

Hope in the LORD! Be strong! Let your heart take courage! Hope in the LORD!  
(Psalm 27:14)

## Esther – Book of Esther

### Prepare to Wonder

#### Faith Word: COURAGE

Today's Bible story is about Esther, who often is called "the courageous queen." This dramatic and surprising story demonstrates Esther standing up with courage for her people and for God. Esther stays committed to her faith and to who she is.

The Common English Bible notes that being selfless is brave. Esther follows God in a difficult time and a hard situation. She risks her own life by telling the truth and standing up for other people. The risk and selfless bravery pay off, as she saves many lives. Some scholars say that Esther knew and seized the perfect moment and opportunity to help save her people.

Children can learn why it is important to stand up for others in times of need. Esther is a great example of doing the right thing, even when it is hard. Sometimes this is scary or difficult. But Ester reminds us to be brave and courageous so that we can do the right thing and be examples of God's courageous love.

#### Spiritual Practice for Adults

Find a stop watch, or use your phone as a timer. Set the time for one minute. As the seconds pass, repeat over and over, "For a moment like this." When the timer goes off, say this prayer: "Dear God, give me the courage to seek you in each moment. Amen."

# Come Together

## Welcome to Wonder

**Supplies:** *Class Pack—pp. 16 & 17; Leader Guide—pp. 4, 85; Activity Sheets (Session 11); Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD; CD player; stickers or markers; items for Wonder Table (small table, green cloth, and items such as a candle, wooden people figures, a plant); Wonder Box; a crown; pens; pencils, crayons; markers*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Display the Attendance Chart (Class Pack). Set up a Wonder Table (see Leader—p. 4). Place the crown inside the Wonder Box. Set the Wonder Box on the Wonder Table.*

- Play “Celebrate Wonder” (CD) as the children arrive. Lyrics are on page 85 of the Leader Guide.
- Greet each child. Show the children where to mark the Attendance Chart using a sticker or a marker.
- Distribute this week’s Activity Sheet (Session 11). Help the children interact with the activities on each page.

## Sing and Celebrate

**Supplies:** *Leader Guide—p. 88, Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD or Celebrate Wonder DVD, CD player, DVD player, TV*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy “Song Sheet—Unit 3” for each child.*

- Gather the children around the Wonder Table, and hand out the Song Sheets.
- Play “Kind & Brave” (CD or DVD). Invite the children to sing and celebrate.

## Wonder Time

### Share a Story

**Supplies:** *CEB Bible; “Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook” (optional); Class Pack—pp. 4, 10 & 23; Celebrate Wonder DVD; TV; DVD player*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Obtain the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 23) and the Wonder Story Mat Figures (Class Pack—p. 4). You will use Esther today.*

- Lay the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat on the floor.

- Read from the Bible today's story in the Book of Esther. Or read the story from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*.
- Let a child move or place Esther on the crown on the Wonder Story Mat.
- Watch the Session 11 video on the DVD.

## Wonder with Me

**Supplies:** *Class Pack—pp. 8 & 25, Wonder Cube (from a previous quarter or from the Digital Pack at CokesburyKids.com), Wonder Box (containing a crown)*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Display the Unit 3 Faith Word poster (Class Pack). Locate a Wonder Cube.*

- Let a child roll the Wonder Cube. Direct the children to answer the question(s) about the Bible story. You can interact with the Wonder Cube as time allows.
- Then pick up the Wonder Box and place it in front of the children.

**SAY:** Today's faith word is *Courage*: choosing to act in faith, even when you are afraid.

- Wonder together:
  - How did Esther show courage?
  - Have you ever had to stand up for someone else?
  - What did courage look like in the Bible story?
  - What do you think is inside our Wonder Box today?
- Open the Wonder Box and reveal the crown.

**WONDER:** Is it hard for leaders to be courageous?

## Experience Wonder

### Haman's Hat (Cooking/Snack)

**Supplies:** *Leader Guide—p. 72, refrigerated sugar cookie dough, ingredients for nut filling (walnuts, sugar, vanilla, 1/2 lemon, 1 orange, cinnamon, orange marmalade, 1 egg), measuring cups, measuring spoons, food processor, paring knife, citrus zester, mixing bowl, mixing spoon, baking sheets, oven mitts, oven*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Check for allergies before making this snack. Make one copy of "Haman's Hat" (Leader Guide). Preheat the oven to the temperature listed on the cookie dough package.*

**SAY:** *Hamantaschen* (or Haman's Hat) is known traditionally as a Purim sweet. Purim is the Jewish festival in which the bravery of Esther is remembered.

- Follow the directions in “Haman’s Hat” to make and bake the cookies with your children.

**SAY:** Sharing cookies is one way we can show love.

*Tip: Make enough cookies so that the children can share with a friend or a neighbor.*

## Thinking and Speaking (Discussion)

*Supplies: paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils*

- Share the following about THINK with the children.

T - Am I **telling** the truth?

H - **How** will this help?

I - Does it **inspire** others?

N - Is it **necessary** to say out loud?

K - Does it share God’s **kindness**?

**WONDER:** Is there something you want to speak up about? What would you say?

- Have each child make a poster with a message he or she wants to share with others.
- Invite willing volunteers to share.

## Scepters (Craft)

*Supplies: paper towel tubes, aluminum foil, permanent markers, stickers, gems, glue*

**SAY:** Esther was an important queen because she spoke up with courage and saved her people. We will make scepters to remind us to speak up with courage, just like Esther did.

- Give each child a paper towel tube.
- Have the children wrap their tube in aluminum foil.
- Direct the children to use the permanent markers, stickers, and gems to decorate their scepters.

*Tip: The children will use the scepters during the spiritual practice.*

## Peaceful Place

*Supplies:* suggested books: “My Heart Will Not Sit Down” by Mara Rockliff and “Willow’s Whispers” by Lana Button; quiet toys and items: dress-up clothes, colorful stick-on jewels

- Locate the suggested books and quiet items, and place them in the Peaceful Place.
- Allow children who want or need a quieter activity to visit the Peaceful Place.

*Tip:* You may choose to include other quiet toys, books, or activities.

## Go in Peace

### Spiritual Practice—Exploring Courage Through Discipline

*Supplies:* Leader Guide—p. 89, “Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book” (optional), scepters (made in a previous activity)

*Prepare Ahead:* Photocopy “Celebration Chart” (Leader Guide) for children who have not received it yet.

- Gather the children near the Wonder Table.

**SAY:** You each have a scepter. Scepters represent power.

**WONDER:** What would you do if you were a queen or a king?

**SAY:** You can use your power for good.

**WONDER:** What would God want you to use your power to do?

- Have the children hold up their scepters and repeat the following after you:

**SAY:** I have the courage to speak up!

- Do this several times.
- Send “Celebration Chart” home with children who have not received it yet.
- Encourage the children and their families to use the “Celebration Chart” and to read together the quarterly *Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* (if purchased).

# CELEBRATE WONDER<sup>®</sup> Haman's Hat

## Haman's Hat Cookies

### INGREDIENTS

refrigerated sugar cookie dough  
nut filling (see directions below)

### DIRECTIONS

- Follow the directions at the bottom of the page to make the nut filling.
- Slice 1/4-inch sections from the roll of cookie dough.
- Put 1 teaspoon of nut filling in the middle of each dough circle.
- Use your finger to put water around the rim of each circle.
- Fold each nut-filled circle into a three-cornered cookie by pressing two sides together, folding the third side over, and pressing the ends together.
- Put the cookies on baking sheets, and bake as directed on the cookie dough package.

### NUT FILLING

#### INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup walnuts, ground  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/4 teaspoon vanilla  
rind and juice of 1/2 a lemon

rind and juice of 1 orange  
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/4 cup orange marmalade  
1 egg white

### DIRECTIONS

- Combine the above ingredients, and mix well.

