



LESSON 25

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: ESTHER

ESTHER [SELECTED PORTIONS]

THE STORY HOME

The Epic story that we learned about today taught us about Esther, a Jewish girl who became queen. After Haman, one of the king's advisors, tried to get all of the Jewish people killed, Queen Esther, with the help of her cousin Mordecai and courage from God, risked her life to ask the king to save her people.

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- How did Esther become queen in the first place?
- What do you think Esther was like? Why?
- What do you think it was like for Esther to be queen?
- What was the king like?
- Why did Haman want the Jewish people killed?
- What does this Epic story teach us?

TOGETHER HOME

Becoming queen was a LONG process. Esther and the other candidates had to complete 12 months of beauty treatments. After the treatments, the king found Esther to be the most pleasing person and took her to be his queen. In honor of Esther, have a makeover night. (As simple as painting toenails or fixing hair together) Have boys that don't want in on the makeover action? Host a family talent show together. Decide what silly or serious categories you want to have judged beforehand and how they will be judged. Then, vote on who wins your family talent show. Everyone can participate and everyone can vote.

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him" (Deuteronomy 13:4). Discuss this verse with your family. Let younger children learn the underlined portion.

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LESSON 26

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: FIERY FURNACE

DANIEL 3

THE STORY HOME

In today's Epic story we learned about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; three men who refused to bow down to the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had made. As a result, the king threw them into a fiery furnace. When the king looked into the furnace he saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walking around accompanied by an angel. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had stood up for God, refusing to bow to an idol. As a result, God protected them.

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- Why didn't Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego bow down to the idol? Why did everyone else do it?
- What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?
- How do you think they felt as they were getting ready to be thrown into the furnace?
- How do you think they felt when they saw the angel in there with them?
- What does this Epic story teach us about God?

TOGETHER HOME

Buy, borrow, or check out from your local library a copy of *Rack, Shack, and Benny*, a Veggie Tales version of today's story. Watch it together and talk about the important lessons in this story. How is the Veggie Tales version similar to and different from the real version found in our Bibles?

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him" (Deuteronomy 13:4). Write the verse on index cards, one or two words on each. Practice putting the cards in order to help learn the verse.

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LESSON 27

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: DANIEL AND THE LION'S DEN

DANIEL 6

THE STORY HOME

Today, we learned about Daniel, who refused to stop praying to God, even though there was a law that no one could pray to anyone but the king for 30 days. Three times a day Daniel still prayed. The king liked Daniel a lot, but when Daniel got caught praying to God, Daniel still had to be thrown into the den of lions just like the decree said. God closed the mouths of the lions and Daniel wasn't hurt. The king believed in God and praised Him.

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- Why was Daniel thrown into the lion's den?
- How did God protect Daniel?
- I wonder, how do you think the king felt when he went to the den the next morning? Why?
- What do you believe that no one can change your mind about, even if they threaten to hurt you?
- What does this Epic story tell us about God?

TOGETHER HOME

In today's story, Daniel was thrown into a lion's den. Using chairs and blankets, a large box, furniture, or anything else you have around your house, build a lion's den together. Take turns being Daniel, the guard who threw him in the den, the lions, and the king.

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him" (Deuteronomy 13:4). Create a poster with the verse printed on it. Have the family decorate the poster with illustrations from the Bible stories this month.

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Lesson 27, Take-home



LESSON 28

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: JONAH JONAH 1—3

THE STORY HOME

In today's Epic story, we learned about Jonah. God called Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh to turn from their wicked ways, but Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh. Instead, he got on a boat going the opposite direction. A huge storm came and Jonah told the other people on the boat to throw him overboard. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. While inside the fish, Jonah asked for God's forgiveness. After three days, the fish spit Jonah out. Then Jonah obeyed God and went to Nineveh and the entire city was saved!

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think God sent the big fish to swallow Jonah? What do you think that was like for Jonah?
- Talk about a time when you knew you were supposed to do something, but you really, really didn't want to do it. What was that like?
- What does it mean for us to obey God?
- Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh and he really didn't want the people of Nineveh to be saved. After all, they were "bad" people. Could God be calling you to be a friend or show love to someone that you really don't want to?

TOGETHER HOME

Make a Jonah in the fish piñata together. You'll need a balloon, some cardboard, newspaper strips, and paste or watered glue. Blow up the balloon. Create a tail out of cardboard and attach it to one end of the balloon with packing tape. Cover your fish with strips of newspaper dipped in glue. Leave a space at the top of the balloon without newspaper. Give your fish a second layer of newspaper strips and set out to dry again. You may paint your fish or you can glue on pieces of crepe paper to color your fish. Fill the piñata with goodies, including random items a fish might swallow. Place a plastic character that represents Jonah inside the piñata too. Hang the piñata and watch the kids have fun.

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him" (Deuteronomy 13:4). This is the last week for this verse. Does everyone know it?

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LESSON 29

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: BIRTH OF JESUS

LUKE 2:1-20

THE STORY HOME

Today, we learned about how God chose a young woman named Mary to give birth to His child, Jesus. God used angels to explain what was going to happen to Mary and her fiancé, Joseph. We also learned that Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted for the census. There, Jesus was born in a stable because there wasn't anywhere else for Mary and Joseph to stay. Angels appeared to shepherds and announced the arrival of God's Son.

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- What makes the birth of Jesus unusual? There are lots of things to talk about here!
- How do you think Joseph felt before the angel visited him? What makes you think that?
- What would it have been like to be one of the shepherds on the night Jesus was born?
- How do we celebrate Jesus' birth? Why do you think that is? What would be some other good ways to celebrate Jesus' birth?

TOGETHER HOME

Get out your family photo albums or pictures. Talk with your kids about when they were born. What was it like? How was it similar to or different from Jesus' birth? Take some time to look at family photos of the event. If you don't have pictures or videos to look at, do your best to imagine together and tell the story.

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

This month's memory verse is "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Encourage everyone in the family to memorize this verse. Write it on index cards and post them where family members will see them each day.

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LESSON 30

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: THE MAGI MATTHEW 2:1-12

THE STORY HOME

The wise men's journey to visit Jesus was the subject of today's Epic story. We learned about how they followed a star, went to see King Herod, and took gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. We also learned that they had a dream telling them to take a different route home. An angel told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill Jesus. They didn't return until Herod was dead.

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- The wise men (magi) knew that Jesus was someone special. What makes Jesus special?
- Why did the wise men give Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh?
- What gifts can we give Jesus?
- How do we worship Jesus?

TOGETHER HOME

Make a map of the journey of the wise men. You may sketch your own or add to a printed map of the region. The magi may have been from Babylon. Draw their route on the map. Were there twists and turns or did they go straight there? Then, fill in symbols for things they might have seen on their journey such as mountains, different sources of water, wild animals, etc. Talk about what it would have been like to travel for such a long time to see Jesus. Where would they have slept? What would they have eaten?

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Practice this verse together whenever possible: in the car, at the dinner table, during devotions, while taking a walk or playing in the yard.

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LESSON 31

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: BAPTISM OF JESUS

MATTHEW 3:1-17

THE STORY HOME

Today's Epic story was about John the Baptist calling people to repent of their sins and be baptized. Many people responded to John's call. John the Baptist taught the people that someone greater than he was coming who would not just baptize with water. Jesus went to the river where John was baptizing people and told him He wanted to be baptized. As Jesus was being baptized the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and landed on Jesus, and God said, "This is my Son with whom I am well pleased."

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- John the Baptist was one unusual guy. He lived in the desert, dressed in clothes made of camel's hair, and ate locusts and honey. Do you think God still uses unusual people today? What makes you think that way?
- Would you go out to the desert to see a man preaching? How is John the Baptist similar to or different from people we go to see speak or sing today?
- Have you been baptized? Talk about the significance of baptism and the story of your baptism. Have your kids been baptized? If not, when will you know they are ready?

TOGETHER HOME

Get some honey, perhaps even on the honey comb, from a local bee keeper, farmers' market, or grocery store. Eat some of the honey together. Talk about different foods that people eat.

At Jesus' baptism, God revealed Jesus as His Son. Thank God for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank Jesus for being willing to come to earth.

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Make a poster of this verse and have every family member write or draw about a way God shows love. Or, create signs for the words of the verse to help everyone learn the verse.

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LESSON 32

TODAY'S EPIC STORY: TEMPTATION OF JESUS

MATTHEW 4:1-11

THE STORY HOME

Today, we learned about how Jesus was tempted in the desert. After fasting for 40 days, Satan appeared to Jesus and tempted Him to turn stones to bread, throw himself off the temple so that the angels would save Him, and follow Satan so He could be rich and rule over lots of land and people. Even though Jesus was very hungry, He refused to do any of those things. After Satan left, angels came and took care of Jesus.

PARENTS & KIDS QUESTIONS:

- Talk about temptation. What is it? When do you experience temptation?
- What gave Jesus the ability to resist temptation, even though He was really hungry and weak?
- How can God help us with our temptations?
- What should we do when we feel tempted?

TOGETHER HOME

Play a tempting game of Simon Says. One person is Simon and the rest stand in a line facing Simon. The 'Simon' calls out instructions like this, "Simon says, touch your nose." Everyone else has to touch their nose. If the 'Simon' calls out an instruction without saying "Simon says" then everyone should ignore the instruction. If you don't follow a Simon says instruction you are out. If you do follow an instruction that doesn't have Simon says on it you are also out. The person who wins can then be Simon next time. In this case, pretend that getting "out" is falling to temptation.

Or, watch the *Veggie Tales* video *Larry Boy and the Bad Apple*. Talk about the temptations from the movie and how the characters overcame them.

BIBLE MEMORY HOME

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). This is the last week for this verse. Does everyone in the family have it memorized? See if everyone can say it with minimal assistance.

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