

3-6 | November 23

Today's Bible Story: Esther • *Esther 1-10*

Conversation Starter: When has someone stood up for you?

Today's Bottom Line: God can help you stand up for others.

Monthly 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)

1. Opening Activity

Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He sees and values every voice, no matter the age! Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when you were able to stand up for someone who needed help or speak up with love and courage. Ask God to help preteens understand that they don't need to wait until they're older to be used by Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to help them see the people around them who need to see God's love, kindness, and truth, and to act on what He shows them.

What You Need:

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Floor tape

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a high-five, fist bump, or a wave.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Before you begin:
 - Create a large circle or square with floor tape.
- Divide the kids into two teams (or more, depending on your group's size).
- Explain: "Each team will choose a kid whom they'll protect. That kid's identity must stay a secret!"
- Direct the teams to secretly choose a kid to protect, and then stand on opposite sides of the tape zone you created.
- On your "go!" the teams will walk (no running!) toward the zone, trying to get as many teammates—including the selected kid—inside as possible.
- In the zone, the teams must try to protect their selected kid from being tagged by the other team.
- Each opposing team can try to gently tag three people from the other team.
- If they tag a regular player, that player steps out for one round. If they tag the real VIP, the round is over!
- Play several rounds, switching selected kids each time.

What You Say:

"That was so fun! How did it feel to be protected by your team? (*Invite responses.*)"

"Standing up for others can feel hard and complex. Sometimes we don't know who needs us to stand up for them, or what will happen if we do."

"Today, in our true story from the Bible, we'll discover a woman named Esther who stood up for others even though it was risky for her. Let's go hear more and discover how God can help us stand up for others too!"

Inclusive Pro Tips:

- Remind the group to use gentle tags if tagging and to include everyone.

2. Isaiah 40:31 Crowns***What You Need:**

- Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crowns" Activity Page
- Safety scissors
- Clear tape
- Jewel stickers
- Markers

What You Do:

- Open the Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31.
- Read the verse aloud to the group.
- Demonstrate the following motions to the kids and repeat the verse together several times.
- These are the motions for the NIV:
 - *Those who trust (Hold palms open and up to the sky.)*
 - *in the LORD (Point both hands up toward heaven.)*
 - *will receive (Pull your hands in toward your chest like you're reeling something in.)*
 - *new strength. (Show your muscles—flex both arms with a strong face.)*
 - *They will fly as high as eagles. (Flap your arms slowly and gracefully like wings.)*
 - *They will run (Run in place.)*
 - *and not get tired. (Cross your arms in front of you in an "X.")*
 - *They will walk (Take slow, steady walking steps in place.)*
 - *and not grow weak. (Cross your arms again in an "X.")*
 - *Isaiah 40:31 (Open palms together like a Bible.)*
- These are the motions for the NIV:
 - *Those who hope (Hold palms open and up to the sky.)*
 - *in the LORD (Point both hands up toward heaven.)*
 - *will renew their strength. (Show your muscles—flex both arms with a strong face.)*
 - *They will soar on wings like eagles; (Flap your arms slowly and gracefully like wings.)*
 - *they will run (Run in place.)*
 - *and not grow weary, (Cross your arms in front of you in an "X.")*
 - *they will walk (Take slow, steady walking steps in place.)*
 - *and not be faint. (Cross your arms again in an "X.")*
 - *Isaiah 40:31 (Open palms together like a Bible.)*

Create Together:

- Give every kid an "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crown" Activity Page and a pair of scissors.
- Set out the markers and jewel stickers for the group to share.
- Point out the words from the verse printed on the crown.
- Direct them to:

- Cut out the crown pieces.
- Use coloring supplies and jewel stickers to decorate it.
- Tape the pieces together so the crowns fit.
- Help the kids write their names on their crown.

What You Say:

“Isaiah 40:31 reminds us that everything we need comes from God. When we trust in God, He gives us strength just like Isaiah 40:31 says. He helps us keep going, even when it’s hard.

“Esther wore a real crown because she was queen, but you’re like a royal too because God has appointed you to live in this exact time and in this exact place just like her!

“Just like Esther was chosen to be queen, God calls YOU chosen too! He made you on purpose for a purpose. God will give you the strength you need to stand up for the people in your life! So whenever you wear this crown, remember: **God can help you stand up for others.**”

3. Bible Story Extension

What You Need:

- “Block Sort” Activity Pages

What You Do:

- Divide the kids into two teams.
- Instruct each team to sit together in a circle.
- Give each group a set of cards from the “Block Sort” Activity Page.
- Say, “You’ll work as a team to sort these cards! Think about which words describe someone who is putting their confidence in God, like Esther from our Bible Story. As your team chooses a word, use it as a ‘block’ to help build a castle or tower in the middle of your team!”
- Remind the kids that some words describe someone whose confidence is in God, and some don’t.
- As they finish, review the chosen words and discuss why each one fits (or doesn’t).
- Discuss why the other words do not fit.
- ***[Make It Personal] (Share about a time you stood up for someone, or for a group of people who needed help, even when it felt tough. Explain how God helped you do it!)***

Inclusive Pro Tips:

- Create smaller groups for kids who might want a more personal conversation.

4. Pray and Dismiss*

“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.”