



Sample

Leader's Pocket Guide

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Welcome!

We are so excited you will be joining us as a leader for this outreach! We want you to be well prepared for taking on this role, so we have supplied you with this resource to guide you as you lead your group.

Each day includes a personal devotional, an overview of the Bible story, and instructions for a Small Group Time—the sessions you will have to talk with your group about the theme for the day and share a personal story. Using this guide will help you be the most effective at connecting with your kids so that they may be reached with the good news of Jesus Christ!

Here are some things you can do to be the most successful:

- ◇ **Do the devotions** supplied for each day. This gives you the opportunity to know how the story impacts you personally, allowing you to communicate God's truth from your heart.
- ◇ **Select and practice the personal story** you will be sharing *before your outreach begins*. Make sure to think about how you can communicate your story in an age-appropriate way. This is a great method for building relationships and connecting on a personal level with your group!
- ◇ **Know the gospel** and how to share it clearly. If you have not had a chance to practice or be trained, talk with your team leader about how to do this well with the kids. There is a section in this guide about sharing different components of the gospel each day—this is the most important thing the children will hear at your outreach this week!
- ◇ **Have fun!** As a leader, you are able to build specific relationships with the kids in your small group. Make sure to have fun with them during games, encourage them during craft time, and sing loudly with them during music to show them the love of Christ through you!

Daily Preparation Checklist

- ◇ **Pray for the kids in your group by name.** Pray for your role as their leader and for God to help you be an example. Pray that God will prepare hearts for the gospel. Pray for safety and fun.
- ◇ **Memorize the verse.** The kids will be memorizing this during your outreach and it is central to the entire week of your program. As a leader, you should be prepared to help your group put God's word to memory!
- ◇ **Read the Bible passages for the day.** Do the devotional and familiarize yourself with the Small Group material to make sure you are ready well in advance of camp time.
- ◇ **Review the Gospel.** Make sure you are ready to share! If your team is using a tool to share the message, please make sure you know this prior to your program. If you need to practice each day so that you are ready for Thursday's gospel sharing time, please do so.
- ◇ **Be ready for other responsibilities.** If you have any responsibilities other than being a small group leader like music, object lessons, crafts, games, or teaching a Bible story, collect all your materials and practice so that you can be confident when presenting each day.
- ◇ **Get excited!** The leader's energy level directly influences how much energy the kids will have too.

Devotional

Read Esther 2:1-11

Think back to a time when you had a great coach. What characteristics did that person show to make you want to learn from him/her? On the flip side, every coach has someone they are teaching or guiding—what characteristics make a good student or player on a team? We are all underneath the ultimate coach, God, who has our best interest in mind and holds the plan for our lives. The question every Christian needs to ask themselves is this: am I allowing myself to be a willing learner, an obedient child, and an eager follower of God's will?

Neither Esther nor Mordecai began very courageous, and while each showed a measure of willingness to be coachable, they were not listening to the ultimate coach, God. Esther listened to Mordecai when he told her to hide her lineage, but that did not show godly courage. Mordecai demonstrated a worrisome spirit by visiting the palace every day, not listening to God's promise through Moses, "He [The Lord] will not leave you or forsake you" (Deut. 31:6b). When we listen to God and learn from His word, we gain knowledge, wisdom, and tools to help us through life.

Today we're talking with the kids about how we can become courageous in our relationship with Christ by being coachable. Think of some ways you can encourage them to listen to the coaches, parents, and/or teachers in their lives, including this week at VBS!

Context:

- What does God's word teach us about being courageous?
- Why is it important to be a willing learner in life?
- How can you help others practice being coachable?

Meditate on:

Deuteronomy 31:6: Deuteronomy 31:6 is the memory verse for this week at VBS. Strive to read it every day and memorize it along with your kids. How will you use it as an encouragement to be courageous for God both at VBS this week and in other areas of your life?

Contemplation:

As you pray over this Small Group and the children in your group, thank God for the courage we find in Him. Pray that the children will begin to understand the love God has for them and the plans and instructions He's laid out that they should follow. Pray that the kids you interact with at VBS and church would see an example in you that reflects Jesus' love and points them back to Him.

Bible Overview - Esther Becomes Queen

The Main Idea

Our Bible story on Day 1 begins with setting up the “big picture” of the Bible and how it all points to Jesus. We introduce Esther and Mordecai, showing that being coachable when facing challenges is an important aspect of being courageous. Though they did not start out very courageous, God was still working behind the scenes throughout the whole book. We learn that courage does not always come naturally, but God, who is the best coach we can listen to in life, will help us become courageous because He created us and wants a relationship with us. Our first daily theme focuses on the idea that courageous people are coachable by demonstrating humility, obedience, and a willingness to do what is right, even when it is frightening or difficult. Our story is found in Esther 2.

Remember to talk about the daily theme: Be Coachable.

Begin by introducing the Bible as God’s Word, making sure the campers know that it is all 100% true! God gave us the Bible so that we can learn about Him and serve Him better through our words and actions, therefore practicing how to become courageous in our faith. **Being courageous means trusting God enough to do what He tells you, even when something is frightening or difficult.**

The Narrative

1. God created everything for the purpose of glorifying Him, which means to honor or exalt. We can do that in many ways, including following the way in which He wants us to live (i.e., being coachable).
2. Esther, an exiled Jew living in Persia, had been

adopted by her cousin, Mordecai, when she was a young girl. He acted as a father figure to her, and she listened to his instructions, demonstrating our daily theme: be coachable. Yet neither Mordecai nor Esther showed courage to begin with because they hid their Jewish lineage rather than display a public faith in God (Esther 2:5-8, 10-11).

3. The Persian ruler at the time, King Ahasuerus, had recently gotten rid of his wife, Queen Vashti, and was advised to have all the most beautiful, eligible young women come to the palace for the king to choose a new wife. Esther was one of those women and ended up pleasing the king and all those around her, so she was chosen to be his new queen (Esther 2:1-4, 15-18).
4. Esther's example of being coachable points to Jesus' better demonstration of obediently submitting to the will of the Father to save the world. Pray to close.

Optional Interactive Ideas

- Draw or print out pictures of each scene of the Bible's "big story" (i.e., creation, the fall, Jesus' birth, Jesus on the cross, the resurrection, Heaven).
- Attach a hand motion to the word "courageous." Some examples are fistted hands on hips or strong arms. Have the kids do that motion every time you say "courageous."

Small Group

Theme: Courageous people are coachable.

Personal Story:

- **Story Option #1:** Share a story about a time when you did or did not listen to a coach or teacher and the results that came from that situation.
- **Story Option #2:** Tell about a time when you had a coachable kid and how much your team benefited from having that player.

Discussion Questions: *(Feel free to use questions from any age range regardless of your group.)*

4-5yrs

- Being courageous means doing something even when you're afraid. When have you done something even though you were afraid?
- God helps us be courageous. How can we learn from God?

6-8yrs

- What do you think it means to be coachable?
- Why is God the best coach we could listen to and learn from?

9-12yrs

- Why is it important to follow instructions? What happens when we don't?
- How does listening to God help us become courageous?

Gospel Sharing:

If you are using the gospel wristband, today correlates with the yellow color on the bracelet for God. Today's Bible story taught us that God created the whole world and everything in it. He created our world to glorify Him and for each human to be in a trusting relationship with Him. That is our purpose! We also learned how the Jews living in Persia—including Esther and Mordecai—were not very obedient to God, yet God still had a plan and purpose for His people. The Bible gives us many promises about how God remains faithful to His people even when they are not faithful to Him. The Bible also promises that when we trust in God, He helps us become courageous! This week, we will learn how to listen to God as our ultimate coach and follow Him even when we are afraid or facing challenges.

Discussion Questions:

1. God created Esther and Mordecai for a purpose, and we'll learn more about that the rest of this week. What purpose did God create you for?
2. We saw Esther and Mordecai being coachable, but they weren't doing it in the way God wanted. How can we make sure that we're listening to God and living the way He wants us to?
3. What are some things we're afraid of that cause us not to be courageous? How can we trust God to help us with those things?

