

RISE UP

Lessons from

Queen Esther

Small Group Leader's Guide



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RISE UP: LESSONS FROM QUEEN ESTHER
ISAIAH 40:31
SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

GEMIS Girls' Clubs

Bringing girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ

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Letter

From the Executive Director

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Hi Friend,

Welcome to GEMS Girls' Clubs! On day one at GEMS, whether it's this moment or it was years ago, you became part of an authentic sisterhood and life-changing ministry. Together we live the GEMS name and passion—helping *all* Girls Everywhere Meet the Savior. It's never mattered more!

As I contend in prayer for you and the girls you will lead through this important Esther study, there are two stats I'd like to share that, by God's grace, I believe we can reverse in this generation of girls.

1. Reverse 57% of hopelessness with 100% of hope in God. Three out of five teenage girls feel persistently sad or hopeless.¹ This is bigger than having a bad day or a tough weekend. Friend, this should not be. Though girls have unprecedented hurts and hardships we couldn't have imagined having at their age, they are never without hope. But they must meet the God of Hope to know this endless hope.

Isaiah 40:31 is God's promise and this study's theme verse.

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Even on a girl's worst day and darkest night, God's Truth reminds us that she is never alone. With God, she always has hope. Tell your girls; remind your soul. And if it's too hard to believe it's possible for you, reach out. Speaking the hope and love of God over one another is what sisters do. As GEMS leaders and mentors, we get to come alongside girls so they can know, live, and experience this powerful promise.

¹ U.S. Teen Girls Experiencing Increased Sadness and Violence, CDC Media Relations, February 13, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/newsroom/2023/increased-sadness-and-violence-press-release.html>

2. Reverse the 1% biblical worldview with 100% of GEMS Club girls owning a personal Bible. According to George Barna, Gen Z (ages 11-26) has less than a 1% biblical worldview.² It's why our girls are confused about who God is, who they are, and what it looks like to rise up and stand strong in their faith no matter what they face.

Our girls need to know that there is a capital "T" Truth, and it's found in God's Word. Open God's Word with your girls when you gather at club, and ensure that every girl has a personal Bible so she can keep reading outside of club. Through your encouragement and example, girls will learn to love God's Word so they can know and love God more.

As you study Queen Esther's story, you and your girls will see what it looks like for a girl living in a faithless culture to put her hope in God so she can rise up with a strong and courageous faith. I believe you will see it again in this generation as you pour God's love and Truth into your girls.

Friend, the GEMS Sisterhood is here to pray with, encourage, and support you. You are not alone. We are cheering for you!

Serving Him Together,



Cindy Bultema
GEMS Executive Director

P.S. What are you most looking forward to this club season? Any prayer requests? Drop me a note at hello@gemsgc.org. It'd be my joy to pray for you, friend.

² Resilient Disciples Podcast, Episode 82, June 22, 2021: George Barna: The "Single Most Important" Investment You Can Make in Your Ministry

Meet the *Rise Up*: Lessons from Queen Esther Curriculum Team

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Cindy Bultema has over 20 years of ministry experience, including serving as the Executive Director of GEMS. Prior to GEMS, Cindy served as the Children's Director at a West Michigan megachurch, as well as a children's curriculum writer for Zondervan Publishers, an international women's speaker, and the author of the women's Bible studies *Red Hot Faith* and *Live Full Walk Free: Set Apart in a Sin-Soaked World*.

Cindy lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband and their two dogs. She has four children, ages 19-29, living in various parts of the US. When she's not running a full household, you can find Cindy meeting a friend for coffee, traveling to visit family, walking her two dogs, or creating a charcuterie board for a game night with friends.

Lenae Bulthuis has served as Content & Curriculum Director for GEMS since 2003. For 20 years, Lenae has been writing life-changing curriculum for GEMS. She was eight years old when her life intersected with the GEMS ministry for the first time. Today she counts it grace to write curriculum and train leaders within a ministry that has radically changed her life.

Lenae lives with her husband, Mike, on a Minnesota grain and livestock farm. She enjoys reading, watching her grandchildren, and seeing God's grace on gravel roads and other dusty places.

Kara Lepley is a West Michigan native and lifelong GEMS participant. She has a Masters of Divinity from Western Theological Seminary and served the local church for eight years in various children's ministry programs, including as a GEMS Club Coordinator. As GEMS Program Manager, Kara supports and equips GEMS leaders around the world through trainings, events, and more.

Kara lives in Holland, Michigan with her husband and son. Outside of GEMS, you can find Kara curled up with a good book, at a Hope College sporting event, or at the beach on sunny days.

Kamarah Bayard is a Content Writer who has been on the GEMS staff for four years. Kamarah has had a passion for writing and storytelling since she was small. She also has a love for education and, of course, girls! Her passion for education took her overseas to South Korea, where she taught English to children as a private tutor and co-coordinated her church's Sunday children's program.

Kamarah lives in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and enjoys watching science shows, cooking, and sipping a hot cup of tea while listening to music.

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Why Rise Up?

It's not easy being a girl today.

Ask a 90-year-old woman and a teen girl the hardest part of being in middle school, and you may hear similar responses—things like jealousy, appearance, and friend drama.

But there will be a sharp fork where their similarities stop, and the teen girl will share unprecedented challenges unique to her generation. Today's girls know the heartache of global pandemics, gun violence, lack of genuine connection in person and online, and unlimited access to scary and sad stories around the world.

There is nothing easy or fairy-tale-like about being a girl today. Girls face unique challenges and unsustainable pressures in a culture of confusion about who they are and what truth is.

Queen Esther got it. She may not have been perfect, but she is a perfect example to today's girls of how to live set apart in a faithless culture.

Esther was more than an orphan or a beauty queen. She was a girl who could rise up in faith and stand her ground because she put her hope in God alone.

Everything changes when a girl stops grasping for hope and meets the God of Hope.

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

We can't put our trust in Someone we don't know, so the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum will help girls discover five important Bible-based Truths about who God is and what it means to put their hope in Him.

Through Queen Esther's story, girls will learn:

- ❖ God is King—Psalm 47:2
- ❖ God is our Deliverer—Psalm 18:2
- ❖ God is trustworthy—Psalm 145:13
- ❖ God is always at work—Psalm 145:18
- ❖ God is with you wherever you go—Joshua 1:9

When a girl knows she can trust God's heart, she is able to trust Him with all her heart.

Wholehearted trust in God was Esther's story. She was so confident in who He was and what He said about her, she was willing to risk her life—*for such a time as this* (Esther 4:14).

So why not use Esther 4:14 as the theme verse of this study? Though inspiring and pivotal to the storyline, "*for such a time as this*" is the result, not the reason Esther was able to rise up.

Only when Esther put her hope in God, the uncontested and true Hero of Esther's story, could she rise up in His strength—*for such a time as this* (Esther 4:14).

Our girls can do the same.

When girls place their hope in God, they will rise up, stand secure, and have complete confidence that they will be okay, no matter what. Their wholehearted trust in God will reverse the sad stats, transform our girls, and make a difference in our world.

Watch the ReFresh Message "Rise Up" at gemsrefresh.org for more inspiration.

How *Rise Up* Works

Through the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum, girls will learn that Queen Esther was more than an orphan or a beauty queen. She was a girl who put her hope in God, which changed everything for her and God's people.

Queen Esther's story will help girls discover five Bible-based Truths about God to help them stand strong in their faith, whatever their circumstances. Girls will discover that God is their King and Deliverer, always trustworthy, always at work, and with them wherever they go.

Girls will be invited to get to know God more through worship, prayer, Bible study, and intentional time with GEMS leaders who provide a safe place to belong and be loved. Through these mentors, they will be equipped and encouraged to pray and read their Bibles at club and at home.

- As girls learn more about God and grasp His promises by faith, their trust in Him will increase.
- It'll make all the difference in the strength of their stance as they respond to hardships in their homes, their communities, and our world.

OUR GOD is King (Psalm 47:2), Deliverer (Psalm 18:2), trustworthy (Psalm 145:13), always at work (Psalm 145:18), and with us wherever we go (Joshua 1:9).

OUR GIRLS can rise up with God-given strength and courage when they choose to put their hope in God (Isaiah 40:31).

"RISE UP" SERVICE PROJECTS. Strengthened through His hope, our girls will rise up and put their faith into action in their homes, their communities, and our world.

Breakdown of Lessons

The *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Starter Kit curriculum contains enough material for eight weeks of club gatherings, plus eight "Rise Up" Service Projects (putting their faith into action). Use the material weekly for a semester, monthly, or in whatever fashion best fits your schedule.

Through God's Word and GEMS leaders, girls will:

- ❖ Learn who God is
 - ❖ Discover who God made them to be
 - ❖ Rise up—standing strong and courageous, no matter their circumstances
 - ❖ Be equipped to read God's Word at club and at home
 - ❖ Actively engage in "Rise Up" Service Projects
- ...and more.

How to Use *Rise Up:* *Lessons from Queen Esther*

Three Options

GEMS Girls' Clubs come in all shapes and sizes—from big to small clubs, from city to rural clubs. There is no one-size-fits-all. However, the one consistency among all GEMS Clubs is that they use GEMS curriculum. Based on how frequently your club meets, you'll want to select one of the options below for using the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* resources. Once you've chosen the option that best fits your club, set your schedule for the year and begin praying, planning, and preparing.

..... Option 1:

Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther Alone

Works great for clubs that meet monthly or for a shortened season: October-December, January-March, or June-August.

Use *Rise Up* as a stand-alone resource for up to sixteen weeks. You will have everything you need for a complete club gathering.

..... Option 2:

Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther + Badges

Works great for clubs that meet two or more times a month and desire to rotate lesson nights and badgework.

Use the sixteen weeks of *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* with GEMS Girls' Clubs badges. Go to gemsgc.org for more information on our wide variety of girl-friendly badges and information on how to incorporate these resources into your club season.

..... Option 3:

Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther + Badges + Other GEMS Supplemental Curriculum

Works great for all clubs, no matter the length of their season.

Use the sixteen weeks of *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* with other GEMS curricula like *LOVED*, *Friended*, *Unshakeable*, or *Act. Love. Walk*, plus badges. Go to gemsgc.org for more information on these curricula and badges.

How to Maximize the *Rise Up* Survey

.....

You are a difference-maker. What you do for this generation of girls matters! But on our most challenging days, we may wonder...

- ❖ Is it worth it?
- ❖ Have the girls heard *anything* I said?
- ❖ Are lives *really* changing at my GEMS Club?

These are questions asked by church decision-makers (should we continue the GEMS program?), parents (should I sign my girl up for club?), and volunteers (should I serve in GEMS another year?). And on the days when we're tired, discouraged, and ready to quit, we may ask these questions in our own hearts.

What if the answers to all those questions could be a resounding YES?

The *Rise Up* Survey is an essential tool to help you measure what matters so you can strengthen your club's eternal impact on the lives of girls. You will have real-life information to share with your church and community about how GEMS makes a difference in your girls' lives.

Imagine being able to share on GEMS Sunday or with your parents and volunteers, "This is where the girls were at the beginning of the season, and this is where the girls are now. At the beginning of the season, 10% of the girls in our club didn't know what it meant to put their hope in God. Now, 92% put their hope in God and trust Him even on their hardest days."

Measure What Matters by Following Three Easy Steps

1. **GIVE THE SURVEY.** Download the survey from the *Rise Up* Online Resources and have each girl take it during Small Group in Lessons One *and* Eight (your before *and* after). It only takes a minute to complete, and the answers are anonymous, giving the girls freedom to share honestly.
2. **RECORD THE ANSWERS.** After Lessons One and Eight, Small Group Leaders give the surveys to the Club Coordinator, who will ensure that the club's answers are compiled and recorded at <http://bit.ly/GEMSRiseUpSurvey>. An automatic report will be generated for your club.
3. **SHARE YOUR RESULTS.** Share what you discovered with church decision-makers, parents, your leadership team, and your congregation on GEMS Sunday. Celebrate where you see God at work. Take note of where girls struggle to see how they can rise up in their tough circumstances so you can intentionally pray and mentor.

Measuring what matters maximizes your opportunity to make an eternal difference in the life of every girl entrusted to your club.

Give the survey, record the answers, and share the results. Be reminded that what you do is more than worth it. You're making an eternal difference—one girl at a time.

What You Need

The *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum provides all the necessary components to help your girls understand from Queen Esther's story that when they put their hope in God, they can rise up in His strength—bold and brave, called and courageous—no matter what they face.

LARGE GROUP RESOURCE BOOK—There are eight lessons with an overview, Large Group arrival activities (called Icebreakers), scripted lesson openers and Bible teachings, craft activities, and meaningful dismissals, plus eight “Rise Up” Service Projects (putting faith into action) with a Large Group devotional and service project options for your girls to work on together.

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE—There are eight Small Group welcomes, memory verse games, relationship-building activities, questions for applying God's Word, prayer prompts, and craft instructions contained within this guide for girls in grades 1-8. The application questions and activities range from a girl learning about God for the first time to a girl digging deeper into her faith. Leaders base what questions and activities they choose primarily on their group's knowledge of God and His Word rather than their age. It's a must-have resource connecting every leader to every girl, regardless of age or where she is on her faith walk.

RISE UP KEYCHAIN—This *Rise Up* Keychain contains eight beautiful tags with the theme verse, Isaiah 40:31, plus other key verses about who God is from the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* study. You will want to get one for every girl and leader. Distribute the tags at the beginning of the season, at the conclusion, or individually as you study each lesson. There is one *Rise Up* Keychain in the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Starter Kit. They are also available from gemsgc.org/store.

RISE UP JOURNAL—Purchase one inspirational journal for each girl and leader. They are a must-have during Small Group with Scripture verses for girls to study at club and read at home. The coloring pages, dotted grid, and journal pages with each lesson's Bible verse are the perfect place

for girls to record application thoughts, memory verses, and prayer requests.

NEW TO THE RISE UP JOURNALS! The additional Scripture verses within the *Rise Up* Journals are designed to equip and encourage girls to read God's Word at home. There is one *Rise Up* Journal included in the *Rise Up* Starter Kit, and they are also available from gemsgc.org/store. **NOTE:** You may want to keep the *Rise Up* Journals at club for the study duration since girls use the same journal each time.

RISE UP STICKERS—Girls can decorate water bottles, mirrors, helmets, and more with their *Rise Up* stickers. There is one *Rise Up* sticker sheet in the *Rise Up* Starter Kit, and they are also available from gemsgc.org.

RISE UP THEME SONG—“Rise Up (Eagles)” by Doorpost Songs, as well as side-by-side hand motion and tutorial video downloads, are available in the *Rise Up* Online Resources.

“REAL TALK” VIDEOS—An intro video to meet the GEMS *Rise Up* “Real Talk” teaching team and eight “Real Talk” videos provide fun and inspiring challenges to close each lesson, helping your girls to live out what they learned at club. All videos are available in the *Rise Up* Online Resources, and a corresponding bookmark for each lesson contains a link to each video. The bookmarks make it possible for girls to watch these girl-friendly videos at club and at home; plus, they contain Scripture verses to equip and encourage girls to read their Bibles outside of club.

Rise Up Online Resources

If you purchased a *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Starter Kit, you received access to a digital library that contains items such as printables, Theme Song Motion Tutorial videos, Craft videos, “Real Talk” videos, and presentation slides. If you did not purchase a *Rise Up* Starter Kit, these digital resources are available for purchase at gemsgc.org/store or by calling 616-616-GEMS (4367).

OPTIONAL RESOURCES—You may purchase these additional resources from gemsgc.org/store or by calling 616-616-GEMS (4367) in the US or 519-424-9007 in Canada.

RISE UP VERSE POSTER—This beautiful poster displays the key verse, Isaiah 40:31, which girls will memorize. The digital download includes a high-resolution file and a license to print one copy at your chosen printer.

RISE UP IRON-ON LOGO—This iron-on logo is perfect for t-shirts, fabric bags, and banners. It adheres to cotton and many other fabrics. Transfers are quick to apply, extremely durable, and will stretch with your garment. Size: 5"x6".

MICAH 6:8 POSTER—This poster displays the GEMS Girls' Clubs Aim, which is Micah 6:8. Girls and leaders recite this aim each time they meet at club.

GEMS GOSPEL TREASURE BOX—Use to share the Gospel message with your GEMS girls. See "The Joy of Sharing Jesus: Leading a Child to Christ" on page 14 for more information.

You can also incorporate other GEMS curricula like *LOVED*, *Friended*, *Unshakeable*, or *Act. Love. Walk* or badges from the *Discovery Place Badge Book*. See "How to Use *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Options 2 and 3" on page 7.

AND MORE! Find more resources at gemsgc.org/store.

NOTE: All *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* materials are protected under copyright. Photocopying is not allowed, with the exception of the printables in the *Rise Up* Online Resources. The *Rise Up* logo is not to be used in any manner other than for promotional materials without expressed permission from GEMS Girls' Clubs. These clip art images may not be used on any products. Products include but are not limited to mugs, special recognition awards, keychains, pens, pencils, and T-shirts.

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Leader's Guide

The *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum is designed to lessen your planning and prep time so leaders have more time to pray and focus on building relationships with their girls. It contains everything needed to guide your girls to understand who God is and how placing their hope in Him will help them rise up and stand strong no matter what they face (Isaiah 40:31). Here is the structure of each lesson.

Lesson Overview

Purpose—Each lesson has a short statement with the primary focus of the lesson. This is your main aim and prayer.

Bible/Memory Verse—The Bible verse will be memorized and studied throughout the lesson. Additional Scripture passages and Bible teachings are woven into each lesson.

Preparation

A chart at the beginning of each lesson lists the materials you need to prepare for each club meeting. Advance preparation includes praying for your girls, gathering needed supplies, and, if necessary, printing materials from the *Rise Up* Online Resources.

Lesson Elements

The lessons are broken into four elements to make it easy for you to lead your girls. While some clubs have the luxury of two-hour meetings, this study is structured for a 1½-hour club meeting.

ARRIVAL—GIRLS MATTER. Arrival is the time frame from when girls arrive until club officially starts. When girls open the club doors, the first people they should meet are their leaders. The whole team is waiting for them, welcoming them, and letting them know they matter!

During Arrival, warmly welcome girls by name. As you distribute name tags, look each girl in the eye and say, “_____ [*girl's name*], you matter to God and to us. We are so glad you are here.” Then direct girls into the Large Group space to play the Arrival activity.

LARGE GROUP—GOD'S WORD MATTERS.

Large Group is the 20- to 30-minute time frame to gather all girls and leaders into one space. Begin with a warm welcome and prayer. Recite the GEMS Girls' Clubs Aim. Then worship together—sing praises to God.

After worship, you'll open God's Word. From God's Word of Truth, you'll teach girls that Queen Esther was more than an orphan or a beauty queen. She was a girl living in a faithless world who could rise up when she trusted who God was and what He said about her. Through Queen Esther's story, you will unpack Isaiah 40:31, teach girls their Truth-filled identity, and discover five Truths and promises about who God is.

Does every girl in your GEMS Club have a Bible? Along with studying God's Word at club, encourage girls to read their Bibles at home. This is how they will get to know who God is, which is critical to growing in their relationship with Him. Make it your club's goal (invite your senior saints to get involved if needed) that 100% of your girls have a personal Bible! Then direct girls to the *Rise Up* Journals and bookmarks for Scripture passages to read at home.

Your girls don't know how to find books, chapters, and verses in their Bibles? You get to teach them! It will be time well spent as you prepare them for a lifetime of reading their Bibles. Grab your highlighters and sticky notes and read alongside your girls. The passion and enthusiasm you have for Scripture is contagious.

SMALL GROUP—RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.

Small Group is a 60-minute time frame when six to eight girls meet with their Small Group leader. GEMS is a relationship-building ministry, and it's within Small Groups that relationships are built and lives are transformed.

During the first 30 minutes of Small Group, a leader will guide her Small Group into God's Truth through the Bible and the Small Group Leader's Guide. The leader's guide is key to building relationships, teaching the memory

verse, and digging into Scripture—it has questions *and* answers. Plus, discipleship takes place as the leader guides girls in prayer and helps them apply His Truth and what it means to rise up and stand strong in their faith, no matter what they face.

The *Rise Up* Journals contain coloring pages, dotted grids, and journal pages with each lesson's Bible verse, plus additional verses to dig into at home. The journals are the perfect place for girls to record application thoughts, what they are learning from Scripture, memory verses, and prayer requests. Be sure each girl has a Bible and a *Rise Up* Keychain.

During the last 30 minutes of Small Group, grow relationships with hands-on activities. This is the time to craft, earn badges, or participate in "Rise Up" Service Projects (putting their faith into action).

DISMISSAL—LEAVING LOVED MATTERS.

Dismissal is the last 5–10 minutes of club. Gather all girls into the Large Group space to reiterate the focus of the club meeting and pray. Send the girls home with high fives, hugs, and words of encouragement.

Gather all girls and leaders into the Large Group space. Show a "Real Talk" video from the *Rise Up* Online Resources and then send girls home with the lesson's bookmark (from the *Rise Up* Online Resources) so they have the video link and can watch again at home, plus additional Scripture verses for them to read at home. Then speak life-giving words. Remind them who God is and who they are—girls who can rise up and stand strong in their faith, no matter what they face. When they leave club, may they remember those last words.

Leaders Needed

In addition to the Club Coordinator, you will need one leader for each Small Group of six to eight girls. The leader should stay with her Small Group throughout the year. You may also choose to have additional helpers for sound and video, worship, snacks, and crafts.

Space Needed

You will need one space to host the Large Group activities for each lesson and separate Small Group activities and crafts areas.

Décor (Optional)

LARGE GROUP SPACE Decorate with anything that will make your space feel like a castle—fun, contemporary, and compelling for all ages. Avoid anything that looks like a princess party. Instead, think warm and welcoming with twinkle lights, taper candles, gold draping, tulle, ivy, and brick castle backdrops. Visit gemsgc.org to see fun ideas on the GEMS *Rise Up* Pinterest board.

SMALL GROUP SPACE Create a Small Group space that ties into the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* theme and makes girls immediately know they have a safe and fun place to belong and be loved. Use colorful tablecloths, twinkle lights, tulle, gold accents, and trendy castle accessories.

CENTERPIECE OPTIONS:

- ❖ Pencil holders decorated with sequins and GEMS stickers
- ❖ Wooden blocks (use an old Jenga game) where girls can write their names. Girls can build castles and towers with them to tie into the castle theme, or you can use them as name cards to assign seats (switch up every lesson for girls to get to know one another better)
- ❖ Butcher paper tablecloth (you can also hang it on the wall) where girls can write and draw what they are learning from week to week

If possible, keep décor up all season. For more fun decorating ideas, visit gemsgc.org to find the GEMS *Rise Up* Pinterest board.

LEADING CRAFTS? Don't miss this! The time required for any craft depends on how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, and a girl's age and individual abilities. **To see a step-by-step video tutorial for each craft, go to the *Rise Up* Online Resources.** For an inspiring overview of the importance of crafts at club, be sure to watch "Crafting with a Purpose" on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsgc.org for more information. **NOTE:** If you have extra time and supplies, have girls make extra crafts to gift to others.

Rise Up: Lessons From Queen Esther Club Guide

.....

..... Arrival

Icebreaker Activity

..... Large Group

Praise & Worship

Lesson Opener

Bible Teaching

Closing Prayer

..... Small Group

Bible Application & Activities

Craft, Badgework, or “Rise Up” Service Project

..... Dismissal

Return to Large Group

Closing Prayer

Watch the ReFresh Message “Four Essential Pieces to Structuring Your Club Meeting” at gemsrefresh.org for more details about each part of your club meeting.

GEMS ReFresh

Equip • Encourage • Engage

The Joy of Sharing Jesus: Leading a Child to Christ

.....

At GEMS, we are on a mission to help bring girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. The GEMS acronym—Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior—is our name and passion. GEMS is committed to speaking the life-changing Truth that girls are loved and known by God, and they matter to Him and us.

Think about this generation of girls. Think about the girls in your sphere of influence.

Girls have questions about God. Who is God? Do I have to be good for God to love me? Does He love me when I'm bad? Can He be powerful *and* personal? Can I really trust Him with everything?

Girls have questions about themselves. Who am I, anyway? Where do I belong? Do I matter? What's my purpose?

Friend, you know the Truth! You know the good news that girls' questioning hearts need to hear. His name is Jesus! His love is eternal and unstoppable. In Jesus are hope, love, strength, life, forgiveness, purpose, and our true identity.

Jesus made our mission clear. *Go and make disciples* (Matthew 28:19). You get to tell this generation of girls about Jesus and His love. You get to help them discover who Jesus is, all He says about them, and that He is inviting them into a relationship with Himself. It's why you're holding this resource.

The time is now. Girls must know that they have a friend in God. A survey by the International Bible Society reported that 83 percent of Americans commit to following Jesus between the ages of four and fourteen.¹ And George Barna reports, "What you believe by your thirteenth birthday is generally what you die believing."²

¹ "At what age do Americans become Christian?", Southern Nazarene University, modified February 21, 2022, <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm>.

² "Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age," Barna Research Group, November 17, 2003, <https://www.barna.com/research/research-shows-that-spiritual-maturity-process-should-start-at-a-young-age/>.

As you experience the joy of sharing Jesus, remember that you don't go alone. You're part of a growing sisterhood that is on a mission to bring girls to Jesus. Above all else, God is our Guide who calls and equips us to lead girls to Christ.

Sharing the Gospel Reminders

Sharing Jesus is not a one-time conversation. Every time you meet, share more about who He is and all He says about them.

Sharing Jesus is more often caught than taught. Girls are observing your life and relationship with Jesus.

Sharing Jesus happens best as we listen to the Holy Spirit and the child. What do they need to hear about Jesus first?

- ❖ The unloved need to hear that God accepts and loves them no matter what.
- ❖ The insecure need to know God gives them a Truth-filled identity.
- ❖ The one grasping for hope must know that putting her hope in God the Deliverer changes everything.
- ❖ The one with big fears and worries needs to know God the King is in charge, always working, and with her wherever she goes.
- ❖ The lonely need to hear that God is near. He is with them, and they are not alone.
- ❖ The one who wonders if she's a mistake or made too many mistakes needs to know that God never gives up on her. Through Jesus, she is forgiven and a masterpiece.

Sharing Jesus requires heart prep. Always be prepared to share your faith story within the context of God's story. Pray that He would prepare the girls' hearts to receive His good news.

Resources

GEMS has resources to help you share the Gospel with the child/children in your care.

GEMS Gospel Treasure Box This box is a beautiful, tangible resource that aids leaders in walking girls through the Gospel message. Use the treasure box in Large Group, Small Group, or one-on-one settings throughout the season. To order, go to gemsgc.org/store or call the GEMS Global Office at 616-616-GEMS (4367) in the US and 519-424-9007 in Canada.

Gospel Message Series Watch the three-part **Gospel Message Series** videos at gemsgc.org/gospel for specific training and equipping for sharing the life-changing Good News of Jesus. They are also available on GEMS ReFresh at gemrefresh.org.

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

Five “God Is” Scripture Verses

THEME VERSE: *Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).*

In *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther*, girls will learn that when they put their hope in God, they will have the strength to rise up and stand strong in their faith, no matter what they face. But to put their hope in God, they need to know Him, for it's only when we trust His heart that we can trust Him with all our heart.

Challenge girls to memorize Isaiah 40:31. For extra heart-strengthening to help girls know more about the God of Hope, memorize some or all of the corresponding Bible verses.

Five Scripture Verses About God Our Hope

1. **God is King.** *For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth (Psalm 47:2).*
2. **God is our Deliverer.** *The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:2).*
3. **God is trustworthy.** *The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does (Psalm 145:13b).*
4. **God is always at work.** *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth (Psalm 145:18).*
5. **God is with you wherever you go.** *Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).*

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

Lesson 1

Date of
Lesson _____

What Is *Rise Up: Lessons From Queen Esther*?

PURPOSE: To introduce GEMS girls and their grown-ups to this season's curriculum, *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther*.

BIBLE/MEMORY VERSE: *Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).*

Small Group Supply List

- Rise Up* Journal for each girl
- Small Group Leader's Guide* for each leader
- Bibles
- One *Rise Up* Survey for each girl—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources (See page 8 for details)
- Pencils or pens, sticky notes, and crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Small Group Welcome supplies: A paper plate and pen or pencil for each girl
- Step In supplies: None
- Memory Verse supplies: One *Rise Up* Journal and *Rise Up* Keychain per girl
- Create supplies: River rocks, at least five per girl
- Walk It Out supplies: River rocks from Create, permanent markers

- OPTIONAL DÉCOR:** Create a Small Group space that ties into the *Rise Up* theme and ensures girls immediately know they have a safe and fun place to belong and be loved. Use colorful tablecloths, twinkle lights, tulle, gold accents, candlesticks with battery-operated candles, comfortable seating, and coloring supplies or fidgets to hold while girls talk.

CENTERPIECE OPTIONS:

- ❖ Pencil holders decorated with sequins and GEMS stickers
- ❖ Wooden blocks (use an old Jenga game) where girls can write their names. Girls can build castles and towers with them to tie into the royal banquet theme or you can use them as name cards to assign seats (switch up every lesson for girls to get to know one another better)
- ❖ Butcher paper tablecloth (you can also hang it on the wall) where girls can write and draw what they are learning from week to week

CRAFT SUPPLIES

Trust Jar

- One plastic jar per girl—8-oz (237 mL/g) size
- Square pieces of colored tissue paper—approximately 1 in (2.54 cm)
- Ribbon pieces—length depends on the width of your jar
- Mod Podge® glue
- Foam brushes
- Scissors
- 5 *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths per girl—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- OPTIONAL:** Stickers and washi tape
- OPTIONAL:** “Trust Jar” words—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

NOTE: For a step-by-step tutorial of this craft, go to the *Rise Up* Online Resources and view the L1-Trust Jar video.



Small Group Welcome

[Time: 5 minutes]

LEADER TIP: What an opportunity you have to be instrumental in the life of girls today. Thank you for being a Small Group leader. We can't wait to see what God will do with your **YES** to mentoring this generation. This first meeting will set an important tone for the rest of the year.

- Smile and greet girls enthusiastically when they arrive at Small Group.
- Look them in the eye and ask their name. Repeat it back to them, and pronounce their names correctly.
- Take a moment to introduce yourself, letting them know what they can call you.

SAY Welcome to our Small Group, girls. My name is _____, and I am so excited to be your GEMS Small Group Leader. I can't wait to get to know each one of you!

Today, we will take some extra time to get to know one another. Each of you is important, and you matter in this group, so I'm asking that we listen carefully to each other, show kindness, and be loving in all we do and say.

Do you want that too? Great! We will have so much fun together. Now, let's get to know each other.

LEADER NOTE: This simple icebreaker will get your girls learning each other's names and laughing along the way.

Name Game

SUPPLIES: None

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask each girl to think of a word that starts with the same letter as the first letter in her first name. Examples: Olivia Otter, Emma Excellent, or Charlotte Car. Any appropriate word with the same letter works.
2. Go first to model by your example and give girls more time to think, then move to the girl on your right.
3. Repeat until you've gone around the whole circle.

If your girls are up for a challenge round, start over, but this time add one rule. Before a girl says her name and word, she has to say the name and word of every person who goes before her. It will get harder as you move around the circle. If girls in your group start to struggle, invite other girls in the group to help them out. See if you can make it around the circle.

If your girls aren't up for the challenge round, do the circle a second time with no name repetition, but challenge everyone to pick a different matching word than they did in the first round.

LEADER NOTE: You can use this game whenever a new girl joins your small group. It will help her feel welcome and let the other girls work together for the challenge of repeating what everyone else said.

SAY Girls, thank you for helping us get to know you. One of the things we'll do every time we get together is to check in with each other. Knowing how you're really doing matters to us.

Drawn Out

SUPPLIES: A paper plate and pen or pencil for each girl

Distribute the plates and pens to each girl.

Ask the girls to put the plate on top of their heads and then draw an emoji that best describes their day. (Yes, these will look silly. That's okay and part of the fun!)

Girls take turns sharing their emojis and explaining their choice.

LEADER TIP: Repeat each girl's name and personally acknowledge her answer. Ask questions as appropriate, and let her know that no matter how she feels, she is loved. Be sure to share your emoji too.

SAY Thank you for sharing. No matter how you feel, you are loved by God and by all of us. Let's learn more about each other with a game called Step Off the Line.



Step In

[Time: 5 minutes]

Step Off the Line

SUPPLIES: None

Have the girls in your group stand in a single-file line facing you. As you ask them the questions below, have them step to their right (your left) if they pick the first option and to their left (your right) for the second. After each question, look to see where the girls ended up, listen to girls who may want to share the reason for their choice, and then have them all step back in line before asking the next question.

ASK

- Would you rather be super strong or super fast?
- Would you rather live in an amusement park or a zoo?
- Would you rather have five pretty good friends or one best friend?

- Are you looking forward to the rest of the week or dreading what's coming up?
- Did you learn something new at GEMS today or were you reminded of something you already knew?

Transition girls to sitting at the table to take the Rise Up Survey.

WHY TAKE THE RISE UP SURVEY? The Rise Up Survey is an essential tool to help you measure what matters to strengthen your club's eternal impact on girls' lives. You will have real-life information to share with your church and community about how GEMS makes a difference in your girls' lives.

Rise Up Survey

SUPPLIES: One Rise Up Survey for each girl—download from the Rise Up Online Resources

- **SAY** Before I distribute this easy survey, we're going to make a commitment to one another. I promise no one will see what you mark on your survey. There's no need to add your name; no one here will see your responses.

What I'm asking from you is that you will commit to being honest. Please don't circle responses that you think you should be or wish you were. Circle what is true for you today. I'll keep it private. You keep it honest. Deal?

1. Distribute the surveys, which should only take a minute to complete.
2. Collect and fold the surveys in half so no one sees the responses.
3. Give the surveys to your Club Coordinator, who will report the results by following the instructions on page 8 of the *Large Group Resource Book*.



Memory Verse

[Time: 2 minutes]

Memorize Isaiah 40:31 by playing the memory verse game Act it Out.

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Act It Out

SUPPLIES: One Rise Up Journal and Rise Up Keychain for each girl

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the Rise Up Journals and Rise Up Keychains to each girl and ask them to read Isaiah 40:31 aloud from page 6 of their Rise Up Journal or Rise Up Keychain.
2. Create different actions for specific words or phrases within a verse as a group. Moving helps cement words and meanings into hearts.
3. Repeat verse with actions until memorized.

God's Word Is Truth



[Time: 6 minutes]

LEADER NOTE: Distribute Bibles and pens or pencils, crayons, colored pencils, or markers to the girls. While you ask questions, encourage girls to answer the questions or color in the appropriate Rise Up journaling pages for this lesson.

KEY PASSAGES: Isaiah 40:31; Esther 2:5-7, 17; 3:1-2, 5-6; 4:15-16; 5:1-2

ASK What did you learn about Queen Esther in the Large Group Bible teaching?

LEADER NOTE: Ask the girls to retell the Bible teaching for comprehension. Fill in the missing or forgotten pieces and invite girls to ask questions if they don't understand something.

SAY Today, we learned about Queen Esther, her cousin Mordecai, and wicked Haman. When Haman made an evil plot to destroy all the Jews, including Mordecai and Esther, Queen Esther risked her life to go to the king. When Esther put her hope in God, she was able to go to the king even though she was afraid. She trusted God with all her heart. God promises that you can rise up when you put your hope in Him and trust Him

with all your heart (*trace a heart in your right palm with your finger or use a pen, and invite girls to copy your motion*). God will give you the strength to stand firm in your faith, no matter what you face.

LEADER NOTE: Girls can record their answers in their journals with words or pictures or answer the questions while coloring. Answers flow when their hands are busy, and it feels less “school-like” and more relational as they learn and apply God’s Word to their lives.

1. Open your Bibles to Isaiah 40:31, and let’s read this verse aloud together. What do we learn about God in this verse? Why do you think God used an eagle? **God is a God of Hope. When we hope in Him, He promises to renew our strength so we can keep going. A true understanding of who God is fills us with hope. Personal responses about eagle imagery may include that eagles soar high and rely on the air currents to gain altitude instead of flapping their wings. For girls to keep going despite difficult situations, God invites them to rely on Him. They don’t have to panic (rapidly flapping their wings) but can put their hope and trust in God, and He will help them rise up and soar.**
2. When would it be important for girls your age to remember this promise? **Personal responses may include when girls feel worried, tired, anxious, or afraid, or when they wonder what to do or if they have what it takes to keep going. Whatever girls share, remember that it’s *always important* to remember God and His promises. How we view God relates to how we view ourselves and our problems.**
3. It’s hard to trust someone we don’t know. Whether you know a lot about God or very little, He always invites you to know Him more. Look on page 7 in your *Rise Up Journals* and read the five Truths we will learn about God this year. What Truth means the most to you and why? What Truth do you have the most questions about? **The five “God is” Truths are God is King (Psalm 47:2), God is our Deliverer (Psalm 18:2), God is trustworthy (Psalm 145:13), God is always at work (Psalm 145:18), and God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9). The girls will**

give personal responses as they reflect on those five Truths. As you lead those lessons in the weeks ahead, you’ll have a greater understanding of your girls’ thoughts and questions about who God is and what He has promised. **NOTE:** Encourage the girls to read these verses at home. They are in the journal and on their bookmarks—download from the *Rise Up Online Resources*. Ensure that each girl has a Bible at home, and teach them how to find books, chapters, and verses so they can look Scripture up on their own.

4. Personalize a reminder to yourself about what we’ve learned today by finishing this sentence: When I am feeling _____, I will put my hope in God and ask Him to _____. **NOTE:** This sentence is on page 7 of the *Rise Up Journal*.

Digging Deeper Questions

1. Read Isaiah 40:31. Talk to your girls about hope. What are they hoping for now in their family, friendships, or the future? **Personal responses.** How does hoping in the Lord impact the hopes they shared? **Without God, hopes are only temporary wishes. It’s like a bubble that fills the air momentarily and then pops. But when we hope in God, we put our hope in God, the Maker of Heaven and earth. He loves them, is for them, and never breaks His promises. To put their hope in God is to receive strength to stand firm in their faith, no matter their circumstances.**
2. Read Philippians 4:6-8. When you pray, you’re putting your hope and trust in God. Tell Him what you need. What are the things we can pray about? What are the things you want this group to pray for you? **We can pray about anything. We get to know God more in prayer and by reading our Bibles. LEADER NOTE:** Listen carefully to girls’ prayer requests, and don’t wait to pray. Pray as they share. While it’s good that you pray, first ask if there is a volunteer who would like to pray. This may be the highlight of your time together.
3. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Putting our hope in God means trusting Him with all our hearts. What does Proverbs 3:5-6 say about trusting God? Does this describe the way you trust

God? Why or why not? **Proverbs 3:5-6** says to trust God with all your heart, all the time—not with some of your heart, some of the time—even when we can't see what God is doing or don't like what we can see. It's a wholehearted trust that believes God is loving, kind, and good and that He is for us, no matter what. Girls will give personal responses about how they trust God. Encourage them, but do not shame their responses. Like us, they are growing in trust.



Create

[Time: 6 minutes]

LEADER NOTE: This fun, collaborative activity helps girls understand what they learned and create ownership.

Rock Towers

SUPPLIES: River rocks, at least five per girl

ASK What's the secret to building a tall, strong tower? (*Listen to girls' responses.*)

SAY The secret is the base. If you have a strong base, you'll have a strong tower.

When you put your hope and trust in God, you have the strongest base possible for your life. You are welcome here, whether you know much about God and the Bible or very little. This is a safe and good place to ask questions.

While building your rock towers, you can ask me any question you want about God and His Word or what it means to trust Him. And if you think of questions later, you can ask me then. Your questions are always welcome.

ROCK TOWER INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each girl approximately five rocks. Ask them to make individual towers by seeing if they can get all their rocks to balance on each other to create a tower. As they work, give hints about ensuring the base is strong so the tower can stand strong.
2. Now ask the girls to work as a group to create a rock tower using all their rocks. Don't give

hints unless asked, and remind them that the stronger their base, the stronger their tower will stand.



Walk It Out Unshakeable Hope

SUPPLIES: One river rock for each girl from Rock Towers and permanent markers

1. Ask each girl to pick a rock and write one or two words on it that will remind her that she can put her hope in God. It may be the names "God" or "Lord" or the words "hope," "trust," "strength," "Isaiah 40:31," or "Rise Up."
2. After they have written on their rock, invite them to take it home and put it in a place where they most often feel scared, worried, or afraid.
3. Invite girls to share what they wrote and where they will place their rocks.

SAY Thank you for sharing. The next time you feel scared, worried, or afraid, instead of hoping your problems will go away, put your hope in God. Trust Him. You may even want to trace a heart in the palm of your hand while you say, "God, I trust You." Let's do that together. (*Girls repeat.*) Girls, you can do this anywhere. Before you take a test, at the lunch table, at night when you can't sleep. "God, I trust You" is a choice and a prayer.



Let's Pray

[Time: 3 minutes]

LEADER TIP: Before praying, direct the girls to the things you discussed together. What can they praise God for? Maybe they want to thank Him for always being with them. Perhaps they want to ask for God's help for themselves or someone they love.

Encourage girls to write prayer requests in their *Rise Up* Journals.

(Invite the girls to pray, pray your own prayer, or use the one below by having each girl take turns praying by filling in the name of the girl on her right. Go around the circle until every girl and leader has been prayed for personally.)

PRAY Dear God, thank You for _____. You love _____ and are her greatest Hope. Help _____ to rise up and trust You with all her heart. In Jesus' name, amen.



Craft Trust Jar

[Time: 20-30 minutes]



LEADER TIP: See the important note to Craft leaders in the introductory pages on page 12. For a step-by-step video tutorial of this craft, go to the *Rise Up* Online Resources and view the **L1-Trust Jar video**.

Supplies

- ✦ One plastic jar per girl—8-oz (237 mL/g) size
- ✦ Square pieces of colored tissue paper—approximately 1 in (2.54 cm)
- ✦ Ribbon pieces—length depends on the width of your jar
- ✦ Mod Podge® glue
- ✦ Foam brushes
- ✦ Scissors
- ✦ 5 *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths per girl—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- ✦ **OPTIONAL:** Stickers and washi tape

- ✦ **OPTIONAL:** “Trust Jar” words—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

Instructions

Suggested Prep Work:

1. Cut colored tissue paper into 1-inch squares.
2. Cut out the 5 *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
3. **OPTIONAL:** Cut out “Trust Jar” words—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

With Girls:

1. Paint Mod Podge® on a portion of the plastic jar with a foam brush and place a square or two of tissue paper onto the glue. Then repeat the process until the jar is covered.
2. With the ribbon, tie a bow around the neck of the jar.
3. Roll up each of the *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths and store them in the jar. Review often!
4. **OPTIONAL:** Glue “Trust Jar” words onto the jar.
5. **OPTIONAL:** Instead of using Mod Podge® and tissue paper, you can decorate with stickers and washi tape.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.



Craft & Chat Questions

1. What do you think the best thing about living in a castle would be? How about the worst thing?
2. What has been your favorite part about club tonight?
3. Who is a friend you could bring with you to club the next time we meet?

(Dismiss to Large Group for Dismissal.)



Leader Notes

Use this space to reflect on your club gathering. What went well? What could be improved? Where did you see God working?

SAMPLE
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Prayer Requests

RISE UP

Lessons from

Queen Esther

Large Group Resource Book

GEMIS Girls' Club

GEMSGC.ORG

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RISE UP: LESSONS FROM QUEEN ESTHER
ISAIAH 40:31
LARGE GROUP RESOURCE BOOK

GEMIS Girls' Clubs

Bringing girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ

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Letter

From the Executive Director

.....

Hi Friend,

Welcome to GEMS Girls' Clubs! On day one at GEMS, whether it's this moment or it was years ago, you became part of an authentic sisterhood and life-changing ministry. Together we live the GEMS name and passion—helping *all* Girls Everywhere Meet the Savior. It's never mattered more!

As I contend in prayer for you and the girls you will lead through this important Esther study, there are two stats I'd like to share that, by God's grace, I believe we can reverse in this generation of girls.

1. Reverse 57% of hopelessness with 100% of hope in God. Three out of five teenage girls feel persistently sad or hopeless.¹ This is bigger than having a bad day or a tough weekend. Friend, this should not be. Though girls have unprecedented hurts and hardships we couldn't have imagined having at their age, they are never without hope. But they must meet the God of Hope to know this endless hope.

Isaiah 40:31 is God's promise and this study's theme verse.

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Even on a girl's worst day and darkest night, God's Truth reminds us that she is never alone. With God, she always has hope. Tell your girls; remind your soul. And if it's too hard to believe it's possible for you, reach out. Speaking the hope and love of God over one another is what sisters do. As GEMS leaders and mentors, we get to come alongside girls so they can know, live, and experience this powerful promise.

¹ U.S. Teen Girls Experiencing Increased Sadness and Violence, CDC Media Relations, February 13, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/newsroom/2023/increased-sadness-and-violence-press-release.html>

2. Reverse the 1% biblical worldview with 100% of GEMS Club girls owning a personal Bible. According to George Barna, Gen Z (ages 11-26) has less than a 1% biblical worldview.² It's why our girls are confused about who God is, who they are, and what it looks like to rise up and stand strong in their faith no matter what they face.

Our girls need to know that there is a capital "T" Truth, and it's found in God's Word. Open God's Word with your girls when you gather at club, and ensure that every girl has a personal Bible so she can keep reading outside of club. Through your encouragement and example, girls will learn to love God's Word so they can know and love God more.

As you study Queen Esther's story, you and your girls will see what it looks like for a girl living in a faithless culture to put her hope in God so she can rise up with a strong and courageous faith. I believe you will see it again in this generation as you pour God's love and Truth into your girls.

Friend, the GEMS Sisterhood is here to pray with, encourage, and support you. You are not alone. We are cheering for you!

Serving Him Together,



Cindy Bultema
GEMS Executive Director

P.S. What are you most looking forward to this club season? Any prayer requests? Drop me a note at hello@gemsgc.org. It'd be my joy to pray for you, friend.

² Resilient Disciples Podcast, Episode 82, June 22, 2021: George Barna: The "Single Most Important" Investment You Can Make in Your Ministry

Meet the *Rise Up:* Lessons from Queen Esther Curriculum Team

.....

Cindy Bultema has over 20 years of ministry experience, including serving as the Executive Director of GEMS. Prior to GEMS, Cindy served as the Children's Director at a West Michigan megachurch, as well as a children's curriculum writer for Zondervan Publishers, an international women's speaker, and the author of the women's Bible studies *Red Hot Faith* and *Live Full Walk Free: Set Apart in a Sin-Soaked World*.

Cindy lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband and their two dogs. She has four children, ages 19-29, living in various parts of the US. When she's not running a full household, you can find Cindy meeting a friend for coffee, traveling to visit family, walking her two dogs, or creating a charcuterie board for a game night with friends.

Lenae Bulthuis has served as Content & Curriculum Director for GEMS since 2003. For 20 years, Lenae has been writing life-changing curriculum for GEMS. She was eight years old when her life intersected with the GEMS ministry for the first time. Today she counts it grace to write curriculum and train leaders within a ministry that has radically changed her life.

Lenae lives with her husband, Mike, on a Minnesota grain and livestock farm. She enjoys reading, watching her grandchildren, and seeing God's grace on gravel roads and other dusty places.

Kara Lepley is a West Michigan native and lifelong GEMS participant. She has a Masters of Divinity from Western Theological Seminary and served the local church for eight years in various children's ministry programs, including as a GEMS Club Coordinator. As GEMS Program Manager, Kara supports and equips GEMS leaders around the world through trainings, events, and more.

Kara lives in Holland, Michigan with her husband and son. Outside of GEMS, you can find Kara curled up with a good book, at a Hope College sporting event, or at the beach on sunny days.

Kamarah Bayard is a Content Writer who has been on the GEMS staff for four years. Kamarah has had a passion for writing and storytelling since she was small. She also has a love for education and, of course, girls! Her passion for education took her overseas to South Korea, where she taught English to children as a private tutor and co-coordinated her church's Sunday children's program.

Kamarah lives in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and enjoys watching science shows, cooking, and sipping a hot cup of tea while listening to music.

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SAMPLE
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Why Rise Up?

It's not easy being a girl today.

Ask a 90-year-old woman and a teen girl the hardest part of being in middle school, and you may hear similar responses—things like jealousy, appearance, and friend drama.

But there will be a sharp fork where their similarities stop, and the teen girl will share unprecedented challenges unique to her generation. Today's girls know the heartache of global pandemics, gun violence, lack of genuine connection in person and online, and unlimited access to scary and sad stories around the world.

There is nothing easy or fairy-tale-like about being a girl today. Girls face unique challenges and unsustainable pressures in a culture of confusion about who they are and what truth is.

Queen Esther got it. She may not have been perfect, but she is a perfect example to today's girls of how to live set apart in a faithless culture.

Esther was more than an orphan or a beauty queen. She was a girl who could rise up in faith and stand her ground because she put her hope in God alone.

Everything changes when a girl stops grasping for hope and meets the God of Hope.

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

We can't put our trust in Someone we don't know, so the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum will help girls discover five important Bible-based Truths about who God is and what it means to put their hope in Him.

Through Queen Esther's story, girls will learn:

- ❖ God is King—Psalm 47:2
- ❖ God is our Deliverer—Psalm 18:2
- ❖ God is trustworthy—Psalm 145:13
- ❖ God is always at work—Psalm 145:18
- ❖ God is with you wherever you go—Joshua 1:9

When a girl knows she can trust God's heart, she is able to trust Him with all her heart.

Wholehearted trust in God was Esther's story. She was so confident in who He was and what He said about her, she was willing to risk her life—*for such a time as this* (Esther 4:14).

So why not use Esther 4:14 as the theme verse of this study? Though inspiring and pivotal to the storyline, "*for such a time as this*" is the result, not the reason Esther was able to rise up.

Only when Esther put her hope in God, the uncontested and true Hero of Esther's story, could she rise up in His strength—*for such a time as this* (Esther 4:14).

Our girls can do the same.

When girls place their hope in God, they will rise up, stand secure, and have complete confidence that they will be okay, no matter what. Their wholehearted trust in God will reverse the sad stats, transform our girls, and make a difference in our world.

Watch the ReFresh Message "Rise Up" at gemsrefresh.org for more inspiration.

How *Rise Up* Works

Through the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum, girls will learn that Queen Esther was more than an orphan or a beauty queen. She was a girl who put her hope in God, which changed everything for her and God's people.

Queen Esther's story will help girls discover five Bible-based Truths about God to help them stand strong in their faith, whatever their circumstances. Girls will discover that God is their King and Deliverer, always trustworthy, always at work, and with them wherever they go.

Girls will be invited to get to know God more through worship, prayer, Bible study, and intentional time with GEMS leaders who provide a safe place to belong and be loved. Through these mentors, they will be equipped and encouraged to pray and read their Bibles at club and at home.

- As girls learn more about God and grasp His promises by faith, their trust in Him will increase.
- It'll make all the difference in the strength of their stance as they respond to hardships in their homes, their communities, and our world.

OUR GOD is King (Psalm 47:2), Deliverer (Psalm 18:2), trustworthy (Psalm 145:13), always at work (Psalm 145:18), and with us wherever we go (Joshua 1:9).

OUR GIRLS can rise up with God-given strength and courage when they choose to put their hope in God (Isaiah 40:31).

"RISE UP" SERVICE PROJECTS. Strengthened through His hope, our girls will rise up and put their faith into action in their homes, their communities, and our world.

Breakdown of Lessons

The *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Starter Kit curriculum contains enough material for eight weeks of club gatherings, plus eight "Rise Up" Service Projects (putting their faith into action). Use the material weekly for a semester, monthly, or in whatever fashion best fits your schedule.

Through God's Word and GEMS leaders, girls will:

- ❖ Learn who God is
 - ❖ Discover who God made them to be
 - ❖ Rise up—standing strong and courageous, no matter their circumstances
 - ❖ Be equipped to read God's Word at club and at home
 - ❖ Actively engage in "Rise Up" Service Projects
- ...and more.

How to Use *Rise Up*: *Lessons from Queen Esther*

Three Options

GEMS Girls' Clubs come in all shapes and sizes—from big to small clubs, from city to rural clubs. There is no one-size-fits-all. However, the one consistency among all GEMS Clubs is that they use GEMS curriculum. Based on how frequently your club meets, you'll want to select one of the options below for using the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* resources. Once you've chosen the option that best fits your club, set your schedule for the year and begin praying, planning, and preparing.

..... Option 1:

Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther Alone

Works great for clubs that meet monthly or for a shortened season: October-December, January-March, or June-August.

Use *Rise Up* as a stand-alone resource for up to sixteen weeks. You will have everything you need for a complete club gathering.

..... Option 2:

Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther + Badges

Works great for clubs that meet two or more times a month and desire to rotate lesson nights and badgework.

Use the sixteen weeks of *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* with GEMS Girls' Clubs badges. Go to gemsgc.org for more information on our wide variety of girl-friendly badges and information on how to incorporate these resources into your club season.

..... Option 3:

Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther + Badges + Other GEMS Supplemental Curriculum

Works great for all clubs, no matter the length of their season.

Use the sixteen weeks of *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* with other GEMS curricula like *LOVED*, *Friended*, *Unshakeable*, or *Act. Love. Walk*, plus badges. Go to gemsgc.org for more information on these curricula and badges.

How to Maximize the *Rise Up* Survey

.....

You are a difference-maker. What you do for this generation of girls matters! But on our most challenging days, we may wonder...

- ❖ Is it worth it?
- ❖ Have the girls heard *anything* I said?
- ❖ Are lives *really* changing at my GEMS Club?

These are questions asked by church decision-makers (should we continue the GEMS program?), parents (should I sign my girl up for club?), and volunteers (should I serve in GEMS another year?). And on the days when we're tired, discouraged, and ready to quit, we may ask these questions in our own hearts.

What if the answers to all those questions could be a resounding YES?

The *Rise Up* Survey is an essential tool to help you measure what matters so you can strengthen your club's eternal impact on the lives of girls. You will have real-life information to share with your church and community about how GEMS makes a difference in your girls' lives.

Imagine being able to share on GEMS Sunday or with your parents and volunteers, "This is where the girls were at the beginning of the season, and this is where the girls are now. At the beginning of the season, 10% of the girls in our club didn't know what it meant to put their hope in God. Now, 92% put their hope in God and trust Him even on their hardest days."

Measure What Matters by Following Three Easy Steps

1. **GIVE THE SURVEY.** Download the survey from the *Rise Up* Online Resources and have each girl take it during Small Group in Lessons One *and* Eight (your before *and* after). It only takes a minute to complete, and the answers are anonymous, giving the girls freedom to share honestly.
2. **RECORD THE ANSWERS.** After Lessons One and Eight, Small Group Leaders give the surveys to the Club Coordinator, who will ensure that the club's answers are compiled and recorded at <http://bit.ly/GEMSRiseUpSurvey>. An automatic report will be generated for your club.
3. **SHARE YOUR RESULTS.** Share what you discovered with church decision-makers, parents, your leadership team, and your congregation on GEMS Sunday. Celebrate where you see God at work. Take note of where girls struggle to see how they can rise up in their tough circumstances so you can intentionally pray and mentor.

Measuring what matters maximizes your opportunity to make an eternal difference in the life of every girl entrusted to your club.

Give the survey, record the answers, and share the results. Be reminded that what you do is more than worth it. You're making an eternal difference—one girl at a time.

What You Need

The *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum provides all the necessary components to help your girls understand from Queen Esther's story that when they put their hope in God, they can rise up in His strength—bold and brave, called and courageous—no matter what they face.

LARGE GROUP RESOURCE BOOK—There are eight lessons with an overview, Large Group arrival activities (called Icebreakers), scripted lesson openers and Bible teachings, craft activities, and meaningful dismissals, plus eight “Rise Up” Service Projects (putting faith into action) with a Large Group devotional and service project options for your girls to work on together.

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE—There are eight Small Group welcomes, memory verse games, relationship-building activities, questions for applying God's Word, prayer prompts, and craft instructions contained within this guide for girls in grades 1-8. The application questions and activities range from a girl learning about God for the first time to a girl digging deeper into her faith. Leaders base what questions and activities they choose primarily on their group's knowledge of God and His Word rather than their age. It's a must-have resource connecting every leader to every girl, regardless of age or where she is on her faith walk.

RISE UP KEYCHAIN—This *Rise Up* Keychain contains eight beautiful tags with the theme verse, Isaiah 40:31, plus other key verses about who God is from the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* study. You will want to get one for every girl and leader. Distribute the tags at the beginning of the season, at the conclusion, or individually as you study each lesson. There is one *Rise Up* Keychain in the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Starter Kit. They are also available from gemsgc.org/store.

RISE UP JOURNAL—Purchase one inspirational journal for each girl and leader. They are a must-have during Small Group with Scripture verses for girls to study at club and read at home. The coloring pages, dotted grid, and journal pages with each lesson's Bible verse are the perfect place

for girls to record application thoughts, memory verses, and prayer requests.

NEW TO THE RISE UP JOURNALS! The additional Scripture verses within the *Rise Up* Journals are designed to equip and encourage girls to read God's Word at home. There is one *Rise Up* Journal included in the *Rise Up* Starter Kit, and they are also available from gemsgc.org/store. **NOTE:** You may want to keep the *Rise Up* Journals at club for the study duration since girls use the same journal each time.

RISE UP STICKERS—Girls can decorate water bottles, mirrors, helmets, and more with their *Rise Up* stickers. There is one *Rise Up* sticker sheet in the *Rise Up* Starter Kit, and they are also available from gemsgc.org.

RISE UP THEME SONG—“Rise Up (Eagles)” by Doorpost Songs, as well as side-by-side hand motion and tutorial video downloads, are available in the *Rise Up* Online Resources.

“REAL TALK” VIDEOS—An intro video to meet the GEMS *Rise Up* “Real Talk” teaching team and eight “Real Talk” videos provide fun and inspiring challenges to close each lesson, helping your girls to live out what they learned at club. All videos are available in the *Rise Up* Online Resources, and a corresponding bookmark for each lesson contains a link to each video. The bookmarks make it possible for girls to watch these girl-friendly videos at club and at home; plus, they contain Scripture verses to equip and encourage girls to read their Bibles outside of club.

Rise Up Online Resources

If you purchased a *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Starter Kit, you received access to a digital library that contains items such as printables, Theme Song Motion Tutorial videos, Craft videos, “Real Talk” videos, and presentation slides. If you did not purchase a *Rise Up* Starter Kit, these digital resources are available for purchase at gemsgc.org/store or by calling 616-616-GEMS (4367).

OPTIONAL RESOURCES—You may purchase these additional resources from gemsgc.org/store or by calling 616-616-GEMS (4367) in the US or 519-424-9007 in Canada.

RISE UP VERSE POSTER—This beautiful poster displays the key verse, Isaiah 40:31, which girls will memorize. The digital download includes a high-resolution file and a license to print one copy at your chosen printer.

RISE UP IRON-ON LOGO—This iron-on logo is perfect for t-shirts, fabric bags, and banners. It adheres to cotton and many other fabrics. Transfers are quick to apply, extremely durable, and will stretch with your garment. Size: 5"x6".

MICAH 6:8 POSTER—This poster displays the GEMS Girls' Clubs Aim, which is Micah 6:8. Girls and leaders recite this aim each time they meet at club.

GEMS GOSPEL TREASURE BOX—Use to share the Gospel message with your GEMS girls. See "The Joy of Sharing Jesus: Leading a Child to Christ" on page 14 for more information.

You can also incorporate other GEMS curricula like *LOVED*, *Friended*, *Unshakeable*, or *Act. Love. Walk* or badges from the *Discovery Place Badge Book*. See "How to Use *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* Options 2 and 3" on page 7.

AND MORE! Find more resources at gemsgc.org/store.

NOTE: All *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* materials are protected under copyright. Photocopying is not allowed, with the exception of the printables in the *Rise Up* Online Resources. The *Rise Up* logo is not to be used in any manner other than for promotional materials without expressed permission from GEMS Girls' Clubs. These clip art images may not be used on any products. Products include but are not limited to mugs, special recognition awards, keychains, pens, pencils, and T-shirts.

**SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE**

Leader's Guide

The *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* curriculum is designed to lessen your planning and prep time so leaders have more time to pray and focus on building relationships with their girls. It contains everything needed to guide your girls to understand who God is and how placing their hope in Him will help them rise up and stand strong no matter what they face (Isaiah 40:31). Here is the structure of each lesson.

Lesson Overview

Purpose—Each lesson has a short statement with the primary focus of the lesson. This is your main aim and prayer.

Bible/Memory Verse—The Bible verse will be memorized and studied throughout the lesson. Additional Scripture passages and Bible teachings are woven into each lesson.

Preparation

A chart at the beginning of each lesson lists the materials you need to prepare for each club meeting. Advance preparation includes praying for your girls, gathering needed supplies, and, if necessary, printing materials from the *Rise Up* Online Resources.

Lesson Elements

The lessons are broken into four elements to make it easy for you to lead your girls. While some clubs have the luxury of two-hour meetings, this study is structured for a 1½-hour club meeting.

ARRIVAL—GIRLS MATTER. Arrival is the time frame from when girls arrive until club officially starts. When girls open the club doors, the first people they should meet are their leaders. The whole team is waiting for them, welcoming them, and letting them know they matter!

During Arrival, warmly welcome girls by name. As you distribute name tags, look each girl in the eye and say, “_____ [*girl's name*], you matter to God and to us. We are so glad you are here.” Then direct girls into the Large Group space to play the Arrival activity.

LARGE GROUP—GOD'S WORD MATTERS.

Large Group is the 20- to 30-minute time frame to gather all girls and leaders into one space. Begin with a warm welcome and prayer. Recite the GEMS Girls' Clubs Aim. Then worship together—sing praises to God.

After worship, you'll open God's Word. From God's Word of Truth, you'll teach girls that Queen Esther was more than an orphan or a beauty queen. She was a girl living in a faithless world who could rise up when she trusted who God was and what He said about her. Through Queen Esther's story, you will unpack Isaiah 40:31, teach girls their Truth-filled identity, and discover five Truths and promises about who God is.

Does every girl in your GEMS Club have a Bible? Along with studying God's Word at club, encourage girls to read their Bibles at home. This is how they will get to know who God is, which is critical to growing in their relationship with Him. Make it your club's goal (invite your senior saints to get involved if needed) that 100% of your girls have a personal Bible! Then direct girls to the *Rise Up* Journals and bookmarks for Scripture passages to read at home.

Your girls don't know how to find books, chapters, and verses in their Bibles? You get to teach them! It will be time well spent as you prepare them for a lifetime of reading their Bibles. Grab your highlighters and sticky notes and read alongside your girls. The passion and enthusiasm you have for Scripture is contagious.

SMALL GROUP—RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.

Small Group is a 60-minute time frame when six to eight girls meet with their Small Group leader. GEMS is a relationship-building ministry, and it's within Small Groups that relationships are built and lives are transformed.

During the first 30 minutes of Small Group, a leader will guide her Small Group into God's Truth through the Bible and the Small Group Leader's Guide. The leader's guide is key to building relationships, teaching the memory

verse, and digging into Scripture—it has questions *and* answers. Plus, discipleship takes place as the leader guides girls in prayer and helps them apply His Truth and what it means to rise up and stand strong in their faith, no matter what they face.

The *Rise Up* Journals contain coloring pages, dotted grids, and journal pages with each lesson’s Bible verse, plus additional verses to dig into at home. The journals are the perfect place for girls to record application thoughts, what they are learning from Scripture, memory verses, and prayer requests. Be sure each girl has a Bible and a *Rise Up* Keychain.

During the last 30 minutes of Small Group, grow relationships with hands-on activities. This is the time to craft, earn badges, or participate in “Rise Up” Service Projects (putting their faith into action).

DISMISSAL—LEAVING LOVED MATTERS.

Dismissal is the last 5–10 minutes of club. Gather all girls into the Large Group space to reiterate the focus of the club meeting and pray. Send the girls home with high fives, hugs, and words of encouragement.

Gather all girls and leaders into the Large Group space. Show a “Real Talk” video from the *Rise Up* Online Resources and then send girls home with the lesson’s bookmark (from the *Rise Up* Online Resources) so they have the video link and can watch again at home, plus additional Scripture verses for them to read at home. Then speak life-giving words. Remind them who God is and who they are—girls who can rise up and stand strong in their faith, no matter what they face. When they leave club, may they remember those last words.

Leaders Needed

In addition to the Club Coordinator, you will need one leader for each Small Group of six to eight girls. The leader should stay with her Small Group throughout the year. You may also choose to have additional helpers for sound and video, worship, snacks, and crafts.

Space Needed

You will need one space to host the Large Group activities for each lesson and separate Small Group activities and crafts areas.

Décor (Optional)

LARGE GROUP SPACE Decorate with anything that will make your space feel like a castle—fun, contemporary, and compelling for all ages. Avoid anything that looks like a princess party. Instead, think warm and welcoming with twinkle lights, taper candles, gold draping, tulle, ivy, and brick castle backdrops. Visit gemsgc.org to see fun ideas on the GEMS *Rise Up* Pinterest board.

SMALL GROUP SPACE Create a Small Group space that ties into the *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther* theme and makes girls immediately know they have a safe and fun place to belong and be loved. Use colorful tablecloths, twinkle lights, tulle, gold accents, and trendy castle accessories.

CENTERPIECE OPTIONS:

- ❖ Pencil holders decorated with sequins and GEMS stickers
- ❖ Wooden blocks (use an old Jenga game) where girls can write their names. Girls can build castles and towers with them to tie into the castle theme, or you can use them as name cards to assign seats (switch up every lesson for girls to get to know one another better)
- ❖ Butcher paper tablecloth (you can also hang it on the wall) where girls can write and draw what they are learning from week to week

If possible, keep décor up all season. For more fun decorating ideas, visit gemsgc.org to find the GEMS *Rise Up* Pinterest board.

LEADING CRAFTS? Don’t miss this! The time required for any craft depends on how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, and a girl’s age and individual abilities. **To see a step-by-step video tutorial for each craft, go to the *Rise Up* Online Resources.** For an inspiring overview of the importance of crafts at club, be sure to watch “Crafting with a Purpose” on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsrefresh.org for more information. **NOTE:** If you have extra time and supplies, have girls make extra crafts to gift to others.

Rise Up: Lessons From Queen Esther Club Guide

.....

..... Arrival

Icebreaker Activity

..... Large Group

Praise & Worship

Lesson Opener

Bible Teaching

Closing Prayer

..... Small Group

Bible Application & Activities

Craft, Badgework, or “Rise Up” Service Project

..... Dismissal

Return to Large Group

Closing Prayer

Watch the ReFresh Message “Four Essential Pieces to Structuring Your Club Meeting” at gemsrefresh.org for more details about each part of your club meeting.

GEMS **ReFresh**

Equip • Encourage • Engage

The Joy of Sharing Jesus: Leading a Child to Christ

.....

At GEMS, we are on a mission to help bring girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. The GEMS acronym—Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior—is our name and passion. GEMS is committed to speaking the life-changing Truth that girls are loved and known by God, and they matter to Him and us.

Think about this generation of girls. Think about the girls in your sphere of influence.

Girls have questions about God. Who is God? Do I have to be good for God to love me? Does He love me when I'm bad? Can He be powerful *and* personal? Can I really trust Him with everything?

Girls have questions about themselves. Who am I, anyway? Where do I belong? Do I matter? What's my purpose?

Friend, you know the Truth! You know the good news that girls' questioning hearts need to hear. His name is Jesus! His love is eternal and unstoppable. In Jesus are hope, love, strength, life, forgiveness, purpose, and our true identity.

Jesus made our mission clear. *Go and make disciples* (Matthew 28:19). You get to tell this generation of girls about Jesus and His love. You get to help them discover who Jesus is, all He says about them, and that He is inviting them into a relationship with Himself. It's why you're holding this resource.

The time is now. Girls must know that they have a friend in God. A survey by the International Bible Society reported that 83 percent of Americans commit to following Jesus between the ages of four and fourteen.¹ And George Barna reports, "What you believe by your thirteenth birthday is generally what you die believing."²

¹ "At what age do Americans become Christian?", Southern Nazarene University, modified February 21, 2022, <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm>.

² "Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age," Barna Research Group, November 17, 2003, <https://www.barna.com/research/research-shows-that-spiritual-maturity-process-should-start-at-a-young-age/>.

As you experience the joy of sharing Jesus, remember that you don't go alone. You're part of a growing sisterhood that is on a mission to bring girls to Jesus. Above all else, God is our Guide who calls and equips us to lead girls to Christ.

Sharing the Gospel Reminders

Sharing Jesus is not a one-time conversation. Every time you meet, share more about who He is and all He says about them.

Sharing Jesus is more often caught than taught. Girls are observing your life and relationship with Jesus.

Sharing Jesus happens best as we listen to the Holy Spirit and the child. What do they need to hear about Jesus first?

- ❖ The unloved need to hear that God accepts and loves them no matter what.
- ❖ The insecure need to know God gives them a Truth-filled identity.
- ❖ The one grasping for hope must know that putting her hope in God the Deliverer changes everything.
- ❖ The one with big fears and worries needs to know God the King is in charge, always working, and with her wherever she goes.
- ❖ The lonely need to hear that God is near. He is with them, and they are not alone.
- ❖ The one who wonders if she's a mistake or made too many mistakes needs to know that God never gives up on her. Through Jesus, she is forgiven and a masterpiece.

Sharing Jesus requires heart prep. Always be prepared to share your faith story within the context of God's story. Pray that He would prepare the girls' hearts to receive His good news.

Resources

GEMS has resources to help you share the Gospel with the child/children in your care.

GEMS Gospel Treasure Box This box is a beautiful, tangible resource that aids leaders in walking girls through the Gospel message. Use the treasure box in Large Group, Small Group, or one-on-one settings throughout the season. To order, go to gemsgc.org/store or call the GEMS Global Office at 616-616-GEMS (4367) in the US and 519-424-9007 in Canada.

Gospel Message Series Watch the three-part **Gospel Message Series** videos at gemsgc.org/gospel for specific training and equipping for sharing the life-changing Good News of Jesus. They are also available on GEMS ReFresh at gemrefresh.org.

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

Five “God Is” Scripture Verses

THEME VERSE: *Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).*

In *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther*, girls will learn that when they put their hope in God, they will have the strength to rise up and stand strong in their faith, no matter what they face. But to put their hope in God, they need to know Him, for it's only when we trust His heart that we can trust Him with all our heart.

Challenge girls to memorize Isaiah 40:31. For extra heart-strengthening to help girls know more about the God of Hope, memorize some or all of the corresponding Bible verses.

Five Scripture Verses About God Our Hope

1. **God is King.** *For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth (Psalm 47:2).*
2. **God is our Deliverer.** *The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:2).*
3. **God is trustworthy.** *The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does (Psalm 145:13b).*
4. **God is always at work.** *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth (Psalm 145:18).*
5. **God is with you wherever you go.** *Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).*

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

Lesson 1

Date of
Lesson _____

What Is *Rise Up: Lessons From Queen Esther*?

PURPOSE: To introduce GEMS girls and their grown-ups to this season’s curriculum, *Rise Up: Lessons from Queen Esther*.

BIBLE/MEMORY VERSE: *Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).*

Arrival

- Name tags—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- Icebreakers: Never Have I Ever or Sit & Chat questions
 - Never Have I Ever supplies: None
 - Sit & Chat questions supplies: Colored pencils/crayons, *Rise Up* Coloring Sheet—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- OPTIONAL:** Create a photo booth.
 - Supplies: Any prop that belongs within a royal banquet. Use twinkle lights and ivy to create a backdrop or white tulle to make it look whimsical. Provide signs for girls to hold that say “Rise Up” and the name of your club. **NOTE:** Ask parents to sign photo release forms—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources. Never post pictures of girls unless you have parental permission.

Large Group

FOR GIRLS:

- Select worship songs, including the *Rise Up* theme song “Rise Up (Eagles)” by Doorpost Songs, and provide the means to play them. Suggested songs and lyrics are here: <http://bit.ly/RiseUpSongs>
- Micah 6:8 Presentation Slide—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources or display using the Micah 6:8 poster available at gemsgc.org/store
- A Bible
- A camera, phone, or device to take a picture
- A jar, marbles, and small table to display the jar
- Esther Family Tree PowerPoint Slide or Esther PDF—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- **DÉCOR:** Decorate with anything that will transform your space into a royal banquet scene. Twinkle lights, tulle, ivy, gold accents, candlesticks with battery-operated candles, and brick castle backdrops are just a few ideas. Visit gemsgc.org for fun ideas on the GEMS *Rise Up* Pinterest board.
- **NOTE:** Reading the Bible matters at GEMS Club and at home. One of the objectives of this curriculum is for 100% of girls who meet at GEMS to have their own Bibles. Do whatever is needed to ensure this happens for the girls who attend your club.

FOR GEMS GROWN-UPS: (Choose a time at the beginning or end of club to meet with the GEMS Grown-Ups.)

- A club schedule
- Club registration form—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- GEMS Grown-Up Letter—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- Use the “Connect with GEMS Grown-Ups” text within this lesson to guide your meeting
- Share the short, encouraging message titled “GEMS Grown-Ups: You’re Not Alone” with your girls’ grown-ups. **NOTE:** This is a short message of encouragement that can be shared at your club meeting, on your club’s social media pages, via email (<http://bit.ly/GEMSGrown-Ups>), or as a QR code on the GEMS Grown-Up letter that is available on the *Rise Up* Online Resources. It’s also on GEMS ReFresh for easy access.

Small Group

- ❖ *Rise Up* Journal for each girl
- ❖ *Small Group Leader’s Guide* for each leader
- ❖ Bibles
- ❖ One *Rise Up* Survey for each girl—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources (See page 8 for details)
- ❖ Pencils or pens, sticky notes, and crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- ❖ Small Group Welcome supplies: A paper plate and pen or pencil for each girl
- ❖ Step In supplies: None
- ❖ Memory Verse supplies: One *Rise Up* Journal and *Rise Up* Keychain per girl
- ❖ Create supplies: River rocks, at least five per girl
- ❖ Walk It Out supplies: River rocks from Create, permanent markers

- ❖ **OPTIONAL DÉCOR:** Create a Small Group space that ties into the *Rise Up* theme and ensures girls immediately know they have a safe and fun place to belong and be loved. Use colorful tablecloths, twinkle lights, tulle, gold accents, candlesticks with battery-operated candles, comfortable seating, and coloring supplies or fidgets to hold while girls talk.

CENTERPIECE OPTIONS:

- Pencil holders decorated with sequins and GEMS stickers
- Wooden blocks (use an old Jenga game) where girls can write their names. Girls can build castles and towers with them to tie into the royal banquet theme or you can use them as name cards to assign seats (switch up every lesson for girls to get to know one another better)
- Butcher paper tablecloth (you can also hang it on the wall) where girls can write and draw what they are learning from week to week

CRAFT SUPPLIES

Trust Jar

- ❖ One plastic jar per girl—8-oz (237 mL/g) size
- ❖ Square pieces of colored tissue paper—approximately 1 in (2.54 cm)
- ❖ Ribbon pieces—length depends on the width of your jar
- ❖ Mod Podge® glue
- ❖ Foam brushes
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ 5 *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths per girl—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

OPTIONAL: Stickers and washi tape

OPTIONAL: “Trust Jar” words—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

NOTE: For a step-by-step tutorial of this craft, go to the *Rise Up* Online Resources and view the L1-Trust Jar video.

Dismissal

- ✦ Videos: “Meet the Real Talk Team” and Lesson One “Real Talk” and the means to play them—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- ✦ Bookmarks: Distribute a Lesson One: *Rise Up* Bookmark that contains the “Real Talk” video links and Bible verses. This provides girls access to the videos at home and a Scripture guide for them to dig into their Bibles outside of club. Download L1-Bookmark from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- ✦ **OPTIONAL:** Give your girls the GEMS Club Invite to help them invite their friends to your next club meeting—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources



Arrival

[Time: When girls arrive until club begins]

LEADER NOTE: Every girl in your club has experienced some kind of hardship. Whether they’ve been excluded from a party, bullied, or impacted by divorce, disease, or some other difficulty, they know what it is to face something sad and hard.

Today, they’re going to be introduced to Queen Esther, who was able to rise up through horrific circumstances—not because she somehow mustered up enough bravery, read the right positivity affirmations, or believed in herself. No!

Esther was able to rise up because she put her hope in God. *Rise Up* invites girls to put their hope in God so they can stand strong in their faith, no matter their circumstances.

Greet each girl at the door with a warm welcome. Introduce yourself, smile, and call her by name. As you distribute the *Rise Up* name tags, look each girl in the eye and **SAY** “_____ [girl’s name], you are loved.”

Until club starts, direct girls into the Large Group space. You may want to engage your younger girls in the Icebreaker game Never Have I Ever. Engage girls who are older or maybe reserved and shy with the Sit & Chat questions.

Never Have I Ever

SUPPLIES: None

NEVER HAVE I EVER INSTRUCTIONS

1. Invite girls to sit in a circle with both hands in front of them and all ten fingers extended.
2. Explain that players need to take turns saying something they’ve never done. If a girl in the circle HAS done that thing, she puts one finger down. (Example: “Never Have I Ever been camping.” Anyone who HAS gone camping puts a finger down.)
3. The girl on your right should say the next “Never Have I Ever” statement. Continue around the circle until every girl has a turn to share.
4. Add girls to the circle as they arrive and have them jump in on the next question. If they are joining halfway through, have them start with five fingers up instead of ten to even the playing field.
5. When the circle is complete, see who has the most fingers left (if any), and then play again if time permits.
6. The activity continues until Large Group begins.

Sit & Chat Questions

SUPPLIES: Colored pencils/crayons, *Rise Up* Coloring Sheet—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

LEADER NOTE: Most girls (even adult girls) are more talkative when their hands are busy. While girls are coloring, ask the following questions:

QUESTIONS:

1. What are your three favorite things to do?
2. What instrument do you play, or do you want to learn?
3. What would you choose if you could only eat one food for the rest of your life?

OPTIONAL: Photo Booth

Create a photo booth for the girls to take pictures in as they arrive. Gather supplies for your photo booth with props that might be seen at a royal banquet. Use twinkle lights, ivy, and a castle brick backdrop, or add white tulle to make it look more whimsical. If you'd like, provide signs for girls to hold that say "Rise Up" and your club's name.

LEADER NOTE: Ask parents to sign photo release forms—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources. Never post pictures of girls unless you have parental permission.

(When it's time for club to begin, start Large Group.)



Large Group Welcome & Prayer

[Time: 2 minutes]

SAY: Welcome to _____ [*name of your club*] GEMS Girls' Club. We are so excited and grateful you are here. You are always welcome here, and so are your friends. Bring as many girls as you can with you to club. We love new beginnings, and this year's club will be terrific. We will laugh and learn, sing and craft, serve others, spend time with one another, and learn more about God and all He says about us. I'm glad you're here. Let's pray together and thank God for the gift of a new year and our club. **Will you please stand with me and pray?**

Pray

GEMS GIRLS' CLUBS AIM

SAY We start our club meetings by saying the GEMS Girls' Clubs Aim. Girls all over the United States, Canada, and around the world are starting their club meetings in the same way. Some may even be meeting right now. How great is that? Let's declare Micah 6:8 together.

MICAH 6:8 PRESENTATION SLIDE:

Download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources or display using the Micah 6:8 poster available at gemsgc.org/store.

ASK _____ [*name of your club*] GEMS and GEMS leaders, what does the LORD require of us?

(Leaders and girls respond): To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God Micah 6:8.

GEMS GIRLS' CLUB AIM HISTORY:

GEMS started in 1958. In 1972, GEMS Girls' Clubs adopted Micah 6:8 as the organization's theme verse and aim. Many girls and leaders worldwide recite this aim in unison at the start of each club gathering to remind ourselves of the type of women and girls God desires us to be.

Praise & Worship



*[Time: You decide!
About 4 minutes per song]*

SAY GEMS stands for Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior. Does anyone know who we are talking about when we say "the Savior?" (*Listen.*) That's right—Jesus! Whether you've known about Jesus your whole life or are hearing His name for the first time today, you are welcome here, and we're so glad you're with us.

One of the ways we spend our time at club is by singing. Even if a song is new to you, listen to the words and join when you can. Let's worship God together.

SING one or more songs as a whole group.

SAY Beautiful singing, girls. You may take a seat.

NOTE: *Any supplies or people needed for the Lesson Opener or Bible Teaching are found under the Large Group list at the beginning of the lesson.*

Lesson Opener: Rise Up



[Time: 5 minutes]

SAY Welcome to the GEMS Castle! This is a fun and safe place to learn what it means to rise up.

ASK Have you ever had some good days? Silly days? Crazy days? Funny days? Maybe some hard or sad days? (*Raise your hand so girls know how to respond.*)

SAY We've all had one of those days, right? Whatever kind of day you're having, I'm so glad you're here. There's no pretending at the GEMS Castle. You can show up as you are, whether you're having the best or worst day ever.

One of the best parts of the GEMS Castle is that you are never alone. God is with you, and so are the girls and leaders in this GEMS Club. Look around the room, and you will see people who care about you.

(Give girls the opportunity to look around the room. Take a picture of everyone looking at you. You want them to remember this moment. This is a special place and group!)

This year, you'll get to know God and the amazing girls and women in our club. I can't wait for what we'll experience together in this place.

Let's get to know one another better with a castle-focused game of Would You Rather? I'll ask a series of questions with two choices. If you pick the first option, stay seated. If you'd prefer the second option, stand. Let's practice to make sure we all understand.

LEADER NOTE: Keep the string of questions moving. After each question, give the girls a few seconds to stand or sit. When everyone is ready, move on to the next question, reminding them that sitting means choosing the first option and standing means choosing the second.

Would You Rather?

ASK Would you rather decorate the ceiling of your castle bedroom with elegant floral wallpaper or sparkly gold polka dots? (*Girls should stay seated if they would rather have floral wallpaper on their ceiling*

and stand if they would rather have sparkly gold polka dots.)

Good job. You got it!

ASK Would you rather live in a castle in the middle of nowhere with no one else around or an apartment in the middle of a crowded city?

ASK Would you rather move through your castle on rollerblades or in high heels?

ASK Even people who live in castles have problems. Would you rather always be hungry or always be tired?

ASK If you could choose one pet to live in the castle with you, would you rather have a pet porcupine or a pet skunk?

ASK If you were asked to stand on the castle's balcony and give a speech, would you rather speak in front of 1,000 people or three people?

ASK Would you rather have the castle pool filled with chocolate milk or maple syrup?

ASK Would you rather be served a breakfast you didn't like in a king-sized, comfy bed or eat your favorite breakfast foods in a castle garden swarming with mosquitoes?

ASK The last question. Would you rather live in a castle without your family and friends or live in a castle with people you couldn't trust?

SAY That's a hard one, isn't it?

At GEMS this season, we'll learn about a queen who was forced to move away from her family and friends and live in a castle with people she couldn't trust. The queen's name was Esther; her story is found in the Bible, God's Word of Truth.

Bible Teaching: Rise Up



[Time: 8 minutes]

(Open your Bible to the book of Esther.) **SAY** Queen Esther's story is found in the short book of Esther. The Bible has two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The book of Esther is found in the Old Testament between the books of Nehemiah and Job. If you get to the book of Psalms, you're close, but need to back up a bit. Better yet, use the Table of Contents. Your Small Group leader will show you how.

As we read Queen Esther's story, it can almost seem fairy-tale-like because she unexpectedly moves from being an ordinary girl to being the queen of the land.

Except Esther's story was true! And she didn't live happily ever after when she moved into the castle.

Here's what happened: Queen Esther had a cousin named Mordecai (MOR-de-kye). Please say, "Mordecai." (*Girls repeat.*)

(Direct girls to the Esther Family Tree PowerPoint Slide or PDF download from the Rise Up Online Resources each time you introduce a new character into the story.)

Queen Esther's cousin Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman (HAY-man), one of the king's top guys. This made Haman so mad that he made a secret plan to kill Mordecai. And since Mordecai was a Jew, one of God's chosen people, Haman decided to destroy *all* the Jews, which included the queen. Yikes!

ASK How would you feel if you were one of God's chosen people, a Jew? (*Listen to responses.*)

SAY It would be terrifying. Queen Esther was scared, too, even though no one knew she was a Jew, including the king.

ASK If you were Queen Esther, would you go to the king and tell him what was happening? (*Listen to responses.*)

SAY Sounds easy, right? But it wasn't. She couldn't just walk in and talk to the king. No one could. It was palace policy. If the king didn't invite you in, he could kill you for showing up unannounced. But your life would be spared if he held out his gold scepter, a long, fancy stick. How scary!

ASK What do you think Queen Esther did? If you think she risked her life and went to the king, raise your hand. (*Pause for responses.*)

SAY If you raised your hand, you're right. Queen Esther went to the king afraid, praying he would hold out his gold scepter. And (*long pause*) he did!

(Wipe your forehead.) Whew! Let's give it up for brave Esther! (*Girls cheer.*)

If you want to see if Queen Esther, cousin Mordecai, and her people, the Jews, were saved, keep coming back to club or read the whole book of Esther in your Bible at home (*extend your Bible open to Esther*)—I hope you will!

ASK But for today, let's look at a promise God made to Queen Esther, you, and me. It's a promise we'll sing about often in our theme song, "Rise Up." It's found in Isaiah 40:31.

(Read from your Bible.) Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).

ASK What does it mean to hope in the LORD? (*Listen to responses.*)

SAY The word "hope" means to trust. So to trust in God means that you believe what God says. If God makes a promise, you trust that He will keep it. If God says He will do something, you trust that He will do it in His time. So to put your hope in God is to trust Him with all your heart.

Which is a lot different than trusting people.

ASK Have you ever had someone break their promise? Or maybe you've made a promise that you didn't keep?

SAY Sadly, we humans always let each other down, but God never does. He always keeps His promises.

Maybe you're thinking, "_____ (your name), how do I trust Someone I don't know?"

Great question. Maybe you've never heard about God before; wow, I'm thrilled you're here. Or maybe you know quite a bit about God; I'm glad you're here too. No matter how much we know about God, there's always more to learn. And the more we learn about God, the easier it is to trust Him.

(Place an empty jar on the table.) An author once said trust is like a marble. You learn to trust little (*drop a marble into the jar*) by little (*drop a marble*) by little (*drop a marble*) as you get to know someone.

You'll learn about God at GEMS as we sing (*drop a marble*), read the Bible (*drop a marble*), pray (*drop a marble*), and have conversations while playing games or making crafts (*drop two marbles*). You can also learn about God when you read your Bible at home (*drop a marble*). If you need a Bible, talk to your Small Group leader or me.

As we get to know God little by little (*marble, marble, marble*), we start to trust Him more and more. When we choose to trust God, He gives us the strength to rise up no matter what kind of day

we are having—good days, silly days, crazy days, funny days, and even hard and sad days.

The Bible says that when God gives us His strength, it looks a lot like a soaring eagle, running without stopping, and walking while never getting tired. God gives us the strength to keep going, no matter what.

It all starts when we trust Him (*drop a marble*).

The next time you're stressed or scared, tell God you trust Him.

Maybe you even want to try this. Hold your right palm flat, take the pointer finger on your left hand, and trace a heart in your right palm.

As you do, say, "God, I trust You." Go ahead; let's do it together. (*Girls repeat.*)

Now do it again, but rather than saying it aloud, say it in your thoughts: "God, I trust You." (*Girls repeat silently.*)

No matter what you're doing or what kind of day you're having, you can trace a heart in your palm and remember that God is at your right hand. He's with you, He loves you, and you can trust Him.

Wrap-Up & Prayer



[Time: 1 minute]

(**PRAY** your own prayer or conclude with this one.)

PRAY God, thank You for a new GEMS season and for every girl and leader who is part of our GEMS Club. Thank You that we can trust You with all our hearts. Teach us more about who You are today/tonight and let us have a lot of fun too. In Jesus' name, amen.

Girls, if you need a Bible, want to talk about your day, or even want to learn more about belonging to God's family, please meet with *me (*or say the name of another leader*) or talk to your Small Group leader.

***LISTEN** carefully to each girl. Acknowledge her feelings. Answer her questions as you are able. If she asks questions you do not have answers for, let her know you don't know but will look for answers. Ask your pastor or Club Coordinator for help if you need it. Share your faith story as appropriate and pray. Pray with anxious and afraid girls about what's

happening in their world. Pray with girls who want to belong to God's family.

WHAT IF?

What if a girl shares unimaginable hurts or problems that she hasn't felt the freedom to share before and asks you for help? If she shares tough stories, what should you do?

1. If you suspect abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, report it immediately to your Club Coordinator or pastor. Together you can walk through next steps in your state or province.
2. If you need tools to equip you for difficult conversations, check out these two resources:
 - Seek counsel from your church's pastor or Christian organization's leader. And be mindful to keep GEMS Grown-Ups in the know as you mentor their girls.
 - **Before Your Club Meeting, Watch "Navigating Hard Topics With Girls"** on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsrefresh.org for more information.

Need resources to help you lead a child to Christ? See page 14 and watch the **Gospel Message Series** videos at msgsc.org/gospel. They are also available on GEMS ReFresh at gemsrefresh.org.

(Dismiss to Small Groups.)

Connect With GEMS Grown-Ups



[Time: 15-20 minutes, depending on Q&A time]

Hold a brief grown-ups (parents/grandparents/caregivers) meeting at the beginning or end of your first club gathering.

COLLECT REGISTRATION FORMS Ask the GEMS Grown-Ups to complete a club registration form for their girls. A form is available in the *Rise Up* Online Resources.

DISTRIBUTE A GEMS SCHEDULE AND GEMS GROWN-UP LETTER

Distribute a personalized club schedule with dates and details for meetings, special events, and GEMS Sunday. You can personalize your club's GEMS Grown-Up Letter (available in the *Rise Up* Online Resources). You'll find a QR code to a video message just for them called "GEMS Grown-Ups: You're Not Alone."

NOTE: This short, encouraging message is also on GEMS ReFresh (gemsrefresh.org). If you choose, you can show it to your grown-ups at this meeting, send it in an email (<http://bit.ly/GEMSGrown-Ups>), or share it on your club's social media pages.

THANK GROWN-UPS *You may want to say . . .*

Thank you for sharing your girls with our club this season. Our time together will be even more special because she is here. Your girl matters to God, to YOU, and to us. As GEMS Leaders, we are committed to praying for her, connecting and building a relationship with her, and reminding her of who God says she is. We will remind her that she has a place to belong here and that we see who she is becoming.

- We are deeply committed to sharing the Truth of God's Word with your girl in an engaging and fun way. We are also intentional about building a loving and encouraging environment and culture. We hope that GEMS day will be her favorite day of the week. As we get to know your girls, we want to know you too. So thank you for being here.

SHARE THE MESSAGE OF RISE UP WITH GROWN-UPS *You may want to say . . .*

I wonder if your girl is facing challenges that you never knew at her age. (*Allow parents to share.*) There's nothing easy or fairy-tale-like about being a girl today, and it can be hard to be a girl's parent, mentor, and guardian.

In our *Rise Up* theme, we will be learning life lessons from the story of Queen Esther. Esther is a short book in the Bible that you may want to read with your girl(s) at home. What your girl will learn in club is that Queen Esther faced tough stuff in faithless Persia. But when she put her hope in God, she was able to rise up in His strength—bold and brave, called and courageous.

Through Esther's story, your girl will learn her Truth-filled identity and five truths about God to help her stand strong in her faith, whatever her circumstances. She will discover God is her King and Deliverer, always trustworthy, always at work, and with her wherever she goes. As she learns who God is, she'll learn to trust Him more and grow in confidence that she can rise up, stand secure, and be okay, no matter what.

Knowing who God is and who God says she is will equip your girl to rise up and stand strong in her faith, no matter what challenges are part of her story. And like we just shared, our girls know challenges. See why we're so excited about this theme?

Along with learning life lessons from Queen Esther that will equip your girl(s) to rise up and stand strong on God's Truth, we are praying and working toward each girl regularly reading a Bible at home and being actively engaged with our club in "Rise Up" Service Projects.

So what does that look like to accomplish all of these things this year? We have two main goals for this GEMS season:

Goal #1: We want girls to grow in their relationship with God.

Maybe you want that for you and your family, too. You are welcome here wherever you are in your relationship with God. God always meets us right where we are and invites us into a closer relationship with Himself.

At GEMS, we're helping girls and their grown-ups grow in their faith, so if you're not sure how to pray, don't know what it means to be a Christian, are looking for a church home, or don't have a Bible or wonder where to begin reading, please reach out. You're among friends, which may be why you're here. Belonging to God's family is the best decision you could ever make. If you have questions, please talk to me, another GEMS leader here tonight, or even one of the GEMS Staff at gemsgc.org. We care about you and your girls.

Our first goal is to grow together in our relationship with God.

Goal #2: We want to equip girls with God's Truth so whatever girls face, they can rise up and stand strong in their faith. Instead of running away from hard stuff or throwing their covers

over their heads, wishing it would all go away, your girl will put her hope in God and rise up with His help.

The *Rise Up* theme verse girls will learn and memorize is Isaiah 40:31. (*Read from your Bible.*) It says, *Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* As our girls learn these words, we pray that they will put their hope in God for the help and strength they need to rise up and stand strong, no matter their circumstances.

After each club meeting, ask your girl what she learned. If you want her faith to stick, ask about her memory work and memorize it with her.

I'm eager to grow with your girls, as is this team.

INTRODUCE YOUR GEMS CLUB TEAM

Introduce each leader by name and her role within your club.

Communicate Expectations

PICK-UP/DROP-OFF TIMES &

EXPECTATIONS Do you require grown-ups to come into the building to check their girls in and out? If so, what is the process? If your club needs to cancel, what can they expect? Would you transition to an online club, and if so, what can parents anticipate?

GEMS SCHEDULE/PLANS Direct their attention to the club schedule and highlight the events that specifically involve them—GEMS & Gals Night, GEMS & Gents Night, GEMS Sunday, fundraisers, etc. Encourage them to add these dates to their phones and calendars.

CLUB SPECIFICS What do you expect of the girls and their grown-ups? What can they anticipate from you and your club? How will you regularly communicate with them? Will you use print or emailed newsletters, a club Facebook page, or text messages?

TECHNOLOGY PLAN Technology is native to our kids, so it's important to communicate what that looks like at your club. Tell the GEMS and their grown-ups the technology expectations at your club.

Close With Q&A And Prayer



Dismiss with enthusiasm and anticipation!



Craft Trust Jar

[Time: 20-30 minutes]



LEADER TIP: See the important note to Craft leaders in the introductory pages on page 12. For a step-by-step video tutorial of this craft, go to the *Rise Up* Online Resources and view the **L1-Trust Jar video**.

Supplies

- ❖ One plastic jar per girl—8-oz (237 mL/g) size
- ❖ Square pieces of colored tissue paper—approximately 1 in (2.54 cm)
- ❖ Ribbon pieces—length depends on the width of your jar
- ❖ Mod Podge® glue
- ❖ Foam brushes
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ 5 *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths per girl—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources
- ❖ **OPTIONAL:** Stickers and washi tape
- ❖ **OPTIONAL:** “Trust Jar” words—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources

Instructions

Suggested Prep Work:

1. Cut colored tissue paper into 1-inch squares.
2. Cut out the 5 *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources.
3. **OPTIONAL:** Cut out “Trust Jar” words—download from the *Rise Up* Online Resources.

With Girls:

1. Paint Mod Podge® on a portion of the plastic jar with a foam brush and place a square or two of tissue paper onto the glue. Then repeat the process until the jar is covered.
2. With the ribbon, tie a bow around the neck of the jar.
3. Roll up each of the *Rise Up* “God Is” Truths and store them in the jar. Review often!
4. **OPTIONAL:** Glue “Trust Jar” words onto the jar.
5. **OPTIONAL:** Instead of using Mod Podge® and tissue paper, you can decorate with stickers and washi tape.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

Craft & Chat Questions



1. What do you think the best thing about living in a castle would be? How about the worst thing?
2. What has been your favorite part about club tonight?
3. Who is a friend you could bring with you to club the next time we meet?

(Dismiss to Large Group for Dismissal.)

LEADER NOTE: Any supplies needed are found under the Dismissal list at the beginning of this lesson.



Dismissal

LEADER NOTE: Play music as girls return to the Large Group room. Once everyone enters the room, close with a “Real Talk” video. Then wrap up your meeting and close in prayer. Remind them when you are going to meet again.



Real Talk

SAY Before you leave, we want you to see an important “Real Talk” message. Please turn your attention to the screen.

LEADER NOTE: Show the Intro Video first so the girls will get to know the “Real Talk” Team they’ll hear from all season. If there are technical difficulties, please use the script below.

INTRO “REAL TALK” TEXT

KAMARAH: Hello, friend! Welcome to your first “Real Talk” video. My name is Kamarah.

KAYLA: My name is Kayla.

MACY: My name is Macy, and we are your *Rise Up* “Real Talk” Team.

KAMARAH: We’re the “Real Talk” Team because we keep it real. We are here to talk to you about real life, especially when life gets really hard. We ask big questions, tell stories about the good and bad things in life, and are here to talk about what we are learning about God and what it means to trust Him with everything.

KAYLA: That’s right. This year at GEMS, we are focusing on Queen Esther and how we can rise up and trust God to give us everything we need, no matter the size of our problems, big or small. I wonder—have you ever been scared, worried, or lost about what to do next? *(Raise hand.)*

MACY: *(Raises her hand.)* I definitely have. That’s why being at club is so important to me. I’m glad you’re here too. GEMS Club is where we can laugh together, have fun, and learn who God is and what He says about us.

KAMARAH: That's right. So keep showing up. We will be here! Together, we'll learn more about God and that whatever we face, we can put our hope in God and rise up, trusting Him with everything. We can't wait to learn more with you this year. See you soon!

(Everyone waves goodbye.)

LESSON ONE "REAL TALK" TEXT

Hi, friend! I'm Kamarah.

Is there something that makes you scared or afraid? *(Point to self)*. When I was little, I was scared of the dark. I wouldn't let my parents turn the lights off in my room at bedtime, even though I had a nightlight. Even now, I have a small light by my bed at night. It's true! I wonder about you? *(Lean in as if listening)*.

If you've ever been scared, you're not alone. There are lots of things that can make us afraid. Maybe you're scared of taking tests, thunderstorms, or trying something new. Or perhaps what makes you most afraid is being alone, laughed at, or not being picked.

We can't stop scary things from happening, but we can remember God's Truth when they do. The Truth is, you are not alone. God sees you, loves you, and gives you grown-ups who care about you too. God promises that when you put your hope in Him and trust Him with all your heart *(trace a heart in the palm of your right hand with an ink pen)*, you can rise up, and He will give you everything you need to keep going.

Girl, you, *yes you*, can rise up!

I don't know what's happening in your life today. Maybe your grandma is sick, your dad lost his job, or gym class is the worst. The next time you're scared, will you do two things?

#1: Tell God. You can talk to Him anytime, anywhere, about anything. Be honest with God. Maybe you say, "God, this stinks," or trace a heart in the palm of your hand as you say, "God, help me to trust You more." And because it's not easy to trust Someone you do not know, maybe you say, "God, help me to know You more."

#2: Tell a trusted grown-up. You have people in your life who care about you, including your

GEMS leaders. You don't have to face this alone.

What do you think? Can we help each other remember to trust God and rise up? If so, please trace a heart in your palm or show me your heart *(create a heart with your hands)* and on the count of three, say, "Rise up!" One, two, three! *(Kamarah smiles, shows the heart in her palm, and says, "Rise up!")*

See you next time! *(Wave.)*

(After the video is finished . . .)

SAY Girls, we are so grateful you joined us at our first club meeting this year. We hope to see you at every club gathering, and we'd love it if you'd bring friends with you too.

I have special bookmarks for each one of you. On your bookmark, there are links for you to watch the "Real Talk" videos we just saw together and some Bible verses that you can look up and read at home. The Bible is overflowing with God's hope, so look up each verse!

Let's pray together.

(PRAY *your own prayer or use this one below.)*

PRAY Dear God, thank You for all we learned about You at GEMS today. Thank You that we can trust You with all our hearts. May we be girls and women who rise up and put our hope in You in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

LEADER NOTE: Distribute the Lesson One *Rise Up* Bookmark containing the "Real Talk" video links and Bible verses for girls to watch and read in their Bibles when they are home.

OPTIONAL: Distribute the GEMS Club Invite to help girls invite their friends to your next club meeting. Give high fives, hugs, and words of encouragement.

