

Questions for Cubs

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

Lesson

God Has a Plan for Our Lives

Key Verse

“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

- Q: Why doesn't Hegai want Mahnoosh to be queen?
A: *She is ruthless.*
- Q: What happens to Ardia as she tries to deliver the letters?
A: *She falls in the mud.*
- Q: What does Ardia overhear?
A: *Two guards are plotting to kill the king.*
- Q: What does Mordecai refuse to do when Haman rides by?
A: *He refuses to bow.*
- Q: What does Haman ask the king to decree?
A: *He wants the Jews to be killed.*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

Q: If you are faced with a dangerous challenge, will God keep you safe and make sure you succeed?

A: Not necessarily. God may not keep you safe all the time, and you may not succeed at everything you try. This concept is a bit difficult to comprehend but very important to understand. God has a different perspective than we do. He knows everything, His plans are mysterious to us, and He works everything together according to His good purpose. Often, what looks like a failure to us is a victory to God.

In the book of Daniel, the faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were facing a fiery death for choosing not to bow down to an idol and sin against God. They told their angry king, “If it be so [if we are thrown into the fire],

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our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (Daniel 3:17–18). These godly men were willing to do what they knew was right and let God decide what was best according to His plan. Do not believe that everything will always go well for you if you obey God; it might be a very tough road ahead, but it will be a tough road that was prepared by God and His victory is certain (Romans 5:3–5).

Q: When Esther was preparing to go into the king and plead for her people, she fasted and worked like crazy to prepare a banquet for the king. Of these two things, which was the more important?

A: They were both important. While under great pressure, some are tempted to only prepare the banquet, to work like crazy to deal with the problem and get it fixed. Others are tempted to stop everything and only sit and pray. It is interesting that Esther did both at the same time and God blessed her efforts.

"I" Check (*Personal Application*)

1. Esther did not want to be queen, but she realized that if Mahnoosh was chosen, everyone would suffer. Have you ever done something you didn't want to do in order to help someone else? Do you think God sometimes places us in positions like this one so that He can accomplish His plan through us?
2. Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman. Would it have been wrong for him to bow? Why or why not?
3. Haman plotted to kill all of the Jews. Look up *persecution* in a dictionary. Is the definition appropriate to describe what Haman intended to do to the Jews? Jesus said that people who believe in Him will be persecuted. Did you know that some Christians around the world are persecuted for their faith? Can you think of any examples?
4. Queen Esther made the decision to go before the king even though it could mean losing her life. Can you think of anything that is so important that you would be willing to give your life for it? Heroes are people who put their own lives at risk to defend the lives of others. Do you know any heroes?

Director's Notes

One of the great moments in one of the great stories of all time occurs when Esther realizes that she must go in to the king and plead for the lives of her people. For me, what makes this a truly great moment is that she almost didn't do it! She was a real person who knew the risk she was facing, and she was really scared.

When I was a child, well-meaning adults occasionally told me Bible stories. They described Elijah, David, Esther, and other biblical figures as though they were always confident, calm, and emotionless when facing danger or death. I'm sure that these storytellers merely wanted to show me heroes, but I heard something entirely different. These were alien people confidently doing things that I could never do. What a disservice! It would be much better if I had heard the truth—these great people wavered and sometimes ran away. However, in the end each one trusted God and did what was right even though they were scared. They followed God in spite of their fear. That's an example I could relate to!

Esther was scared. She tried, but she could not muster the necessary courage to do what she had to do. Mordecai's wise words pulled her eyes off of herself and changed her perspective. Esther listened, and she realized that she was not the center of the universe. God's plan was far beyond what she could see or understand. For those who are able to take their eyes off of themselves and view life from an eternal perspective, it is a surprisingly wonderful, freeing way to understand the world. In a flash, Esther was able to see her life as a part of God's ultimate plan.

One of the great lies of Satan says that each one of us is the most important person on the planet. This lie leads to great self-centeredness. Casual observation and common sense reveal that people who live deeply self-centered lives are uniformly miserable. Sadly, their loved ones suffer along with them.

We were not created to carry the burden of self-centeredness. If we act as if we are the center of the universe, it may be easy to find distraction, but it is very difficult to find any meaning. We can engage in busy activity, but it is hard to find hope. On the other hand, when we realize that our lives can be used to accomplish an eternally meaningful goal, the chains of self-centeredness will fall to the ground. Recognizing this hope is like finding wings to soar. When Esther took her eyes off of herself, she was freed; she was able to see God's hand on everything in her life. All of her pain, sadness, and disappointment fell away to reveal the Master's ultimate, perfect plan to use Esther to rescue her people.



David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales