



THE SCOTTISH SLEUTHS

and

THE CASE OF THE HIDDEN HERO

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM
TEACHER'S MANUAL: 4TH - 5TH GRADES



JUNIOR
VBS01JTM

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JUNIOR TEACHER'S MANUAL

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750 S. Pear Orchard Road, Ridgeland, MS 39157
601-519-8423 | info@onestoryministries.org
www.onestoryministries.org



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Scottish Sleuths Vacation Bible School curriculum series. Each year, our Scottish Super Sleuths, Angus McTavish and Professor Dabney Thornwell, are called in to solve a Biblical “case” with the help of the VBS children. The detective characters symbolically portray the message that we want the students to learn to become thoughtful investigators of Biblical truth.

The Case of the Hidden Hero centers on an in-depth study of the Old Testament Book of Esther. It is a fascinating story of God’s providential protection of His people. The overall goal of this study is for your children to grow in a knowledge and love for God, the “Hidden Hero” of the Book of Esther!

Curriculum Distinctives

1. Focuses on the verbal transmission of Bible stories (The art of storytelling).
2. Emphasizes class discussion in an open question and answer format.
3. Age-appropriate.
4. Maximizes the small amount of time with profound truths without trying to be too theologically elaborate.
5. Reduces the amount of “busy work.”
6. Does not overload with too much content or too many activities.

Vacation Bible School is a ministry of the local church that is intended to be primarily evangelistic in nature. The curriculum presents the gospel message from God’s Word in the context of loving relationships between

teachers and their students. Therefore, it is vital for each teacher to remember that VBS is all about:

- a) Showing the love of Christ to each one of your students;
- b) Faithfully and clearly presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ from God’s Word; and,
- c) Praying for God’s Spirit to do His sovereign work in the lives of the VBS children.

Please feel free to use your creative energy to mold this curriculum to your own personality and the learning styles of your particular students. Remember that the end goal of all our teaching is to bring students face-to-face with the gospel of Jesus Christ with full dependence on His Spirit to change hearts and minds.

On Classroom Setup

The most important thing to remember about your classroom setup is that it should be conducive to learning. Arrange the room in such a way that the students can effectively hear and see the teacher(s) and have classroom discussion. Also, post the Scripture Memory, Application Points and other visual aids that will focus the minds of the children on God’s truths.

Don’t worry about decorating according to the theme—but you are welcome to be as creative as possible. The priority is making the room a place that helps the children learn.



OVERVIEW OF DAILY LESSONS

PERFECT PLAN

DAY ONE

Theme: God has a **PERFECT PLAN** for His People.

Bible Text: Esther 1:1-2:20

Scripture Memory: Isaiah 46:9-10

PERSECUTED

DAY TWO

Theme: God's People are **PERSECUTED** by God's Enemies.

Bible Text: Esther 2:21-4:3

Scripture Memory: Matthew 5:11-12

PARTICIPATE

DAY THREE

Theme: God's People **PARTICIPATE** in God's Plan.

Bible Text: Esther 4:4-5:14

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 2:10

PROTECTS

DAY FOUR

Theme: God **PROTECTS** His People.

Bible Text: Esther 6:1-8:11

Scripture Memory: Psalm 91:1-2

PRAISE

DAY FIVE

Theme: God's People **PRAISE** God for Their Protection.

Bible Text: Esther 8:15-10:3

Scripture Memory: Review all memory verses



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

DAY ONE: ISAIAH 46:9-10

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

DAY TWO: MATTHEW 5:11-12

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

DAY THREE: EPHESIANS 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

DAY FOUR: PSALM 91:1-2

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

DAY FIVE: REVIEW ALL MEMORY WORK

Note: All Scripture Memory passages are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.



DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00 - 9:15	_____	OPENING PROGRAM
9:15 - 9:45	_____	WELCOME/ICEBREAKER BIBLE LESSON
9:45 - 10:05	_____	MUSIC
10:05 - 10:25	_____	CRAFTS
10:25 - 10:45	_____	BIBLE APPLICATION
10:45 - 11:05	_____	RECREATION
11:05 - 11:25	_____	SNACK TIME
11:25 - 11:45*	_____	BIBLE MEMORY
11:45 - NOON	_____	CLOSING PROGRAM

**Day Five Only: 11:30 - Noon
Closing Celebration*



GOD HAS A PERFECT PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE

DAY ONE

BIBLE TEXT

Esther 1:1-2:20

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 46:9-10

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

Things do not happen by chance;
God is in control of all things.

LESSON AIM

For the students to understand that an obedient heart allows the child of God to enjoy the fact that God is in control of all circumstances of life.



OPENING PROGRAM

The opening program includes a skit to introduce the day's theme, a time of singing, and announcements. After the opening program, go with your students back to your classroom.



WELCOME

Introduce yourself, your co-teacher(s), and your classroom helpers. Greet the boys and girls warmly, working diligently to memorize their names. Make sure each student has a name tag.



ICEBREAKER

[Note: Each day's icebreaker is intended to: 1) help build relationships between leaders and students, and between students themselves; and, 2) help "warm up" the students so that they will engage in conversation about the Bible Lesson.]

Write on the board: "What is your favorite food?"

Make sure to begin with your own answer to this question. Encourage the students to listen closely to each answer. After all of them have named their favorite foods, give a couple of students the opportunity to repeat back each person's name and favorite food **from memory**.

Transition: *Those are some very tasty foods! Aren't you glad God has given us so many good things to eat? But He has saved the BEST food for our souls. Do you know what that food is? The Word of God! Let's "eat" of God's Word today!*



BIBLE LESSON

[Note: The "Bible Lesson" time is intended to: 1) Allow the students to read and hear God's Word and gain understanding of what it says; 2) Raise questions in their minds that will be discussed during the "Bible Application" time.]

Materials: Bibles, one per student. [All in-text references are from the ESV.]

Have your students open their Bibles to the Book of Esther in the Old Testament. Encourage the students to be "good detectives," listening closely for clues about this year's case.

Introduction: *The events described in the Book of Esther occurred between 483-473 B.C. That's about 2,500 years ago! More than a generation had passed since King Cyrus of Persia defeated the Babylonians and allowed the Jews to return to their home in Israel. Many Jews decided to stay in Persia, living among the Persian people, under the rule of a new king, King Ahasuerus. The Book of Esther records the story of some of these Jews in this foreign land.*

Let's begin reading. Read Esther 1:1-5.

¹ Now in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces, ² in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in Susa, the citadel, ³ in the third year of his reign he gave a feast for

all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces were before him, ⁴ while he showed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor and pomp of his greatness for many days, 180 days. ⁵ And when these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in Susa the citadel, both great and small, a feast lasting for seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

Discussion: *Why did King Ahasuerus have such a long celebration?* [To show off his glory.] *Who attended the week-long special banquet?* [All the people.] *This was a big deal, wasn't it?*

Summary: *During this banquet, King Ahasuerus calls for his wife, Queen Vashti, to come to the party. He wanted to show her off too! The queen refuses, making the king very, very angry. Let's pick up the story in verse 16.*

Read verses 16-21.

¹⁶ Then Memucan said in the presence of the king and the officials, "Not only against the king has Queen Vashti done wrong, but also against all the officials and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. ¹⁷ For the queen's behavior will be made known to all women, causing them to look at their husbands with contempt, since they will say, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, and she did not come.' ¹⁸ This very day the noble women of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will say the same to all the king's officials, and there will be contempt and wrath in plenty. ¹⁹ If it please the king, let a royal order go out from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be repealed, that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. ²⁰ So when the decree made by the

king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, for it is vast, all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low alike." ²¹ This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed.

Discussion: *What advice did the king receive from Memucan?* [Vashti must be punished.] *Why was it so important to get rid of the queen?* [She set a bad example for the women of the kingdom.] *Did the king heed this advice?* [Yes.]

Summary: *We continue our story in the next chapter with the king needing to find a new queen for himself. Let's see what happens.*

Read Esther 2:5-10.

⁵ Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, ⁶ who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷ He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. ⁸ So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. ⁹ And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem. ¹⁰ Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known.

Discussion: *What was the relationship between Mordecai and Esther? [Mordecai was Esther's cousin—and like a father.] What happened to Esther? [She became part of the king's harem, with an opportunity to be queen.] What did Mordecai tell her NOT to do? [Not to tell anyone she was a Jew.] Did Esther obey him? [Yes.]*

Let's finish today's part of this incredible story...

Read verses 17-20.

¹⁷ Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸ And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality. ¹⁹ When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. ²⁰ But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.

Discussion: *Who did the king choose as his new queen? [Esther!] What did the king do for Esther? [He gave Esther a great banquet; proclaimed a holiday, etc.] Did Esther continue to obey Mordecai's instructions? [Yes.]*

Conclusion: *We will look at our points of application later on, and then read more of this story tomorrow.*

Close this time with prayer, thanking God for His Word.



MUSIC

Escort your children to the Music Area. The Music Team will lead the class in a time of singing and learning the various VBS songs. **Use this time for a break.**



CRAFTS

Go with your students to the Crafts Area. The VBS Crafts Team will lead your students in a crafts project. You may also use this time to prepare for Bible Application time.



BIBLE APPLICATION

[Note: The Bible Application time is intended to help the students think about how the Bible Lesson applies to their lives. The focus is on providing a practical emphasis using the key concepts of the lesson. For visual reminders, post these points in the room as you present them.]

**Application Point 1:
Disobedience brings consequences**

Thinking back on our story today, what was the consequence of Queen Vashti's disobedience of her husband's request? [She lost her position as queen.] Why was this extreme punishment thought to be necessary? [If her disobedience went unpunished, women in the kingdom would think it was okay to disobey their husbands. Vashti was a bad example!]

So, not only did the queen's disobedience cost her dearly personally, but it affected others, since people were watching her.

*What consequences have you received for your disobedience to parents or other authorities? **Allow time for students to talk about these consequences.***

*Has your disobedience ever been a bad example for others—like younger brothers or sisters, friends, etc.? What might they think if you your disobedience went unpunished? **Allow time for thoughtful responses.***

*We are ALL disobedient, and our disobedience always produces consequences in our lives (and in others), whether we see the effects immediately or not. We may not like these consequences, but they help to teach us to obey. Can someone give me an example of how consequences for your disobedience TAUGHT you to obey? **Allow discussion. Give your own answer too.***

Application Point 2:

Obedience means doing what those in authority tell you to do

Let's contrast Queen Vashti and young Esther for a moment. Queen Vashti disobeyed her husband and consequently lost her position as queen. Esther, on the other hand, consistently obeyed her cousin Mordecai (who was basically

a father to her). What happened to Esther? [She won favor with both the king's advisor and the king. She became the new queen.] And, we already know what happened to Vashti.

*Does obedience always bring immediate reward, as in Esther's case? [No.] Actually, obedience may sometimes make life tougher for a time! The point is, that all through the Bible, God commands us to obey Him and those He has put in authority over us. Esther lived out her responsibility to obey Mordecai. Is it easy to obey your parents or others in authority like Esther obeyed Mordecai? What makes it so difficult? **Give students an opportunity to discuss.***

*Ultimately, obeying those in authority over us involves doing what is commanded of us, even if we don't like it, agree with it, or understand it. Esther and Vashti are examples of two different responses to authority. Which lifestyle will you choose? Why is submitting to your authorities so important to God? **Allow discussion.***

Application Point 3:

God has a perfect plan for His people

*The part of the story that we read today seems to have a lot of strange coincidences. Let's list them. **Help the students talk these out. Write them on the board.** [Queen Vashti disobeys what seems to be a small request and just happens to lose her position as queen; Esther just happens to be picked out as a potential queen; she just happens to become the favorite of Hegai; the king just happened to be more attracted to Esther than any other woman.]*

Do you think any or all of these events "just happened" by chance, or maybe something else was involved?

*Boys and girls, many people believe things happen just by “chance.” One of the most important messages of the Bible is that nothing just happens by chance; there are NO mere coincidences. Do you see how unbelievable it is that a young Jewish girl, from a group of people captured as slaves, could become queen of the greatest nation of the world at that time? Could that really be just a coincidence? Why or why not? **Allow discussion.***

The truth is that God has a perfect plan for His people. Esther was one of God’s chosen people, and we are beginning to see a plan unfolding. Watch carefully in the days to come.

*Consider that, if you belong to God, He has a perfect plan for you too. Nothing that happens to you is by chance. All things will work according to God’s perfect plan. Have you ever seen God’s perfect plan working in your life? **Allow sharing. You may also want to share your own story here.***

Close in prayer, asking God to give us obedient hearts that can fully enjoy His perfect plan for our lives.



RECREATION

Go with your children to the Recreation Area. The Recreation Team will be responsible for your students during this time. **This is your break.**



SNACK

Snacks will be delivered to your classroom. Have a volunteer lead the class in a prayer of thanks for the food and drink. Make sure the students respect each other while eating and clean up after themselves.



BIBLE MEMORY

Begin by reminding the students the importance of memorizing God’s Word:

1. We “hide it in our hearts” so we will turn away from sin and obey God.
2. It changes the way we think—focusing on pleasing God instead of pleasing self.
3. It helps us to know Jesus more and love Jesus more.

If time, relate to the students how Scripture memory has impacted your life.

**Today’s Scripture Memory is found in
Isaiah 46:9-10.**

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

Have the students open their Bibles and read this section of Scripture aloud.

Discussion: *What does today's memory verse tell us about God? [There is none like God. His purposes always come to pass. He does what He pleases.] These verses reinforce what we are starting to see in our story: God has a perfect plan. He has a purpose for all things that happen to us.*

Activity: Memory Toss. Bring in a soft "sponge" ball or beanbag. Whoever you toss it to must say the first part of the memory verse. When the student cannot remember a part of the verse or misses a word, he or she must toss it to another student. Keep playing the game until all students have had a chance, or time is up.

Hand out Scripture memory reminder cards and encourage the students to spend time in memorization.



CLOSING PROGRAM

Go with your students back to the area designated for the Closing Program. Remind them to be respectful of others on their way to and during the Closing Program. Afterwards, escort the students to their pick-up location.

END DAY ONE