

## Behind The Scenes

Week 2

### **BIG IDEA**

God helps us do good behind the scenes.

### **BIBLE**

Scene II. Mordecai and Haman:  
Esther 3:1-6; 6:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

## LARGE GROUP TIME

SAY...

Welcome back to Behind the Scenes, where we're watching the epic story of Esther play out!

Today, we're going to follow Mordecai and a new character, Haman, and hear about all the royal drama that goes on behind the scenes of the palace where Esther lives. Come with me behind the scenes where all the action starts!

## WHAT?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
  - "God is Real" (Vineyard Kids)
  - "Thank the Lord" (Ark Kids)
  - "In You Alone" (Lifetree Kids)
  - "Raise a Hallelujah" (Community Kids)

ACTIVITY | Wardrobe Wars

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Divide the group into teams and line the kids up for a relay race. Place each team's bin with different articles of clothing and accessories on the opposite side of the room. One at a

time, each team member runs to the bin and puts on one item from the bin. Then, they'll run back to the end of the team line. When the box is empty, tell everyone on the team to sit down. The first team to sit down wearing all the costume items from the box wins! (Maybe dressing one person, team runs down to dress them)

- We are still getting ready for our stage production of *The Epic Events of Esther and the Empire*.
- Last week, we prepared our sets. Today, we're jumping into the costumes!
- Sometimes between scenes, the actors need to do a quick costume change. So, let's prepare for our big moment!

#### ACTIVITY | Kindness Tag

- We've been talking about what happens behind the scenes, specifically what God does for us behind the scenes. Let's see how we can also be someone's behind-the-scenes person.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show a video of random acts of kindness (like [this one](#)) and have kids point out the various ways people in the video are showing kindness to others. Afterward, play a round of "Kindness Tag" which is like normal freeze tag, but each time someone gets tagged, they have to say something kind about someone in the room before they can continue play. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Sometimes, the honest thing to do isn't obvious or easy to do. But if we do the honest thing, we can really brighten someone's day or even change someone's life.
- We won't always be noticed or rewarded for the things we do, but even if people don't see, God always sees the good things we do for others.

#### QUESTION | Caught Doing Good

- We notice everything on the stage of a play, but sometimes, we forget the background players.
- The person lifting the curtains at the right time, the people moving props between scenes, the person who cleaned the whole stage the day before the big performance. These people don't always get a lot of credit, but their contributions make a big difference to the entire theater team.
- Every day, there's something we can do for someone else — without trying to get credit for it — just out of kindness.
- **Have you ever been caught doing something good?**
- **Or have you ever caught someone else doing something good?**

## Section

#### SCRIPTURE | Esther 3:1–6; 6:1–11 (Scene II. Mordecai and Haman)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up your Bible story space like you're rehearsing a play with a director's chair in front of the stage area and the audience behind you. Choose kids and volunteers to pantomime the instructions you call out as you tell the story. Pick a few kids to be the story's characters: King Xerxes,

*Haman, Mordecai, Bigthana, Teresh, and the king's people. As you tell the story, pause occasionally to tell the actors to stand in a certain spot or move in a certain way.*

- Welcome to another exclusive, behind-the-scenes experience.
  - *Optional:* Today's story comes from Esther 3:1–6; 6:1–11 in the Bible.
- When we last saw King Xerxes, he had gotten himself a brand new queen named Esther. But today's story is not about her, it's about her cousin, Mordecai. Mordecai, wave to the audience, please!
  - Mordecai had warned Esther before to make sure she didn't reveal her family's background. Mordecai knew many people in the kingdom of Persia didn't like the Jews who were living among them.
  - But now that Esther was queen, Mordecai was probably worried the secret would come out. So, he kept watch at the palace gates, pacing back and forth, back and forth, and making sure nothing bad happened.
- During one of these daily strolls, he overheard something.
  - Bigthana and Teresh were planning something in hushed voices and motioning wildly. It turns out, they were two of the king's officers who were trying to overthrow the king.
  - When the king found out, he gave the order for the two conspirators to be punished. Bigthana and Teresh, run off the stage!
- Now, you think they were bad people? There was an even bigger bad guy. His name was Haman.
  - Haman walked around the kingdom like he owned the place because he was the king's right-hand man and he was very proud of it.
  - So, whenever he passed by, even the king's people would bow down to him. Like so low, their noses almost touched the ground.
- But our friend, Mordecai, refused to do this. Day after day, Haman would walk by, everyone would bow, and Mordecai would remain standing as tall as a tree.
  - Now, the Bible doesn't say, but we can safely guess that Mordecai refused to bow to Haman because Mordecai believed in God and worshiped only God.
  - And it made Haman furious. He stomped around while he tried to think of what to do about Mordecai. All he knew was that he wanted to make Mordecai disappear. But not just Mordecai. Everyone like Mordecai who loved God.
- One evening, King Xerxes was lying in bed. But he couldn't sleep. He kept tossing and turning. He counted sheep. He did a few jumping jacks. Finally, he asked one of his people to read him a book, which was kind of like a journal. It was a record of everything that happened every day in his kingdom.
  - One of the accounts that were read aloud to him was about the time Mordecai had saved the king's life by exposing Bigthana and Teresh's plan to harm the king.
  - Xerxes sat up very suddenly. He just realized that nothing had been done to recognize Mordecai for his good deed. He scratched his head and asked out loud, "What should we do?"
  - The king's people and Xerxes just stared at each other for a long time. They had no idea.
- Just then, Haman had skipped into the palace courts, humming cheerfully. You see, he had an evil plan for Mordecai and Mordecai's people and he was just coming to the king to talk about it.
  - But then, one of the king's people grabbed Haman and brought him before the king.
  - Haman bowed a fancy and showy bow.
  - The king was happy to see Haman and asked him, "What should I do for someone that I really want to honor?"
- Haman couldn't hide his excitement. He thought for sure the king was talking about him. He ran around the entire room with his fists in the air like he just won a big race. Then, he composed himself, cleared his throat, and spoke very slowly so the king wouldn't miss a single word.
  - "What can be done for someone the king wants to honor?" Haman chuckled. "King, you should give me — I mean, them — a royal robe from the king's private collection and one of the magnificent horses that belongs to the king. Then, get someone high-ranking to parade this person through the city streets, and shout at the top of their lungs, 'This is what the king does for awesome people!' I think this is fair."

- The king clapped his hands, grabbed Haman's shoulders, and rushed him to the door — er, stage right — and told him, "Now, go do everything you just said for the guy I owe my life to . . . Mordecai."
- So, Haman was stuck having to honor the very man he wanted to destroy.
  - Mordecai was dressed in the king's finest robe and rode on the king's finest horse. And while Mordecai waved to the crowds, Haman was right next to him, shouting at the top of his lungs, "This is what the king does for awesome people!"
- And . . . scene! Bravo, everyone!
- You see, lots of things were happening behind the scenes.
  - Mordecai spent his behind-the-scenes time doing good things like obeying God and saving the king's life.
  - Haman spent his behind-the-scenes time plotting to take Mordecai down.
  - **Which do you think was the better choice?**
- Well, stay tuned, everyone . . . the story gets even better!

BIG IDEA | God helps us do good behind the scenes.

VIDEO | Behind the Scenes, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

STORY | Behind The Scenes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a short story about a moment in your life when you noticed someone doing something good behind the scenes. Share a few ways you can look back now and see how God was working through that person. It could be something you noticed a kid doing in your group or something you witnessed growing up.*
- It's nice to get recognition for the good things we do, and we shouldn't feel badly when we're given compliments or prizes.
- But we shouldn't only do good things to get that kind of attention. The kind of love God gives us should motivate us to share that love, regardless of who's watching!

OBJECT LESSON | Line Readers

- Prithee good sirs and madams! 'Tis I, thy humble teacher! Should it pleaseth thee, methinks I shall share some more knowledge about the Bible and the theater, where all the world's a stage!

- **Did anyone understand any of that?** I was trying to copy Elizabethan speech, which is how they talked and wrote in the days of possibly the most famous playwright of all time: William Shakespeare. **Has anyone ever heard of him?**
- Shakespeare is known for writing plays like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read aloud a famous line from a Shakespeare play and then halfway through, "forget" your line. Have a different volunteer yell the line from offstage.
  - **PRETEEN HACK:** Instead of using Shakespeare, consider using famous movie (or even trending TikTok) quotes and have your preteens feed you the rest of the line!
- Let me share some of the more well-known lines from Shakespeare's plays, like:
  - "Shall I compare thee to a . . . [...summer's day.]"
  - "To be or not to be. That . . . [...is the question.]"
  - "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou . . . [Romeo.]"
  - "To thine own self . . . [...be true.]"
- Thank you for helping me with these lines! I thought I knew them, but I definitely needed some help.
- When someone good and thoughtful is behind the scenes, we can be more confident in our lives. We all have someone like that — God! And **God helps us do good behind the scenes** for others, too.

SCRIPTURE | 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13

- Sometimes, it's not clear what the right thing to do is. Other times, it can be hard or we can get tired of doing good.
- Think about Mordecai's story — he saved the king's life, but he was never rewarded for it. He didn't brag about it to others or ask for recognition. He did it because he knew it was the right thing to do.
- Let's see what Paul had to say about doing good in a letter to his friends in Thessalonica.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13.
  - **PRETEEN HACK:** After reading through this passage together, have kids jot down or share aloud some advice they might give someone who is trying to do good.
- In this letter, Paul is saying followers of God should stay focused on doing what's right and by doing that, they model for others what doing good looks like.
- Paul says when people forget to do good, God's followers should help them get back on track again.
  - Paul knew doing good isn't always easy, but it wasn't impossible — Jesus led by a great example.
  - Jesus did endless good things for people who were sick and hurting, and Jesus didn't do it to win some sort of prize. This was just how Jesus loved and shared God's love with everyone.
- Just like Paul writes in this Bible story, God is with us all the time, helping us do good behind the scenes. That's why we should never get tired of doing good for others.

NOW WHAT?

RESPONSE | Royal Imagination

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out an index card or piece of paper and pencil to each kid.

- Imagine you've been given the abilities of a royal and you can do good for anyone who needs it. Think about what you would be able to do to help!
- Write or draw the good thing you want to do for someone if you were king or queen.
- Now, since we're just imagining what we can do, think about what we can actually do. What are some of those things?
- The key is to not let things sit in our imaginations. I hope this exercise inspires us to actually go out and do good because **God helps us do good behind the scenes!**

#### MEMORY VERSE | Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

- **"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Divide the kids into groups of five or six and give each group a copy of the memory verse graphic (located in your Programming folder). This week, have them decide amongst themselves how to split up the verse so that each person is saying only a few words from the verse. After some practice, announce each team to come up to the front with trumpet sounds, either from the rest of the class or play [this](#). Groups take turns reciting the entire verse, one person at a time. Once a team recites the verse, have everyone say, "Hear! Hear!"*
- **(Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs – a combination of SEE and ASL – available in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/Philippians2-13](http://growcurriculum.org/Philippians2-13).)**

#### PRAYER

- God, You've always been there behind the scenes, helping us to do what's good. It's not always easy or glamorous to choose to do good, but we want to do it for you and for the people in our lives. Help us to notice all the ways we can do good in our world even though we might not get any credit for it. We know you see us and that's all that matters. Amen.

### SMALL GROUP TIME

#### DISCUSSION

- **What good thing did Mordecai do for the king?**
- **Why do you think Mordecai refused to bow to Haman?**
- **What did Haman end up having to do for Mordecai because he thought the king was going to reward him?**
- **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:13. Why do we sometimes grow tired of doing good? What is one way you might remind yourself to keep doing good?**
- **How do you know when something you're doing is "good?"**
- **Why do you think it's important we do good even when no one's looking?**
- **What is one way you can do good this week without expecting anything in return?**

ACTIVITY | The Do Good Coupon Book

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a copy of the printable. Have kids write the name of the person they want to honor on the cover page. Then in the remaining pages, have them write a different good deed they will do for that person (like a specific chore, a hug, reading together, breakfast, going for a walk.). Once kids are done, have them cut out each coupon and staple the pages together.
- King Xerxes wanted to honor Mordecai because nobody gave him anything for saving the king's life.
- **Who's one person in your life who you feel doesn't get enough credit for what they do? What are some ways you can honor them?**
- Make a coupon for the royal gifts you would like to give them. And you know what? See how many of these things you would be able to do behind the scenes anyway . . . even if they don't use their coupon!