TRACK TWO

Kids Ministry

A complete 45-60 minute lesson for elementary classes (about grades K-5), with notes for preschool and a take-home page for parents.

THE BIG IDEA

God can turn sorrow into gladness.

LESSON PLAN

	45 MIN	60 MIN
Welcome and opening game	8	10
Bible story (told or film)	10	12
Object lesson	5	6
Craft	10	15
Small groups	7	10
Memory verse	3	4
Prayer and goodbye	2	3

THE STORY IN PLAIN WORDS

On a sleepless night, the king learned Mordecai had saved his life, and proud Haman had to honor him. Esther asked the king to save her people, and Haman's wicked plan fell back on him. A new law let the Jews defend themselves, and their sorrow turned to gladness.

READ BEFORE CLASS

Esther 6-10 and Proverbs 16:33. If you will show the film, watch it all the way through first.

What Kids May Ask

"What happened to Haman?" Say: *The king punished him for his wicked plan. The trap he set for Mordecai caught him instead.* No more detail is needed for younger children.

"Was it okay for the Jews to fight?" Say: *Their enemies were coming to hurt them, and the king let them protect their families.* (See the Youth notes for older kids.)

"Why didn't God's name show up?" Say: *The writer never says His name, but God was working the whole time, like on that sleepless night.*

"What is Purim?" A happy Jewish holiday that remembers this story, with a feast and gifts of food for friends and the poor (9:22).

"Can God turn my sad thing around?" Say: *God cares about your sad things. Tell Him, and tell a grown-up you trust.*

Telling the Story

YOU'LL NEED a paper crown, a bathrobe or blanket for the royal robe, a stuffed animal for the king's horse, a book for the record book, and a chair for the throne (the leader sits; kids stay on the floor). *SAY lines are a dramatized paraphrase for children; READ lines quote the WEB.*

DO Teach the cues. When you hear "Haman," stomp your feet softly. When you hear "turned around," everyone turns around once in place.

SAY Haman had built a gallows for Mordecai. But that very night, the king couldn't sleep. *(Yawn and open the book.)* He read in his record book that Mordecai had saved his life, and nothing had been done for him.

READ Esther 6:1 aloud: "On that night, the king couldn't sleep."

SAY The king asked Haman how to honor someone. Haman thought it was him! But the king said, *Do it for Mordecai.* So Haman had to lead Mordecai on the king's horse. *(Put the robe on a helper; walk the horse.)* Everything turned around!

SAY At Esther's banquet, she asked the king, *Please save me and my people!* She pointed at Haman, and the king punished him. His wicked plan fell back on him. Everything turned around!

SAY Mordecai wrote a new law so the Jews could protect their families. God's people were saved, and their tears turned to joy.

READ Esther 8:16 aloud: "The Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honor."

ASK What turned around in the story? Who was working even when no one could see Him?

USING THE FILM INSTEAD. The film runs about 12 minutes. Preview it, and mark your stop times in your player before class. For grades K-2, show two clips: 0:22 to 3:49 (the sleepless night through Esther's "this wicked Haman!"), then 4:43 to 6:50 (the king's ring through "light, gladness, joy, and honor"). **SKIP 3:50-4:42,** Haman's fall, and stop at 6:50. For grades 3-5, the default is two clips: 0:22 to 3:49 and 4:43 to 8:15. **SKIP 3:50-4:42,** which has the king's "assault" accusation (4:05) and "Hang him on it!" (Esther 7:9; at 4:29 in the film); at the skip, say simply: *The king punished Haman for his wicked plan.* After previewing, a leader may choose to play straight through, 0:22 to 8:15, for a class that is ready (Haman's face is covered and only a distant pole is shown). At 6:51-7:22 the battle day is narrated briefly; no fighting is shown. Times are from the film's final caption file.

Opening Game: Upside Down

Play like "Simon Says," but kids do the opposite: when you say *stand up,* they sit; *hands up,* hands down; *look sad,* they smile. Anyone who slips just laughs and keeps playing. No one is out. Finish with *Turn around!* (they stand still), then *Stand still!* (they turn around).

Wrap up: *Today everything turns upside down for Haman and for Esther's people. Let's find out how!*

Object Lesson: Turned Around

YOU'LL NEED a paper plate with a sad face drawn on the front and a happy face on the back, taped to a craft stick.

Show the sad face. **Say:** *Esther's people were very sad. A law said they would be destroyed.* Ask kids to name sad things in the story. Then slowly turn the plate around. **Say:** *But God turned it around! The Bible says "the opposite happened" (9:1). Their sorrow turned to gladness.* Hold up the happy face. *God can turn sad things around. Sometimes it takes a while, and sometimes He gives us comfort while we wait. But in Jesus, sorrow never gets the last word.*

Craft: Gifts of Gladness Bag

Kids decorate a paper lunch bag with a happy face, stars, and the words **God turns sorrow into gladness.** At home, families fill the bag with a small gift for a friend, a neighbor, or someone in need, as in Purim's "gifts to the needy" (9:22). Grades 3-5 can add the memory verse. No food in class (allergies).

SUPPLIES (PER CHILD)

- One brown paper lunch bag
- Crayons or markers
- Large paper stickers (optional)
- A tag with the memory verse (grades 3-5), pre-cut by leaders
- No scissors for children; leaders do any cutting before class

Small Groups

GRADES K-2

1. What happened because the king couldn't sleep?
2. Who got to ride the king's horse?
3. How did God's people feel at the end?

GRADES 3-5

1. Name three things that turned around in the story.
2. What happened after the king couldn't sleep? The book doesn't say why he was awake. How do you see God's care in the timing?
3. Purim includes gifts for the poor (9:22). Why would happy people want to give?
4. Read Proverbs 16:33. What does it tell us about God?

Memory Verse Practice

MEMORY VERSE

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from Yahweh."

PROVERBS 16:33, WEB

Motions: "The lot is cast," pretend to toss a cube; "into the lap," pat your lap; "its every decision," hold up a finger; "is from Yahweh," point up. Grades K-2: learn "...its every decision is from Yahweh."

Prayer

Invite kids to name something sad they want God to turn around, out loud or silently. Anyone may pass. Then pray: *Dear God, You are in charge of every day. Please turn our sad things into gladness. Thank You for Jesus. Amen.*

CLASSROOM TIPS

- **Attention signal:** turn the plate to the happy face; kids smile and look at you.
- **Haman's end:** keep it simple for younger kids; don't describe the gallows.
- Use only large, safe items. No coins, rocks, beads, or other small objects: they are choking hazards for little ones.
- **Safeguarding.** If a child or teen tells you about abuse, neglect, self-harm, harmful drinking or drug use at home, or anything else that makes you worried for their safety: stay calm, listen, and thank them for telling you. Don't promise to keep it secret, don't question them for details or investigate, and don't confront anyone involved. Write down what they said as soon as you can, and report it the same day to your church's designated safeguarding lead, following your church's safeguarding policy and any mandatory-reporting law that applies to you. If anyone is in immediate danger, stay with them and call emergency services. Telling a church safeguarding lead does not replace any report the law requires you to make directly to child-protection authorities or police.

FOR PRESCHOOL (AGES 3-5)

- Plan 20-25 minutes: story with the robe and horse, the Upside Down game, the bag craft, and prayer.
- Tell it as *The king couldn't sleep, Mordecai got a parade, and God saved His people.* Leave out Haman's end and the battles.
- Questions: *Who rode the horse? Was everyone happy at the end?*
- Explain simply: *Long ago people tossed a little cube to decide things. God was in charge even of that!* Then practice "...its every decision is from Yahweh." with a point up.

TAKE-HOME PAGE · FOR PARENTS

Today in Kids Ministry

The Gallows and the Reversal

ESTHER 6-10

WHAT WE LEARNED

On a sleepless night, the king learned that Mordecai had saved his life, and made Haman honor him. Esther pleaded for her people, Haman's plan fell back on him, and a new law let the Jews defend themselves. Their sorrow turned to gladness, remembered every year at Purim. **Big idea:** *God can turn sorrow into gladness.*

TALK ON THE WAY HOME

1. What turned around in today's story?
2. Where did you see God working, even though His name isn't written?
3. What sad thing could we pray about together?

MEMORY VERSE

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from Yahweh."

PROVERBS 16:33, WEB

TRY THIS AT HOME

Fill today's Gifts of Gladness bag with a small gift for a neighbor or someone in need, and deliver it this week.

Watch the film together

Scan, or visit phillacolla.com/biblestories. Free, about 12 minutes, listed there from release day. Parents, preview it first: it includes Haman's execution (Esther 7:9-10; not shown) and a brief summary of the battles of chapter 9.

GO DEEPER AS A FAMILY

The **Family Study** track of the full companion guide has the story, questions for every age, and a prayer. Get the full guide free at phillacolla.com/biblestories. Next: *The Drought* (1 Kings 17), the start of the Elijah series.

PRAY TOGETHER

God, turn our sorrow into gladness, and make us generous. In Jesus' name, amen.

KIDS: DRAW MORDECAI RIDING THE KING'S HORSE

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