

# Esther

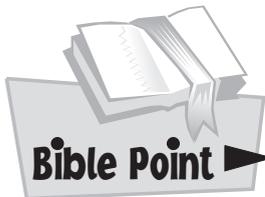
Esther's humble beginning as a Jewish orphan gave no indication of her regal future or the incredible impact she would have on her people. During the holiday of Purim, Jewish people today still recall how this simple girl became the queen of Persia and risked everything to save her people from slaughter. Purim is a time for celebration, worship, remembrance, and charity as Jews thank God for delivering their ancestors from death. During the festivities, the book of Esther is read aloud and the people speak a blessing each time Esther's name is mentioned. Thousands of years after Esther's victory, the Jews praise God for placing a brave young woman in a powerful position and giving her the courage to take a stand.

Just as God made Esther a brave and beautiful woman, God creates each of us with special gifts to help us reach others for him. It's not unusual for 3- and 4-year-olds to feel too small and powerless to be of any use. That's why it's so important to affirm preschoolers and reassure them that God can use them for big, important tasks right now. Use the lessons in this module to help children realize that they have special gifts and talents to contribute to God's great plans.

## Four Lessons on Esther

Lesson	Bible Point	Page	Bible Basis
<b>10</b>	God made us special.	129	Esther 2:1-18
<b>11</b>	God made us special so we can help.	141	Esther 4:1-17
<b>12</b>	God made us special, and we can do great things.	155	Esther 5:1-8; 7:1-7, 10
<b>13</b>	God made us special, and he'll take care of us.	169	Esther 8:1-17




**Bible Point**

# God made us special.

## Bible Verse

“Serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13b).

## Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will

- discover that God made each of us special,
- learn that God cares about how we look on the inside,
- hear how Esther was special, and
- affirm each other.

## Teacher Enrichment

### Bible Basis

■ **Esther is chosen to be queen.**

**Esther  
2:1-18**



The book of Esther is unique. Its main purpose is to describe in detail the origin of the Jewish festival known as Purim. No other book in the Bible is devoted to describing the origins of a festival. Purim commemorates God’s deliverance of his people during the days of Esther, a young Jewish woman who became queen of the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C. Although God is not specifically mentioned in this account, it is obvious that his sovereign hand was directing everything from behind the scenes.

The most important thing to grasp is that God prospered a servant of his in the midst of a difficult set of circumstances in order to bring deliverance to his people. Esther had been snatched from her family and those who could encourage her in her faith.

Esther remained faithful and when she found favor in the king’s eyes, the Jews were saved from a horrible fate.

### Prayer

- Read Romans 8:28.
- Have you ever experienced a difficult situation that you later understood to be part of God’s plan to bless you?
- Have you ever felt as though God were absent in a time of need? What does this verse and the book of Esther teach you in that regard?
- Pray: Dear God, thank you that you care for me and will never abandon me. Help the children I teach to learn that you love them and made them special. In Jesus’ name, amen.

### Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

# This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
<b>Welcome Time</b>	<b>Welcome!</b> —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	Basket name tags made in Lesson 1	
<b>Let's Get Started</b>  Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	<b>Option 1: One of a Kind</b> —Make fingerprints and discover that God made us each different.	Newsprint, magnifying glass, pen, wet wipes, washable markers	
	<b>Option 2: Someone Special</b> —Peek inside a box to find someone special.	Large box, towel or blanket, mirror	
	<b>Option 3: Path to the Palace</b> —Build Esther's house and a palace; then draw a path between the two places.	Newsprint, blocks, crayons or washable markers	
	<b>Pick-Up Time</b> —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
<b>Bible Story Time</b>	<b>Setting the Stage</b> —Pass shiny stars, sing a song, and tell others that they're special.	CD player	
	<b>Bible Song and Prayer Time</b> —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	<b>Hear and Tell the Bible Story</b> —Hear how Esther became a special queen.	Bible	
	<b>Do the Bible Story</b> —Play a game to find special children.		
<b>Closing</b>  	<b>Bath Night</b> —Help Whiskers see that a Saturday night bath isn't so bad after all.		
	<b>A Special Creation</b> —Make dough sculptures; then pray and thank God for making us special.	Craft dough, paper plates, resealable plastic sandwich bags	

\*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

## Welcome Time

**SUPPLIES:** basket name tags made in Lesson 1

- Bend down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week's "Today I Learned..." discussion. Use questions such as "What did you do to show love to others this week?" and "Who did you show love to this week?"
- Say: **Today we're going to learn that ► God made us special.**
- Hand out the basket name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help the children attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if children weren't in class the first week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout on page 22. You can find the directions for making the name tags on page 13.
- Direct children to the Let's Get Started activities you've set up.

### ◀ BIBLE POINT



### teacher tips

It's important to say the Bible Point just as it's written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

### teacher tips

If you can't find newsprint at your local craft or art store, you might check with your local newspaper. Papers that still print their own editions will often sell "end rolls"—the last of a roll of newsprint that is too short to be used on the big printers. Generally you can purchase end rolls at a reasonable price.

### ◀ BIBLE POINT



## Let's Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate between the activities to offer help as needed and direct children's conversation toward the point of today's lesson. Ask questions such as "Who is special to you?" or "What's something special about you?"

### ■ Option 1: One of a Kind

**SUPPLIES:** newsprint, magnifying glass, wet wipes, washable markers, pen



Set out a sheet of newsprint, a magnifying glass, the *ink pad* from the Learning Lab, and wet wipes or damp paper towels. Help children make fingerprints by pressing one finger on the *ink pad* and then on the newsprint. Write each child's name next to his or her fingerprint. Use the magnifying glass to help children see the differences in their fingerprints. Explain that each person's fingerprints are different from everyone else's. Tell children that ► God made us special. Give children wet wipes to clean their fingers with before going on to the next activity.

### ■ Option 2: Someone Special

**SUPPLIES:** large box, mirror, towel or blanket

Stand a large box on its side, and set a mirror inside it. Drape a towel or blanket over the open side of the box. Tell the children that there's someone special inside the box. Allow them to take turns lifting the towel and looking inside the box. (Make sure others don't see inside the box until it's their turn.) Children will be delighted to see





## BIBLE POINT

themselves in the mirror. Be sure to have each child whisper and tell you what special person he or she saw. Explain that ► *God made us special.*

### ■ Option 3: Path to the Palace

**SUPPLIES:** newsprint, blocks, crayons or washable markers

Cover a table with a large sheet of newsprint, and set out a pile of blocks. On one corner of the newsprint, have children build a simple house to represent Esther's house. On the opposite corner, have children build a castle. Explain that in today's story, they'll learn about a young woman who left her home and went to live in a palace. Set out crayons or washable markers, and allow children to draw a winding path from Esther's house to the palace. Then allow children to "walk" their fingers from Esther's house to the palace.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

### ■ Pick-Up Time

**SUPPLIES:** CD player



track 2

Lead children in singing "Come Along With Me" with the CD (track 2) to the tune of "Come and Go With Me." Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



SING

**Come along with me and pick up all our things,  
Pick up all our things,  
Pick up all our things.  
Come along with me and pick up all our things  
So our room will be clean.**

*(Repeat 2x.)*

## Bible Story Time

### ■ Setting the Stage

**SUPPLIES:** CD player



track 15



Tell children you'll clap three times to get their attention. Explain that when you clap three times, the children are to stop what they're doing and raise their hands. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Form a circle, and ask:

• **What did you make or do when you came to class today?** (Made fingerprints; looked at a special person in a box; made a path to a palace.)

Say: **Some of you made fingerprints, some of you saw a special person in a mirror, and some of you made a path from a house to a palace. You were all learning important things about our Bible story. Today we're learning that ► *God made us special.***

In our Bible story, we'll hear about a girl named Esther. Hold up one of the *linking stars*. Esther's name means "star." Did you know that each star in the sky is different and special? None of them are the same. The Bible says that God has a name for each star.

Give 10 children each a *linking star*. If you have fewer than 10 children in your class, distribute five *linking stars*. **You are special to God. Let's sing a song about how special we are. While we sing, we'll pass these stars around our circle. When the song ends, someone special will be holding each star. If you're sitting next to a star-holder, say something special about that person. For example, we might say, "[Name of child] has a nice smile" or "[name of child] is a good friend" or "[name of child] is nice to others" or "I like [name of child]."**

Lead children in singing "I Am Special" with the CD (track 15) to the tune of "Frère Jacques." The song will play three times with breaks between each repetition so that children can share.



**SING**

**I am special, I am special.  
If you look, you will see  
Someone very special,  
Someone very special.  
God made me. God made me.**

Following the last repetition, allow children to share again. Then collect the linking stars. Say: ► ***God made us special.* Each of us is a star! Now let's learn about Esther, the star!**

## ■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



**tracks 3 & 4**

Say: **Now it's time to choose a Bible person to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible person today.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" with the CD (track 3) to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



**SING**

<b>I'm so glad for the Bible. Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'. I'm so glad for God's book today. I'm so glad for the Bible. Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'— Keep me learnin' all about his way.</b>	<b>Let me hear 'bout God's love— Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'. Let me hear 'bout God's love for me. Let me hear 'bout God's love— Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'. Let's shine the light for all to see.</b>
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*(Repeat first verse.)*



**BIBLE POINT**



**teacher tips**

If some children get to hold the stars more than once, have them pass the stars to a neighbor so everyone has a chance to be affirmed.



**BIBLE POINT**



**teacher tips**

If the *ink pad* is dry, moisten it with three to five drops of water.


**teacher tips**

Make sure to return Learning Lab items back to the box when you are finished using them so the items can be used in future lessons.

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *star stamp*, and thank him or her for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. As they come up to you to get their hands stamped, take time to show them the Bible and explain to them that the Bible is God's Word for them.

Say: **I'm thankful for** [name of child who brought the Bible], **and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" with the *CD* (track 4) to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



**I'm so glad we're together.  
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.  
I'm so glad we're all here today.  
I'm so glad we're together.  
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—  
Prayin' for each other every day.**

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

**Thank you, Lord, for each one.  
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.  
Thank you for everyone who's here.  
Thank you, Lord, for each one.  
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—  
Thankful for our friends both far and near.**

## ■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible



Bring out the *Brave Queen Esther* book. Have children gather around you. Show children **Esther 2:1-18** in the Bible. Then say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Esther in the Bible. Our book shows us pictures of our Bible story.**

Distribute the *linking hearts and stars*, making sure each child gets one.

Say: **Remember that Esther's name means "star." Esther was special because of her brave heart. Each of you has a star or a heart to hold to show that you're special just like Esther. If you have a star, whenever you hear me say "Esther" in our story, hold your star in the air and shake it as if it's twinkling in the night sky. If you have a heart, whenever you hear me say "queen" in our story, hold your heart high in the air for everyone to see. Are you ready? Let's practice. Esther.** Pause while children hold up their stars. **Queen.** Pause while children hold up their hearts. **Good job!**

Read the text through page 7. Pause each time you say the name "Esther" or the word "queen," and encourage the children to hold up their stars or hearts. After you've finished reading, collect the *linking hearts and stars* and set them aside.

Ask: • **Why did Esther go to the palace?** (Because she was pretty; because the king wanted her to be the queen; because the king wanted to find a wife.)

This Bible story is featured in the new *My First Hands-On Bible™*. Order several now for your ministry at [group.com](http://group.com).



• **Who watched over Esther while she was at the palace?** (Mordecai; servants; God.)

• **Why did the king like Esther?** (She was pretty; she was special; she was nice.)

• **What happened when Esther became the queen?** (There was a holiday; everyone was happy; they had a party.)

Say: **The king liked Esther because she was pretty and nice. But God loved Esther because she was beautiful on the inside. She was obedient and brave and loving. God made Esther special, and he made us special, too. God has special things for each of us to do. One thing he wants us to do is to ►“serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13b).**

## ■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: none



Say: **The king sent his messengers all over the kingdom searching for someone to be the new queen. Let's play a searching game.**

**I'll be the king, and [name of child] and [name of child] will be our first messengers.** Give each messenger five *linking hearts and stars*. **My messengers will stand with me while everyone else scatters around the room. Then I'll tell my messengers something about the children I want them to find. I might say, “Find all the children wearing blue” or “Find everyone with short hair.” When a messenger finds someone wearing blue, the messenger will give that child a star or a heart and say, “Go see the king!” If you get a star or a heart, come over to the “palace” with me.**

Play the game, choosing new messengers each time. Give each new pair of messengers new instructions such as “Find everyone with black shoes,” “Find everyone wearing red socks,” or “Find children with stripes on their shirts.” Be sure each child is chosen. Have the last messengers find everyone who is special. Collect the *linking hearts and stars*, form a circle, and ask:

- **How did you feel when you were chosen?** (Happy; glad; special.)
- **What makes each of us special?** (Our names; what we're like; our voices.)
- **Why did God make us special?** (Because he loves us; because he cares about us.)

Say: **The king of Persia chose Esther because she was special. ►God made us special, too, and he loves us very much. Now let's choose our friend Whiskers to come visit us.**

## Closing

### ■ Bath Night

SUPPLIES: none

Bring out Whiskers the Mouse, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.

## ◀ BIBLE VERSE



Even though your preschoolers are nonreaders, you may want to use this time to point out where the verse can be found in the Bible. This way the children can begin to develop an awareness of God's Word. You may want to use the same Bible, such as Group's *Hands-On Bible*®, each week.



## ◀ BIBLE POINT





**Teacher:** Hi, Whiskers. How are you today?

**Whiskers:** Today, I'm fine. But last night, I wasn't!

**Teacher:** What happened last night?

**Whiskers:** Last night was Saturday night. Every Saturday night at our house is bath night. Yuck! I hate baths! *(To the children)* Do you like baths? I don't understand why my mom makes me take a bath just because we go to church the next day.

**Teacher:** It's probably because Sunday is a special day, Whiskers. Going to church is special, and she wants you to look and smell your best!

**Whiskers:** Well, baths aren't fun!

**Teacher:** Just be glad you're not Esther in the Bible! She had to spend a whole year getting cleaned up and beautiful.

**Whiskers:** *(Shocked.)* A whole year! Yikes! Did she die?

**Teacher:** *(Laughing)* No, Whiskers, she didn't die. She probably even enjoyed it!

**Whiskers:** Yuck! Why did she do that?

**Teacher:** Children, can you tell Whiskers the story of Esther?

*(Help children explain that Esther was taken from her home to the palace, spent a year getting ready to meet the king, and then he chose her to be his new queen.)*

**Whiskers:** Boy! Esther really was special.

**Teacher:** Yes, Whiskers, ► God made us special.

**Whiskers:** Didn't I hear you singing a song about being special?

**Teacher:** Yes, you did. Would you like to learn it, too?

**Whiskers:** Oh, yes! *(Lead children in singing "I Am Special" to the tune of "Frère Jacques" without the CD.)*



**SING**  
 I am special, I am special.  
 If you look, you will see  
 Someone very special,  
 Someone very special.  
 God made me. God made me.

**Whiskers:** I like that song!

**Teacher:** Maybe you can sing that to yourself the next time you take your bath. It might make you feel better.

**Whiskers:** I think it will. And I'll remember Esther. I'm glad bath night is only once a week. Thanks for teaching me the song! 'Bye, everybody.





Say: ► ***God made us special.*** There’s no one else like you. Jesus is special, too. There’s no one else like him. Jesus is special because he is God’s Son. He is special because he loves us more than anyone else does. He is special because he always listens to us and helps us. Let’s thank him for creating each of us and for being special, too!

Pray: **Dear Jesus, thank you for being so special. We love you. In your name, amen.**



## ■ *A Special Creation*

**SUPPLIES:** *craft dough, paper plates, resealable plastic sandwich bags*

Give each child a small handful of craft dough on a paper plate. Say: ► ***God made us special. You aren’t like anyone else in the whole world! Use your dough to make a person who looks just like you.***

Allow a minute or two for children to sculpt their dough. Then allow children to show their creations to the class.

Say: **Your dough people are fun, and they look like you. But God knows that we’re special on the inside, too, because ► *God made us special.***

Have each child finish the sentence, “God, thank you for...” Encourage children to thank God for things such as their funny giggles, happy smiles, or 10 toes that wiggle. When each child has shared, pray: **Dear God, thank you for making each person here different and special. Thank you for loving us. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

Allow children to take their dough people home in resealable plastic bags.



## **Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.**

Photocopy the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week’s topic.



## For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

### ■ Lively Learning: Jewels in the Crown



Have children sit in a circle. Bring out several colorful balls, and explain that the circle is like a big crown and the balls are colorful jewels. Allow children to bounce the balls around the circle until you call, “Jewels in the crown!” Each child touching a ball should hold on to it. Walk around the circle, and place the *paper crown* on one child’s head. Complete the sentence: “[Name], you’re a jewel because...” You might mention a child’s friendliness, smile, helping hands, or obedience. Allow children to bounce the balls and play again until each child has been affirmed.

### ■ Make to Take: I’m a Star



Before class, photocopy the “Special Visor” handout from page 139 on heavy paper, and cut out a visor for each child. Hand out the visors, and invite children to use decorative items, such as foil star stickers, bits of shiny wrapping paper, and metallic crayons to decorate their visors. Then help children tape a 6-inch length of yarn to each star on the visor pattern. As you fit the visors around children’s heads, remind them that ► God made us special.

### ■ Treat to Eat: Sweet Stars

Before class, take a star-shaped cookie cutter and make numerous stars from flour tortillas. Then set out a plate of the tortilla stars, soft margarine, cinnamon sugar, and plastic knives. Ask children to clean their hands with wet wipes. Then show the children how to spread margarine on the stars and sprinkle the stars with cinnamon sugar. As children enjoy their star treats, remind them that Esther’s name means “star.” You may want to have some plain sugar for children who do not like cinnamon.

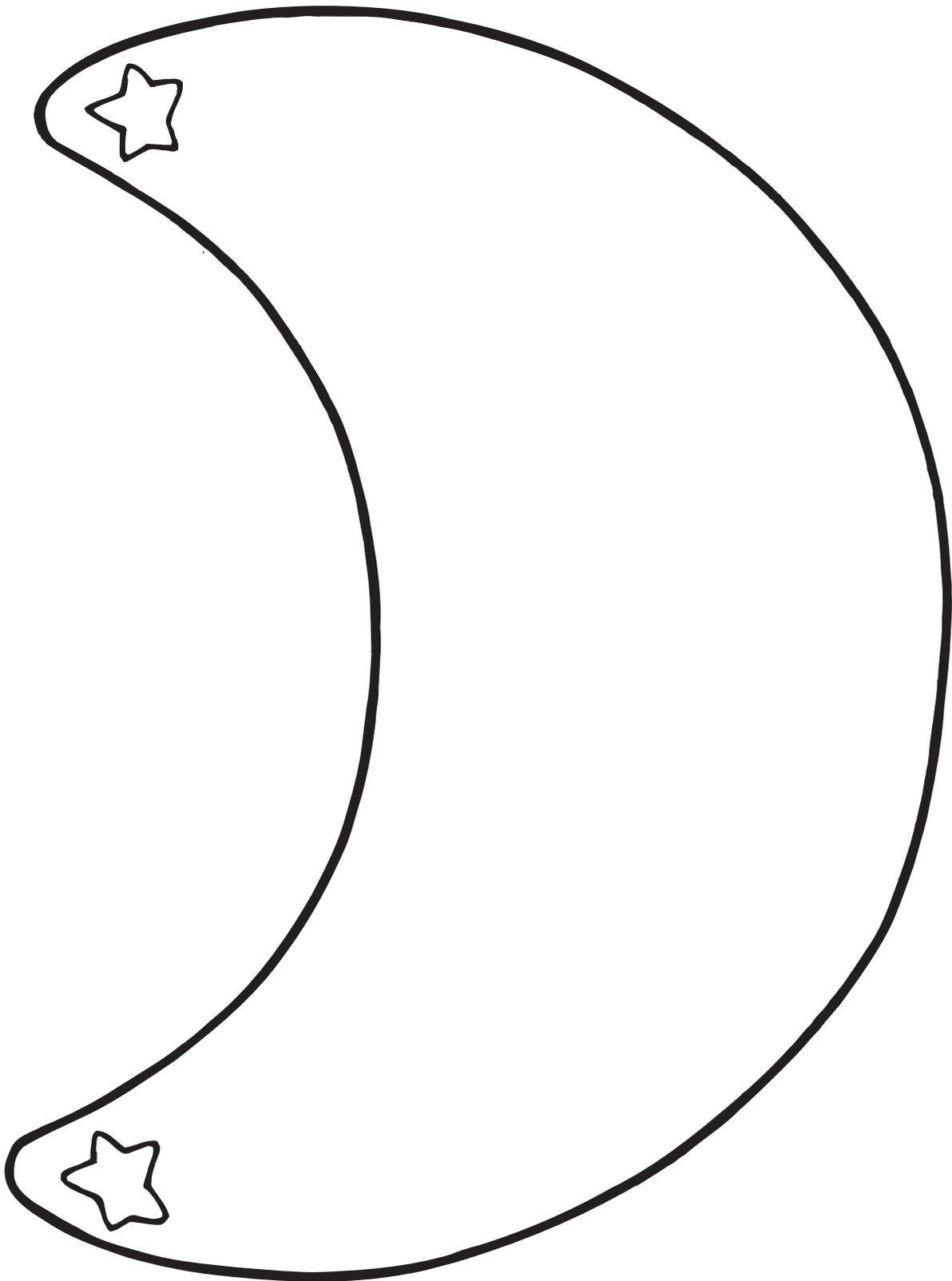


### ■ Story Picture: Esther Is Chosen to Be Queen

Give each child a copy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Set out glue, pieces of fabric, and a bottle of perfumed lotion. Help children glue small pieces of fabric to Esther’s dress. Then let children dab the lotion on the fabric. As children work, review the story of Esther and remind them that ► God made us special.

# Special Visor

Photocopy the handout on heavy paper, and cut out a visor for each child. After children decorate their visors, help them tape 6-inch lengths of yarn to the stars.



# Today i learned... @

## @ God made us special.

Help me learn this:

"Serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13b).

Ask me:

- Why was Esther chosen to be queen?
- What are some things that are special about you?
- How can our family members show each other that they're special?

### Family Fun

- Set out your choice of ingredients for banana splits. Have each family member make a special banana split for someone else in the family. Talk about how you made the treats special and that God made each of us special.
- Using an ink pad and a sheet of white paper, have each family member make a set of fingerprints. Compare the prints, and see how each one is different from the others. Pray and thank God for making each of us different and special.

**Lesson 10**  
Today your child learned that **GOD MADE US SPECIAL.** Children learned that Esther's name means "star" and that Esther became a special queen. They talked about ways that each of us is special and affirmed unique qualities in each other.



**Esther Is Chosen to Be Queen**  
(Esther 2:1-18)