

## Aim of lesson

To show that God's standard of who is important may be different from ours. 'Unimportant' people become important when God uses them.

## Bible background

Esther.

## Outline of lesson

### Who Is a VIP?

You could begin by asking the class about their ideas of Very Important Persons. The story of Esther can tell us a lot about God's ideas of who is important. It can help us to see if we are nobodies or VIPs.

### Life In exile

Though a large number of exiles went back to Jerusalem and Judah with Zerubbabel, many remained in exile. Esther was brought up by her cousin Mordecai in the royal city of Susa in south west Persia. Mordecai's grandfather had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar at the same time as Ezekiel. They lived in exile for three generations.

### The events at court

The acrostics and their clues in the workbook can be used to form, with the class, a simple outline of the events in the book of Esther. Appropriate sections of the text can be referred to as the class consider the words needed to complete the outline. The answers are as follows:

|          |           |           |          |
|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1 down   | Ahasuerus | 10 across | Request  |
| 2 down   | Esther    | 11 across | Persia   |
| 3 across | Agagite   | 12 across | Mordecai |
| 4 across | Haman     | 13 across | Hadassah |
| 5 across | Gallows   | 14 across | Plotted  |
| 6 across | Jews      | 15 across | Vashti   |
| 7 across | Susa      | 16 across | Life     |
| 8 across | Media     | 17 across | Purim    |
| 9 across | Xerxes    |           |          |

### The rise to fame

Ask the class to consider in what way Esther could be thought of as a nobody. She was a foreigner. Her land and people were now ruled by the powerful Persian empire. She was an orphan. Later in the story she and her people were condemned to death. The Jews then were considered as having the same value as they had under Hitler. But Esther became a very important person. Superficially she became important because she became queen and had all the expensive trappings of rank. However, her real importance was that she was used by God in his purpose of saving his people.

The class should use the questions in the workbook to note the contrast between the view point of Esther as a nobody and as a VIP.

### The value of a person

Use the previous discussion to ask the class to begin to consider the value of a person in God's sight. Rank and expensive robes do not make anyone important to God, but God can use the lowliest of people in his plan. We all can be part of God's plan if we accept his invitation. This will make us very important people in a lasting way.

## Digging deeper

### Haman and Mordecai

Haman's ancestors were Amalekites, and this section looks at the relationship between the Jews and the Amalekites in the past, and a possible reason for his particular dislike of Mordecai (he was a Benjamite, the same as Saul).

## Relevance to our lives

The class could start to think of the Very Important People whom they meet each week – people God sent his Son to die for.

## Prayer

'Thank you, Lord, that I am important to you.'

The class could write a prayer Esther might have said before going in to appeal to the king.

## Other suggestions for activities

- A newspaper report of the changes at the palace could be written.
- The reaction of a Jewish family receiving news of the two proclamations could be dramatised.

- The class may like to look at Mark 8:35-38, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 or Philippians 3:8-9 and consider how they relate to today's lesson.