," or Christian character, and exhorts Christians to practice these qualities. Boaz is a noble model of virility and biblical manhood. He demonstrated the role of man with honor and integrity, as God designed for man to function. In conjunction with Ruth's virtuous character and demonstration of biblical femininity, we see in them a full reflection of Imago-Dei.

How character develops over time is a multi-faceted topic. Each one of us is ultimately responsible to God for our own character, which is a product of our personal, daily choices. This is why, as teachers and parents, we must instruct and inculcate our children in the knowledge of God and in the practice of His precepts. Following are some of the principles of character formation from our AMO® Teacher Manual:

- God created man and woman in His image, each with a free will to govern himself or herself.
- Character is formed from the inside out, not by our external circumstances. We are not victims of our environment!
- The Bible is our "character handbook," teaching us the unchangeable standard for self-government.



Notebook Record:

Record the following on your Portrait of Ruth graphic organizer:

- Married Boaz, her kinsman redeemer
- Became part of the lineage of Jesus through the birth of her son Obed
- Is a virtuous model of biblical womanhood

Record the following on your Portrait of Boaz graphic organizer:

- Is a virtuous model of biblical manhood



Memory Verse:

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart" (Luke 6:45).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

- *Christian* character begins with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who initiates the sanctification process.
- Character is formed by personal choices, and virtuous character is a personal choice, not a gift. One's will must be instructed with biblical principles and habits and trained early to follow Christ and His Word. Character determines behavior and behavior demonstrates character!
- Character is often formed by watching and imitating others.
- God tests and refines our character through trials and tribulations as we interact with others.
- The distinctive characteristics of the Christian leader are service and sacrifice.

These characteristics are visible in the lives of Ruth and Boaz, both of whom sacrificed their time, talents, and possessions by selflessly serving others. In return, God abundantly blessed each of them.

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent prayer and blessing cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the definition of virtuous and how a woman of virtuous character is a model of biblical femininity.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write the Portrait of Ruth and the Portrait of Boaz notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Ruth graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent prayer and blessing cards home with the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

12

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Ruth 4:11-22 (NIV)

Review: A man of virtuous character is a model of biblical manhood.

Principle: Jesus, the Messiah, has both Jew and Gentile in His earthly family lineage. God purposed in eternity that salvation and redemption were for all who believe.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

genealogy (n.) The study of the history of families, using historical documents to discover the relationships between people.

heritage (n.) 1) Inheritance; an estate that passes from an ancestor to an heir by descent or course of law. 2) In Scripture, the saints or people of God are called his heritage, as those being claimed by him and the objects of his special care (1 Peter 5).

lineage (n.) One's family tree; the descendants of a common ancestor considered to have been the founder of the line.

restorer (n.) One who returns what is lost or unjustly detained.

sustainer (n.) One who upholds, supports, and keeps from falling.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned readings. Make certain you understand them in the context of this lesson.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and background content.

Principle: Jesus, the Messiah, has both Jew and Gentile in His earthly family lineage. God purposed in eternity that salvation and redemption were for all who believe.

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit (Isaiah 11:1).

STUDENT



Key Word:

Messiah (n.) The Anointed One; the Christ.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. Describe how God blessed Ruth and Boaz.
2. What was Naomi's great blessing?
3. How did Jesus the Messiah come to descend from Obed? What is the "Good News" in this lineage?
4. Have you accepted Jesus the Messiah as your Savior and Redeemer? Explain your answer.
5. Turn in your binder to your Imago Dei graphic organizer. Review your notes and tell how both Boaz and Ruth fulfilled their roles as God originally designed man and woman.

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land (Jeremiah 23:5).

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations (Matthew 1:16, 17).

Jesus . . . the son of David . . . (Luke 3:23, 31).

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me [Jesus], because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19).

The Bible tells us that children are a heritage from the LORD! (Psalm 127:3). Boaz, Ruth’s kinsman redeemer, married her, and she bore a son. His love for Ruth reflects the kind of love God has for us. Boaz is a great model for boys and young Christian men to emulate.

The greatest blessing for Ruth and Naomi was the birth of Obed, whose name means “servant.” Little did they know at the time, but Obed would become the father of Jesse, who would father King David, whose kingdom would endure forever through the eternal reign of Jesus Christ.

And your [David’s] house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever (2 Samuel 7:16).

The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and . . . Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David the king (Matthew 1:1, 2, 5, 6).

Read Matthew 1:1-17 (traced through Joseph, Jesus’ legal but not biological father, through whom His claim and right to the throne of David were established) and Luke 3:23-38 (traced through Mary, His mother) for the whole genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah. “Messiah” is the Hebrew word for “anointed One,” and “Christ” is the Greek word. Jesus descended from the lineage of King David.

The Lord was indeed “the restorer of Naomi’s life and sustainer of her old age” (4:15). Naomi received high praise from the women of Bethlehem.

God also providentially placed Ruth, the Gentile, in the Messianic lineage as the great-grandmother of King David. It is through the election of this young Gentile believer



Notebook Record:

Record the names from the chalkboard or whiteboard onto your Messianic Lineage graphic organizer.



Memory Verse:

“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart” (Luke 6:45).

that we come to more fully perceive that God planned in eternity for both Jew and Gentile to receive eternal salvation and redemption in Jesus Christ. This is, indeed, “Good News” for those of us who are Gentiles.

Our study of Ruth concludes with this lesson. Make certain the children have completed all their notebook work for this part of the unit. We will continue this Bible Reading for Reasoning unit with the study of another young woman of the Old Testament named Esther.

3. Gather resources: Bible, student vocabulary card, and the Messianic Lineage graphic organizers.

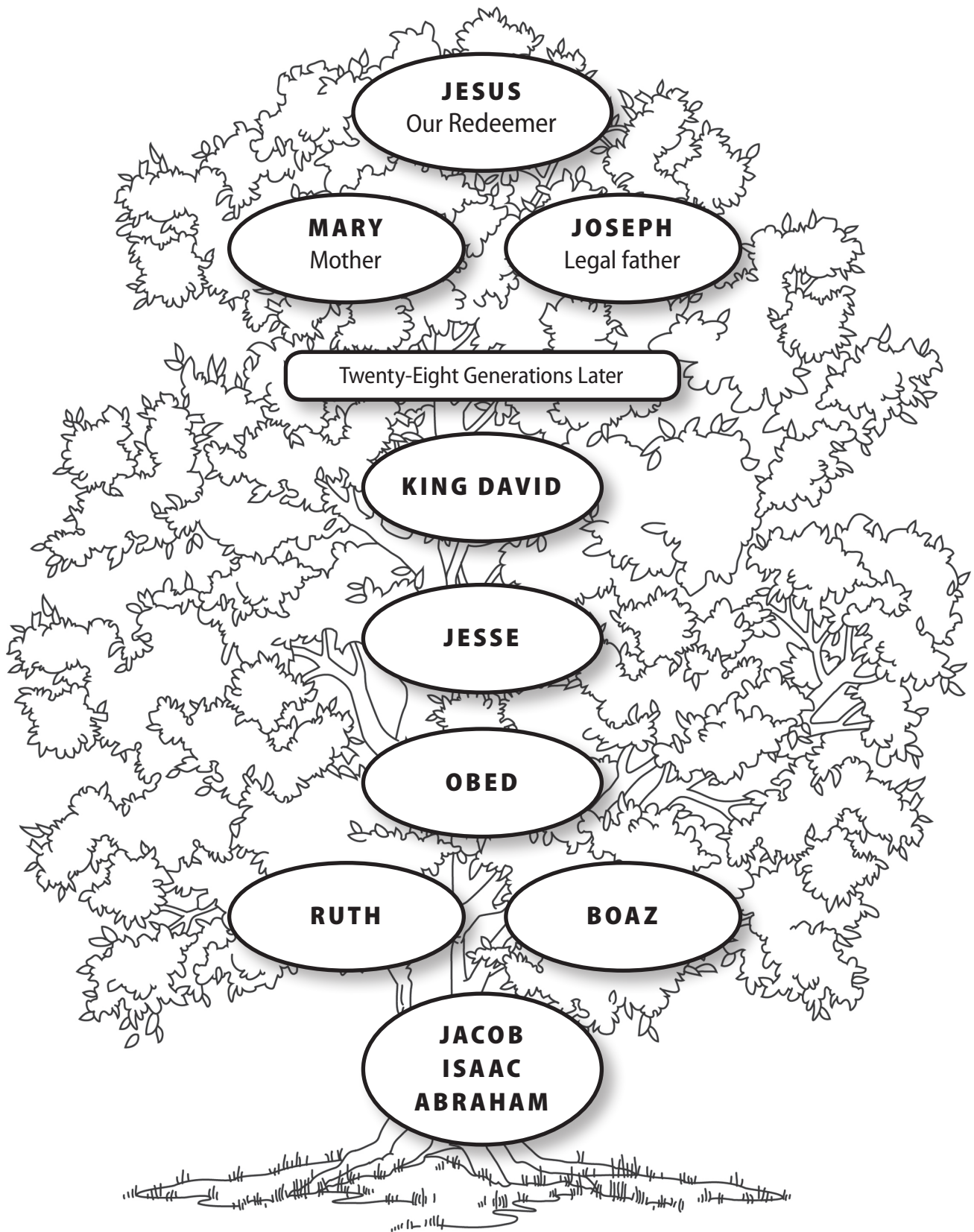


Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, into our class and be our teacher today. Illumine our minds with an understanding of godly manhood and womanhood. Help us to know Jesus Christ better and to grow in the knowledge and understanding of your Word, the Holy Bible. Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the definition of virtuous and how a man of virtuous character is a model of biblical manhood.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
5. Connect the vocabulary word to the lesson's principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to look for this principle as they read the Scriptures.
6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently (if time) and then orally.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute the Messianic Lineage graphic organizers to the children. Sketch a tree on the chalkboard or whiteboard and write on it the names in Jesus' lineage. Have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Practice frequently during the week.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

Messianic Lineage

Print some of the names of Jesus' earthly ancestors from Ruth 4:22 and Matthew 1:5, 6, 16, 17.



Overview of Esther

The Book of Esther:

Esther is the last of the twelve history books in the Old Testament that precede the poetical or wisdom literature. The 39 Old Testament books are placed into four groups:

- 1) The Books of Moses or the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- 2) The Historical Books or the history of God's people, Israel: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- 3) The Poetical or Wisdom Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- 4) The Prophets:
 - Major Prophets (longer books): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
 - Minor Prophets (shorter books): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The three small books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther record God's dealings with the Jews after their seventy years of exile and captivity in Babylon. While Ezra and Nehemiah are the account of those Jews who left Babylon to return to rebuild Jerusalem, Esther is an account of those who remained in the land of captivity, of which there were a far greater number.

Esther is a drama set on the stage of real history. As a narrative, it is both:

- 1) A hero story, based on the godly character and beauty of a young Jewish exile who risked her life to save her people
 - A hero or heroine is one who demonstrates great courage and is admired for his or her achievements and noble virtues.
 - A hero story is one in which the main character undergoes a great trial and is rewarded at the end. Hero stories inspire their readers and

remind us of our own tremendous potential in Christ.

- 2) A patriotic story of Israel's national history
 - A patriotic story is an inspiring story based on historical facts that serves as a national symbol of a country and highlights that country's national character. It cultivates the love of country and national pride in its readers.

Date Written:

465 B.C., the last year of the reign of King Xerxes

Author:

Unknown author, a Jew who was personally acquainted with the reign of Xerxes and the Persian palace in Susa

Historical Background:

Remembering God's Hand in Israel's history:

- 722 B.C. God's judgment fell on Israel when the Assyrian army conquered the ten tribes of the northern kingdom and scattered the people among the nations.
- 586 God's judgment fell on Judah when the Babylonian army conquered the southern kingdom and many Jews were marched from Jerusalem to Babylon into captivity.
- 539 The Babylonian Empire was conquered by Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire.
- 538 King Cyrus the Great issued a proclamation that encouraged exiles to return to their homelands, and he extended special favor to the Jews.
- 537 The Jewish prince Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem with 50,000 exiles to rebuild the temple.

- 485 The Persian King Xerxes I (485-465) ascended the throne and ruled over Persia and Media.
- 483-73 The ten-year period in which the events of the book of Esther took place
- 478 The young Jew Esther became the queen of Persia.
- 473 Queen Esther saved the Jewish nation, and the Messianic line was preserved!
- 457 The high priest Ezra returned to Jerusalem with 2,000 priests and Levites to restore temple worship.
- 444 The Persian King Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes I, issued a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. His cupbearer, Nehemiah, returned to Jerusalem to supervise the rebuilding of the walls and to restore covenant life.

In only 440 years God would send forth His Son, Jesus the Messiah.

Setting:

Esther lived at the same time as Nehemiah, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The books of Nehemiah and Ezra relate the history of how the Jews returned to Jerusalem after over 100 years of exile to rebuild the city and to restore their homeland. The events of Esther cover a ten-year period (483-73 B.C.) in the land of exile during the period between Ezra 6, the rebuilding of the temple, and Ezra 7, the return of Ezra to Jerusalem.

The Medo-Persian Empire was the largest of the ancient world by geographic extent, spanning three continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe. It included all of the land from India to Greece and from the Black and Caspian Seas south to the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Indian Ocean (Esther 1:1). The Medo-Persian Empire had several capital cities. The story of Esther took place in Susa, “the city between two rivers.” Susa became one of the Persian capitals after Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon. Located 150 miles north of the head of the Persian Gulf, Susa was one

of the oldest cities of the world at that time in history. The city was rebuilt by Cyrus, who made it his fortress and winter palace. He surrounded the city with massive walls and created a moat by diverting the Shauer River. Susa became one of the strongest and richest storehouses in the then-known world and was linked to Babylon, Assyria, and Turkey by the royal road. When King Darius took the throne, he built a more famous palace in Susa; this was the palace referenced in the Esther account. This palace was later destroyed by fire. Immense treasure, attesting to Susa’s wealth and luxurious lifestyle and including gold, silver, gems, and purple dyes, was found in abundance and plundered by Persia’s conqueror, Alexander the Great.

Persia (today’s Iran) is best remembered for (1) being the enemy of the Greek city states during the Greco-Persian Wars; (2) releasing the exiles, including the Jews, from their Babylonian captivity; and (3) communicating in the languages of the people groups located throughout its many provinces.



The above image of two royal Persian attendants, located at the great hall of Xerxes in Iran, is a portion of a 5th-century B.C. Persian relief scene called the “Harem of Xerxes at Persepolis.”

Key Characters:

1. King Xerxes I (Hebrew Ahasuerus; pronounced “a has you AIR us”): king of the Persian Empire
2. Queen Vashti: the Persian wife of Xerxes
3. Mordecai: Esther’s older cousin, who raised her like a father
4. Esther: exiled Jewess living in Persia, who was crowned queen of Persia
5. Haman: prime minister of Persia

Key Events in the Book of Esther:

1. Xerxes divorces Queen Vashti.
2. Young Esther is prepared for royalty.
3. Esther is chosen the next Persian queen.
4. Mordecai reveals a plot to murder the king.
5. Haman is promoted to prime minister.
6. Haman’s decree is issued to kill the Jews.
7. Mordecai appeals to Esther to save the Jews.
8. Esther intercedes for her people.
9. Haman plots to hang Mordecai.
10. Haman is humiliated and hanged by the king.
11. Mordecai is promoted to prime minister.
12. The Jewish people are preserved and their enemies defeated.
13. The Feast of Purim is instituted.
14. Mordecai’s godly leadership is memorialized.

Themes of Esther:

1. The providence and sovereignty of God, even though His name is never mentioned in the Hebrew text

God moving on behalf of His covenant with Israel to preserve his people from annihilation through the courage of young Queen Esther, a Jewess

2. Anti-Semitism, as demonstrated by Persian prime minister, Haman

Haman was a descendant of King Agag, an old enemy of the Jews. Haman’s hatred of the Jews, coupled with his jealousy and anger toward Mordecai, drove him to persuade Xerxes to kill all the Jews in the Medo-Persian Empire. Haman was an instrument of Satan, who ultimately plotted to extinguish the Messianic line.

3. Self-Sacrifice

Both Esther and Mordecai risked their lives to intercede for the lives of their people:

- Mordecai exposed an assassination plot against pagan King Xerxes and refused to bow down to Haman, the king’s prime minister.
- Esther interceded for all Jews living in the Medo-Persian Empire by approaching the king without a summons. If she had not found favor with the king, she would have been put to death.

4. Deliverance and preservation

The origin of the Jewish Feast of Purim began with Esther’s courageous act. It celebrates God’s deliverance of the Jews and preservation of the Messianic line.

RUTH AND ESTHER

13

Time: 45 minutes

Teacher Reading: Book of Esther Overview

Student Reading: Esther 1:1-12 (NIV)

Review: The biblical view of women contained in the Scriptures

Principle: In God's providence, He calls, prepares, and uses both individuals and nations to forward Christ, His Story, the Gospel.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

citadel (n.) A fortress or castle, usually built on a high place, intended for the defense of a city; a place of arms.

concubine (n.) A wife of inferior condition; a lawful wife, but not united to the man by the usual ceremonies (e.g., Abraham's concubines, Hagar and Keturah).

eunuch (n.) An emasculated man whose job it was to guard the women in a harem.

exile (n.) A person who has been expelled from their native land.

goblet (n.) A metal or glass cup used for drinking wine.

moat (n.) A deep, wide ditch usually filled with water that surrounds a castle as protection against attack.

narrative (n.) A story or an account relating the particulars of an event or transaction; storytelling.

patriotic (adj.) Inspired by the love of one's country.

polygamous (adj.) Having a plurality of wives.

porphyry (n.) [purple] A rock containing large crystals embedded in a fine-grained, igneous matrix.

royal (adj.) Kingly; pertaining to a king or queen; noble.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Before teaching, make certain you have read the entire book of Esther and are familiar with its historical background. For this lesson, read and reflect upon the Overview and Esther 1.

STUDENT



Key Word:

providence (n.) The continual care and guidance God provides His creatures, according to His eternal plan.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What type of literature is the book of Esther?
2. Describe the setting (place, time, climate, environment, and society) of the book of Esther.
3. Compare Queen Vashti's beauty with Ruth's beauty.
4. Compare and contrast the kingdom of pagan King Xerxes to the kingdom of the living God.
5. Which kingdom is still flourishing today? Which kingdom is eternal?

2. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle, and teacher background information.
3. Gather resources: Map of ancient Persia, Esther title pages, Overview of Esther graphic organizers, student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders and the Esther title pages. Have the children write their name on the title page.
3. Review the high view of womanhood you studied in the first four lessons.
4. Introduce the children to the book of Esther and read aloud the Overview of Esther that precedes this lesson.
5. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.

Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: In God's providence, He calls, prepares, and uses both individuals and nations to forward Christ, His Story, the Gospel.

God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted (Psalm 47:8-9).

The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all (Psalm 103:19).

Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons; He sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning (Daniel 2:20, 21).

There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves (Romans 13:1, 2).



Notebook Record:

1. Write your name on the Esther title page and file in your binder behind your study of Ruth.
2. Record the following on the Overview of Esther graphic organizer:
 - Last of the Bible's historical books
 - Written by an unknown Jew
 - Is both a hero story and a patriotic story of the nation Israel
 - God's name is not mentioned, but His providence is implied throughout the book.
 - Relates both the eternal purpose of God and the courage of young Esther to save the Jews from annihilation



Memory Verse:

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

6. Show the children the extent of the ancient Persian Empire on a map.

Esther 1 introduces the reader to the vast wealth of the ancient Persian Empire and the extravagance of King Xerxes. Long-continuing royal banquets on such an enormous scale were common in Persia. The occasion of this particular feast is not recorded, but most historians believe the king had summoned his provincial governors and military leaders to plan their strategy against Greece.

After a seven-day feast the drunken king summoned Queen Vashti (whose name means “beautiful woman”), presumably to make a display of her, but she refused. This chapter gives us insight into the way women were perceived in the ancient Persian culture. Persian queens were kept in a harem, out of sight of the general public. They rarely saw the king unless he summoned them. The king used his concubines for entertainment, music, and dancing. To call for the queen at such an inebriated moment was a breach of Persian etiquette.

7. Ask reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute the Overview of Esther graphic organizers. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently and then orally together.
9. Write Overview of Esther notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Overview of Esther graphic organizers.
10. Have the children file this and their Esther title page in their binders.
11. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse. Pin it onto the bulletin board.
12. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
13. Send parent blessing and prayer cards home with the children for the week.

Ancient Persian Women



THE LIVES AND STATUS OF women in ancient Persia were complex and very interesting. Women in pagan Persia were classified according to status. Women of royalty ranked at the top, beginning with the king's mother, who was head of the female members of the household. Next was the queen, followed by the king's daughters and sisters. All had titles with recognized authority in the court, and each administered great wealth. The king, whom Persians regarded as the very image of God, was the ultimate source of authority. The royal women acted within clearly defined rules and standards set by the king. Each had personal living quarters, revenue, and a large number of servants.

Interestingly, these court women enjoyed economic independence, owned land, were involved in governing their own economic affairs, and were able to travel and control their wealth and position by being enterprising. The royal women paid stewards and servants to administrate their estates and receive their rental collections from free subjects. They also had judges who looked after their legal affairs.

To a far lesser degree, such was true for non-royal women as well: they had employment opportunities, earned wages, and enjoyed economic independence. Many owned property and managed their assets, much as did the Jewish woman depicted in Proverbs 31.

Women of royal and noble status received an education, and some learned such skills as horsemanship and archery, enabling them to participate in hunting. Writing was not a part of education at this time, even for the privileged boys. The Persians used foreign scribes for state business. (This information is based on recent archeological finds of treasury and fortification texts discovered at Persepolis, Susa, and Babylonia and dated from 509-483 B.C. (www.parstimes.com.)

Families were patriarchal and polygamous, and concubines existed during the period when Esther lived. The Persians made every effort to safeguard their lifestyle and honor their women. The practice of taking large numbers of wives and keeping them in secluded quarters or harems began when

the Persian Empire extended into the Near Eastern kingdoms. Royal edicts governed the life of women in the harem, who were kept in seclusion, guarded by eunuchs, and prevented from turning their frequent disputes into rebellious plots, such as the king feared in Esther 1.

Herodotus wrote that during the time of Artaxerxes each Persian man of nobility had several wives and an even larger number of concubines. He maintained a schedule for time spent with each of his wives, who exercised total control over her own children until they were five years old; boys did not spend time with their fathers until the age of five (1.135-136). Wives attended banquets with their husbands but left when "women entertainers" from the harem came in and the men began making merry (such as we read in Esther 1). The king's concubines were often used to provide entertainment by making music and singing during the night. There is no doubt that Persian nobility had an excessive lust for luxury, entertainment, and personal pleasure (www.iranica.com).

Persian women, unlike Egyptian and Babylonian women, did not participate in religious ceremonies.

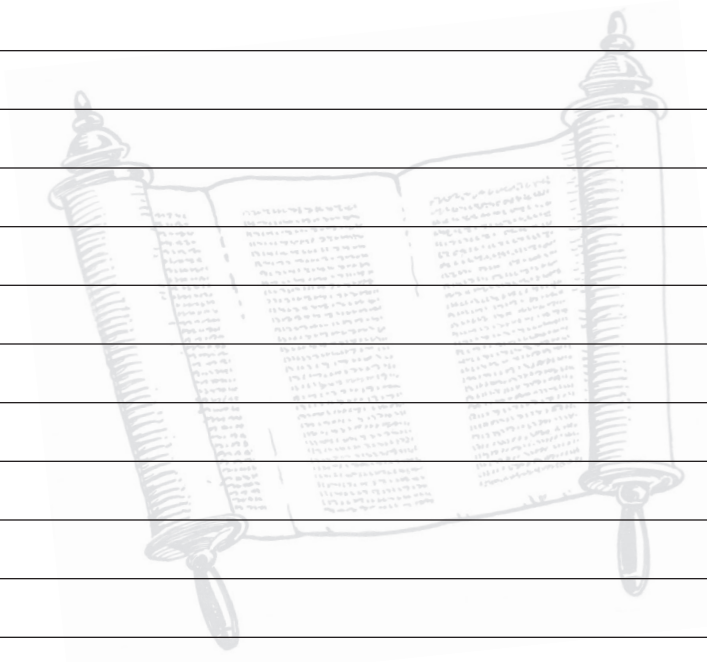
Veiling, as seen today in Iran, has a long history in ancient Mesopotamian cultures. However, based on ancient art, figurines, and statues from this period, women are seen fully clothed, with partial veils, and were crowned without a veil. Most likely royal women used a veil in public as a status symbol, but veiling as an institution to subjugate, control, or exclude women from public domain originated after the Islamic conquest in A.D. 644.

The Book of Esther

NAME

“Who knows whether you have not attained royalty
for such a time as this?”
(Esther 4:14).

Book of Esther Overview



RUTH AND ESTHER

14

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Esther 1:13-22

Review: The background and setting of Esther and God's providence

Principle: Submission for a Christian is based on a reverence for God and a respect for those in authority over him or her.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

decree (n.) An official law or order made by a leader as a rule to govern subordinates; an edict.

despot (n.) One with absolute power who uses it in a cruel and unreasonable way.

disrespect (n.) A lack of reverence; disrespect often leads a person to treat another with a degree of contempt.

justice (n.) 1) The virtue that consists in giving to everyone what is his or her due; practical conformity to laws in the dealings of people with each other. 2) Merited punishment.

law (n.) 1) A rule of action prescribed for the government of rational beings or moral agents, to which rule they are bound to yield obedience. 2) That which governs.

respect (v.) 1) To have regard for. 2) To view or consider with some degree of reverence; to esteem as having real worth.

reverence (n.) 1) Fear mingled with respect and esteem. 2) An act of respect.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire chapter.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Persian Empire wall map, Portrait of King Xerxes graphic organizers, and student vocabulary card.

STUDENT



Key Word:

submission (n.) Obedience; the act of voluntarily yielding to the authority and governance of another.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. Why did the king consult his advisors?
2. What effect might Queen Vashti's decision to disobey her husband have had on the rest of the women in the empire?
3. How did King Xerxes try to control the people in his empire?
4. Name those in authority over you.
5. Describe how God has commanded you to treat them. How are you to treat those who are not in authority over you?



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the background and setting of the Book of Esther and the principle of God's providence.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: Submission for a Christian is based on a reverence for God and a respect for those in authority over him or her.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself (Ephesians 5:22-28).

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you (Hebrews 13:17).

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21).

5. This is a difficult topic to teach young children. Our principle is based upon New Testament teachings that are rooted in God's principles of authority and family governance and a mutual respect and regard for others. This is not the worldview in the pagan world where women are often considered to be of lesser value than men or even thought of as property. In the Persian culture women did have great influence behind the scenes, providing they governed their lives according to the accepted customs and protocol.

Perhaps the best lesson for children with regard to submission is from the life of Jesus at the age of twelve. His



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on the Portrait of King Xerxes graphic organizer:

- Name means "mighty man"
- Ruled over 127 provinces but could not rule over his own spirit
- Extravagant and showy
- A despot



Memory Verse:

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

parents had taken Him to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Passover. When it was time to return to Nazareth, they could not find Him. After three days they located Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the Jewish teachers asking questions. After they had explained how worried they had been, Jesus answered, "Did you not know I had to be in My Father's house?" Although He preferred discoursing with the learned doctors, Jesus submitted, placing himself under the authority of Mary and Joseph and remaining dutiful and obedient to them. Read Luke 2:39-52.

Like the king, Queen Vashti was of royal lineage. There are many conjectures about why she did not obey her husband's command. Many believe that she may have been with child (the Artaxerxes of the book of Nehemiah, who was born the following year) and did not want to be seen in public in that state.

Regardless, Xerxes reacted rashly, having her banished from the court but later having second thoughts about his decision (2:1). Poor decisions are often made when people are unable to think clearly. In addition, the king was placed in a difficult situation because Vashti's response was a breach of protocol. He sought legal counsel about Persian law and inquired what would best provide justice in this circumstance.

Queen Vashti paid the price of loyalty to her dignity and womanhood, and the king divorced her. As the mother of their child, she most likely raised the boy. Children spent the first five years of their lives living with their mothers, and boys did not spend any time with their fathers until the age of five.

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently and then orally together.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute the Portrait of King Xerxes graphic organizers. Write the notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have children repeat their weekly memory verse.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

15

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Esther 2:1-11 (NIV)

Teacher Reading: Esther 2:12-18

Review: The principle of submitting to those in authority over us

Principle: When truth and kindness guide our words and actions, we attain favor with God and man.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

citadel (n.) A castle or fortress, usually built on a high place in or near a city and intended for its defense; a place of arms.

harem (n.) [Turkish, forbidden place] A house where Eastern princes and kings confined their wives, female relatives, concubines, and servants.

kindness (n.) An act of good will promoting the happiness or welfare of others and exercised cheerfully.

liberality (n.) An act of generosity.

repute (n.) One's reputation.

truth (n.) 1) The true state of facts or things. 2) God's Word (John 17:17). 3) Jesus Christ (John 14:6). 4) Purity from falsehood; honesty.

virgin (n.) A woman who has not been married and has no carnal knowledge of men.

virtue (n.) 1) Moral goodness; the practice of moral duties and abstaining from vice; the conformity of life and conversation to the moral law. 2) Obedience to truth.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.

STUDENT



Key Word:

favor (n.) An act of gracious kindness shown by word or deed.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How did the king arrange to choose a new queen?
2. What qualities did Esther possess that gave her favor with all those she met? Were these external or internal qualities?
3. Name other biblical characters to whom God showed favor.
4. Scripture doesn't tell us, but how do you think Esther developed such godly virtue and wisdom at such a young age?
5. How did the Persians prepare the young women to meet King

3. Gather resources: Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizers, student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle of submitting to those in authority over us.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: When truth and kindness guide our words and actions, we attain favor with God and man.

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man (Proverbs 3:3-4).

The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness (Psalm 147:11).

I sought your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to Your word (Psalm 119:58).

Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52).

5. The Book of Esther highlights the power and influence that one individual who has been prepared by God for His gospel purposes can exercise. In this chapter the young Esther was chosen to enter the contest for the next queen of Persia and won the favor of the king. What is amazing about her testimony is that even though she was beautiful in form and features, she was an exile without rights—an orphan and a Jewess. What was it about her, then, that won the king's heart, since all the other young women must have been beautiful as well? She had the favor of the living God resting upon her. God's Word tells us that "the king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns

Xerxes? Upon what kind of beauty were they focused?

6. How is God preparing you to meet and serve King Jesus? Upon what is God focused?



Notebook Record:

1. Record these phrases on the Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizer:
 - A young, beautiful Jewess living in Persian exile
 - An orphan raised by her older cousin, Mordecai
 - Hebrew name "Hadassah," meaning "myrtle"
 - Persian name "Esther," meaning "star"
 - Found favor with King Xerxes and crowned queen of Persia
2. Sketch the star-shaped flower of the myrtle bush on your graphic organizer and color it with your colored pencils.



Memory Verse:

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man (Proverbs 3:3-4).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

it wherever He wishes” (Proverbs 21:1). God’s favor opens doors that man cannot!

Esther had also learned spiritual disciplines that were modeled by her older cousin, Mordecai, and she possessed a godly character forged through the many trials and tribulations of her young life. God had prepared her for a life of royalty by refining her character and teaching her how to live a righteous life. She was a young woman who feared the Lord and obeyed His principles. The Esther narrative reveals the same principle of the overruling of God on behalf of His people that marks all of history. God’s providence is implied through every event. In this chapter we see that God will use King Xerxes’s divorce from Queen Vashti to position His “royal daughter,” the young Esther, in a place of power and influence, not for her own gain but for the welfare and survival of His chosen people, the Jews.

God used this earthly kingdom of Persia to set the stage for the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. It would be only 400 years until the birth of His Son, the King of all kings. As Christians, we are a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9), sons and daughters of the most high King! Our royal position and authority are found in Christ and in His Word. As we obey His Word and follow Him, He prepares and equips us for His gospel purpose in our own lives and gives us favor with men!

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently and then orally together.
7. Read the second portion of the chapter aloud to the children.
8. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
9. Distribute the Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizers. Write the notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
10. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
11. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
12. Send parent cards home with the children for the week.

Esther's Name and Preparation

Esther's Name

Esther's Jewish name was "Hadassah," whose Hebrew root "hadass" means "myrtle." Myrtle is a beautiful evergreen bush that bears clusters of pure white flowers, each in the shape of a star. Both its dark and shiny green leaves and its flowers contain



a scent used in making perfumes. The taste of the leaves is bitter; although they are used as an herb in cooking meats, they are not eaten.

Her Persian name, "Esther," is a derivative of "Satarah" which means "star." Seemingly, she took this name based on the star-shaped flowers of the myrtle bush when she entered the royal harem of King Xerxes.

Esther's Preparation

Esther received favor from the eunuch in charge of preparing all of the young women. He moved her to the best place in the royal harem and provided her with seven handmaidens from the palace to serve her every need. She also received special food and beauty treatments beyond those of the other virgins (2:9).

Cousin Mordecai came to the courtyard every day during this twelve-month period to inquire how she was doing (2:11).

Each young woman received two elaborate beauty treatments (2:12):

1. Six months with oil of myrrh for cleansing and purification.

Susa was located between the Arabian desert and the Persian Gulf in a very hot and dry climate, which took its toll on the skin. Summer temperatures rise to 140° F. with no cooling breezes. Interestingly, this area is not a desert wasteland, since two months out of the year monsoon rains flood the very fertile soil.

Myrrh is a desert tree that exudes a bitter, aromatic resin when bruised. An oil is derived from the resin that was very costly and used for many things:

- Helped to alleviate body odor
- Kept the skin healthy and young
- Was used for embalming the dead
- Was used to make the holy oil for anointing the tabernacle priests and articles (Exodus 30)
- Was burned in the temple to mask the odor of sacrificing animals
- Was used to make perfumes
- Relieved pain (myrrh was mixed with the wine offered to Jesus on the cross [Mark 15:23])
- Was brought to baby Jesus by the Magi (Matthew 2:11), symbolizing His sacrificial death. Mary Magdalene anointed Jesus' feet with myrrh, a costly oil (Luke 7:37).

2. Six months with perfumes and cosmetics

RUTH AND ESTHER

16

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Esther 2:19-3:6 (NIV)

Teacher Reading: Esther 3:8-15

Review: The principle of attaining favor with God and man

Principle: He who seeks good, seeks favor, but evil will come to the one who seeks it.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

- annals** (n.) Official records arranged according to their dates.
- conspire** (v.) To secretly plan with another to do something evil.
- disperse** (v.) To scatter; to cause to separate and go in different directions.
- gallows** (n.) An instrument of punishment whereon criminals are executed by hanging. It consists of two posts and a cross-beam, from which the criminal is suspended by a rope fastened around his neck.
- lot(s)** (n.) That by which an event or the future of an individual is committed to chance or the determination of providence (Proverbs 16:33); as to cast lots or draw lots.
- modus operandi** A habitual method of procedure.
- moral** (adj.) Relating to the practice, manners, or conduct of people as social beings, both in relation to each other and with reference to right and wrong. The word *moral* is applicable to actions that are good or evil, virtuous or vicious, and has reference to the law of God as the standard by which their character is to be determined.
- plunder** (v.) To forcefully destroy and remove valuable goods from a captured people.
- prejudice** (v.) To obstruct or injure by an undue bias of the mind; to judge prematurely and irrationally.
- scorn** (v.) To despise; disdain, deride, or slight.
- signet ring** A ring bearing a special design used to seal official documents and letters as a way of signing them.

STUDENT



Key Word:

evil (n.) That which is morally wrong in principle and practice, according to God's laws.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How did it happen that Mordecai learned of the plot to assassinate King Xerxes? What did he do about it? Was he rewarded?
2. When Haman was promoted to the position of prime minister, what did the king require others to do in Haman's presence? Why did Mordecai refuse?
3. How did Haman react to learning about Mordecai's insubordination, as well as about his nationality?



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Be certain to understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Portrait of Haman graphic organizers and student vocabulary card.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle of attaining favor with God and other people through kindness and truth.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: He who seeks good, seeks favor; but evil will come to the one who seeks it.

He who diligently seeks good seeks favor, but he who seeks evil, evil will come to him (Proverbs 11:27).

He who returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house (Proverbs 17:13).

He who leads the upright astray in an evil way will himself fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit good (Proverbs 28:10).

5. Children need to be taught the difference between good and evil with regard to the moral law, as well as the respective consequences of either choice. God rewards moral goodness with His favor but punishes evil deeds. The Scriptures teach us that those who plot evil against others will eventually be destroyed by their own schemes.

Haman's anger toward Mordecai was really directed toward what Mordecai stood for: the Jew's dedication to the living God as the only authority worthy of reverence and worship. Haman's attitude was prejudiced. He hated a whole

4. Why did Haman try to bribe the king? How did he misrepresent the Jews to the king? How did the king respond?
5. What was the greater purpose behind Haman's evil plan?



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on the Portrait of Haman graphic organizer:

- Royal prime minister to King Xerxes
- Was proud, arrogant, and prejudiced
- Had an evil nature
- Was a "type" of Satan, who hated God's people and planned to kill all the Jews in the Persian Empire



Memory Verse:

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man (Proverbs 3:3-4).

group of people because they had different beliefs from his own.

Haman is a “type” of Satan in the story of Queen Esther. He personifies the character of the devil, of whom Jesus said, “He is a murderer, does not stand in the truth, and is the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Satan’s modus operandi was “to steal, kill, and destroy” God’s people (John 10:10) in an effort to defeat God’s eternal plan of redemption. During the time of Esther, Satan’s desire was to eliminate the Messianic lineage, and it was through Haman that he schemed to kill all of the Jews. You will remember that Satan tried to kill all of the Jewish baby boys at the time of both Moses’ and Jesus’ births, but God is sovereign, and His providence always prevails!

Jesus the Messiah defeated the works of the devil through his shed blood on the cross, after which He was resurrected from the dead! Christ has won the victory for us. However, since Satan continues to “prowl around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8), we must guard ourselves against any temptation to partake of his ways and enter into his evil schemes.

A note on the phrase “Mordecai sat in the king’s gate” (2:21; 3:3): similar wording is found throughout the Old Testament with reference to fortified cities, including Sodom, Jerusalem, and Susa. Gates were actually rooms with double doors hung on both the outside and the inside of the thick, fortified wall. City officials and elders sat in the gates to settle disputes about passage and to govern local affairs, while guards were positioned nearby for protection. Mordecai held an official position among the Jewish captives, permitting him to be near the king’s gate and close to the palace.

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently and then orally together.
7. Read aloud the second portion of the assigned reading to the children.
8. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
9. Distribute the Portrait of Haman graphic organizers. Write the notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
10. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
11. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

17

Time: 45 minutes

Teacher Reading: Esther 4:1-8

Student Reading: Esther 4:9-17

Review: The consequences of good and evil deeds

Principle: God positions those whom He has called and prepared, but each one must choose whom he will serve.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

annihilation (n.) The state of being reduced to nothing.

fasting (n.) The act of abstaining from food to humble oneself and draw closer to God, seeking spiritual guidance or breaking the bonds of sin and injustice.

mourning (n.) The act of expressing grief and sorrow.

plead (v.) To urge reasons for or against an issue; to attempt to persuade someone by argument.

sackcloth and ashes A display of extreme repentance or grief, while dressed in a garment made of the coarse cloth used to make sacks and dusted with ashes to show humility before God.

scepter (n.) A staff used by kings as an emblem of royal power and authority.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book. Also read Isaiah 58:1-12 on fasting and its effect.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Student vocabulary card, memory verse card, parent cards, and bookmark.

STUDENT



Key Word:

choose (v.) To select; to decide to act in a certain way.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. Why was Mordecai in sackcloth and ashes?
2. About whom was Esther first concerned when she learned of Haman's decree? Of what did Mordecai remind her?
3. What choice did Esther make? What does this say about her character?
4. How was Esther prepared for this difficult task at such a young age?
5. What plans did Esther make before going into action? Upon whom was she depending?



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the consequences of good and evil deeds.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: God positions those whom He has called and prepared, but each person must choose whom he will serve.

Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose (Psalm 25:12).

[Jesus said,] "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you" (John 15:16).

Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? (James 2:5).

"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

5. In Esther chapter 2, we read how Esther was physically prepared to become the queen of Persia. We also learn about her spiritual life and internal character but can only speculate as to how she was spiritually prepared to save her people. Her cousin Mordecai had surely taught her God's Law and ways and modeled them before her. It is obvious from the Scripture that she both knew and practiced spiritual disciplines such as prayer and fasting, and she must have believed that God's favor was obtained by such disciplines. She approached God's throne of grace before venturing to the throne of the proud king.

6. Share an experience you may have had in which you had a difficult decision to make. Upon whom were you depending? What character qualities were demonstrated by your choice? What was the outcome?



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizer:

- Was teachable and open to advice
- Had an inner dependence upon God
- Practiced spiritual disciplines and approached God's throne before going to the king's throne
- Planned wisely before acting



Memory Verse:

Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Fasting, coupled with prayer, is a spiritual discipline that can reposition events and people. God is sovereign, but He both looks at the heart and hears the cries of His people and answers their prayers.

“Is this not the fast which I [God] choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6).

Esther’s first response to Mordecai’s request to approach the king was to remind him that she could lose her life. In response, Mordecai reminded her that when Haman’s decree was carried out, she most certainly would lose her life anyway, along with all the other Jews in the empire. When Esther had been selected to live in the harem, Mordecai had advised her to conceal her identity as a Jew, but now she must make her heritage known to the king.

6. Esther applied Mordecai’s wisdom as she made plans to speak to the king. She chose to petition God first, before petitioning the king. Her prayers and fasting, combined with her wise planning, strengthened her for the daunting task before her.

The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes (Proverbs 21:1).

7. Read aloud to the children the first portion of the assigned reading.
8. Distribute the Esther bookmarks to the children.
9. Assign the Bible reading. Have the children read it silently first and then orally together.
10. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
11. Write Esther character notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizers.
12. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
13. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
14. Send parent cards home with the children for the week.

RUTH AND ESTHER

18

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Esther 5

Review: God's call and our choices

Principle: God quickly brings about justice for His people who cry to Him day and night.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

banquet (n.) A feast or ceremonial dinner honoring a particular guest or commemorating an occasion.

boast (v.) To brag of one's own worth, property, or actions.

gallows (n.) An instrument of punishment whereon criminals are executed by hanging.

petition (n.) A formal request or supplication, written or verbal, from an inferior to a superior for something needed or desired.

rage (n.) Violent anger accompanied by furious words or gestures.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: God's Providence graphic organizers and student vocabulary card.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and*

STUDENT



Key Word:

justice (n.) Conformity to moral rightness in action or attitude.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. How did God grant favor to Queen Esther?
2. What do you think she realized as she stood before the king unharmed? Had Mordecai's assessment of her position of royalty been correct?
3. Why did Esther desire the presence of Haman at her banquet?
4. What personal information did Esther need to share with the king? Do you think she was fearful?
5. Was Haman's assessment of his own importance accurate?
6. Why is it unwise to boast about yourself to others?

our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.

2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review how God calls individuals and prepares and positions them for His purpose, even though each must choose whom he or she will serve.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: God quickly brings about justice for His people who cry to Him day and night.

“Now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I [Jesus] tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly” (Luke 18:7, 8).

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7, 8).

5. Esther had prepared herself spiritually during her three-day fast and through her prayers. She had boldly petitioned the throne of grace for God’s intervention in the lives of her people. No doubt she stood boldly and courageously in the Spirit before the living God and advocated—as Moses, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel had done—not for herself but for the plight of her people. She then exchanged her sackcloth and ashes for her royal robes and stood in the inner court of King Xerxes. Imagine her relief when the king extended his scepter to her, rather than having her put to death! God’s justice had prevailed. God had given her wisdom to invite the king and Haman to a banquet in their honor. She knew the temperament and sensibilities of her husband and also wanted Haman present when she made her request. For whatever reason she did not share her petition with the king at the first banquet. God providentially used the extra day to build a case with King Xerxes for honoring Mordecai.

Meanwhile, Haman’s hatred for Mordecai was fueled even more as he left the palace. He, his wife, and his friends plotted to murder Mordecai on the following day.

Mordecai was confident that God wanted to deliver His people through the intervention of Esther. He had placed his trust in the providence and power of God!

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently and then orally together.



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your God’s Providence graphic organizer:

- Queen Vashti’s banishment (1:19)
- Selection of Esther, the Jewess, to enter the harem (2:8)
- Favor granted Esther by Hegai for special food, cosmetics, and handmaids (2:9)
- King’s choice of Esther as the queen (2:17)
- Esther’s spiritual preparation and knowledge of God’s ways (4:16)



Memory Verse:

Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Distribute God's Providence graphic organizers to the children. Write God's Providence notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing.

RUTH AND ESTHER

19

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Esther 6

Review: God's justice for His people when we call to Him in prayer

Principle: God exalts the humble and brings low the proud.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

chronicles (n.) A record or narrative description of past events.

entrust (v.) To put into the care of protection of another with confidence of their fidelity.

grace (n.) 1) The free, unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all the benefits people receive from Him. 2) Favorable divine influence of God. 3) Mercy and pardon.

humble (v.) 1) To abase; to reduce to a low state. 2) To crush, break, or subdue.

proud (adj.) 1) Possessing a high opinion of or unreasonable conceit about one's own excellence. 2) Arrogant; haughty. 3) Presumptuous.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and*

STUDENT



Key Word:

humble (adj.) Lowly; modest; meek; submissive.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.

Reason Questions:

1. Why were the chronicles being read to King Xerxes in the middle of the night?
2. What did the king learn about Mordecai?
3. How did God use this incident to exalt Mordecai and bring Haman low?
4. Contrast the character qualities of Haman and Mordecai.
5. Which of the two men exemplifies the profile of a godly leader? Explain your answer.
6. What did Haman's wife and advisors predict about Haman after he had arrived home?

our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.

2. Distribute the student binders.
3. Review how God quickly moves to perform justice on behalf of His people when they cry out for mercy.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: God exalts the humble and brings low the proud.

Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you (James 4:10).

“Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time (1 Peter 5:5, 6).

5. We can certainly see the invisible hand of Almighty God overruling throughout this chapter. Of all the texts that could have been selected to read to the sleepless king, the scribe chose at this time the account of Mordecai’s loyalty. It was a great breach of Persian law not to recognize and reward one who had saved the life of the king.

As Haman arrived at court early, intent on seeking permission to have Mordecai executed, the king sought his counsel. Haman’s arrogance and conceit led him to believe that he himself was that man King Xerxes wanted to honor, and he designed a ceremony characterized by abundant pomp and glory. The pride of a man deceives the man, and the haughty one will eventually be brought down. The deceitfulness of our own hearts is unveiled through the conceit we demonstrate with regard to ourselves, a trait against which we should always watch and pray. The irony of this event is that Haman was forced to honor Mordecai from whom he had daily and unsuccessfully sought honor.

When Haman arrived home, humiliated and grieved, his wife and advisors did not entreat him to repent and ask Mordecai’s forgiveness. Instead, they foretold his destiny as fatal and unavoidable! They saw the handwriting on the wall and believed that Mordecai the Jew would be his downfall. Before Haman could do anything else, the king’s servants arrived to take him to Esther’s second banquet. It was

7. Why is it best not to exalt yourself and think more highly of yourself than of others?



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your Portrait of Haman graphic organizer:

- Arrogant, conceited, and cruel
- Unending quest for power and wealth
- Deceived by pride and blinded from seeing himself as God saw him



Memory Verse:

Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).



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an oriental custom for the king to escort his guests to the palace.

God's divine timing was once again perfect! His hand of protection was upon His chosen people in order to bring forth His Messiah from their seed.

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently and then orally together.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write Haman character notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Portrait of Haman graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent cards home with the children for the week.

RUTH AND ESTHER

20

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Esther 7

Review: God exalts the humble and brings low the proud.

Principle: God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

adversary (n.) An enemy; one who has enmity at heart.

called (pp.) Invited, summoned, named, or appointed.

fate (n.) A predetermined event; lot; destiny.

molest (v.) To hurt or behave in a threatening way toward someone else.

vile (adj.) Morally base or impure; depraved by sin.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Student vocabulary card.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.

STUDENT



Key Word:

cause (v.) 1) To bring into existence; to produce. 2) To effect by power or influence.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What were Esther's two requests of the king? How did the king respond?
2. How did Haman's evil plan come back to destroy him?
3. Who in this story was called by God for His gospel purposes?
4. How did God cause all things to work together for good in Esther's life? In Mordecai's life? For the nation of Israel?
5. As a child of God, what is your hope in Christ for your calling, what do you perceive to be God's gospel purpose to be fulfilled?

- Review the principle that God exalts the humble and brings low the proud.
- Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.

Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:28-31).

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive” (Genesis 50:20).

- God is able to take the enemy’s evil plans and deeds and use them to deliver and save His own people. This theme runs throughout the Bible from the life of the Old Testament Joseph through that of Jesus and His disciples. Haman’s hatred and evil schemes toward Mordecai and the Jews turned against him when the king found out about his true intentions. Xerxes had Haman hung on the very gallows Haman had erected for Mordecai’s death. Haman lost not only his earthy life but also his eternal salvation.

A person who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him (Proverbs 26:27).

Esther was very courageous in her requests. She had kept her identity as a Jewess from King Xerxes until the moment when she asked that her own life and the lives of her people be spared from annihilation. The king must have been surprised at her petition, anticipating instead a request for wealth or power or a special favor on behalf of a friend.

Mordecai’s exhortation to Esther proved prophetic: “Who knows but that you have attained royalty for such a time as this?” God had called and positioned her in the royal palace to be an advocate for her people before the king of Persia. Young Esther’s intercessions ultimately saved them from the wicked plan of Satan, which was to destroy the Messianic line by killing all of the Jews.

through you, and how do you envision yourself preparing for this calling?



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your Portrait of Queen Esther graphic organizer:

- Courageous
- Self-sacrificing
- Fulfilled God’s purpose for her life



Memory Verse:

Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).

6. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently and then orally together.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write Esther character notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Portrait of Esther graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

RUTH AND ESTHER

21

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Esther 8:1-10

Teacher Reading: Esther 8:11-17

Review: God causes all things to work together for good.

Principle: God is the sovereign ruler over all individuals and nations.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

avenge (v.) To take satisfaction for an injury by punishing the injuring party; to vindicate by inflicting pain or evil on the wrongdoer.

exalt (v.) To elevate in power, wealth, rank, or dignity.

rescind (v.) To revoke or annul; to state officially that a law has ended and no longer has legal authority.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizers, student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*

STUDENT



Key Word:

sovereign (adj.) Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion over all.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. To what official position was Mordecai elevated? What principle that we've studied does this validate?
2. With what petition did Esther appeal to King Xerxes?
3. How did Mordecai come to write the new decree for the benefit of his people, the Jews?
4. How did God overrule in the affairs of both the Persian Empire and the Jewish nation of exiled people?

2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle that God causes all things to work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: God is the sovereign ruler over all individuals and nations.

He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15).

It is He that changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings (Daniel 2:21).

The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands . . . He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:24-27).

In God's divine timing, He sovereignly exalted humble Mordecai. Mordecai inherited Haman's vast estate and wealth and was promoted to the position of prime minister, the second in command next to the king. Although God's people should not expect earthly rewards for being faithful to God, they do often come. Both Mordecai and Esther served God faithfully to the point of risking their lives to save others, and God rewarded them both. They are both "heroes" in our "Hall of Faith."

The king could not reverse Haman's decree because it had been sealed with his signet ring, in accordance with a provision of the famed "law of the Medes and the Persians." So Mordecai was asked by the king to devise another decree to offset the first, without actually rescinding it.

The law that was written granted the Jews in all the provinces the right to defend themselves, kill their attackers, and take the spoils. Mordecai had the edict written in all of the languages of the provinces and sent hastily by couriers. When they heard the new law, the Jews called for a feast, and all celebrated with joy and gladness. Many of the people in the Persian Empire became Jews because a fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

5. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read it silently and then orally together.

5. Have you been looking for the hand of God in your life since beginning this study? How has God revealed to you His providence in your life? Be specific in your answer.



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizer:

- Raised Esther as his daughter
- Was a righteous and humble man
- Employed in royal service to the king
- Exposed a plot to kill the king
- Was patient and persevering



Memory Verse:

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation (Psalm 33:11).



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6. Read aloud to the children the remaining portion of the chapter.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond.
8. Distribute the Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizers. Write Mordecai character notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent cards home with the children for the week.

RUTH AND ESTHER

22

Time: 45 minutes

Teacher Reading: Esther 9:1-11

Student Reading: Esther 9:12-19

Review: God is the sovereign ruler over all individuals and nations.

Principle: When God delivers His people, mourning gives way to joy and gladness.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

satrap (n.) A governor of a province in ancient Persia.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Student vocabulary card.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.*
2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle that God is the sovereign ruler over all individuals and nations.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.

STUDENT



Key Word:

deliver (v.) To free; to set at liberty; as to deliver one from captivity or bondage.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What strategy did the Jews employ to strengthen themselves for battle?
2. How did God help the Jews defeat their enemies?
3. What did the provincial rulers do to assist the Jews in defeating their enemies?
4. Why didn't the Jews take the spoils of the Persians? What does this reveal about their character?
5. How did they celebrate their deliverance?

Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: When God delivers His people, mourning gives way to joy and gladness.

Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked (Psalm 97:10).

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness (Psalm 30:11).

“The virgin shall rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together, for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and give them joy for their sorrow . . . and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness,” declares the LORD (Jeremiah 31:13, 14).

5. God’s people, the Jews, had eight months to prepare for battle with their enemies in the Persian Empire. They were successful in defeating their enemies throughout the provinces because the Lord struck their enemies with fear, and the Jews worked together to defend themselves in their cities. In addition, the rulers of the provinces fought on their behalf. They did not harm women and children but struck only those who were armed. Even though Mordecai’s decree gave them permission to plunder their enemies, the Jews left the spoils for the women and children to use to care for themselves. This was a demonstration of their determination to save themselves and nothing beyond. God delivered his people from captivity, and they quickly celebrated their victory and gave thanks to the Lord.

King Xerxes approached Esther and offered to grant her a third petition. She requested that Haman’s ten sons be hanged.

6. Read the first portion of the chapter aloud to the children.
7. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently and then orally together.
8. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
9. Write Mordecai character notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizers.
10. Before completing the lesson, have children repeat their weekly memory verse.
11. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your Portrait of Mordecai graphic organizer:

- Guided Esther with wisdom and faith to save their nation of people
- Was exalted to the position of prime minister of the great Persian Empire
- Wrote the decree that restored the right for Jews to defend themselves



Memory Verse:

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation (Psalm 33:11).

RUTH AND ESTHER

23

Time: 45 minutes

Student Reading: Esther 9:20-32

Teacher Reading: Esther 10

Review: Deliverance brings gladness and joy.

Principle: God commanded that history be recorded so His people would remember His wondrous acts and celebrate His love and mercy.

TEACHER



Vocabulary:

goodwill (n.) 1) An attitude of kindness or friendliness; benevolence. 2) Cheerful willingness.

lamentation (n.) Expression of sorrow; cries of grief.

Purim (n.) ["Pur" means "lot."] The feast of lots was instituted to commemorate the Jews' deliverance from Haman's intended plan of extermination.

tribute (n.) Money or gifts given by a leader to a more powerful leader.



Preparation and Lesson Background:

1. Read and reflect upon the assigned reading. Make certain you understand it in the context of the entire book.
2. Study the teacher vocabulary, principle, and lesson background.
3. Gather resources: Student vocabulary card, memory verse card, and parent cards.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of your people. You are near to all who call upon your name in truth. You keep all who love you, while the wicked you destroy. We will extol you, our God and*

STUDENT



Key Word:

celebrate (v.) To praise, extol, or honor by ceremonies and marks of joy and respect.



Read the Bible Passage:

Read the Bible passage silently and orally, as assigned by the teacher.



Reason Questions:

1. What did Esther and Mordecai institute that would tell of God's deliverance of His people for generations?
2. Describe three things the Jews did during the Feast of Purim.
3. How does Esther 10 portray Mordecai? Why do you think he was able to remain humble and charitable after attaining such position, power, and wealth?
4. What contributions did Esther make in the deliverance of her people?

our King, and bless your name forever and ever. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Amen.

2. Distribute student binders.
3. Review the principle that when God delivers His people, mourning gives way to joy and gladness.
4. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the principle and teach the principle.

Principle: God commanded that history be recorded so His people would remember His wondrous acts and celebrate His love and mercy.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (Exodus 17:14).

Therefore, write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things (Revelation 1:19).

So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants (Esther 9:28).

How Esther and Mordecai must have celebrated the Jews' triumph over their enemies! How their hearts must have been filled with the joy of the Lord and of His salvation. They perpetuated the remembrance of God's wondrous deeds for posterity in two ways: (1) By writing the history of the events and sending copies to the Jews in all of the provinces; and (2) By instituting a feast to be observed annually from generation to generation.

God instructed Israel to celebrate feasts and tell the story of God's hand in their lives to warn future generations against a repetition of unfaithfulness:

For God established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments (Psalm 78:5-7).

Esther and Mordecai instituted the Feast of Purim to make it a day (1) of feasting and joy, (2) of generosity by giving gifts to family and friends, and (3) of charity by giving gifts to the poor.

5. Describe the qualities of young Esther that demonstrate biblical femininity.
6. What is God's calling on your life? How is He preparing you for it?



Notebook Record:

Record these phrases on your God's Providence graphic organizer:

- Esther's favor with King Xerxes (5:2)
- The sleepless night of King Xerxes when the account of Mordecai saving his life was read (6:1)
- King Xerxes granting Esther her requests (7:3)
- Mordecai's favor with the king and his promotion to prime minister (8:2)



Memory Verse:

We celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness (Psalm 145:7).



Take Blessing and Prayer Cards home to parents.

Esther 10 concludes the story of Esther and Mordecai, whom God raised up “for such a time as this.” We’re told that Mordecai served Xerxes as his righthand man and was great among the Jews, seeking their welfare and speaking peace to all his seed. He proved to be a man of moral and charitable character of whom all spoke well, both Jew and Persian.

5. Assign the Bible reading to the children. Have them read silently and then orally together.
6. Read Esther 10 aloud to the children.
7. Ask the reason questions and have the children respond orally.
8. Write God’s Providence notes on the chalkboard or whiteboard and have the children copy onto their God’s Providence graphic organizers.
9. Before completing the lesson, have the children repeat their weekly memory verse.
10. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.
11. Send parent cards home with the children for the week.

Purim Festival

*Who knows whether you have not attained royalty
for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14).*

This AMO® celebration is inspired by the Feast of Purim from the book of Esther. This feast is still celebrated by Jews in memory of their deliverance from evil Haman and their Persian enemies, who plotted to exterminate them during the period of their Babylonian exile. Our modified celebration is designed to (1) memorialize the completion of our study of Ruth and Esther and its focus on the unique role of women and (2) enjoy the spirit of Purim by befriending and serving the poor and needy children within the community.

Goals

1. To culminate the study of Ruth and Esther in the spirit of celebration and service
2. To proclaim the unique role of womanhood and the qualities of biblical femininity
3. To involve parents in their children's lives and provide them an opportunity to minister with them in the community
4. To develop a friendship with the children of a local orphanage and invite them to your Purim Feast
5. To share the gospel and give public testimony to the faithfulness of God in your AMO® Program

Events

Welcome Guests
Presentation, Singing, and Games
Invitation to Dine
Giving of Gifts and Blessings

Length of Time Needed for the Celebration

1½ hours

Preparation

1. Start collecting donations of nonperishable food and clothing for the orphanage in your community **at the beginning of this unit**. Ask for donations from AMO® Program families, announce in your churches, and call local businesses to see whether they have anything they would like to contribute. Ask one of the mothers or grandmothers to organize this task. As the donations come in, arrange them in boxes or baskets.
2. Pray about an orphanage and call the director to invite the staff and children to your festival.
3. Seek a business sponsor for your celebration. Approach local grocery and clothing stores. Explain your ministry and your desire to serve the community by providing gifts and food for the children in the orphanage. Ask the owner or manager whether their business would be willing to donate food, clothing, or appropriate toys for your event.
4. Call the Bible Society or local Gideons organization to see whether they have copies of one of the Gospels or New Testaments that can be given to the children.

5. Plan to have a favor and a small gift or toy to give to every child. The Feast of Purim is a festival of gift giving, games, feasting, and sharing with the poor or needy in the community.
6. Choose a location to host your event and plan how you can utilize this space to accommodate your festival. Arrange tables to sit and eat. Plan to seat your children among those from the orphanage.
7. If your children have just completed one of the AMO® literature units, display their artwork and crafts on side tables.
8. Write a brief description of the Ruth and Esther Bible Reading unit. Assign a girl to describe biblical femininity and a boy to describe biblical manhood. Relate how the roles of woman and man reflect Imago-Dei. Select a child to tell the story of Ruth and Boaz and to share how Boaz is a type of Jesus Christ. Select a child to tell the story of Esther and to share how God used this young woman to save her people. Describe the Feast of Purim. Have the children recite their memory verses.
9. Sing “I Am a Promise” (from the AMO® Timeline unit) and teach it to the orphanage children so they can join in the singing. Speak life and vision into their hearts and minds. Have your children gather around the orphans and pray a special blessing upon them.
10. Ask the orphanage director to share with the group about its ministry and program.
11. Select some indoor games to play and have a prize for each winner.
12. Ask one mother or grandmother to oversee the preparation and service of the meal. Have her put together a committee of mothers to assist. You will want a menu that will be enjoyed by children.
13. Ask one mother or grandmother to oversee the table settings for the dinner. Collect tablecloths with which to cover the tables. Place a colored runner, cut out of bulletin board paper, across the middle of the table. Using a thick black marker, print “We celebrate your abundant goodness” on the runner. Collect vases and ask volunteers to gather and arrange flowers. Place them among the children’s crafts.
14. Place the donated Gospels or New Testaments at every other place setting and ask the children from the orphanage to sit at these designated places. Be certain to tell them that the books are a gift.
15. Assign a parent to greet guests and make name tags as they arrive.
16. The AMO® Program director should welcome the guests, volunteers, and children to the festival. Share the vision and program details of your AMO® Program. Introduce your audience to your children’s experience of reading for reasoning two Old Testament books about women and learning about the qualities of biblical womanhood and manhood.
17. Assign someone to take plenty of photos at the festival.

Schedule for the Celebration

- Welcome
- Presentations and Games
- Invitation to Dine and Prayer
- Giving of Gifts and Blessings

