



Undercover Queen – A 4-Week Series

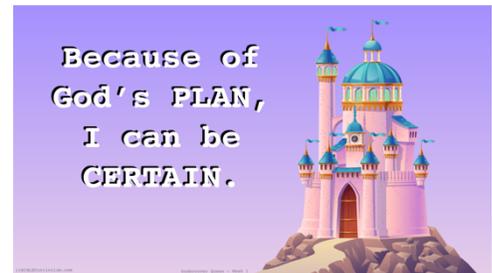
Lesson 1: A QUEEN IS CHOSEN

The **it**



The **it** of the lesson is that ONE THING you say over and over so they understand it. If their parents ask, “What did you learn at church?”, you want them to answer with the **it** of your lesson. If YOU ask the kids, “What am I trying to get you to learn/understand?” and they answer with this phrase, you can say, “That’s **it!**”

THE **it THIS WEEK IS:**
Because of God’s PLAN
I can be CERTAIN.



Things you might need for this lesson:

FIND/GATHER/BUY:

- Spy Costume for Whyit (all 4 weeks)
- 9x12 Envelopes for Intro it
- Safe for Play it
- Ball and Box for Teach it

FROM DOWNLOADS:

- Take home tool for parents
- IMAGES and VIDEO for projection
- Code Letters for Intro it
- Combination Numbers for Play it
- Script for Tell it



Whyit (Pronounced Wyatt)

For this series, Whyit needs to dress up as a spy. Include a shirt and tie, shades, fedora, and extra pens in the pocket, as well as a magnifying glass. Each week he will explain that he has a new code name in order to keep his civilian identity a secret. His code name is something very funny and Leader always struggles to understand the code name because of the nature of it. (Think of Who's on First with Abbott and Costello from the Radio Classics era.)



PREPARATION: From your lesson downloads, print the Intro Code Letters: K, I, N, G, 2 X's, 2 E's, R, S. They will decode to the **CODE WORD** King Xerxes. Place each letter into a separate envelope. Place these envelopes on the stage for easy access later.

NOTE: The entire alphabet is provided in your downloads in case you want to change the code word.

PRESENTATION: This week Whyit's code name is: **Top Secret**

Whyit comes out in his spy costume, and Leader asks, "Why are you dressed that way, Whyit?" Whyit responds by shushing her very loudly and saying, "Don't use that name! I'm undercover!" Leader asks, "What should we call you then?" Whyit tells her, "My code name, of course!" Leader asks what his code name is. Whyit says, "It's **Top Secret!**" Leader responds with something like, "Of course it is, but what is it?" Every time Whyit says his code name is Top Secret, Leader responds with another phrase like, "I know, but you can trust me, I promise not to tell anyone." Even as the kids try to explain to Leader that his code name IS "Top Secret," Leader never gets it and always thinks that Whyit just won't tell. You'll have a lot of fun with this routine! Leader finally says, "OK, well, if you aren't going to tell me and I have no idea what your code name actually is, I'm just going to have to call you, "Top Secret". (Be prepared for exasperated children!)

For this part of the lesson, use the letters and envelopes that you prepared ahead of time.

Whyit now reveals a collection of envelopes. Each contains a letter to a TOP SECRET WORD! He calls on kids to guess letters from the alphabet. If they guess a letter in the word, they come up and get the envelope(s) and a prize for guessing correctly. Once all the letters are guessed, they open the envelopes and kids try to UNSCRAMBLE the word! It will reveal one of the characters from today's Bible Story. Players and kids from the audience can try to guess the name. Whoever guesses first wins.



CODE WORD: King Xerxes



Each week there is a Detective themed team game. The boys are the **Gumshoes** and the girls are the **Super Sleuths**. They will compete in the games. You can extend the competition beyond the game time to include bringing Bibles, friends, answering questions, and participation if you'd like! The four games in this series are Crack the Safe, Crack the Code, Crack the Crook, and Crack the Case!



Crack the Safe

PREPARATION: Download and print the four combination codes from your lesson downloads. You'll also want a "safe". If you want, you could order a safe with a programmable four-digit combination, or you can use a container that can be locked with a programmable 4-digit padlock combination. But that is completely optional! A box decorated as a safe is perfectly fine, as kids have wonderful imaginations. However, if you do purchase a toy safe, use it for offering for the entire series to make the investment worth it.

PLAYING: You will need multiple teams (as many as your group and space allow) of 5-8 players each. Explain that the safe has a **FOUR DIGIT CODE**. One of your agents was able to get the combination, but the numbers got mixed up en route to headquarters! We know that the combination includes these numbers: 1-3-4-6. (Show the printed numbers.) But when we try it, it tells us that only **ONE** of these is in the right spot, but doesn't say which one. The others are **NOT** in the right spot. To play, teams take turns sending up a player to rearrange the numbers. You can have the numbers displayed by taping them to a chalkboard, whiteboard or wall, placed on a music stand, or some other way that makes them easy to rearrange. After the team player creates a new combination, the main Leader tells the entire group how many numbers are in the right spot, but not which one! (Think of the game Mastermind.) The first team to get the combination right gets the treasure inside the "safe!"

CODE: The correct code is 1-6-3-4, so at the beginning the "1" is in the correct spot. After they Crack the Safe, have the kids look up Proverbs 16:3-4.

READ: **Proverbs 16:3-4** *Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. The Lord has made everything for its purpose.*

The Point: God has a plan for our life, a good plan, but we have to be willing to do our part if we want to benefit from the rewards of that plan.

WATCH *it* A video that sets *it* up



PREPARATION: Video included in your Download.
The image to the right is also included in your Download to display on screen before playing.

SUMMARY: Luke is keeping a video blog about what he's learning. Lately, God's been challenging him to work on his character. He tells stories about some of the ways he's had to work on his character. He is learning that character is who you are when no one is looking.



Scripture: *2 Chronicles 16:9a The Lord searches all the earth for people who have given themselves completely to him. He wants to make them strong.*

TELL *it* The Bible story that illustrates *it*



PREPARATION: Print the Script for Week 1 from your downloads.

DEBRIEFING: This is the telling of the story of Esther. Each week it is told from a different perspective. Two options are provided here. One is a live actor, the other is a "dial in" report between Leader and a recording that you would play over the sound system. (The recording is provided in your downloads.)



LIVE ACTOR OPTION: It is best to have a different actor each week come in and give a report on what happened from their perspective. Use the script (in your downloads) not so much word-for-word, but more to provide an outline of the content to cover. Have the actor share the information conversationally as they report on the events as though they are telling the story from their personal memory and perspective.

THIS WEEK: Have King Xerxes come in dressed as a King. OR, you can have him come in "in disguise," dressed as an agent so that no one recognizes him, to give his report.

LIVE REPORT OPTION: Alternately, if you don't have actors available, you can have the characters "call in" to report. The script is included as an MP3 recording in your lesson downloads. The questions are NOT on the recording, so the tech running your sound should PAUSE the recording for each question so that Leader, who has a printout of the script, has time to ask each question. After asking, the tech can then RESUME the recording.

NOTE: There is only a **SHORT** pause, not the length of the question. There are just a few seconds between answers so that the tech can hit pause, the question can be asked live, and then the recording resumes. The effect is that the person is being interviewed live.

SCOPE AND FOCUS OF STORY: Typically, the story of Esther is told in segments over several weeks. However, since children may not attend all four weeks, in this series, the entire story will be summarized each week, but focusing on a different aspect each week, adding more detail to the story each time.

PRESENTATION: Use the script or recording from Week 1 downloads to tell the story from King Xerxes' perspective.

After the report from King Xerxes, tell the kids how Queen Esther was a peasant girl who had been chosen by the King to be queen because of her beauty. Esther was adopted by her cousin Mordecai because her parents died when she was very young. Mordecai told her to keep her Jewish heritage a secret since she was living in a foreign land where Jews were not treated well. He didn't know if it was safe to share that information with a king who was often harsh with his people. (He had banished his previous queen over a very small offense.) When an evil government official named Haman who hated Jews wrote a law making it legal to kill Jews – and the king signed it – she was frightened, not only for her life, but for her people. Mordecai said something powerful to her. He knew that perhaps God had made her queen for this very reason – so she could speak to the king and save the Jews lives!

Read: Esther 4:14 *For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?*

Explain that people could not just enter the throne room unannounced. To do so could result in imprisonment or death, even for a queen! If they wished to enter, the king had to extend his scepter to grant them permission. If he didn't, they could be taken away by the guards. What would Queen Esther do?

Read: Esther 5:1-2

The king had to extend his scepter letting a guest know they had his permission to approach the throne. Esther had to take a great risk to go to the king, tell him she was Jewish, and hope that he would spare both her and her people.



Because of God's PLAN I can be CERTAIN.

You'll often hear "Queen Esther was brave." But I don't think this is a story about bravery. Yes, of course, she was brave. But you can be brave and enter a pit of snakes. But that would be foolish. Being brave is not enough. You can be brave and jump out of an airplane with no parachute. Brave? Yes. Smart? No. You could be brave and drink from a bottle of the hottest hot sauce you can buy at the store! Brave? Yes. Smart? No. There is something more important than Esther's bravery.



What matters is WHY Queen Esther was able to be brave. It was understanding that God had put her right where she was for a purpose. God took her from her village and placed her in the palace for a reason.

It was because of God's plan for her that she could be certain that God would be with her. She was brave because she knew God had her back.

READ AGAIN: Esther 4:14 *Perhaps you were born for such a time as this.*

Did you know that YOU TOO were born for a purpose? You were born **when** and **where** you are for a purpose!

READ: Job 14:5 *A person's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*

God chose WHEN you would live!

READ: Acts 17:26 *From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.*

God chose WHERE you would live!

Not only that, but even when things aren't looking good, it's STILL a part of GOD'S PLAN! That is what we can cling to! That is why we can be CERTAIN even in UNCERTAIN times!

READ: Romans 8:28 *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

THE CHOICE WE HAVE! Notice that Mordecai told Queen Esther that God would deliver his people either way: "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place," (Esther 4:14) but SHE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE GOD'S ANSWER!

Because of **GOD'S PLAN** she could be **CERTAIN** that God would come through for her!

ACTIVITY: I HAVE A PLAN!

PREPARATION: You'll need an object and a container. The object can be a large ball, stuffed animal or object, and the container should be an empty trash can, hamper, or box that your object can fit into. Place the container further back in the room while you are up front with the object. It's best if the object is big enough to be clearly seen by everyone throughout the activity. Below I'll refer to them as the ball and the box, but you can use anything, as long as the object fits inside the container.

PRESENTATION: Show the ball and point to the box. Explain that you are going to get the ball into the box, but there are many ways that you can do it. The easiest would be to simply walk over there and put it in yourself. (Demonstrate.) Alternately, you can have some of the kids help. Ask for a volunteer from the front row. Allow kids to raise their hands. Choose one child and give them the ball. Now, tell them to choose one person to hand the ball to, on their left or right, or behind them, but generally, in the direction of the box. (They are not to toss it.) Then give the next child the same choice. Continue until a child is close enough to place the ball into the container. At the end, have the kids who helped you raise their hands and count them. You could have done this yourself, but instead you used (say the number, perhaps ten) kids to help you! Ask the kids, "What would have happened if one of the 'ten' held on to the ball and didn't pass it? I would have taken it back and given it to another. What if one of the kids offered the ball had refused it? It would have been passed to another. Either way, the ball would have made it to the box. All that would change is who got to help."

OPTIONAL: If time permits, ask which kids never got to help. Ask if they felt left out. If you have time at the end of the service, you can do this again but make sure it passes through the hands of every child so everyone is included.

THE POINT: God has a plan, and His plans **WILL SUCCEED**. The question isn't whether God will succeed, but only whether we will choose to be a part of God's Plan. Will we accept the ball when it is handed to us? Will we do our part to pass it on? We might not be the biggest part of the plan, but we must do our part, no matter how small, to help the plan succeed. It will succeed either way, but how exciting to be part of God's Plan!

READ: Psalm 33:11 *The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.*

Ask the kids: Will God let you down if you are trusting Him for something that matters? (No!) Ask several times, getting them to answer more and more enthusiastically.

End with the "it": **Because of God's PLAN I can be CERTAIN.**

SHOW it *An object lesson or activity that illustrates it*



ACTIVITY: WORD TWISTS!

PREPARATION: Download the Word Twists screen files. Alternately, you could use a white board with markers and have the kids help you. What is a Word Twist? It's a word that transforms into another word just by rearranging the letters! Each week you'll reveal a new word to the kids as they try to UNTWIST IT to discover the new word.



PRESENTATION: Reveal the Word Twist, whether you use the file from your download or bring it about in your own spy way - hidden in the room, delivered by a spy, or simply included in the CLASSIFIED ENVELOPE you used earlier.

This week's Word Twist: **HOW to WHO**

After you guide the kids to figure it out, briefly talk about how, if we want to have the courage to do what is right and be used by God in challenging situations, like Queen Esther did, we need to change the question from "HOW are I going to do this?" to "WHO is going to do this?" The answer is: God will help me!

READ: *Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

POWER TIP: If you enjoy these Word Twists, they come from a book available on Kidology called Word Twists by Lenny Corliss. There are 20 in the book along with a devotional to go with each. Download at Kidology.org/wordtwists

FIND it Bible verses that help unpack it



Have the children get their Bibles out and race to find these verses. Encourage all the kids to look up the verses. After a student reads it, put it up on the screen and read it together. Briefly discuss the passage and explain it as it relates to the lesson.



1 Corinthians 2:9

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him."

Proverbs 16:9

The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.

HIDE it The unit scripture that kids will memorize to hide it in their hearts



This is the **THEME PASSAGE** for the series.

Challenge the kids to memorize this passage during this series. You may want to have a fun prize or treat for the kids who memorize it, perhaps a crown for the girls and a spy hat for the boys!



Jeremiah 29:11-13

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Scripture Memorization

As a Scripture Memory activity, Jeremiah 29:11-13 BLUEPRINTS are provided in your lesson downloads in the Every Week folder. The passage is divided into ten pages and includes a blank background (included in your Blank Slides folder) in case you want to make any adjustments or change translation. It is also offered in three print sizes: letter (8.5x11), legal (11x14), and my favorite, tabloid (11x14).

HOW TO USE: Print and invite ten kids to come up front and hold the signs in order and have the audience read the verse. After reading two or three times, begin to randomly remove one sign at a time by taking it away or turning it around. You can have the child sit down or stay, but either way, leave the gap there so the audience knows there are words to say that aren't visible. Remove the reference towards the end, but it doesn't have to be last. Once all the signs have been removed, the kids should know the verse! If they struggle, you can always put one back.



OPTIONAL: Print two copies, choose two teams of kids, scramble the signs, and have kids race to put the verse in order! It helps to choose an 11th kid as a captain to help move kids around.

TEACHING POINT: Jeremiah 29:11 is a very popular verse. It is taught and memorized by many, and for good reason. But seldom do pastors and teachers point out that it is a conditional promise. Ask the kids if they know what a conditional promise is. An example would be a parent saying, "I'll let you stay up later if you clean your room." Have the kids come up with some examples of conditional promises. They are promises that are made with a condition attached. It is important to point out that many verses in the Bible, such as Jeremiah 29:11, are part of a larger chapter. That's why it is verse eleven. There are verses before and after it. This wonderful verse makes several promises. Plans to prosper you! Plans not to harm you! Plans to give hope and a future! Wow, those are wonderful. But they are not automatic. They are a result of a relationship with God. The next two verses describe that relationship. What does it look like?

- You will call on me.
- You will pray to me (and God will listen).
- You will seek me (and God will be found) IF
- You seek with all your heart.

THE POINT: If you want all those wonderful promises from God – good plans, prosperous plans, hope and a future – you have to do your part: Call on God, pray to God, seek Him with all your heart. It's a relationship. It goes both ways.

LIVE *it* The practical life application challenge so the kids can live *it* this week!



UNDERCOVER ASSIGNMENT: Each week, the agents will be given a covert assignment. Something they can do to apply the lesson to their life. They should do it secretly so that only God knows they did it.

God has a plan for your life, and it's a good plan! But what is YOUR PLAN for your relationship with God? Are you reading your Bible? Are you spending time in prayer? Make a plan for your week. When will you read your Bible and pray? First thing in the morning? Before bed each night? Make a plan and work the plan! And then watch as God's Plan starts to unfold. **Read your Bible secretly – don't get caught!**

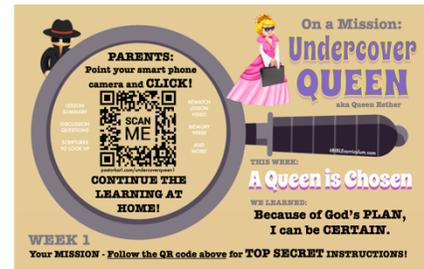


TAKE *it* Take home tool to help parents review *it* with the kids.



PREPARATION: Included in your download.

Send home the TOP SECRET Manila Envelope with the QR Code on it. Scanning the code will take the kids (and parents) to a Top-Secret online page with a lesson summary, discussion questions, Bible verses to look up, the Watch It video and more!



LOOKING AHEAD

Here is next week's lesson topic:

Lesson 2: A Queen in Danger
Because of God's PROTECTION
I can be COURAGEOUS.



BONUS IDEAS!



it is always growing and adding NEW IDEAS!

Be sure you are a member of the **Kidology.org Facebook Group** so you don't miss out on BONUS IDEAS or COACHING VIDEOS that Pastor Karl or Doug often post to help make your Sunday Experience the best it can be! If they get new ideas, they will share them! AND if YOU come up with a great idea for this lesson, you can share it too!

VISIT OR JOIN AT: [Facebook.com/groups/kidologyorg](https://www.facebook.com/groups/kidologyorg)