
GOD IS IN CONTROL

SERIES: KEEP IT REAL

Join us throughout the month of February as we hear stories that show how GOD IS REAL! We will be going through the books of Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah!

REMEMBER VERSE

PROVERBS 19:21—Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

SCHEDULE

All Services

- 0:00—0:35 Small Group (Respond Activity/Lesson)
- 0:35—0:40 Transition to Large Group
- 0:40—1:00 Large Group (B100)
- 1:00—1:05 Transition to Small Group
- 1:05—1:15 Bless and Dismiss

NOTES

LEADER RESOURCES

SERIES OVERVIEW

WEEK 1: God Is Real

Daniel

CURRENT WEEK: God Is In Control

Esther

WEEK 3: God Redeems

Nehemiah

WEEK 4: Remember & Celebrate

Feast of Harvest

EQUIP

Through His Word and the Holy Spirit, God continues to show us He is in control—and we can trust Him. The book of Esther illustrates this because without God's intervention, the entire Jewish race would have been wiped out—and the line of the Messiah lost with it. But as we read Esther, we see that God was in control the whole time.

The book of Esther records the founding of the Feast of Purim, a feast that celebrates how God used Esther to save His people from the schemes of wicked Haman. In Esther 9, we read that Purim is celebrated "annually [on] the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration" (vv. 21–22). Instead of this date being one of genocide for God's people, it became a day of victory.

Though everything seemed to line up against His people, their doom secured, God wouldn't let harm come to them. He used kings, servants, lost records, eavesdropping, beauty contests, banquets, bad decisions, and more to work together for good in protecting His people and preserving the line of His promised Redeemer. God used Esther to save His people from destruction at the hands of the Persians. God is in control—and we can trust Him.

ENCOURAGE

Though God is in control, He's not in a hurry. He knows that we might not see the fruition of our hopes, dreams, prayers, or desires in our lifetimes, but that doesn't mean He doesn't listen to or care about them. The foundation you've been laying through prayer will produce a harvest, but perhaps not until a few generations down the line and maybe in a way you can't imagine.

If you're struggling to live daily in the knowledge that God is in control of your life, your prayers, your dreams, and your future, spend some time with Him. Tell Him your frustrations and your fears. Ask Him to comfort you through your pain. And ask Him to reveal Himself to you, because no concrete plan, answered prayer, or realized dream is better than simply being in His presence.

WELCOME

Some fun ideas to welcome kids as they check-in to your room at the beginning of service.

Invite the kids to color on the provided coloring page or work on the provided activity page.

As kids arrive, feel free to ask them this week's Connect Question. Feel free to write the question on the board and encourage some fun dialogue before you start your lesson.

QUESTION: If you could ask the leader of your country one question, what would it be?

RESPOND

A chance for kids to respond to what God is putting on their hearts through creative expression.

In The Big God Story, God used a woman named Esther to protect His people from death.

INSTRUCTIONS: Hand each child a God is in Control: Esther's Story Template. Instruct them to draw pictures in the squares of each part of the story. Encourage them to think through how God was in control the whole time and used Esther to save his people.

SUPPLIES:

- God is in Control: Esther's Story Template
- Coloring supplies

REFLECT

A chance to reflect on what kids have just learned about The Big God Story.

Did you know that the book of Esther never mentions God? But we know that the whole time Haman was plotting to have the Jews killed, God was working behind the scenes to save His people. He is always in control, even when we can't see Him.

- How did Queen Esther help save God's people? *Esther 7:3-4*
- How was God in control in this part of The Big God Story? *Esther 2:17, 21-23; 3:8-11; 5:13-14; 6:1-14; 7:3-4, 9-10; 8:3-11*
- What is one really important reason God saved the nation of Israel? *Matthew 1:1-17*
- What did you learn about God from this part of The Big God Story? *Psalms 46:1, 7*
- How do you know that God is in control of our lives? *Proverbs 16:1; Isaiah 26:3-4*
- How have you seen God use hard times in your life for your good? *Romans 8:28*

BLESS

A powerful way to bless the kids and parents by sending them off with a benediction.

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite the parents into your room at the end of the service to say one last prayer together with the whole family. Instruct them to find their child and sit/stand by their side. Explain what their child learned today and read the verse below. Pray together and then dismiss.

ROMANS 8:28 – And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

BLESSING: May you trust that God is in control of every area of your life. May you be filled with His peace.

NOTES

This script serves as an outline of what your storytelling might sound like. Items written in italics are cues for the storyteller and are not meant to be read out loud. You are fully encouraged to make it your own and add a personal touch.

The script serves as an example, however if you would like to teach based on the script and are in need of any supplies mentioned, we would be happy to supply those for you! Storytelling images mentioned will always be provided in your basket each week, but if you need any other supplies for your lesson, contact a Grove KIDS Staff member beforehand so we can supply it for you! You are also welcome to bring in your own props if you would like!

RESOURCES PROVIDED

- None

STORYTELLING

Today we're going to discover an exciting part of The Big God Story. We'll hear that God is always in control. Before we get started, let's ask God to show us more about how He is in control. *Lead kids in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.*

There once was a beautiful woman named Esther. Esther was one of God's people. During the days of Esther, God's people lived in a land called Persia. The Jews had been conquered and sent to live in a faraway land. This made them very sad, but God would show them that He is in control, no matter where they lived or what happened. God is in control!

Today in The Big God Story, an evil villain tries to destroy God's people. Little does he know that God is in control. It all began when the king of Persia, a man named Xerxes, decided he needed a new queen. You see, his former queen had refused to obey the king's command, so he sent her away forever! Who would be the new queen?

King Xerxes decided to hold a search—a contest—to choose the next queen. Many beautiful women from across the Persian Empire were brought to the palace—including a woman named Esther. Esther was an Israelite—one of God's people—but nobody knew this. When it came time for Esther to go to the king, the king liked Esther more than he liked any other woman and chose her as his wife.

Meanwhile, all was not well in the kingdom. Some of the king's officers were plotting to kill King Xerxes. Esther had a cousin named Mordecai who heard the men's plans. Mordecai told Esther what was happening and urged her to tell the king. Esther told the king what Mordecai had heard and the officers were found out before they could carry out their plans. Even though Mordecai had uncovered the plot to kill King Xerxes, the king did nothing to thank Mordecai. Still, Mordecai knew that God is in control.

Read Esther 3:1-2 and encourage kids to follow along. Because Mordecai would not bow down to Haman, Haman wanted to kill not just Mordecai, but all of Mordecai's people—God's people, the Israelites—"throughout the whole kingdom" (v. 6). To carry out his plan, Haman went to King Xerxes.

Read Esther 3:8-9 and encourage kids to follow along. King

Xerxes told Haman to keep his money and to do whatever he wanted to the people. Mordecai heard about Haman's plot to kill all the Jews, and he was very distressed. Esther saw he was upset and sent someone to figure out what was wrong. Mordecai reported that God's people were going to be put to death, and he pleaded with Esther to act. He told her that she needed to go to the king to beg for mercy for her people.

Read Esther 4:11-16 and encourage kids to follow along. So, after three days, Esther went to King Xerxes' palace. When the king saw Esther, he was pleased and extended his gold scepter to her. *Read Esther 5:3.*

Queen Esther decided not to tell King Xerxes about the Jews being in danger just yet. Instead, she invited the king and Haman to dinner. Before the dinner happened, King Xerxes found out that Mordecai had saved his life before, so the king honored Mordecai in the right way with a parade. This made Haman even more upset. However, Haman still went to the dinner with the king. There the king asked Esther about her request again.

Read Esther 7:2-4a. King Xerxes asked, "Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?" (v. 5). Esther said it was Haman! Esther pleaded with the king to put an end to Haman's evil plan. And though it looked like the king had the power to let the Jews live or die, the truth is that God is in control.

And so, the king granted her request and stopped Haman's plan to have the Jews killed. In fact, King Xerxes had Haman put to death instead! Then, he issued an official order granting the Jews the right to gather together and to protect themselves against their enemies. The days that were meant to cause great harm to the Jews, became days of victory over their enemies. Even today, the Jewish people remember and celebrate these events as a holiday called Purim. Esther's story reminds us that God is in control.

Even though everything seemed against God's people in this part of The Big God Story, what do we know about God? *Allow kids to respond.* Yes, God is in control. God's plan for His people remained even though Haman tried to hurt the Jews! It is so clear that God is in control of everything. Though bad things sometimes happen, and we might wonder why, God can use both bad things and good things for the sake of His people.

We trust that God is in control of our lives and that He takes care of us—His children. Because of this, we can also step out in faith and serve Him and others in unlikely ways, just like Queen Esther was called to do. We are able to be bold because God is in control.