

Gem Seeking

LITTLE GEMS STORY

Parent/Teacher Preparation:

Please see the [Instructions for the Little Gems Story](#) on the YMTOI website. This will help you to understand how to prepare for the story.

Here is the link for a reading of this story:

https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/steveberkson/episodes/2022-03-11T06_33_40-08_00

Purim Edition – Ester Story

Shalom children! I am so excited about what we have planned for today! We are having a special celebration to remember an event that took place a long time ago. Does anybody know what we are celebrating? It is a holiday called Purim. Many years ago, the Yehudim had become part of the Persian Empire. This was a very large kingdom, and it was ruled by a king named Ahashwerosh. **(Place King Ahashwerosh on board.)** Children can you try and say his name with me? A-hash-ve-rosh. Let's try it together. That's sure a mouthful isn't it? Remember the ruler's name in the story of Chanukah? It was Antiochus. I wonder how their parents came up with these names. Anyway, after he became king, Ahashwerosh decided to throw a big party that lasted 180 days. **(Place king's feast on board.)** Whoa, now that is a long party! Then when that party was over, he threw another 7-day party for the people in the city of Shushan where he lived. His wife, Queen Vashti, also hosted a party for all the women of the palace. **(Place Queen Vashti's feast on board.)**

Now, Vashti was a very pretty lady, and on the last day of the party, King Ahashwerosh decided that he wanted to parade her in front of all the princes to show them how beautiful she was. **(Remove king's feast and Queen Vashti's feast from board and place Queen Vashti on board.)** Well, Queen Vashti did not like that idea, so she told his messengers that she would not do it. This made the king very angry, and he decided that he did not want her to be the queen anymore. **(Remove Queen Vashti from board.)** Ahashwerosh and his servants brought lots of other women **(place group of women and regular Ester on board)** into the palace so that a new queen could be chosen. One of those women was named Ester. **(Point to regular Ester.)** She was a Yehudi and had been raised by her cousin Mordekai. **(Place happy Mordekai on board.)** King Ahashwerosh liked Ester a lot, so he made her the new queen. **(Remove group of women and regular Ester and place Queen Ester on board.)** However, she did not tell him that she was a Yehudi because Mordekai had warned her not to say anything about it.

One day, 2 of Ahashwerosh's servants were planning a way to hurt him. **(Place 2 men on board.)** When Mordekai found out about it, he told Ester, and Ester told King Ahashwerosh. The 2 men were found guilty, and it was written in the king's book that Mordekai had saved him from being harmed by the men that day. **(Remove 2 men and place scroll on board.)**



Well, after this happened, a man named Haman was given the job of helping King Ahashwerosh run the kingdom. **(Place Haman on board.)** Haman was a mean man and hated the Yehudim. But he was friends with King Ahashwerosh, so the king made a rule that everybody had to bow down to Haman when he walked by. And that is what everyone did. Well, everyone except for Mordekai, that is.

It made Haman really mad that Mordekai would not bow to him, and he started planning a way to get rid of all the Yehudim. They cast lots, which is kind of like playing the lottery, and decided they would get rid of the Yehudim in the month of Adar. **(Place lots on board next to Haman.)**

Haman then went to King Ahashwerosh and told him that the Yehudim had laws that were different from the king's laws. He said that they should get rid of all the Yehudim in the kingdom. So Ahashwerosh wrote a decree — which is like a law — that Haman could see to it that this would be done. Yikes! He must not have suspected that his queen, Ester was a Yehudi. I don't think he would have given Haman permission to get rid of them, do you?

Well, Haman sent letters to all the different parts of the kingdom saying that on the 13th day of the 12th new moon, the month of Adar, all the Yehudim should be destroyed. Do you think Ester and Mordekai were sad and afraid when they found out about this? Let's keep reading and find out. **(Remove Haman, scroll and lots from board.)**

When Mordekai found out about the new law that Haman and Ahashwerosh had made, he tore his clothes and dressed himself in sackcloth and ashes. **(Remove happy Mordekai and place Mordekai in sackcloth and ashes on board.)** This is what people used to do when they were very upset about something. Many other Yehudim did the same thing, and they cried and fasted and prayed for help. Ester had not heard the reason Mordekai was so upset, so he sent her a copy of the new law that said all the Yehudim would be destroyed. He also told her to go talk to the king and ask him to spare their people.

(Remove Mordekai in sackcloth and ashes from board.) Now, Ester knew that no one was allowed to go talk to the king unless he had called for them, and she told this to Mordekai. But Mordekai told her that if she would not talk to Ahashwerosh, someone else would be used to save the Yehudim and she would perish. So Ester said that she would go talk to him, but first she wanted all the Yehudim to fast and pray with her for 3 days and nights. **(Place #3 on board.)** So they all fasted, which means that they did not eat or drink, and spent a lot of time praying. When the 3 days were over, Ester got all dressed up in her fancy, royal clothing and went to talk to King Ahashwerosh.

When Ester approached him, he held out his golden scepter. **(Remove King Ahashwerosh from board and replace with King with scepter.)** That meant that he would allow Ester to talk to him and she would not be punished for coming in without an invitation. Whew, I'm sure glad he was willing to listen to what Ester had to say! She told Ahashwerosh that she wanted to invite him and Haman to a private feast that she prepared. Yum! I wonder what she had cooked for them; I'm sure it was delicious. **(Remove all characters from board and place King Ahashwerosh, Queen Ester and Haman on board.)**



While they were eating at the feast, Ahashwerosh asked Ester what her request or petition was. Well, Ester was really trying to get on his good side, so she said that she wanted to prepare another feast for them the next day. This made Haman pretty happy... But then as he was leaving the feast, he saw Mordekai. **(Place sad Mordekai on board.)** Remember, he didn't like Mordekai because he would NOT bow to him or honor him. So Haman and his family made plans to kill Mordekai and decided they would tell the king about their plans the next day.

(Remove Queen Ester, Haman, and sad Mordekai from board.)

That night, King Ahashwerosh had a hard time sleeping, so he had someone come and read to him out of the book where all the palace events were recorded. **(Place reader on board.)** They read how Mordekai had warned Ahashwerosh about the men who wanted to hurt him. However, Mordekai had not yet been rewarded for saving the king's life.

Well! Right at that moment, Haman came into the room. **(Place Haman next to king.)** The king asked Haman what should be done for the man that the king wanted to honor. Silly Haman! He thought that the king wanted to honor him, so he said that the special person should get to wear a royal robe and ride on a royal horse, and he should be paraded around the city while it was announced to everyone that this is the man whom the king wishes to honor.

Now, we know that the king wanted to do that for Mordekai, not Haman! Haman was a little shocked when he found out that he would have to honor Mordekai, not the other way around. But the king had ordered it, so Haman had to do it. **(Remove all characters from board and place parade scene on board.)** Afterwards, he went home and told his wife how upset he was. His wife could see that things were not going well for him.

Soon it was time for the second feast that Ester had prepared. **(Remove parade scene and place Queen Ester's feast on board.)** So Ahashwerosh and Haman went to the feast, and Ahashwerosh asked Ester again what her request or petition was. Ester told him that her request was that she wanted her life and her people's lives to be spared. The king wanted to know who it was that dared to hurt her and her people! She told him that it was Haman's evil plan to get rid of the Yehudim, and that she was a Yehudi too.

Well, when the king realized what was going to happen to his queen, he got really angry at Haman, and ordered that he be hanged on the structure that Haman had originally built to kill Mordekai. **(Remove Queen Ester's feast from board.)** King Ahashwerosh then put Mordekai over all the things that Haman used to be in charge of. **(Place happy Mordekai, Queen Ester and king with scepter on board.)**

Ester asked the king if he could reverse the law that said they were going to get rid of the Yehudim. Well, the rule was that once a law had been written in the king's name, it could NOT be reversed. But the king told Mordekai that he could write a new law. So Mordekai wrote a law saying that the Yehudim would be allowed to defend themselves from anyone who wanted to hurt them. Then he sent a copy of the law to everyone in the kingdom. **(Place scroll on board.)** All the Yehudim were so happy to hear that news!



(Place defending men and women on board.) The day arrived when people were allowed to attack the Yehudim, but the Yehudim were allowed to fight back. It turned out that many people were afraid of them now, so they just left them alone! That's so cool! People didn't even want to hurt them anymore! There were still some people who didn't like them, though, and did attack. So, the Yehudim fought those people and got rid of them.

The Yehudim decided that they would make the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar a special celebration so that they would always remember how their people had been saved. **(Remove defending men and women and place celebrating men and women on board.)** They would call it Purim, because pur is a word that means 'lot', and that is how Haman had picked a day to try to destroy the Yehudim—by casting lots. On those days, the Yehudim would have feasts and give gifts to each other. And that is how we still celebrate the holiday of Purim today! Can you say Chag Purim Sameach with me to wish each other a happy feast? Chag Purim Sameach!

Well children, we have come to the end of our story for today. We will see you next time for another exciting Little Gems story!

