

COURAGEOUS

# Large Group Curriculum



Courageous Large Group Curriculum  
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# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your desire to serve as a storyteller at sports camp! This guide is intended to equip you for this important role and make your planning effective, easy, and flexible! It includes:

- ◇ A description of your role.
- ◇ Step-by-step planning guidelines with tips on how to use this manual.
- ◇ Five creative and engaging Bible lessons geared especially for children.
- ◇ High-energy songs to get your campers moving.
- ◇ Helpful resources, tips, and much more.

Please review this guide carefully and prayerfully before you begin your role. As you prepare, get excited about the amazing opportunity you will have to share the Gospel with campers and their families!

## ABOUT SPORTS CAMP

At this exciting, evangelistic camp, boys and girls from your community will sing high-energy songs, learn sports skills, play games, and hear powerful Bible truths proclaimed in a creative and child-centered way. The ultimate goal is for families in your area to hear and respond to the Gospel, becoming active participants in your church.

## A TYPICAL DAY:

- ◇ Large Group #1: Opening (15 minutes)
- ◇ Skills Session #1 (35 minutes)
- ◇ Team Time #1 (10 minutes)
- ◇ Skills Session #2 (35 minutes)
- ◇ Large Group #2: Half Time (25 minutes)
- ◇ Game Time (35 minutes)
- ◇ Large Group #3: Bible Time (25 minutes)
- ◇ Team Time #2 (10 minutes)
- ◇ Large Group #4: Closing (5 minutes)

## ABOUT LARGE GROUP SESSIONS

Large group sessions are some of the most important times to communicate God's truth! During your large group sessions, all campers, coaches, and volunteers join together for five activities: songs, sports story, object lesson, Bible lesson, and verse memorization.

This curriculum has been written so that you and other volunteers can experience how to run the large group sessions. The different elements and their functions are listed below.

## LARGE GROUP SCHEDULE

Your Camp Director will provide you with a specific schedule, but the total time in large group activities each day is approximately 70 minutes, including the welcome. Connect with your Camp Director about when each large group session is scheduled for your camp. Below are the different large group sessions and the components of each.

### Large Group #1 — Opening (15 minutes)

Opening is your first activity of the day when children gather for camp. It includes songs, an introduction to the daily theme, and some other fun activities. Opening is also a good time to tell the sports story or work on the memory verse as a group.

### Large Group #2 — Half Time (25 minutes)

The children gather and, depending on your schedule, snack is served. An object lesson is presented while campers are eating, and a couple of songs are sung. If desired, you can also tell the sports story during Half Time, as well as incorporate some trivia and a reminder of the theme. This is a great time to work on the memory verse.

### Large Group #3 — Bible Time (25 minutes)

This is the main biblical teaching time of each day. This is done right after Half Time or toward the end of the day. A slower song can be played to help the children settle in for the Bible story.

### Large Group #4 — Closing (5 minutes)

This session is at the end of each day. Everybody comes together, reviews the theme for the day, and has a chance to sing to one last song as they get ready to go. This is also a great time to work on the memory verse as a whole group.

## Songs

High-energy worship songs speak of Jesus Christ and His love for us. Coaches and campers enjoy singing along while learning fun motions. The campers quickly develop favorite songs and are excited to come together to sing.

## Sports Story and Object Lesson

Each day you will tell a true sports story that illustrates the daily theme. Next, you will present an interactive lesson that reinforces the day's theme using objects and people you have on hand.

## Bible Lesson

Bible lessons use creative, age-appropriate content to teach campers who God is and how they can know Him personally through Jesus Christ. Each day is designed to present a portion of the Gospel narrative. On the fourth day of camp, a review of the narrative occurs and an invitation is given for campers to place their trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation.

## Memory Verse

Campers recite and memorize the memory verse over the course of the week. Memorization is a key feature of sports camp. God's Word is powerful and active. When children memorize scripture, it is stored in their hearts and minds and practiced for a lifetime.

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You have been chosen as the large group leader because of your ability to share biblical truth with children, your creativity, enthusiasm, organization, and team leadership skills.

As the large group leader, you are primarily responsible for:

- ◇ Overseeing the planning and leading of program elements of the Large Group Sessions.
- ◇ Recruiting, directing, and meeting with the large group volunteer team.
- ◇ Communicating with the Camp Director, coaches, and others about Large Group Sessions.

## LARGE GROUP VOLUNTEER TEAM

The volunteers you need for large group sessions will vary based on your planned program. Minimally, you will need an emcee (to kick off the program and keep it flowing smoothly), a worship leader (leads children in songs and memory work) and a Bible teacher. Additional volunteers may include musicians, sound and video technicians, or a stage crew. Certain Bible lessons include coaches and other volunteers, but these roles require minimal or no preparation.

## PLANNING CHECKLIST

### Three to six months before camp begins:

- Read the Large Group Curriculum and begin planning your large group sessions.
- Listen to sports camp music.
- Determine location for hosting large group activities with the Camp Director.
- Decide which program elements you will lead and which ones you will delegate to others.
- Recruit a volunteer team with the Camp Director.

### One to two months before camp begins:

- Meet with your volunteer team to prepare and practice program elements.
- Gather supplies for large group activities (decorations, sound system, lesson materials, etc.).
- Check with the Camp Director for support regarding supplies and planning.

### One to two weeks before camp begins:

- Go over final details with the Camp Director.
- Inform the Camp Director of any last-minute supply needs.
- Attend all camp volunteer training clinics.
- Communicate to the Camp Director, coaches, and others about large group activities and the ways you will need their involvement during large group sessions.
- Set up/decorate the large group area in advance as much as possible.
- Confirm that all volunteers and coaches will be present for their assigned large group activities.
- Inform the Camp Director of any large group needs and communicate questions or problems.
- Rehearse large group activities with the team.

### During camp:

- Lead/perform large group elements with energy and enthusiasm.
- During Team Time, be available to answer any questions coaches or campers may have about the Bible lesson and related discussion questions.
- Help camp volunteers after large group responsibilities are complete (e.g., assist with registration tables, field set up, etc.).
- Clean up the large group area and prepare the space for the next day.

- Attend volunteer meetings.
- Evaluate large group activities and identify areas to improve after camp is over.

### After camp is over:

- Fulfill your role in camp closing events and follow-up as directed by the Camp Director.
- Collect and add any leftover, usable supplies to your church supply cabinet or resource room.
- Return borrowed equipment or decorations to owners.
- Put unclaimed camper items in the “Lost and Found.”

## LARGE GROUP SET-UP

### Large Group Facility

The space for large group activities should be large enough for all campers and coaches to sit, stand, and comfortably do song motions without bumping into the person next to them. It can be inside a church sanctuary, gym, fellowship hall, or other large room.

Large group activities can also be outside on the church lawn or church parking lot. If you are outside, consider putting up a tent to protect campers from the rain and heat or plan an alternative location inside for rainy days. Keep in mind the technology and visual aids you plan to use during large group activities. Decide if an outdoor setting can accommodate your plans.

### Setting Up

Set up rows of chairs for campers and coaches or have them sit on the floor, on carpet squares, or on the grass (if outside). Clear a large space for the stage in a spot that is visible to everyone in the audience. Consider your technical needs. If you have a large group or are hosting large group sessions outside, you will need to amplify the sound, especially for the Bible lessons. Locate a good sound system and find an adequate supply of microphones for the staff who will be onstage. For safety, secure all cords to the floor with strong tape. You will also need a music player and speakers to increase the volume on the camp music. Optionally, you may want to use a large screen to display song lyrics and lesson-related visuals or to show video footage from the camp week.

### Decorating

Even though decorations are not necessary, they can enhance the theme and overall camp experience.

Make sure you incorporate all the different sports you are hosting to make things fun.

## TIPS AND RESOURCES

- ◇ Children respond to the excitement you generate. Make the atmosphere fun, upbeat, and inviting from the very first second they enter the area!
- ◇ A coach’s faith is a powerful example to campers. Encourage coaches to participate enthusiastically when singing, to interact with campers during lesson activities, and to help campers find Bible passages during the lesson.
- ◇ Maintain crowd control and discipline by ensuring coaches sit with their teams, helping their campers to stay focused. To keep younger children focused, it is best to organize the large group area so teams of younger ages enter first and sit closest to the stage. If a coach is having difficulty interacting with a camper, contact the Camp Director or Head Coach.
- ◇ Children think and act differently at different ages. Be sure to teach with children’s developmental characteristics in mind. Split the campers into groups by age for the Bible lesson in order to target the message for the child’s age level.
- ◇ Children love to see themselves on the big screen! Have a volunteer capture video footage from each camp day and show this on a large screen as campers enter the large group area.
- ◇ Relate to your campers’ world! Watch them during the camp week. What do they talk about? What words do they use? Which experiences from the camp day seem to impact them? Incorporate their language and experiences into your lessons as much as possible.
- ◇ Use active learning. Children learn best when they are involved. Avoid using only “telling” techniques like a lecture. Use a variety of methods that involve children talking, seeing, and moving. We have included some interactive ideas in our stories for your convenience.
- ◇ Keep things moving! Have your supplies in place. Be ready to move on to the next lesson before children become bored with the current one. A child’s minimum attention span is about one minute for each year of age, so a six-year-old would be able to pay attention for at least six minutes. Shorten large group activities if you have a majority of younger students.

# Courageous

## WEEKLY OVERVIEW

Be Coachable <b>1</b>	Stay Faithful <b>2</b>	Step Up <b>3</b>	Follow Through <b>4</b>	Celebrate Victories <b>5</b>
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SPORTS STORY				
Peyton Manning	Jamal Murray	Éder	Katrina Kohel	Morocco
OBJECT LESSON				
Overcoming Obstacles	Faithful Rope	Pilots & Gunners	Three-Legged Race	Bean Bag Toss
BIBLE STORY				
<b>Intro to Esther</b> Esther 2:1-20	<b>Mordecai &amp; Haman</b> Esther 2:21-4:3	<b>Esther Goes Before The King</b> Esther 4:4-5:14	<b>The Second Feast &amp; New Edict</b> Esther 6-8	<b>Jews Celebrate Purim</b> Esther 9-10
KEY POINT				
Listening to God is the best way to live.	Stay faithful to God despite fear or difficulty.	Courageous people take action even if they are afraid.	We should persevere until the job is finished.	We should celebrate the victory we have in Jesus.
GOD'S STORY				
God created us to be in a relationship with Him. 	We are separated from God because of sin. 	Jesus defeated sin to fix our broken relationship. 	Faith alone in Jesus restores our relationship. 	We can live a new life because of Jesus. 

### Memory Verse - Deuteronomy 31:6

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

To view the motions for the Memory Verse and other theme material, please visit the following web page:  
[www.baseministry.org/courageous](http://www.baseministry.org/courageous)

# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Thank you for your desire to use this curriculum! We at Base Ministry hope and pray it will be a blessing to you, your church, and your community. While we provided an overview of the camp schedule on Pages 1-2, we thought it might be helpful to explain the thought behind the components and themes you will find in the curriculum below.

The opening session, sports stories, and object lessons all have a similar purpose: demonstrating the daily themes. These themes are drawn from each day's Bible story, which is the crux of the curriculum.

- ◇ The opening session provides the emcee with a definition of the daily themes, giving a foundation to work from each day.
- ◇ The sports stories give a modern example of how the theme looks in everyday life. We have also included various facts and video links to the event to give the storyteller context. (These are not required to be used when telling the story.)
- ◇ The object lessons are geared toward both visual and kinesthetic learners, providing yet another opportunity to illustrate the daily theme.
- ◇ The Bible stories focus on the lives of different Biblical figures who learn how important it is to trust God and His sovereign plan for their lives. In addition, we spend time each day talking about the Gospel and showing how each story ultimately points to Jesus.

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 important for being courageous. Though they did not start out showing courage, God still had a plan to use them and was working behind the scenes throughout the book. 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 listening to God and doing what He says, even when it is frightening or difficult.**

On Day 2, we focus on Mordecai and Haman—one was faithful, and one set out to destroy the other out of pride and anger (sin). Sin is the opposite of staying faithful because it is disobedience to God's laws. Our disobedience breaks our relationship with God, but through faith in Jesus, our relationship can be made right again. Mordecai takes courageous action in staying faithful to God, refusing to bow down to Haman. Then, as Haman's plot to kill the Jews comes to light, we see how God's plan to deliver His people will happen no matter what because He promised it would

be so. In short, our daily theme today emphasizes how **courageous people stay faithful to their responsibilities, to the people around them, and ultimately to God, who is the perfect example of faithfulness.**

Day 3 is all about stepping up and taking courageous action. Esther shows us this by going before the king unannounced on behalf of the Jewish people, knowing that she could be banished or put to death if the king so chose. God calls us to be courageous in Him! The best example we can learn from is Jesus, who stepped up to take on the sins of the world; He died in our place so that we can have a relationship with God when we step up and acknowledge our need for Him. **Today's theme, “Step Up,” is not easy, but it is a key element to becoming courageous; thankfully, God is the best person to learn this from!**

On Day 4, the story isn't over yet! Even though Esther took a step of courage, she needed to follow through on her task by telling the king about the plot against her people and asking him to do something about it. It takes courage to persevere when a process is long or scary. In the same way, putting our faith in Jesus is not easy, but confessing our sin and following Him is the only way to be saved. We have an everlasting hope to help us follow through when things get tough—Jesus rose from the dead, defeating sin! **Our daily theme highlights following through as a courageous act of persevering despite fears or setbacks, knowing that God promises to help us.**

We conclude the week on Day 5 by reviewing the previous four days and finishing with the theme of celebrating victories. The Jews were given a new edict that allowed them to rise up and defend themselves on the day they were supposed to be destroyed by their enemies. To celebrate God's faithfulness, they established the holiday of Purim with feasting, music, and gift-giving! We should also celebrate Jesus' victory over sin and be determined to honor Him by living new lives. This means following God's Word, sharing the good news of the Gospel, and seeking to live courageously in our faith. **Being courageous means celebrating even the smallest victories, knowing that God's plan is ultimately for His glory and our good.**

In conclusion, there is much we can learn from Esther and Mordecai. While they weren't perfect, their example of growing in courage can encourage us to trust in God's plan no matter the circumstances and take action when God calls us to. Esther and Mordecai's lives point to Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. While their efforts helped save the Jewish people from destruction, Jesus is the only one who can save us eternally, as salvation is found in Him alone.





# DAY ONE

## 1

### Theme

Be Coachable

### Bible Story

Intro to Esther (Esther 1-2:20)

### Key Point

Listening to God is the best way to live.

### Gospel Focus

God created us to be in a relationship with Him.

## OPENING

Hello! Welcome to camp! We are so excited you could join us for this great week of sports, fun, and learning! This whole week, you will play sports, sing some fun worship songs, and best of all, learn how much God loves each and every one of you. In order to create the best space to learn and have fun, let's go over a few things:

*Go over expectations, sports areas, and general camp details.*

The most important thing we want you to learn this week is how God can help us become courageous. In fact, that is our main theme for camp this week! Can anyone tell me what that word, courageous, means?

*Have a few campers respond.*

Well, we know that courageous people don't stop or give up when something is scary, difficult, or painful; they keep going. Being courageous means taking action even if we are afraid or face challenges. In sports, sometimes you must be courageous when trying something new or facing tough competition. But in life, there are lots of situations where it is important to show courage.

To help us remember this, we have a memory verse that we'll practice all week long! It is found in the Bible in the book of Deuteronomy—wow, that's a big word! Can we say that all together? Deuteronomy. Great job! Our verse is Deuteronomy 31:6 which says:

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."*

It is important to memorize verses because that helps us be courageous as we go through life. God's word

can comfort us, remind us of what God says is right and wrong, and give us strength when we need it!

There are many examples in the Bible of people whose faith never seems to move, fail, or collapse no matter the circumstances. This whole week, we will talk about two people in the Bible named Esther and Mordecai who learned what it meant to be courageous!

Each day, we'll discuss some characteristics of people who are courageous. We will also discuss how God is the one who helps us do that. Today, our theme talks about how courageous people are coachable. What do you think I mean when I say that someone is coachable?

*Have a few campers respond.*

That's right! Being coachable means you are willing to listen to and obey what your coach, parent, pastor, or teacher tells you. We'll learn how we should ultimately obey God because He is the best coach of all, but right now, we have a sports story to help us understand our theme of being coachable. Everyone give it up for Coach \_\_\_\_\_!

*Tell the sports story.*

Wow! What an amazing story! I hope it will help you remember that courageous people are coachable.

One of the ways we are going to learn about that is through our worship time! We have some fun songs we want to do with you, so everyone stand up and let's sing together!

*Sing and then dismiss by sport. If applicable, consider dismissing Kickstart last so they can leave at their own pace.*

# SPORTS STORY

## Peyton Manning

Peyton Manning is widely considered to be one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time. He was a very hard worker, extremely intelligent, and most importantly, loved to learn. Many people said he was such a smart player that he was essentially a coach on the field. But what made Manning so great wasn't his physical abilities but the fact that he was very coachable throughout his entire career.

Entering his final season in 2015, Manning's team—the Denver Broncos—decided to hire Gary Kubiak (COO-be-ack) as their new coach. While Manning had played for several different coaches in his career, Kubiak had a different way of playing football. Most of them let him be the most important part of the offense, but Kubiak wanted to let other players step in to have bigger roles. As a result, Manning would not only need to learn a new style of offense, but he would also need to let other players get more of the glory.

Some players would have been upset by the change and by all of the extra work it would take to learn something new, but Manning was not. Instead, he was very willing to be coached by Kubiak and learn a new style of offense. When asked about the new offense, Manning said he loved it when others gave him feedback and was excited to learn something new.

Despite his willingness to be coached, it took a while before Manning and the Broncos saw positive results. They had an incredible defense and started the season 6-0, but their offense struggled to play well. Manning threw a lot of interceptions and looked out of sync. In their seventh game, the Broncos offense finally played well and had a dominant win over the undefeated Green Bay Packers. The team was starting to click and had high hopes of winning the championship.

But then things took a turn for the worse. They lost a game, and Manning hurt his foot in the process. He tried playing the following game against the Kansas City Chiefs but played so poorly that Coach Kubiak decided to bring in their backup quarterback at halftime.

### Fast Facts

*(These facts are intended to help the storyteller understand the context, but do not need to be included when telling the story.)*

- ◇ Manning set career records in almost every passing category - most of which have since been broken by Tom Brady
- ◇ Manning has won 5 MVP awards, the most of all time.
- ◇ The 2015 Denver Broncos had one of the greatest defenses of all time. Their defense was the primary reason they won the championship that season.

*For videos of the event and additional preparation materials, visit [www.baseministry.org/courageous](http://www.baseministry.org/courageous)*

Manning spent the next several weeks recovering from his injuries and was finally ready to play near the end of the season against the San Diego Chargers. However, the backup had played so well while Manning was hurt that Kubiak decided to let him start instead of Manning. This would have been very difficult, but Manning was willing to be coachable and do what was best for the team without complaining about not being the starter. As it turns out, the other quarterback had a very rough 1st half in the Chargers game, so Kubiak put Manning in during the 2nd half. The Broncos won the game and made it to the playoffs with the best record in their conference. Kubiak let Manning start the remaining games, and the Broncos won the championship.

Manning's last season was not easy. From learning a brand new style of offense to getting hurt to being a backup quarterback for the first time in 20 years, Manning went through a lot. However, his willingness to work hard, listen to his coaches, and let them make decisions for the team is a great example of being coachable. In the end, it allowed the Broncos to win a championship even though Manning did not have a great season personally.

### Interactive Idea

Preselect three volunteers: one as Manning, one as a teammate, and one as defense. As you explain that Manning threw a lot of interceptions vs the Chiefs, "Manning" should attempt to throw it to his teammate, but the defensive player should consistently intercept it.



If Manning, one of the greatest football players ever, was coachable and loved learning how he could get better, we can do the same thing. We can always trust God and His word to coach us on how we should live our lives. As a matter of fact, our Bible story today

is about a young woman who was coachable and obeyed an important coach in her life. Although she wasn't listening to God at the beginning, we will see how God placed her in a position to eventually help her people.

# OBJECT LESSON

## Overcoming Obstacles

Wow! I really enjoyed watching you all learn your skills and having fun out there! How many of you had fun? Can anyone remind me of the theme for the week?

*Have the whole group repeat the theme together.*

That's right, this entire week, we are talking about being courageous! Does being courageous mean never having fear, doing our own thing, or being the toughest person out there? No! Having courage means doing what is difficult even when we are afraid, and today we are talking about how courageous people are coachable.

Remember, to be coachable, we must listen to those who are teaching or guiding us, like a teacher in school, our parents, and our sports team coaches. Listening to them is one of the best ways to improve or complete tasks.

To demonstrate this, I need my volunteer to come up here for a short activity! Everyone, give Coach \_\_\_\_\_ a round of applause! Alright, Coach \_\_\_\_\_ has the task of getting the prize at the other end of these obstacles. He/she is not allowed to touch any cones, or else it's back to the starting line! The only catch is Coach \_\_\_\_\_ will be blindfolded! Take a moment to study your path, and then I'm going to put this blindfold on you.

*Tie the bandanna around the coach's head, blocking his/her eyesight. If desired, have them spin around a couple of times to further disorient them.*

Let's see how Coach \_\_\_\_\_ does on this task! Are you ready? On your mark, get set, go!

*The coach should struggle and might run into a cone right away.*

Hmm, that was pretty difficult, wasn't it? What do you think we could do differently to help you complete your task?

*Let the coach give suggestions.*

Well, we could remove the cones or take off the blindfold, but that would take away the challenge, and courageous people don't back down from challenges. What if you had another coach who could guide you through the obstacle course? Do you think that would help? Great! Let's call up one of your coaches to help you out!

## Supplies Needed

- ◇ Two coaches
- ◇ A blindfold (e.g., bandanna)
- ◇ Cones

## Set Up

Randomly set up cones for your obstacle course.

Preselect your first volunteer (coach) and instruct him/her to initially ignore the other coach's instructions.

*Have the first volunteer pick another coach to come up in front.*

Coach \_\_\_\_\_, are you ready to lead Coach \_\_\_\_\_ through these obstacles? Remember, he/she cannot touch any of them, or else we have to start all over again.

*(You may want to quietly remind the blindfolded coach to ignore the instructions.) Address the blindfolded coach: Coach \_\_\_\_\_, are you ready? Let's see how this goes!*

*Have the second coach stand at the starting line and give directions. Assuming he/she ignores the other coach, the blindfolded coach should fail again.*

Hmm, that didn't go as expected. What happened? That's right, even though our second coach was giving good directions, Coach \_\_\_\_\_ completely ignored them! Is this a good example of being coachable? Of course not.

Alright, let's try this one last time.

*Address the blindfolded coach: This time, make sure to follow the directions.*

*Have the second coach stand at the starting line and give directions. The blindfolded coach should be able to complete the task this time.*

Nice! You got the prize! That went a lot better when you listened to the instructions from your coach, didn't it? That was a great demonstration of the importance of being coachable. You could not complete that task on your own and also failed when you didn't listen to

the other coach, right? But when you listened, what happened?

*Allow him/her to answer.*

Yes! You were successful. That is why it is so important to listen to the coaches, teachers, and parents in our lives, like Coach \_\_\_\_\_, who helped you.

*Now address the audience:* Did you know that God is the best coach we can listen to? God created us and gave us instructions in His word, the Bible, to teach us all about His love for us and help us know how to live for Him. We'll get to read His word more later during our Bible time. He is the best coach because He promises to help us become courageous when we trust in His plan! Let's give our coaches a round of applause.

# BIBLE STORY

## Intro to Esther 2:1-20

Welcome, everyone! I hope you have all been having tons of fun at camp today. We have been talking about our theme for this week all day long—can anyone remind me what it is? That's right! This whole week, we are learning what it means to be courageous. Courageous people are those who don't give up when something is scary or difficult.

Becoming courageous is challenging but very important, and we believe that courage comes from God. This week, we will be reading from God's Word, the Bible, which has so many true stories about people who stood up and did the right thing even when they were scared. Can you think of any examples in the Bible of people who had courage?

*Let a few campers answer.*

Those are great examples! Did you also know that there are a lot of people who did not show courage because they chose not to follow God's ways? Well, the good thing is that both can teach us about how to find courage and strength in God!

Now, let's take it back to the beginning. The stories, events, and people in the Bible are all real, which means they actually happened, and we can believe what God says in His word. All the stories tie into one big story, starting with how God created the world and everything in it.

God made everything for the purpose of glorifying Him. Glorify is a big word, but it simply means to honor or praise. We can honor and praise God in many ways. One of the biggest is following the way in which He wants us to live. However, instead of following God's way, we—and everyone who has ever lived—decided to do things our own way, which is called sin. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God. The result of our sin is death, which breaks our relationship with God.

Despite our sin, God, in His great love, still wants to be in a relationship with us. So He sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life on earth, die on the cross, and then defeat death and sin by coming back to life three days later. When we believe in Jesus and ask for our sins to be forgiven, our relationship with God is restored, and we can begin to glorify God

### Fast Facts

*(These facts are intended to help the storyteller understand the context, but do not need to be included when telling the story.)*

- ◇ Esther went by her Persian name throughout the book, but she also had the Hebrew name of Hadassah. Her family came from the tribe of Benjamin.
- ◇ Esther and Mordecai most likely were renamed after Babylonian gods as a way of replacing their culture and asserting dominance.
- ◇ The Jews had already been exiled by different kingdoms by this time. Assyria, Babylon, and Persia were all involved in the exile of the Jewish people.
- ◇ Even though God is not mentioned in Esther, it shows how He is involved in the world.

### Key Point

Listening to God is the best way to live.

and live for Him as He created us to.

That is the big story of the Bible, but as I said earlier, the Bible is filled with many stories that show a lot about being courageous. One of the things we notice about the people in these stories is that they listened to God and learned from Him. That is a good example of being coachable, just like our theme for today!

In our skills sessions here at camp, we can be coachable in how we practice and perform our sports. We can also be coachable by listening to our teachers, parents, and pastors to gain more knowledge. Being coachable means listening and obeying. When we listen to God, we can get more wisdom in how we should live our lives in obedience to Him.

The person from the Bible we are specifically looking at this week did not start out showing courage. As a matter of fact, she had many things to learn, but as we'll see, God had a plan for her, and she was willing to grow. That is an important part of being coachable.

### Gospel Focus

God is the sovereign ruler of the universe and created everything in it. He created us to be in a relationship with Him (Genesis 1:27).



Her name is Esther. Esther was a young girl who lived in a place called Persia. But she wasn't Persian! Esther was Jewish, which meant she and her people were related to the Israelites who followed God's laws. Before this time, God had promised to give land to the Israelites so they could live in a way that glorified Him. Unfortunately, the Israelites chose to do things their own way, resulting in a period called the Exile. Does anyone know what the word exile means?

*Let a few campers answer.*

Exile means being kicked out of your home or country, which is what happened to the Jews. They were taken from their promised home by people who did not share the same faith in God, so they ended up living in Persia.

At that time, Persia was a huge empire, and a king named Ahasuerus (*a-HAS-oo-err-us*) ruled it all. That's kind of a hard name to say, so can we practice it together? A-has-u-er-us. Great job. Now, when we first read about Esther, King Ahasuerus had gotten rid of the Persian queen because she had done some things that upset him. The king had so much power that he could do whatever he wanted, even kill people if they displeased him in some way! One of the only things he couldn't do was go against something he had already said or a rule he had already made.

However, King Ahasuerus did not always make the wisest decisions, and eventually, he realized that sending his queen away made him sad. His advisors suggested that he make a decree to bring many beautiful young women to the palace so that the king could choose whomever he liked best to become his new queen. The king liked this idea and decided to do it! This brings us back to the part about Esther. Let's see what the Bible says about this! We are reading from the book of Esther, chapter two.

*Read Esther 2:7-8*

So, Esther had been brought up by her older cousin, Mordecai, because she was an orphan. But then what does our passage say happened to Esther?

*Let a few campers answer.*

Esther was one of the women who got taken to the palace! Yet, nobody knew that she was Jewish. In fact, a few verses later, Mordecai told Esther to hide that she was Jewish. This was unlike many other people we see in the Bible who openly showed that they followed God. Mordecai may have been scared of what could happen or just concerned for Esther, but does it sound like they were trusting in God? No. And while their actions were not very courageous, their decision ultimately plays a big role in our story this week.

### Interactive Idea

Pre-select a group of kids (five or so) that are sitting in the same section.



When it comes to defining exile, point out that these five are comfortable in their section (maybe in their sport) and they might even feel at home. Now, move those five momentarily from their comfortable spot to sit with another sport, maybe of a different age. After your exile explanation, have them return to their normal spot.

Another thing we can see is that Esther was coachable. Remember our theme of the day? Be coachable. Esther showed this when she listened to Mordecai and obeyed him. The Bible even says that a second time at the end of chapter two! However, up until this point, Esther had not learned the lesson we have for today: the best coach we can listen to is God! He is who we should go to when we need help becoming courageous, especially in scary situations.

It's important to know that having courage does not mean we are never afraid—we all get scared sometimes because we are human. But the great thing is that God promises to help us. When we need wisdom, guidance, or courage, we can always go to God in prayer and read His Word. The hard part is obeying His instructions rather than doing our own thing. That is why being coachable is so important.

Now, becoming courageous is only one of many character traits we can learn from God. Even when we don't see Him, we can be assured that God is still with us and is constantly working in our lives. Compared to many other stories that show God saying or doing things, God's name is actually not mentioned once in this story! Even though we don't see God's name written down, we will find out how God continued to work behind the scenes. It's kind of like a coach on the sideline; we see the players on the field, and we rarely see the coaches, but they influence everything that happens in the game.

Our passage goes on to say that Esther found favor in the eyes of all who interacted with her, including the king, so she was chosen to be the new queen! God's

plan was set in motion. We will have to wait and see if she becomes a courageous queen who listens to the ultimate coach or not, but her story reminds me of another person who had to follow God's way. This man's name is Jesus, and He is the Son of God, who was sent to earth for a purpose. In order to save the world from their sins and help us have a right relationship with God, Jesus had to be very courageous and face many challenges. Unlike Esther, Jesus followed the coaching of His Heavenly Father, showing people how amazing God was and teaching them the truth about His love. Because Jesus continued to follow God and

His ways, He is able to save all people who believe in Him!

God has made each of us to be courageous and to love God and His ways. One of the things you will have to face is people telling you not to listen to God or do things that go against His laws. You are going to have to be courageous. Who is the best person to teach us how to be courageous? That's right, the God who made us and remains with us, no matter what!





