

The Jews Rejoice And Declare A Feast

Esther 9:18-32

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 126:5

“Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

One round lollipop for each child in your class, construction paper, markers, and glue.

One straw per child, pinto beans, and four quart-size bowls.

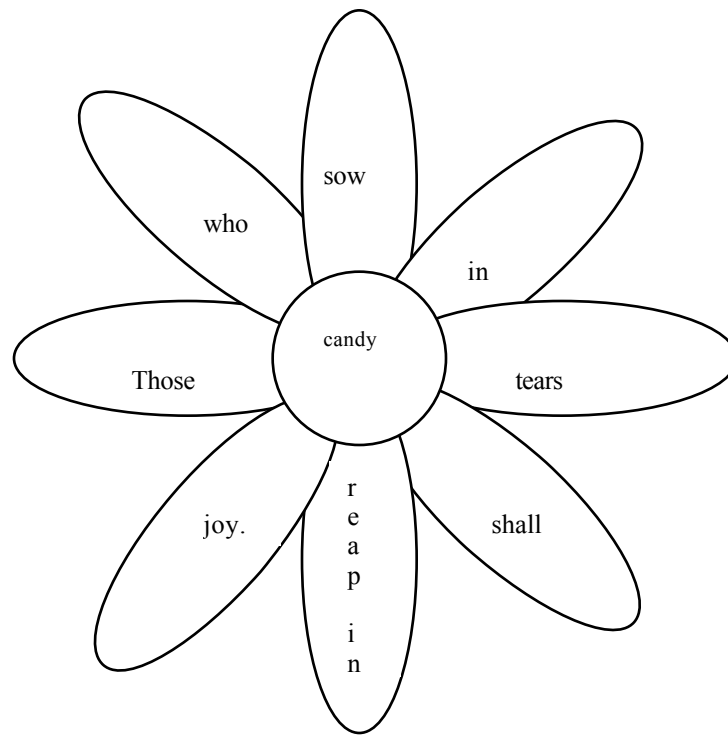
Snack crackers, cheese, apple slices or popcorn.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Grow Where You Are Planted!

The Jews in the book of Esther were living in a land other than Israel. Even though Esther and Mordecai were not “home,” they were still fruitful where they were. God wants us to grow in the place He puts us. This craft will help us to remember that and will also give you a treat to enjoy later.

You will need one round lollipop for each child in your class, construction paper, markers, and glue. Have the children cut out “flower petal shapes” from their construction paper. They should cut out 8-10 shapes depending on the size they choose to go with. Once they have cut out their shapes, have them put their petals together to form a flower. They should lay them flat on a table to make a round shape. The hole in the center should be very small (just big enough to fit the lollipop stick through). The petals may be taped or glued (with a glue stick) to hold together as they overlap.



Next, hold the petals and insert the lollipop through the hole. The round top of the lollipop should rest on top of the petals and the stick through the other side. Glue the flower to the lollipop (make sure the lollipop is still wrapped!). Set aside for the glue to dry until the end of class. Optional: Write “Grow Where You Are Planted” or the Memory Verse on the various petals. See example below.

LESSON TIME!

Note: You may want to structure the class, today, in such a way that you can have a celebration. Perhaps have a blanket on the floor (like a picnic blanket) and have the children sit around it. For ideas, see “Queen Esther’s Celebration Feast” below.

The story of Esther now comes to a beautiful close. God has delivered His people who were sentenced to death! He worked behind the scenes, orchestrating the events. He placed Esther in the *right place* at the *right time* as Queen of Persia, giving her a position to approach the king on behalf of her people. He gave Mordecai an opportunity to demonstrate loyalty to the king by

saving his life, to be remembered later at just the *right time*--as wicked Haman came to seek the king's permission to destroy him. God had worked all things together for His good purpose—the deliverance of His people.

Once Haman, the wicked enemy of the Jews, was destroyed, God moved to resolve the last remaining concern to the Jews—the king's decree, which by law could not be reversed. Do you remember how God handled that one? Mordecai and Esther wrote a new decree giving the Jews the right to assemble and protect themselves which, when approved by the king, went through all the land, to every province and city. The Bible says then, "The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honor."

ESTHER 9:18-22

But the Jews who were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwallied towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar with gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus,

to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,

as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

The Jews defended themselves against the attacks of their enemies on the 13th and 14th day of Adar. Many who sought to harm the Jews were destroyed. On the 15th day, they rested. It was time to celebrate God's goodness.

So, the Jewish people set aside the 14th and 15th day of Adar, the last month on the sacred calendar, to celebrate God's deliverance from the wicked plot of their enemy. They feasted and exchanged gifts as they remembered the time when God turned "sorrow to joy" and "mourning to a holiday." With great cause, they were a thankful people! **Let us celebrate our salvation!**

ESTHER 9:23-28

So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them,

because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that is, the lot), to consume them and destroy them;

but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letter that this wicked plot which Haman had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,

the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written instructions and according to the prescribed time,

that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

The Pur is the casting of lots—similar to how dice is rolled to make determinations while playing games today. The Feast of Purim is a Feast of Lots. Remember, Haman had determined by casting lots which days the Jews would be destroyed. No lot cast against God's people will stand!

The Jewish people still celebrate the Feast of Purim, today. The 13th of March is a day of fasting. On the 14th and 15th of March, Jewish celebration consists of parties and even children's plays depicting the story of Esther and God's deliverance. Little girls dress up as Esther. Boys dress as Haman.

As Christians, we celebrate our salvation. The sentence of death was upon us! Our condition was described in Ephesians: "...having no hope and without God in the world." Yet our redeemer, Jesus Christ, gave His life to save us. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). **Let us celebrate our salvation!**

Running the Race

You will need one straw per child and four quart-size bowls. Split up your class into two teams. Ask them to line up at one end of the room. Make a starting line using tape. At the beginning of each line have one bowl filled with pinto beans. At the other end of the room, place an empty bowl.

When you say, “Go!” have the first child in each line get on their hands and knees over the bowl with their straw. Have them get a bean at the end of the straw and have them suck so that the bean will hold at the opposite end of their straw. Here is the catch. The children may not use their hands or touch the bean in any way. They may hold their hands under the bean just in case it falls, but they must pick it up again with the straw. Hold the bean at the bottom of the straw by suction. Have them go to the other end of the room as fast as they can. Drop the bean into the bowl on the other side of the room. The child should run back to the line and tag the next child in line. Then the next child can do the same thing.

For younger children, you may allow them to use their hands or take a small piece of tape and wrap it, so all sides are sticky. Stick one side to the end of the straw and the other side can stick to a bean.

The first team that is done (and/or has the most beans in a given period of time) is declared as the winner. Perhaps, they could be given the privilege of serving during the “Queen Esther Celebration Feast.”

ESTHER 9:29-32

Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting.

So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

Queen Esther and Mordecai had risen to a place of authority and honor in Persia. God used them as leaders of His people. Queen Esther and Mordecai officially recorded the “matters of Purim.” It was their desire that the Jewish people never forget what God had done for them.

It is good for us to write down ways that God has been faithful in our lives. Some people call this journaling. David set a good example in Psalm 103. He begins, “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:...” David proceeds with a quite a list of the many ways God has been good to him! Let us never forget all that God has done for us. **Let us celebrate our salvation!**

Note to Teachers: You may want to give the children some paper and ask them to begin a journal by writing down some ways that God has been faithful in their lives. With a supply of construction paper or other materials and markers to decorate their journals, this could become a craft. They can take them home and continue to log the ways that God shows Himself faithful in their lives.

The Queen Esther Celebration Feast

At the Feast of Purim, God's people were celebrating His faithfulness and deliverance. Bring to class snack crackers, cheese, apple slices or popcorn. Please make sure to notify parents before class that you are serving food in order to give them an opportunity to notify you about any possible allergies or other problems that their children may have with the food you are serving.

Jewish people continue to celebrate the Feast of Purim, today, by reading the entire book of Esther. Perhaps, you could just read the passages in this lesson for your class celebration. During the reading, Jewish people make noise at the mention of "Haman" so as to blot out his name and memory. You may want to encourage participation during the story by having the class cheer when they hear the name "Mordecai" and "Esther." Every time they hear the name "Haman," the class can "boo."

To continue celebration, you may want to play games. You may want to consider a small skit from a section of Esther. You may consider serving communion to give the children an opportunity to reflect on all God has done for them.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be thankful for the great salvation God has given us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.