

# Small Group Leader Guide

## Today's Suggested Schedule

### Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### Small Group (15 minutes)

#### Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

### Large Group (35 minutes)

#### Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

#### Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

### Small Group (25 minutes)

#### Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Build It Story Review
2. Application Activity: Stand Up!
3. Memory Verse Activity: Isaiah 40:31 Crowns
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

#### Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.

THIS MONTH



## Today's Bible Story

### Esther

Esther 1-10

### Bottom Line

**God can help you stand up for others.**

### Memory Verse

**Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.**

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



### Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

## SOCIAL

# Opening Activity



## What You Need

- Offering container
- Butcher paper
- Markers



## Inclusive Pro Tips

Have verbal prompts ready for kids who may need help imagining their kingdom.

- What kinds of buildings would your kingdom have?
- What would people do for fun there?
- What's one rule everyone in your kingdom would follow?

## ① What You Do

**Pray for your group before they arrive** → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He places people in the right place at the right time for His purpose. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when God gave you courage to speak up for someone else or do what was right to help them. Ask God to help each kid realize that their voice matters and that He can use them, even now! Ask God to help the kids learn how to hear and listen to His voice as He leads them through the places He's put them for such a time as this!

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Ask the kids about their week to build connection!
4. Lay the butcher paper out and gather the group around it.
5. Set out the markers.
6. Ask: "If you were the king or queen of your own kingdom, what would you name it?"
7. Give the kids a few minutes to come up with a kingdom name.
8. Write the name of the kingdoms in large block letters in the center of the butcher paper.
9. Around the name they chose for their kingdom, encourage the kids to draw what would be in their kingdom: castles, ice cream shops, pet parks, unicorns—anything goes!
10. Gather the kids to discuss.

## ② What You Say

"Wow! You all are so creative. I'd love to visit the Kingdom of **(INSERT NAME)**!"

"In today's true story from the Bible, we'll hear about a real Persian king named Xerxes—and one brave queen named Esther. She didn't become queen just to live in a palace; God had a bigger plan. God knew what was coming, and He chose Esther to help! Let's head to Large Group and find out what happened!"

**Transition** → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

## GROUPS 1/4

# Build It Story Review



## Bible Story Review

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- Prepared cardstock squares and triangles
- "Story Image Cards" Activity Page

## ① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into pairs.
2. Give each pair 15 cardstock pieces.
3. Say, "Today we're going to build parts of the Bible Story using these shapes! Make your shapes into pictures as you hear each part of the story. I will show you a picture of what to make!"
4. Read each Story Prompt slowly and clearly (they're listed below), while displaying the card from the "Story Image Cards" Activity Page that matches.
5. Give the kids time to arrange their shapes after each Story Prompt.

### Bible Story Points:

- "King Xerxes was a powerful king. When his queen didn't listen, he decided to find a new one!" (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE CROWN. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A CROWN.)
- "A girl named Esther lived with her cousin Mordecai. She was kind and beautiful—and the king chose her to be queen!" (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE HOUSE. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A HOUSE.)
- "Haman was an evil man who worked for the king. He got really mad at Mordecai for not bowing to him and made a plan to get rid of all the Jewish people." (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE LETTER "H." INVITE KIDS TO BUILD AN "H.")
- "Mordecai asked Esther for help. She was scared but brave! She said yes, and planned a way to help her people." (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF A CHECKMARK. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A CHECKMARK.)
- "Esther had two feasts with the king and Haman, and at the second one, she told them everything. She asked the king, 'Please save my people!' (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE BANQUET TABLE. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A TABLE.)
- "The king made a new law that the Jewish people could stay safe! Haman was punished, and Esther saved her people!" (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE TRUMPET. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A TRUMPET.)

Continued on the next page. →

### Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow the kids to work in groups or independently.

Allow the kids to participate seated in a chair or another position.

## GROUPS 1/4

# Build It Story Review



## Bible Story Review

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- Prepared cardstock squares and triangles
- "Story Image Cards" Activity Page

## ② What You Say

"Amazing job building, friends! God made Esther queen, and He made her queen at the exact right time. Her people needed help! So Queen Esther trusted that God had a plan and stood up for her people!

"You know what? God has put you in the exact time and place to help people too! You're in your class for that reason. You're on your team for a reason. You're in your family for a reason. You're in your church for a reason! There are people you will see in your life who need you to stick up for them.

"Just like Esther, God has put you exactly where you are to help! When you go on the playground, and you see someone being picked on, and you say something to stop it, that's standing up for someone! And God put you right there to help!

"When you go to lunch and you see someone forgot theirs that day, and you share yours, you're helping someone! And God put you right there to help!

"You probably won't have to go before a powerful king ... but there are going to be times when God wants you to help, to stand up for others. When it feels scary, ask God to help you. He loves to! God can help you stand up for others!"

### Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow the kids to work in groups or independently.

Allow the kids to participate seated in a chair or another position.

## GROUPS 2/4

# Stand Up!

## Application Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

→ No supplies needed



### Inclusive Pro Tips

To adjust to the movement needs of your group, do this activity sitting down in chairs or on the floor.

If any child is uncomfortable speaking aloud, allow them to whisper their answer to a leader or give a thumbs-up/down when they agree with an answer.

## ① What You Do

1. Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
2. Say, "I'm going to read a few scenarios. If you have an idea of how you might stand up for someone in the scenario, stand up and raise your hand high!"
3. One at a time, read a "Stand Up Scenario" listed below.
4. Pick one kid who is standing to share what they would do to help.
5. After their answer, lead the whole group to repeat the Bottom Line together: "God can help you stand up for others!"
6. Instruct the kids to sit back down and read the next scenario.

### Stand Up Scenarios:

1. You see someone sitting alone at lunch and looking really sad.
2. A kid on the playground is being made fun of for their shoes.
3. Someone is being picked last for a game, and you know they feel left out.
4. Your younger sibling is crying because someone wasn't kind to them.
5. A kid in your class speaks a different language and is having trouble joining the group.
6. A friend is telling a lie about someone else and asks you to agree with them.

## ② What You Say

"Great ideas, friends! Each of those moments is a chance to stand up for someone else.

"And the thing is, when you are standing up for the people in your life, you're not just being like God, you're showing who He is!

"God is fair. So when you're fair, when you stand up for someone who is being picked on, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is! God is kind, so when you sit with a kid who is alone or you're kind to someone who is different than you, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is!

"You don't have to do that on your own. You can stop to pray and ask God for help, because He's ALWAYS right there and He loves to help. Remember, God can help you stand up for others!"

## GROUPS 4/4

# Pray and Dismiss



## Prayer Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed

### Inclusive Supplies:

- Index cards
- Coloring supplies



### Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer index cards and coloring supplies for kids who may prefer to draw or write their prayers to God instead of praying silently! This gives visual and kinesthetic learners a hands-on way to reflect and connect with God.

## ① What You Do

1. Invite the kids to sit together with you in a circle.
2. Instruct the kids to hold up their left hand in an "L" shape (pointer finger and thumb).
3. Encourage kids to turn and look at the friend sitting on their left. This is the friend they will pray for today!
4. Invite the kids to pray silently or repeat after you as you guide them in praying to God:
  - "God, please help [kid's name] have confidence in You this week. Help them to stand up for others even when it's hard. In Jesus' name, amen!"
5. After a moment of silent or guided prayer, invite all the kids to stand, link arms, or place arms on shoulders.
6. Close in prayer.

## ② Prayer

"God, thank You for the story of Esther. We want to stand up for others too! Help us treat others the way we want to be treated. When we feel nervous or unsure, remind us that we can come to You for help. Thank You for giving each of us a special purpose. Show us how to help the people in our lives. We want to show the world how good You are! We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

**Make It Personal** → Share a short story of a time when you prayed for someone else, or someone prayed for you, and how that made a difference.

**Transition** → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to show off their paper crowns as they remember that God can help you stand up for others.