

Small Group Leader Guide



THIS MONTH



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. Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

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: What If?
2. Application Activity: For Such a Time as This
3. Memory Verse Activity: Built It!
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

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

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

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 NIV



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

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. 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. Instruct the kids to sit in a circle or around a table in chairs.

Play Together

1. Introduce a game called "Stand Up If!"
2. Say: "When I call out something that might be true for you, stand up! Then sit back down so we can go to the next one."
3. Read the "Stand Up If" prompts below one by one.
4. Pause periodically to call on any kids who want to explain why they chose to stand.
 - NOTE: If time allows, invite kids to share their own "Stand Up If" prompts with the group!
5. Continue until all the prompts have been answered.

"Stand Up If" Prompts

1. Stand up if you've ever eaten pizza.
2. Stand up if you've ever asked God for help.
3. Stand up if you've ever felt nervous before a big moment.
4. Stand up if you like rainy days.
5. Stand up if you like cheering for your friends.
6. Stand up if ice cream is your favorite dessert.
7. Stand up if you've ever stood up for someone else.
8. Stand up if you like celebrating your birthday.

② What You Say

"Wow! So many of us like some of the same things, or have been through the same kinds of things. One thing is for sure—we've all had moments when we needed to be confident, even if it felt scary!"

"Today, in our true story from the Bible, we'll follow the story of Esther. Esther did something pretty bold and brave, even when it wasn't easy. She stood up for others! God wants to give you the confidence to stand up for others too! Let's go find out how!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, invite the kids to raise their hands from a seated position or use a thumbs-up to answer the prompts.

GROUPS 1/4

What if?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed



① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into groups of 2-3.
2. Say, "Today you'll help me tell Esther's story, but with a twist!"
3. One by one, read a real moment from Esther's story—they are listed below—then pause and ask the "What if?" question that corresponds to the real moment.
4. After reading a "What If?" question, invite the groups to act it out.
5. For each round, select a group to share their skit, acting out the "What If" question.
6. Before going through Esther's story, discuss the questions below.

Talk Together:

1. Ask: What gave Esther the confidence to stand up for her people even when it was hard?
→ Esther trusted and believed God put her there at that time for a reason! (Esther 4:14b)
2. Ask: Why can we have confidence in God?
→ Because He is good and He is always working for good.

"What If?" Scenarios:

1. Real: Haman made a plan to hurt God's people.
→ What if: Mordecai had just stayed quiet and not told Esther anything about Haman's awful plan?
2. Real: Esther was afraid, but chose to go to the king.
→ What if: Esther had stayed quiet and done nothing to help?
3. Real: Esther prepared two banquets to build up courage and timing.
→ What if: Esther had rushed in without a plan?
4. Real: Esther trusted that God had put her where she was for that time, and stood up for her people.
→ What if: Esther only looked out for herself and ignored people in danger?

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, have the kids share answers to the "what if" statements from a seated position.

GROUPS 1/4

What if?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed



② What You Say

"Wow—so many 'what if' moments! Esther had a choice, just like we do! Think about it: she could've backed away or stayed quiet. But she put aside her own fears and trusted that God had a plan and chose to do the right thing. How incredible is it that God puts us all in the right places for a purpose to carry out His plans!

"We are just like Esther! Just like her, God has put us in this exact time and this exact place. You are to go through your life, with God's guidance, and help people see and feel God's love and goodness.

"God is fair and just. 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, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is! God loves people who don't seem to fit in, so when you show kindness to someone who is different than you, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is!

"And God has put you just where you are to show your world what He is like!

"As you go throughout your days showing who God is, God goes with you every step of the way, and He will help you. God can help you stand up for others!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, have the kids share answers to the "what if" statements from a seated position.

GROUPS 2/4

For Such a Time as This

Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Esther 4:14
- ☐ "Perfectly Placed" Activity Page
- ☐ Prepared poster board
- ☐ Two colors of sticky notes
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Masking tape

MADE TO
Imagine

① What You Do

1. Tape the prepared poster board on a wall or place it on the floor in your group area.
2. Gather the kids several feet away from the poster board.
3. Read Esther 4:14 aloud to the group.
4. Give every kid at least five sticky notes in each color and a pencil.
5. Encourage the kids to write their initials on their sticky notes.
6. Gesture to the prepared poster board and ask: "In today's Bible Story, Esther and her people were going to be killed. Esther's people were in danger! She could have done nothing, but she realized that God put her where she was to help. So she got involved and helped! She stood up for others."

Imagine Together:

1. Say, "We're going to look at different situations we may face in our own lives where we face a choice too—we can either stand up for others, or we can choose not to get involved. On the left side of this poster board, we'll place sticky notes of one color for choices that show what it looks like not to get involved. On the right side, we'll put sticky notes of the other color that show that the hard thing was done and we stood up for others."
2. Read the "Perfectly Placed" Activity Page scenarios one at a time and ask:
3. "Does this show someone standing up for others or not?"
4. Invite every kid to respond by placing the corresponding sticky note color with their initials on the side they want to choose.
5. Continue until all of the scenarios have been read and voted on.

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate example of a time God helped you stand up for others.

② What You Say

"You may not be standing in a palace or talking to a king, but you are just like Esther in that God has put you exactly in the time and place you are—in your family, in your class, on your team, in your church group. God wants you to go through your life and show His love, goodness, kindness, justice, and truthfulness!

"Maybe it's someone being made fun of. Or maybe it's someone who just needs to know they matter. Remember that you're not going through this alone. When you choose to follow Jesus, God's very Spirit, the Holy Spirit, moves inside of you. He will go with you throughout your life and say things to your heart like: 'Hey, do you see that kid over there who is all alone? He needs someone to be kind to him. Go do that!'

"You are not alone as you go and show God's heart to others. God can help you stand up for others!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



Before you begin, provide a visual of what to do with the sticky notes by placing a sticky note on each side and explaining the color meanings.

GROUPS 3/4

Build it!

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "Verse Blocks" Activity Page
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Brown or green butcher paper
- ☐ *Optional: Timer*

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, lay the butcher paper on a table and let your group place the "Verse Blocks" in order on it.

① What You Do

1. Before you begin, tape the "Verse Blocks" Activity Page cards in random order around your group space.
→ NOTE: You can tape them on the floor or on the wall
2. Lay out the brown or green butcher paper on one end of your group space.
3. Divide the kids into groups of 3-4.
4. Give every group a Bible and invite them to look up Isaiah 40:31.

Play Together:

1. Gather the entire group around the butcher paper.
2. Say, "Today you'll be 'mining' for the Memory Verse, Isaiah 40:31! We'll work to build the verse back together on this bedrock platform (point to butcher paper) in the correct order."
3. One at a time, instruct the kids to run to grab a "verse block" and bring it back to build the verse.
4. The kids may only place a block if it comes next in the verse. If it's out of order, it must be 'returned to the mine.'
5. Let the kids continue to take turns to find the next part of the verse until the verse is complete.
6. *Optional: Use a timer to challenge the kids to race to beat the clock!*

Finding verses with 2nd-3rd graders

- ① Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. **(HOLD UP A BIBLE OPENED TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS TO SHOW THE KIDS WHAT THE PAGE LOOKS LIKE.)**
- ② When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list.
- ③ When they find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page.
- ④ When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the correct chapter.
- ⑤ Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 3/4

Build it!



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "Verse Blocks" Activity Page
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Brown or green butcher paper
- ☐ Optional: Timer

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, lay the butcher paper on a table and let your group place the "Verse Blocks" in order on it.

② What You Say

"Today we didn't mine for diamonds, or shiny artifacts—we mined for God's Word! The words in Isaiah 40:31 remind us where real strength comes from: The Lord! It tells us that God is strong—stronger than any person or problem. When we trust in the Lord, He gives us strength too. Not just once, but over and over again.

"Trusting God means, when you're tired, remembering, 'Oh, God can do that!' It means when you need help, remembering, 'God will help me get through that!' Trusting God means giving God the weight so you can soar like an eagle! Trusting God is letting yourself be carried by God's strength, like an eagle rides the wind!

"And that trust in God gives you strength! It's not just physical strength like lifting something heavy. It's strength in your heart and mind—like the courage to do what's right, the willingness to forgive, or the confidence to speak up.

"Remember this verse, let it be a reminder to you that God loves you SO much, and as you put your trust in Him, He will give you what you need. God is cheering you on and wants to renew your strength so you can go through your life stronger! How incredible!"

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

- ☐ "Brick Prayers" Activity Page
- ☐ Coloring supplies



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids in a seated circle.
2. Give every kid a prayer card (a brick) from the "Brick Prayers" Activity Page.
3. Set out the coloring supplies.
4. Say, "Esther showed real courage when she stood up for others."
5. Ask the kids to quietly think of a person they know who might need someone to look out for them.
 - Give examples like a new kid at school, someone who's been left out, or a friend going through a hard time.
6. On the prayer card, encourage kids to:
 - Write that person's name or draw a picture of them.
 - Write a short prayer for them.
7. If time allows, let the kids to decorate their prayer card.
8. Encourage them to take their prayer card home and continue praying to God about that person!
9. Close in prayer.

② Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for all of my friends here today! Thank You for reminding us through Esther's story that You put us in our worlds for such a time as this. Please help us listen to Your Spirit and see the people around us whom You are calling us to help. Remind us that You are always right there with us in everything You ask us to do! We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, invite the kids to share their "Brick Prayers." Who did they choose to pray for today? Why? How is God calling them to look out for that person this week?

Inclusive Pro Tips



Give the kids various ways to complete their prayer card. Some kids may focus better while standing or lying on their stomachs.

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container

Groups

1. What If?

- No Supplies Needed

2. For Such a Time as This

- ☐ Bible marked at Esther 4:14, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "Perfectly Placed" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Poster board, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Sticky notes (two colors), five of each color for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Masking tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ *Before group time:*
 - Write "For Such a Time as This" across the top of the poster board.

3. Build It!

- ☐ Bibles, one for every 3-4 kids
- ☐ Print "Verse Blocks" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Masking tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Brown or green butcher paper, one large piece for each Small Group
- ☐ *Optional: Timer*

4. Pray and Dismiss*

- ☐ Print "Brick Prayers" Activity Page on cardstock and cut out, one brick for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share

*If you don't have time to do all, be sure to do the starred activity.