

Bible Point ▶

God made us special so we can help.

Bible Verse

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

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- sing and act out ways to help,
 - hear what Esther had to do to help her people,
 - teach Whiskers that each person has special ways to help, and
 - talk about ways they can help others.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Esther learns of Haman's plan.

Esther
4:1-17



The story of Esther is a wonderful example of someone God used because she was willing to stand up and serve God.

When Haman's hatred of the Jews led to a decision to wipe out all the Jews in the kingdom, Mordecai sought out Esther's help.

When Esther realized what the king's decree really meant, she responded by fasting and having all the Jews in the city fast as well. Though prayer isn't mentioned here, the intent of the fast was to seek God's favor and direction. Esther then proceeded with her plan to inform Xerxes of Haman's scheme to destroy the Jews.

Esther had to face her fears and trust that God would protect her during her visit with the king. She was obedient in serving God where he had placed her, and God used her actions to preserve his people!

Prayer

- Read Esther 4:1-17.
- Esther faced her fears in this chapter. How have you faced your fears to do something for God?
- Pray: Dear God, please help me face my fears as Esther did. Please help me to teach my students how they can help others. 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
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	Basket name tags made in Lesson 1	
Let's Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Rough and Soft —Sort textured items and learn that Mordecai wore rough cloth.	Scratchy items and soft items	
	Option 2: Rough Rubbings —Make crayon rubbings and hear that Mordecai wore rough cloth.	Sandpaper, burlap, paper, crayons	
	Option 3: At the King's Gate —Whisper messages over a gate made of building blocks.	Building blocks	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Add special ingredients to help make a snack.	Trail mix ingredients, paper cups, bowl, spoon, wet wipes	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Travel between Esther's room and the palace gate as they listen to the Bible story about Esther.	Bible, block wall from Option 3, CD player	
	Do the Bible Story —Play a game, and sing about ways they can be helpers.	CD player	
Closing 	Different Ways to Help —Help Whiskers understand that everyone has a different way to help.		
	A Helping Handful —Enjoy a treat and say the names of people they can help.	Trail mix made in "Setting the Stage," napkins, small measuring cup, wet wipes	

*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 "How did you show that your family is special?" and "Who else is special?"
- Say: **Today we're going to learn that ► God made us special so we can help.**
- 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.



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.

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 "How do you like to help out at home?" or "Who helps you do important things?"

■ Option 1: Rough and Soft

SUPPLIES: scratchy items (like sandpaper, burlap, and a pot scrubber) and soft items (like wool, a carpet sample, cotton balls, a silk scarf, and a piece of flannel)



Set out your choice of textured items—such as sandpaper, burlap, a pot scrubber, an item made from wool, a carpet sample, cotton balls, a silk scarf, a piece of flannel—and Whiskers the Mouse. Have children sort the items into "rough" and "soft" groups. Tell children that in today's Bible story, they'll find out why Mordecai was very sad and why he put on rough cloth.

■ Option 2: Rough Rubbings

SUPPLIES: sandpaper, burlap, paper, crayons

Set out several pieces of coarse sandpaper and burlap. Have children take turns laying paper over the items and making crayon rubbings. Encourage children to see the differences in the patterns made by the items. Explain that in today's Bible story, they'll hear that Mordecai wore clothes made out of rough cloth because he was sad.

■ Option 3: At the King's Gate

SUPPLIES: building blocks

Help children build a simple wall out of building blocks to represent the king's gate. Let children take turns standing on either side of the gate. Explain that Esther and Mordecai sent messages to each other through the king's gate. Whisper a simple message to a child such as "God made you special," and have the child whisper the message to another child on the other side of the gate. Let children think of their own messages, or suggest ideas such as "Jesus loves you," "You're a good helper," or "I think you're nice." Leave the block wall standing for "Hear and Tell the Bible Story."



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.

teacher tips

If you don't choose Option 3, build a simple block wall in one corner of your classroom. Children will use the wall during "Hear and Tell the Bible Story."

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



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.



**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: paper cups, spoon, bowl, wet wipes, trail mix ingredients (a variety of cereals, chocolate chips, dried fruit pieces, and fish-shaped pretzels)

Before children arrive, pour your choice of trail mix ingredients into paper cups. Use ingredients such as a variety of cereals, chocolate chips, dried fruit such as apple or banana chips, and fish-shaped pretzels. You'll need one or two paper cups of each ingredient so each child can have one.

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.

Gather everyone in a circle on the floor, and ask:

• **What did you make or do when you came to our class today?** (Sorted rough and soft things; made crayon rubbings; built a gate.)

teacher tips

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends avoiding nuts and raisins for children under age 4.

Say: **Some of you sorted things into rough and soft piles, some of you rubbed crayons over sandpaper and burlap, and some of you helped build a king's gate to pass messages over. You were all learning important things about our Bible story.**

Today we're learning that ► ***God made us special so we can help.*** I need you to help me make a snack. Ask children to clean their hands with the wet wipes, and then distribute the paper cups so each child has one. Place an empty bowl in front of you, and say: **Hmm, this bowl needs something tasty in it. Who can help out by adding some cereal?** Have children with cups of cereal pour them into the bowl. **That's better, but our snack needs some chocolate in it, too. Who can help us by giving some chocolate chips?** Have the children with cups of chocolate chips pour them into the bowl. Continue asking the children to add their parts of the snack until you have a bowl of trail mix.

Ask: • **How did you help make our snack?** (I gave what I had; I added cereal.)

• **What happened when you helped?** (We had a better snack; the snack has chocolate in it; it made more stuff to eat.)

Say: **Each of you gave a special part to help make a tasty treat for all of us to enjoy.** ► ***God made us special so we can help.*** Let's save our snack for later. Right now we'll get ready to learn how Esther was a special helper.



■ 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.



**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.**

**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.**

(Repeat first verse.)


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."



SING

**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, CD player, block wall made in Option 3



Bring out the *Brave Queen Esther* book. Have children gather around you. Open the Bible to **Esther 4:1-17**, and show the passage to your class. Say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Esther in the Bible. Our book shows us pictures of our Bible story.**

Open the book to page 2, and hold it up so children can see the picture. Say: **Let me tell you about our story last week. If you hear me say something wrong, clap your hands and tell me what really happened.**

Esther was a beautiful young girl who lived with her dog named Woof. (Clap.) **When the king was looking for a queen, he had his messengers find the most beautiful women in the kingdom and bring them to McDonald's.** (Clap.) Turn to page 4. **Esther was chosen to go to the palace, where she lived for a whole year. There she got to play football, basketball, and hockey.** (Clap.) Turn to page 6. **When the king saw how beautiful Esther was, he chose her to be his queen. The king declared a holiday and made the people clean their rooms and go to bed without dinner.** (Clap.)

Thanks for helping me tell the story the right way. I sure needed my good helpers! Today we'll hear how Esther was a helper, too.

After Esther became the queen, the king gave a man named Haman the most important job in the palace. Haman was so powerful that the other palace officials had to bow down to him. But Esther's cousin Mordecai wouldn't bow down to Haman. Mordecai would bow down only to God. That made Haman furious! He was so mad that he came up with a terrible plan to get rid of Mordecai—and all of God's special people! Haman was so sneaky that he tricked the king into agreeing to the wicked plan.

As we act out this exciting story, we'll pretend that our story area is Esther's room in the palace. Point to the block wall. The block wall is the gate to the palace where Mordecai went. When we hear about Mordecai, we'll travel to the gate. When we hear about Esther, we'll come back here to her room. Are you ready?

Play the "A Brave Helper" segment of the CD (track 16). Lead children from the block wall to the story area at the appropriate times.

When the CD segment ends, turn off the CD, and have the children form a circle. Turn to page 8 in the *Brave Queen Esther* book, to the picture of Haman and Mordecai.

Ask: • **Why was Haman mad at Mordecai?** (Because Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him.)

• **What bad thing did Haman's law say?** (To kill the Jews; to hurt Esther's people.)

Turn to page 10 in the book, and show the picture of Esther looking scared.

Ask: • **Why was Esther afraid to help?** (The law said she might die; the king hadn't invited her to see him.)

Say: **Esther decided to help even though she knew it was dangerous. She was special, and God wanted her to help. ▶ God made us special so we can help, too.**



Say: **God helped Esther and gave her special helpers to save her people. Jesus came to be our special helper. As our special helper, Jesus can show us how to help others like our friends, parents, brothers, sisters, and our next-door neighbors.**

Ask: • **When has Jesus helped you?** (When I was scared, Jesus made me feel better; Jesus helped me when I fell down so it didn't hurt anymore.)

• **How can you be a special helper for someone this week?** (I can help my mommy at home; I can bring cookies to Grandma.)

Say: **Let's take a look at how we can help others.**

■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: CD player



Say: **We can help in lots of ways. Let's play a game to show all the ways we can help.**

Choose one child to be King or Queen Help-a-Lot. Give the *paper crown* and a *linking star* to the King or Queen. Have the rest of the children scatter around the room.

Say: **Our King [Queen] will hop around the room and give the star to someone. If you get the star, act out a way you can help someone this week. You might pretend to sweep the floor, make your bed, give a hug, or cheer up someone who's sad. After you act out a way to help, the King [Queen] will put the crown on your head and sit down. Then it's your turn to choose the next helper. Ready?**

During the game, give children suggestions for ways they can help, such as washing dishes, picking up toys, or setting the table. When everyone has had a turn, form a circle and say: **You've shown some super ways to be helpers! ► God made us special so we can help. When we help people, we can show them how much we love them. Show me how special you are by singing a happy song with me.**

Lead children in singing "My Helping Song" (Galatians 5:13b) with the CD (track 17) to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Encourage children to follow your actions as they sing.



BIBLE POINT ►



Sweep, sweep, sweep the floor. (*Pretend to sweep.*)

Be a busy bee! (*Walk in a circle and flap arms.*)

Help awhile; it'll bring a smile (*use index fingers to point to smile*)

To friends and family. (*Point to pretend family members.*)

Wash, wash, wash the dishes. (*Pretend to wash dishes.*)

Be a busy bee! (*Walk in a circle and flap arms.*)

Help awhile; it'll bring a smile (*use index fingers to point to smile*)

To friends and family. (*Point to pretend family members.*)

Help, help, help awhile. (*Brush hands together in front of self.*)

Be a busy bee! (*Walk in a circle and flap arms.*)

I can help because I love (*cross arms in front of self*)

My friends and family. (*Point to pretend family members.*)

BIBLE VERSE ►

When the song ends, turn off the CD and say: **God made us special and wants us to ► "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13b). Your great singing helped me feel happy! I wonder if Whiskers likes to be a helper. Let's call him on the count of three. One, two, three, Whiskers!**

Closing

■ Different Ways to Help

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.



(Whiskers comes in sad and sniffing.)

Teacher: What's the matter, Whiskers? Why are you so sad?

Whiskers: I wanted to help my dad mow the lawn...but he told me I was too little. I'm tired of being too little. *(Sniffles.)*

Teacher: Mowing the lawn is a big job.

Whiskers: I know, but I'm getting big! Besides, the little mouse next door gets to help, and he's only two years older than I am. It's not fair. *(Cries.)*

Teacher: Don't cry, Whiskers. You know, ►God made us special so we can help. Maybe there are some other ways you could help.

Whiskers: Like what?

Teacher: Children, can you think of other ways Whiskers could help the next time his dad cuts the grass? *(Help children suggest things such as picking up sticks, sweeping grass off the sidewalk, or pulling weeds.)*

Whiskers: *(Sighing)* I guess. But that doesn't seem very important.

Teacher: Today in our Bible story, Mordecai wanted to help save his people. But the only thing he could do was send a message to Queen Esther.

Whiskers: He didn't get to do anything else?

Teacher: He helped by talking to Esther. Esther was the one who had to talk to the king. But Mordecai was glad to do his part.

Whiskers: Well, I want to be like Mordecai. Next time my dad cuts the grass, I'll do my part. Besides, someday I'll be big enough to mow the lawn all by myself!

Teacher: That's right, Whiskers. I'm proud of you. ►God made us special so we can help, just like Esther and Mordecai.

Whiskers: Well, I gotta go now. I'll see if I can sweep the sidewalk. I love using the big broom. 'Bye!

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■ *a Helping Handful*

SUPPLIES: trail mix made in “Setting the Stage,” napkins, small measuring cup, wet wipes

Form a circle. Ask children to clean their hands with the wet wipes. Give each child a napkin and a scoop of the trail mix made in the “Setting the Stage” activity. Say: **This trail mix has lots of different parts. Each part makes it taste better. Our class has lots of different children, and each child makes our class better.** ► ***God made us special so we can help.*** As you eat your trail mix, tell your neighbor one way you’ll help someone this week.

After children have shared and enjoyed their snacks, close by praying: **Dear God, thank you for making us special and giving us friends and family members we can help. Show us how to help them. In Jesus’ name, amen.**



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: Action Messages**

Choose a child to be a messenger. Whisper a message to him or her such as “Point to something red,” “Tap a friend on the shoulder,” “Twirl around,” “Hop forward three times,” or “Flap your wings like a bird.” Then have the messenger tell the class what the message is and lead them in acting out your instructions. Remind children that Mordecai and Esther passed special messages back and forth.

■ **Make to Take: Helping-Hand Cards**

Before class, make a copy of the “Helping-Hand Card” (p. 152) for each child. Cut out the cards, and fold them according to the directions on the handout. Distribute the cards, and have children form pairs. Have one partner place his or her hand on the pop-up section, while the other partner uses a crayon to carefully trace around the hand. Instruct partners to trade jobs and then color in their handprints. Help children write their names or initials on their cards. Encourage children to give their cards to people they'd like to help this week. Tell children that ► God made us special so we can help.

■ **Treat to Eat: Sweet Feet Treats**



Set out graham crackers, plastic knives, chocolate chips, Teddy Grahams cookies, and a package of soft cream cheese. Ask children to clean their hands with wet wipes. Give each child a spoon of cream cheese on a paper plate. Help children use a plastic knife to spread cream cheese on their flat graham crackers. Then have each child set a Teddy Grahams cookie at each end of the cracker and make a line of chocolate chips from one bear to the other. Explain that the chocolate chips are like footprints between Esther and Mordecai. Remind children that Esther and Mordecai helped the Jews and that ► God made us special so we can help, too.

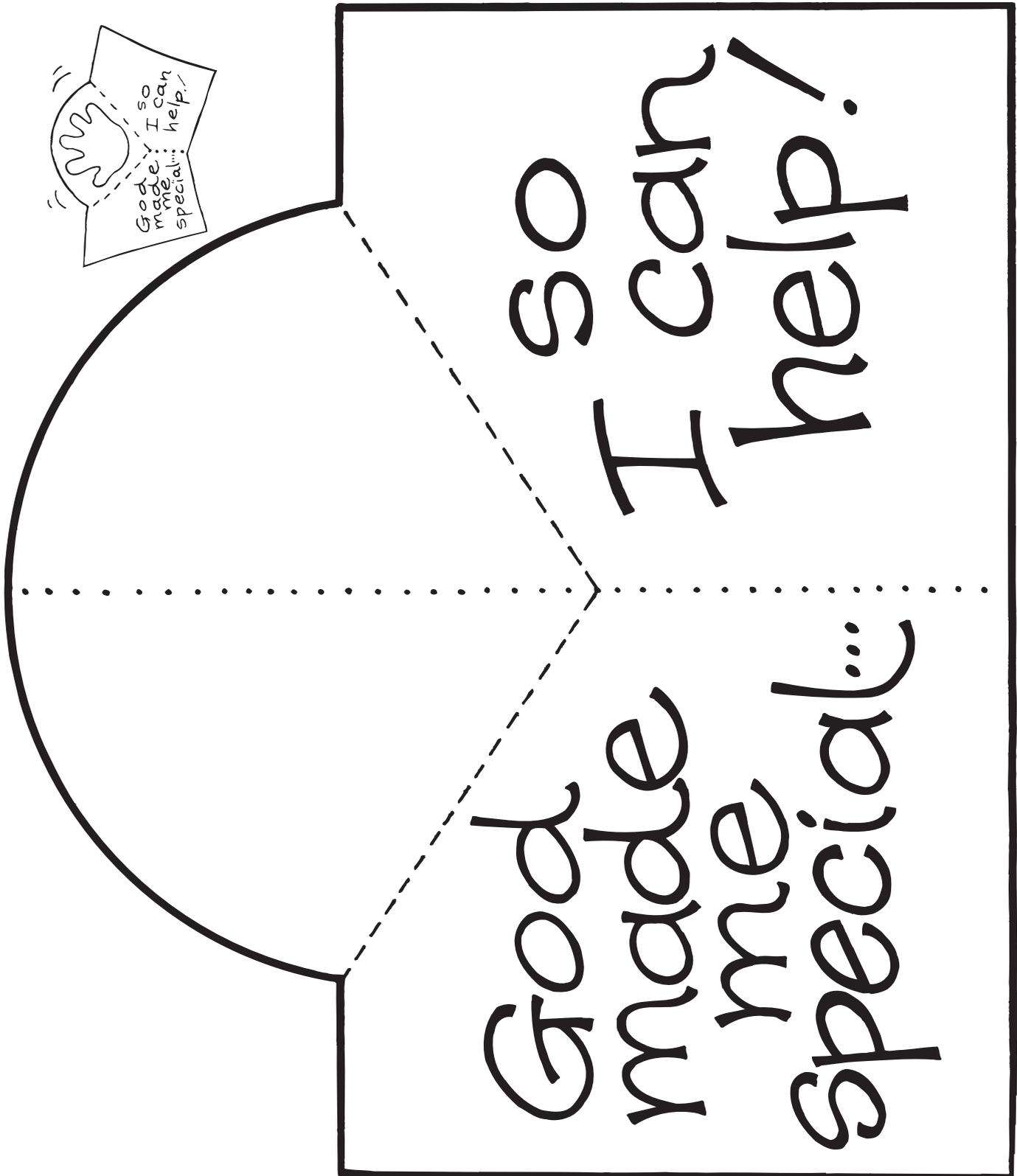


■ **Story Picture: Esther Learns of Haman's Plan**

Give each child a copy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Set out crayons, glue sticks, and bits of burlap. After children color their handouts, have them glue the burlap to Mordecai's clothes to represent the rough cloth he wore. Explain that Mordecai wore rough cloth to show how sad he was about Haman's evil plan.

Helping-Hand Card

Photocopy the handout, and cut it out. Fold the card in half on the dotted line and fold forward on the broken lines. When you open the card, the middle section will pop out.



Today I learned...

God made us special so we can help.

Lesson 11
 Today your child learned that **GOD MADE US SPECIAL SO WE CAN HELP.** Children heard how Esther decided to help her people, even though it was dangerous. They taught Whiskers that each person has special ways to help.

Help me learn this:

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

Ask me:

- What did Mordecai want Esther to do?
- Who can you help at home? at school? at church?
- What are some special ways our family can help others this week?

Family Fun

- Sing "My Helping Song" together to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Allow your child to think of other helping actions, and add them to the song.

Sweep, sweep, sweep the floor.

Be a busy bee!

Help awhile; it'll bring a smile

To friends and family.

Wash, wash, wash the dishes.

Be a busy bee!

Help awhile; it'll bring a smile

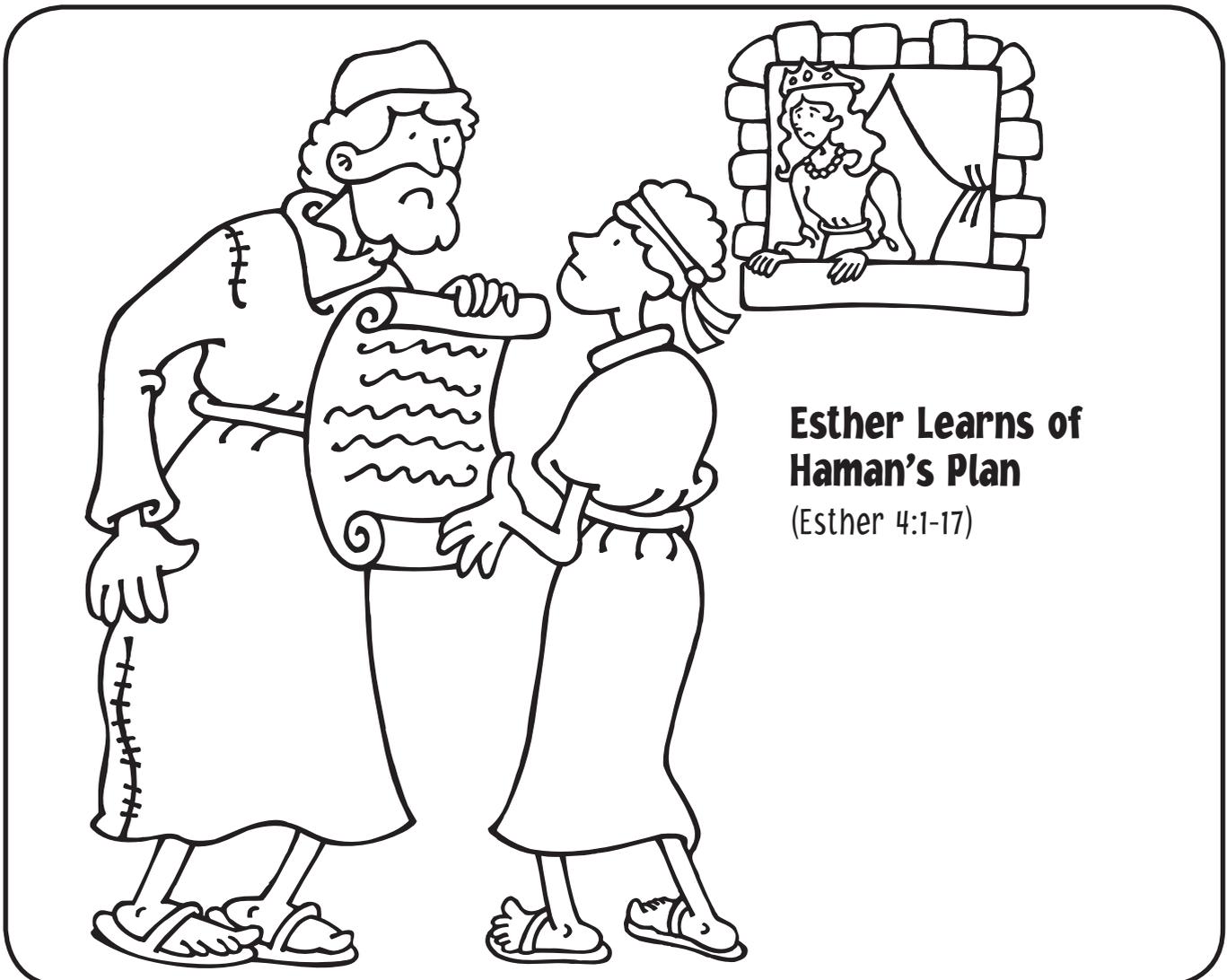
To friends and family.

Help, help, help awhile.

Be a busy bee!

I can help because I love

My friends and family.



Esther Learns of Haman's Plan

(Esther 4:1-17)

