LESSON 11

MORDECAI REFUSES TO BE UNFAITHFUL



Aim: **To show the children how Mordecai remained faithful to God's commandments in a foreign land, even under great pressure not to do so.**

Scripture Reading: **Esther 3:1-15; 4:1-17**

Memory Verse: **Exodus 20:8 (the Ten Commandments) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."**

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

Think of times when important people have come to visit your church or town. Everyone always wants to please them, to provide them with the most comfortable place to stay, and to serve them the best food. Some of these visitors are very kind and pleasant, but others can be very proud.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. King Xerxes had appointed a new prime minister, Haman. Everyone was ordered to show their respect for Haman by bowing, when he walked past (Est 3:1-2a). This made him very proud. **This part of the story can be acted, with one member of the class being Haman and the rest bowing before him or her as he or she walks by.**
2. Only one person among the king's officials refused to bow before another human being. That was Mordecai. Why? To a Jew bowing before someone meant that you worshipped him or her. **Let the whole class recite the second and third commandments (Ex 20:3-5a).** Mordecai's refusal to bow before him made Haman very angry (3:2b-5). **Show Picture 11. The class could act out this part of the story, too.**
3. Haman decided to have his revenge on Mordecai. He told the king that one of the groups of people he ruled over was not obeying the laws of the country. Haman wanted the king's permission to destroy this whole group of people. He even promised to give the king a large sum of money if he would let him. King Xerxes agreed without asking any questions (3:6, 8-11).
4. Haman gave instructions and had it proclaimed everywhere in the kingdom that on a particular day all Jews were to be killed. The king did not know that his queen, Esther, belonged to this group of people (3:12-15).
5. Mordecai was horrified. He went about in clothes that showed his sorrow. Queen Esther heard about it and sent him some new clothes. He refused to take them and asked her to go to King Xerxes and plead for the lives of her people (4:1-8).

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6. Esther sent back a message explaining that if anyone went in to see the king without being called first, they would be put to death. The only exception was if the king held out his sceptre to show that the person's life should be spared (4:9–11). **Show Picture 10. Point out the sceptre in the king's hand.** This golden rod was a symbol of the king's royal power.
7. Mordecai replied by reminding Esther that she, too, was a Jew. Even though she was queen and lived in the palace, she still would be killed along with the rest of her people. But perhaps, he added, God had put her in that position to be able to help his people (4:12–14).
8. Esther agreed to go to the king, but she asked the Jews to help her. For three days beforehand they were to fast and pray that King Xerxes would receive her and spare her life (4:15–17).

Our Response to the Story

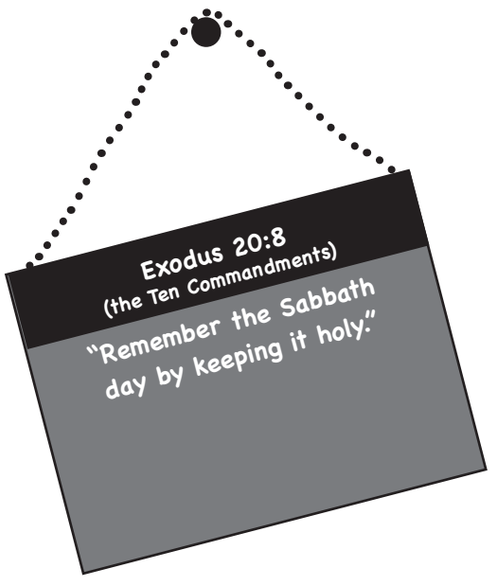
Mordecai remained faithful to God, even when it was very dangerous to do so. He knew God was greater than all the powers against him.

In a certain African country pressure was exerted on a church leader to deny his faith in Christ. When the army invaded his Bible college looking for him, he hid in a deep ditch covered with leaves, for a whole night. The soldiers crossed over the ditch without seeing him. God hid him from harm and he lived many more years to tell the story of his Heavenly Father's care and protection.

Do you believe that God cares for you?

Instil the Memory Verse

Review all the verses of Exodus 20 learnt so far.



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