

CAMP

THROUGH THE

Entire Bible

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FAMILY CAMP GUIDE

WEEK 4

Family CAMP devotions are a way to come together as a family and interact with God's Word. We will go through the entire Bible together this summer! Don't miss the opportunity to CAMP with your family each week using this simple family devotion guide.

How do we CAMP as a family?

Come together
Access God's Word
Make conversation
Pray



C: Come Together

Come together and remove distractions. Prepare your heart and mind to hear from God's Word together today by getting out a few pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to use as an illustration.

Ask a child to explain how puzzles work. Relate their explanation to how God often works: God always has a plan even when we can't see what His plan is. We can only see a very small part of the big picture of what God is doing at any given time but God can always see the whole picture all at once.

(Show the puzzle pieces)

If we pick any one piece of this puzzle, it's hard to tell what the big picture is. This one puzzle piece doesn't make sense to our eye, and doesn't show us all we need to know about the image, but if we take all the little pieces and put them together, they can make something beautiful. Today, we are going to learn about a girl who had many individual things happen in her life that didn't make sense to her at the time, but God was working them all together for His glory in a miraculous plan. If we have time, we can work the puzzle together when we're done.

Parent Tip for Today's Lesson

There are several important people in this story with complicated names. Depending on what translation of the Bible you are reading, sometimes they are referred to by their Hebrew or Greek names and sometimes by their Persian names. Do your kids (and

yourself) a favor and have some visual aids. Use dolls, army men, costumes and name tags, or draw a picture of each one, but somehow label the cast of characters in this epic historical story. It's too important to not understand who's who in it. Below is a list of the people in the story to help with communicating this to your family today.

Cast of Characters

Esther (Persian) or **Hadassah** (Hebrew): heroine and star of the story, an orphaned Jewish girl, living in Persia who becomes Queen because of her unmatched beauty and saves her people from annihilation because of her faith and bravery

King Ahasuerus (Persian) or **King Xerxes** (Greek) or **King Achashverosh** (Hebrew): all of these names are used to refer to the King of Persia, who takes Esther as his second wife

Queen Vashti: King Ahasuerus' first wife who was banished for not accepting a dinner invitation from him

Mordecai: Esther's wise older cousin who raises her after her parents' death, he plays a significant role in helping her save Israelites

Haman: King Ahasuerus' court official and advisor, an evil man who tried to destroy the Jews of Persia but was thwarted by Esther

A: Access God's Word

Access God's Word by reading today's Bible passage together and the daily devotion aloud.

Open your Bible and read aloud

Esther 2:4, 7-10, 17; Esther 3:1-6; Esther 4:1-17; Esther 8:1-7

God's name is not mentioned once in the 5,633 words of the entire book of Esther, but it clearly shows His power over the plans of all people. It takes place more than 100 years after the Israelites were taken over by the Babylonians and made to leave their homes. This book is titled after the story's courageous heroine, Esther. She was an orphan raised by her cousin, Mordecai and they were living in Persia because they were a part of the Israelite people who had been driven out of their homes.



God's supernatural hand works throughout Esther's life and story. God was arranging every detail for His glory.

The Israelites were forced to leave their homeland.

Esther's parents died.

King Ahasuerus divorced (some think even murdered) Queen Vashti.

Esther's looks alone had her chosen as the next queen.

God was there. He allowed those things to happen, not because He isn't good, but because even when evil happens, God can still use those things for His glory and our good. (Genesis 50:20)

Mordecai heard a plan to kill Ahasuerus and was able to save his life by telling Esther. When King Ahasuerus couldn't sleep years later, he read about Mordecai saving him, and remembered how special Mordecai was to him just in time to save Mordecai from Haman. Psalm 37:23 tells us that God is in the details. He is always working behind the scenes of our lives in countless ways we can't see or even understand.

Just like He did with Queen Esther, God uses the faithfulness of us, sinners, to do what only He can do. God works His majesty in the middle of our mess. He wastes nothing and always keeps His promises. So even when we cannot see what He is doing, we can trust that He is still at work for us. He has placed you where He wants you to be used for His glory and His purpose. Just like Esther, God has created you for such a time as this!

M: Make Conversation

Make conversation around today's Bible passage and devotion by asking the questions provided. The goal of this time is to discover together the truth God has provided through His Word and reinforced in the devotion. Think of ways that you can put this truth into action.

1. When is a time you didn't understand what God was doing but later it made sense?
2. Who in the story asked for help from wise, godly people? (Esther)
3. Who are some wise, godly people in your life you can go to for help?
4. Do you believe that no matter what happens God is good and in control? Why or why not?



P: Pray

Guide your family through a prayer to end your time together.

Praise God for the beautiful story of Esther and how one person's faithfulness and bravery can really make a huge difference.

Thank God that even when we do not see Him working, He is always there, always good, and that He can always see the whole picture and plan.

Confess times and ways you are not trusting God's will and His way for your life and instead trying to do it your own way.

Ask God to help you come to Him first when you need direction, but to also have wise and godly people in your life to trust and talk to when you need help.

Ask God to help others see God's faithfulness for their story, too.



Family CAMP Activities

Noise Makers:

It is Jewish tradition to make as much noise as possible whenever Haman's name is mentioned in the story of Esther (they use noise makers called gragar) because Deuteronomy 25:19 says, "You shall blot out the memory of the Amalekites (Haman's people) from under the heavens." Use toy instruments or make some quick noise makers by adding coins or dry beans to an empty water bottle. Take turns telling or reading the story of Esther and making noise whenever the bad guy, Haman's, name is said.

Kerplunk or Jenga:

Both of these games require players to take risks and exercise wisdom. Play either game a few times as a family. Connect this activity to this week's devotion by saying, "We have to be careful and make good choices about what piece to pull when it's your turn in this game. Otherwise, it all comes crashing down. What were some of the choices the kings in this week's passage made about their kingdoms and what were the outcomes? What could they have done differently?"