

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 134: THE JEWS REJOICE & DECLARE A FEAST
ESTHER 9:18-32

The Jews in Susa had met together on the 13th and 14th days of the month of Adar. And then on the 15th day they rested. So they made the 15th day a happy day of feasting. So those who live in the country and small villages celebrate this feast they call Purim on the 14th day of Adar. They keep the 14th day as a happy day of feasting. On this day they have parties and give presents to each other. Mordecai wrote everything down that had happened, and then he sent letters to all the Jews in all of King Xerxes' provinces. He sent letters far and near. He did this to tell the Jews to celebrate Purim every year on the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar. They were to celebrate those days because on those days the Jews got rid of their enemies. And they were also to celebrate that month as the month when their sadness was turned into joy. It was a month when their crying was changed into a day of celebration. Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews and told them to celebrate those days as a happy day of feasting. They should have parties, give gifts to each other, and give presents to the poor. So the Jews agreed to do what Mordecai had written to them. And they agreed to continue the celebration they had begun. Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite was the enemy of all the Jews. He had made an evil plan against the Jews to destroy them. And Haman had thrown the lot to choose a day to ruin and to destroy the Jews. At that time the lot was called a "pur." Haman did this, but Esther went to talk to the king. So he sent out new commands. These commands not only ruined Haman's plans, but these commands caused those bad things to happen to Haman and his family! So Haman and his sons were hanged on the posts. At this time lots were called "purim." So this festival is called "Purim." Mordecai wrote a letter and told the Jews to celebrate this festival. And so the Jews started the custom of celebrating these two days every year. They do this to help them remember what they had seen happen to them. The Jews and all the people who join them celebrate these two days every year at the right time in just the right way. Every generation and every family remembers these two days. They celebrate this festival in each and every province and in each and every town. And the Jews will never stop celebrating the days of Purim. Their descendants will always remember this festival. So Queen Esther daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote an official letter about Purim. They wrote with the full authority of the king to prove that the second letter was

true. So Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of King Xerxes' kingdom. He told the people that the festival should bring peace and make people trust each other. He wrote these letters to tell the people to start celebrating Purim. And he told them when to celebrate this new festival. Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had sent out the command for the Jews to establish this two-day festival for themselves and their descendants. They will remember this festival just as they remember the other festivals when they fast and cry about the bad things that had happened. Esther's letter made the rules for Purim official, and these things were written down in a book.

134. THE JEWS REJOICE & DECLARE A FEAST
(ESTHER 9:18-32)

Each year you must celebrate on both the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar, the days when we Jews defeated our enemies. Remember this month as a time when our sorrow was turned to joy, and celebration took the place of crying. Celebrate by having parties and by giving to the poor and by sharing gifts of food with each other.
(Est 9:21-22)



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MEMORY VERSE:

"Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy." PSALM 126:5

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The Jews celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day of happiness and feasting. TRUE or FALSE
2. They cried and asked God's forgiveness during Purim. TRUE or FALSE
3. Mordecai and Esther sent letters to the Jews telling them to run away and hide. TRUE or FALSE
4. Mordecai and Esther sent letters to all 127 of King Xerxes' provinces telling all the Jews that they should celebrate with joy and feasting. TRUE or FALSE
5. The letters said the Jews should give gifts to the poor and gifts of food to each other. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. How did the Jews know the letters were real and true? Was it because Esther and Mordecai sent them with the full authority of the King?
2. What happened to evil Haman?
3. Do you remember what this day of feasting was called? Was it Purim?
4. Why do the Jews celebrate these two days of joy? Is it to help them remember what they had seen happen to them?
5. Do the Jews celebrate these two days every year? Are they supposed to always do this forever? Yes!

Lesson 134 Esther & King Xerxes (Ahaseurus) Masks

Print the masks on good heavy cardstock, Esther for the girls, King Xerxes (Ahaseurus) for the boys.

Have the children color their masks.

Help them cut out the eyes to make holes (optional - cut slits in the mouth holes)

Use a hole punch to punch a hole on each side of the mask, and tie a piece of yarn (about 6" long for each piece) to each side.

Let the children tie their masks on as you celebrate Purim!

ALTERNATE IDEA:

Since Purim is a Festival when the Jews give gifts to one another, have the children each pick a prize for someone else instead of picking their own prize at the end of class! (you can do both ideas if you want!)

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.



