

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG

by

Sara Boepple
7660 Blue Carriage Ln
Ft Worth, TX 76120
682-561-9060
Sboepple1@gmail.com

CHARACTERS

ENRIQUE—A boy who doesn't have all the answers, but knows Who does. Good at sports, maybe the team captain, observant and aware. An average student in school, doesn't like math, but does like sharing his faith. Not afraid of much.

BRYAN—A boy who is afraid of a lot of things, but most of all of being “different.” Not too good at sports, which has him feeling like a loser. Gets picked on a lot. Is good at math and remembering things.

SUE—A modern girl who plays little league ball as well—if not better—than the boys. Has a good heart but not a lot of courage. Sensitive, maybe a little shy. Thinks she's rather ordinary, although her friends have a high opinion of her.

DAVID—Not a King yet. First scene he is just “little brother” sent by his father to check on his brothers. Demonstrates courage, mostly because he trusts God. Makes friends easily. Also inspires jealousy easily. The Bible describes him as “A man after God's own heart,” which means he loves the Lord very much and tries to do the right thing. Knows God has big plans for his life but stays humble!

JONATHAN—Friend of David, son of Saul —doesn't want to be a King if it means also being a bully. One of the real “good guys” in the Bible. Very loyal to his friends.

KING SAUL—A bully! Mr. Popularity, but to stay popular he has to belittle others. Takes it out on David.

PRINCESS MICHAL—King Saul's daughter, a princess, marries David. Jonathan's sister. Like Jonathan, when faced with a choice between supporting David and supporting her father, she chooses to be loyal to David. Unlike Jonathan, she's prone to jealousy—but we don't see that side of her today.

CHARACTERS - Continued

GOLIATH—Played by a Teen or young adult
Big, strong, and intimidating... the kind of bully who thinks fighting is fun. Takes a big fall.

DAVID'S BROTHERS—Older than David, they think they know everything. They're jealous of him and try not to show it.

David had 7 brothers. The roles are labeled **BROTHER #1** and **BROTHER #2** but the roles can be divided further if there are more children who want speaking roles.

ISRAELITES—Group—mostly preschoolers and early elementary.

Two speaking roles labeled **SOLDIER #1** and **SOLDIER #2**. These can be divided further if there are more children who want speaking roles. Can be girls or boys.

Two group scenes—against the Philistines and again against the Sons of Haman.

QUEEN ESTHER—Knows who she is, and Whose she is. Didn't want to be Queen, but knows she was chosen for a reason. Her faith in God helps her to stand firm in a very tough situation. Has to confront some very jealous, nasty, evil people around her and does so by choosing her words very carefully. Has a lot of self-control and more courage than she even realizes. Seeks God's guidance in everything—which is why she is successful.

PERSIAN GIRLS—Group—mostly older girls

Two speaking roles labeled **GIRL 1** and **GIRL 2**, but the lines can be split if you have additional kids who want speaking roles.

As a group, they are nasty Queen Bee Wanna-Bes. As individuals, they are jealous, cutting, and competitive. They are especially jealous of Esther because she was chosen to be Queen and they weren't. But if Esther's not around, they'll taunt and insult each other instead—it's the only way they know how to behave. Disappointment and fear of losing a very privileged lifestyle combine to make them bitter and vindictive.

CHARACTERS – Continued

SONS OF HAMAN—Group—mostly older boys

A gang of toughs. Think they are entitled to whatever they want whenever they want it. Don't expect anyone to stop or oppose them. Not much different than a modern gang.

MORDECAI—Queen Esther's cousin, who adopted her when her parents died. A man of great faith and integrity. Proud of Esther but like any proud parent, encourages her to go even further. Well-respected for lots of good reasons.

SETTING

Modern Day setting with three ordinary kids. Could be anywhere—at school, at the school bus stop, at church, at Little League. Wherever kids have time to talk without grownups butting in. For our play, we'll set it in a park, after a Little League game. Use a park bench or bleacher/dugout bench for a simple prop that's easy to move on and off stage.

Flashbacks take us to Bible times:

The court of King Xerxes and Queen Esther in Persia,
The battlefield where David kills Goliath,
The court of King Saul, and a cave near the palace.

TIME

Modern day, with flashbacks.

ACT I

Song

Scene 1	After the Little League Game/ At the Park	Now
---------	--	-----

Song

Scene 2	At the Park	Now
---------	-------------	-----

Scene 3	The Battlefield	1025 BC
---------	-----------------	---------

Song

Scene 4	The Battlefield	1025 BC
---------	-----------------	---------

ACT II

Scene 1	At the Park	Now.
---------	-------------	------

Scene 2	King Saul's Court	1010 BC
---------	-------------------	---------

Song

Scene 3	A hidden cave	1010 BC
---------	---------------	---------

Song

ACT III

Scene 1	At the Park	Now.
Scene 2	King Xerxes' Court	475 BC
<i>Song</i>		
Scene 3	King Xerxes' Court	475 BC
Scene 4	At the Park	Now
<i>Song</i>		

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

ACT I

SETTING: AFTER THE LITTLE LEAGUE GAME
SCENE: AT THE PARK

Introduces the characters ENRIQUE and SUE and BRYAN. They are ordinary kids who face ordinary challenges, like bullying, disappointment, fear and nervousness. But they will learn that God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things

OPENING SONG: CHOIR all wears baseball caps and are singing/dancing along the front of the stage, not in the "choir" riser/section; a Little League game is just over. SUE and BRYAN are near the front and center, perhaps sitting on the bench; not happy, they are not participating in the song.

SONG

(End SONG)

(SCENE: AT THE PARK)

ENRIQUE

(after the song ends)

Great job, team! We'll win next time. High fives everyone! See you on Saturday!

(CHOIR each gives ENRIQUE a high-five and then head to the choir risers section. They remove their baseball caps and are now just "CHOIR".)

(BRYAN and SUE do not respond)

ENRIQUE

(Goes to the two of them, between them, puts his hands on their shoulders)

Bryan, Sue? Are you guys okay? You look sad.

SUE

I'm bummed we lost.

ENRIQUE

But we almost won! We came close!

SUE

12 to 10. The closest we've come so far this season.

BRYAN

(squinces his face—trying not to cry)

It's all my fault that we lost!

ENRIQUE

Of course not! There's a lot of kids on the team and none of us are perfect. As long as you do your best that's all that counts.

SUE

And besides, it's just a game.

BRYAN

They say I throw like a girl!

SUE

So? They say I throw like a girl, too!

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

BRYAN

But you are a girl!

SUE

What's wrong with throwing like a girl? I struck out 5 batters today!

BRYAN

All the kids laughed at me. I hate baseball.

ENRIQUE

I don't think you hate baseball, Bryan. I think you're just upset.

BRYAN

(explodes) Am not! I hate baseball, and I hate the whole team!

(ENRIQUE and SUE look at each other, concerned)

(softer) except you two, of course. You don't make fun of me like the others do.

SUE

There are some mean kids on our team, I guess.

As well as on the opposing teams.

ENRIQUE

My dad says that's why we don't win more games. Selfish kids who try to show other kids up, make fun of other kids, aren't playing for the team. And it takes a team to win.

SUE

I never thought of it that way.

ENRIQUE

Being on a baseball team is like practice for life, my dad says. But the difference is that, in real life, if you're on Jesus' team you're guaranteed to win!

(end SCENE—SONG)

SONG

(End SONG)

(SCENE: AT THE PARK)

SUE

(nods thoughtfully)

I want to stand up for Jesus. But I'm not very brave.

ENRIQUE

I'm not either. My dad says you don't have to be brave, though. He says you just have to be faithful.

BRYAN

But I'm just a kid. How can I be faithful?

ENRIQUE

I don't know exactly. I think, first you ask God for help.

BRYAN

Would he help me?

ENRIQUE

Of course he would! He helped lots of kids—young people to have faith in Him.

SUE

Really?

ENRIQUE

Sure! Like David, for instance.

BRYAN

(hoots) He was a King!

ENRIQUE

But before that, he was just a boy. A kid who grew up on a farm and took care of his dad's sheep.

(end SCENE, change SCENE)

SCENE: THE BATTLEFIELD

(ISRAELITES are clustered together. SAUL is as far to the DSR or DSL corner of the stage as possible, sitting on a "throne". David's brothers are near CS)

(DAVID enters)

DAVID

Have you seen my brothers? They're the sons of Jesse.

SOLDIER#1

(points) That way.

DAVID

Have you seen my brothers? They're the sons of Jesse.

SOLDIER#2

(points) That way.

DAVID

Have you seen my brothers? Oh, there you are!

BROTHER#1

What are you doing here, David?

BROTHER#2

This is no place for kids like you!

DAVID

Our dad said you probably weren't eating too well on army food, so he told me to bring you this. (Hands them each a grocery sack)

BROTHER#2

All right! Real food!

BROTHER#1

(rummaging through the sack) Where's the cookies? There are always cookies in a care package.

DAVID

I don't know if there are any cookies. Just bread and cheese and stuff like that.

BROTHER#1

If you ate the chocolate chip cookies before you got here, you little runt, I will tie you up and leave you in the closet.

BROTHER#2

I don't have any cookies either! I'll help!

DAVID

There weren't any cookies, honest!

BROTHER#1

I don't see any crumbs so I guess you're telling the truth. (starts eating)

DAVID

I am, honest! So, uh, how's the war going?

BROTHER#1

Don't ask. It's classified. Besides, you'd better get outta here and get back to the sheep, squirt. The battlefield is a place for real men, not kid brothers.

BROTHER#2

(with a mouthful) Yeah. We don't have time to babysit. We're busy.

DAVID

Can't I stay? I could help!

BROTHER#2

Get outta here already!

(David starts to leave, then from the other side of the stage hears)

GOLIATH

(from offstage—loud booming voice)

I'm Goliath the Philistine, I'm big, I'm mean, I'm gonna make you scream!

DAVID

What's that?

SOLDIER#2

Oh him? He's the biggest, baddest Philistine of them all. He's been taunting us all month.

BROTHER#1

He challenged the King, or anyone representing the King, to single combat. He says if we win, they'll withdraw, but if he wins we have to surrender and let them kill us all.

KING SAUL

(bellows from the side) Is there no one in Israel with the courage to fight that obnoxious giant?

DAVID

Why doesn't the King just fight him?

SOLDIER#2

The King thinks it won't be a fair fight, that the whole Philistine army will attack him and kill him if he gets close enough.

BROTHER#1

He's afraid of an ambush. Now quit asking questions and go be a shepherd again.

DAVID

Why doesn't someone else fight for the King and for Israel then?

BROTHER#2

Because we're not crazy! That guy is seven feet tall!

SOLDIER#1

The King has offered a huge reward, but no one's willing to take on the giant. He even offered to let the volunteer marry his daughter, the Princess!

BROTHER#2

That's enough. No one is going to accept a challenge like that because no one can win a fight against a giant like that.

DAVID

But the Lord is on OUR side! We HAVE to win!

BROTHER#1

David, go home before you get yourself into trouble.

DAVID

(to SOLDIER#2) I volunteer. Can you take me to the King?

(BROTHERS shrug and turn their backs on David,
pointedly ignoring him)

SOLDIER#2

(Leading him to the King) Your Majesty, this kid—I mean this person—has volunteered to fight the Philistine.

SAUL

Who are you?

DAVID

My name is David, Your Majesty. The son of Jesse. I'm not afraid, sir. I will go and fight him for you.

SAUL

It's very brave of you, son, but you're just a boy. That man has been a soldier all of his life.

DAVID

Your Majesty, I am a shepherd and I have to protect my father's herd of sheep every day. I've killed lions and bears before, because God has helped me. And I know He will help me now, too.

SAUL

Listen up, you bunch of chickens! This boy has offered to fight that giant! Are you going to let him claim the reward?

ISRAELITES

(look sheepishly at each other, then one starts a chant and the others, except for the brothers, join in)

David, David, He's our man, if he can't do it no one can! Yay, David!

(brothers sit on the stage and ignore David, eating their bread and cheese)

SAUL

All right, young man. I'll accept your offer. But you don't have any armor of your own. You can use mine. Just don't get it all dented.

DAVID

Thank you Your Majesty. I know the Lord will fight for us today!

(moves away from Saul and starts putting on armor)

JONATHAN

(approaches David) You look pretty silly in that armor.

DAVID

You think I'm silly too?

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

JONATHAN

No! I think you're very brave.

DAVID

(Doesn't know what to say. Struggles with the armor a little.) Oh.

JONATHAN

I'm Jonathan. My dad's the King. What's your name?

DAVID

I'm David. (Tries to stand or move in the armor)

JONATHAN

(Giggles, then covers his mouth) I'm sorry! I'm not laughing at you, but—You really do look pretty silly!

DAVID

I feel silly! (Sighs) But—the King wants me to wear it.

JONATHAN

You don't need my dad's armor to be brave. You're fine just the way you are.

DAVID

You're right! Would you help me take it off?

JONATHAN

Sure! (Quietly) Can I be your friend?

SAUL

(approaching David) What are you doing? You crazy boy, you'll be killed if you don't have armor on!

DAVID

No, I won't, sir. I trust in God. The battle belongs to Him.

(end SCENE, SONG)

SONG

(end SONG)

(SCENE: AT THE BATTLEFIELD)

DAVID

(walks to center stage, kneels or squats to pick up five imaginary stones, then stands and calls out loudly)

Hey, Giant!

GOLIATH

(mocking, to his friends) Did you hear something?

DAVID

(a little bit louder)

Hey Giant!

PHILISTINE#1

Must be the wind!

PHILISTINE#2

Or a lot of hot air!

DAVID

(very loudly)

Hey Giant! Goliath!

GOLIATH

Oh look at the little pipsqueak! What do you want, kid?

DAVID

Come out here and fight me!

GOLIATH

(Laughs)

Are you trying to crack me up, pipsqueak? You want to fight me? You're just a kid! I could fight you with one hand tied behind my back!

(Aside, to his friends)

Which will never happen, because I'd look pretty silly with one hand behind my back.

DAVID

Well, then, come fight me. (Beat) Unless—you're scared?

GOLIATH

Kid, you are asking for it.

(his friends hand him his sword or shield)

Ready or not, here I come!

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

(charges at David, who aims his slingshot. As David releases, Goliath slaps his own forehead with a plastic-wrapped blood pack)

You—hit me! (falls)

PHILISTINES

(gathering around Goliath, slapping his face, checking his pulse, etc.)

Goliath! Get up! Quit fooling around! (Continue ad-libbing)

DAVID

He's dead. Now, you'd better leave before the same thing happens to all of you!
GO!

PHILISTINES

(look at David, look at each other, look at David, and then run screaming off stage)

AAAArgh!

ISRAELITES

(rush to David, cheering, led by JONATHAN)

David, David, he's our man, he killed the giant and our enemies ran! David, David, he's the one, the Lord helped him and the battle is won!

DAVID

(as he is led or carried off stage by the victorious Israelites)

Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Yes?

DAVID

Thanks for being my friend.

(end SCENE, change SCENE)

ACT II

SCENE: AT THE PARK

(BRYAN ENRIQUE and SUE process the Bible story and apply it to their lives.)

SUE

That was a great shot that David made! He was the Israelites' hero, wasn't he?

ENRIQUE

He sure was. He even got to marry the King's daughter Michal, just like the King promised!

SUE

Ugh. I'd hate that.

BRYAN

I bet she fell in love with him. Double Ugh.

(SUE and BRYAN both make faces of disgust)

ENRIQUE

(with feeling) I know! Girls are okay as friends (looks at Sue) and pitchers, but...(shrugs)

SUE

(grins) I know. It's okay. I don't mind that you're boys, either.

BRYAN

(depressed)

David killed that giant with one little stone. I could never be like David.

SUE

What do you mean?

BRYAN

I mean, he could throw really well. And aim really well. I bet he could hit a home run if he tried. I could never do that. I'm such a loser!

SUE

You're not a loser! We lost the game. Big deal. It doesn't make us losers. It doesn't make YOU a loser.

BRYAN

It doesn't make me a hero, either. Not like David.

SUE

David was just a boy, like you. The only difference is, he wasn't scared. Not because he could hit well, or aim well, but because he knew the Lord was on the Israelites' side.

ENRIQUE

And you throw better than you think. Remember last week? You got that kid out at third with a throw from the outfield! Best out of the game!

SUE

It didn't even bounce. Just went right to the third baseman's glove.

BRYAN

The coach said that was a fluke.

SUE

Was not. It was you doing just what we practiced.

BRYAN

Yeah? Well I'm still a loser. I should quit little league.

SUE

Bryan! Don't quit. Please?

ENRIQUE

Wait a second, Bryan. You think you should quit something just because you're not really good at it?

BRYAN

Duh! Who wants to keep trying to do something they're not good at?

ENRIQUE

I'm not good at math. Does that mean I should quit school?

SUE

Quit school? Are you crazy? You can't quit school!

BRYAN

All you need is some help with math. That's easy. I can even help you.

SUE

So can I.

ENRIQUE

That would be cool.

BRYAN

That's easy. It's no big deal.

ENRIQUE

It is to me! And then after you help me with math, we can all practice hitting and throwing to each other.

SUE

That's what team mates do for each other.

ENRIQUE

What friends do for each other!

BRYAN

David sure was lucky to have a friend like Jonathan, wasn't he?

SUE

I wouldn't say lucky. I'd say he was blessed. Jonathan supported him and helped him all throughout his life.

(end SCENE, change SCENE)

SCENE: KING SAUL'S PALACE

(On one side of the stage a throne, maybe the same one as the battlefield. SAUL has a headache, has an ice pack on his head and silk eye shade. On the other side of the stage DAVID is playing the harp, guitar or piano, doesn't have to be very complex, could be instrumental over the loudspeakers. MICHAL and JONATHAN are near DAVID, listening)

SAUL

Quit that racket! I'm trying to rest.

DAVID

Sorry, your Majesty. I'll play a more soothing song.

SAUL

What kind of a wimp are you, anyway. Playing music. If you were a real man you'd be outside racing chariots, or practicing sword fighting, or playing football and soccer with the guards.

DAVID

(strumming quietly) I don't really like sword fighting, sir.

JONATHAN

(loyally sticking up for his friend) But you're amazing with a sling, David. I still remember how surprised that giant looked when you hit him with that stone. Bam! One little stone and he was dead as a doornail.

SAUL

Kid made a lucky shot, that's all. He couldn't do it again if he tried. What kind of prince are you anyway, hanging around with stupid shepherd boys?

JONATHAN

David's a hero!

SAUL

He smells like wet wool. (to David) Quit playing like that. It's annoying all the rest of us.

MICHAL

(pouting)

But Dad, I like to listen to him play!

DAVID

I'll play some other time, Michal. It's okay.

(leaves the guitar, comes to sit with the other two.)

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

JONATHAN

David, tell us about when you killed the bear that was menacing the sheep. That's an amazing story!

MICHAL

Yes, one of my favorites!

DAVID

Well, I had just been writing a song, about how God is like our heavenly shepherd, when I heard a growl—

SAUL

(growling)

Urrrrgh! I hate that story! (throws a pillow at David) Get out of here! I never want to see your ugly face again!

DAVID

(stands, bows)

Yes your Majesty! I'm sorry, your Majesty!

JONATHAN

He doesn't mean it, David. You can stay.

SAUL

(yelling)

I do mean it! Get! Scram! Make like a tree and leave, already!
(DAVID exits, MICHAL follows)

JONATHAN

(to Saul)

That wasn't very nice.

SAUL

I'm the King. When you grow up and you're the King, you'll understand.

JONATHAN

(under his breath, following DAVID and MICHAL offstage)

I don't think I want to be King when I grow up! I'd rather have God for my King!

(end SCENE, SONG)

SONG

(End SONG)

SCENE: OUTSIDE NOT FAR FROM SAUL'S
PALACE

(A cave somewhat near CS—DAVID will hide in the
back so make sure it is well-lit, or use a large hoop to
simulate the entrance only)

JONATHAN

(whispers)

Here, David. Hide here in the cave. My father and his soldiers won't find you in here.

DAVID

Your dad scared me, Jonathan. I didn't do anything wrong, but he was really mean to me!

JONATHAN

I know. I think he's jealous of you. But if you stay out of sight for a few days, maybe he'll forget all about you.

DAVID

I hope so. I don't mind camping in a cave for a night or two, but I don't want to live here for the rest of my life!

JONATHAN

Tomorrow I'll let you know if it's safe to come back. Are you still scared?

DAVID

A little, but I trust you because you're my friend. And I trust God.

JONATHAN

Our God always helps us do the right thing. Sometimes it's standing up to a bully like you did with Goliath, but sometimes it's backing down and turning the other cheek, or avoiding the problem all together.

DAVID

Your father is the King. I have to respect that, even if I don't like him very much right now.

JONATHAN

(bites his lip, this is hard to ask)

Your brothers told me something a long time ago, David. They said that the prophet Samuel anointed you to be the next King of Israel.

DAVID

Sometimes my brothers talk too much!

JONATHAN

Is it true?

DAVID

Yes, it's true that Samuel anointed me. But I never asked for it. I don't want to take your place, Jonathan. You're the prince, your father's son. You should be the next King.

JONATHAN

But I don't want to be the next King of Israel! You'll be a much better King than I ever could be. I'm glad God chose you.

DAVID

Well, let's hope it's a long time before I have to rule Israel. Right now your father is still the King and I won't do anything to harm him.

JONATHAN

Even though he's trying to kill you?

DAVID

Even then. If I don't respect the King now, how could I expect anyone to respect me if—when—I become the next King?

JONATHAN

You're pretty smart, David. No wonder Samuel said that God wants you to be the next King!

DAVID

It's getting dark. You'd better go home.

JONATHAN

You sure you'll be okay?

DAVID

Of course I'm sure! I'm in God's hands!

(JONATHAN leaves. DAVID unrolls a sleeping bag as far upstage as possible, as far away from the "entrance" as possible)

(SAUL and 3 or 4 SOLDIERS enter)

SAUL

It's getting dark. I'm getting tired. Let's use that cave and get some rest for tonight. Tomorrow we'll find that little creep David so I can show him who's boss around here!

SOLDIERS

(ad lib)

Yes Sire. Yes Your Majesty. Very good, sir.

(they unroll sleeping bags near the mouth of the 'cave')

SAUL

(yawns)

I'm sleepy. You men stay way over there. I don't want to hear you snore all night!

(lays down, on top of the sleeping bag not in it—uses his cloak as his blanket)

(SOLDIERS and SAUL fall asleep. From the back of the cave, DAVID sits up in his sleeping bag)

DAVID

Dear God, please help me! Hear my prayer! The King is right here! If he finds me in the morning, he'll beat me up, or maybe even kill me! What should I do?

(waits for a few moments, then)

Thank you, Lord. I have an idea, and I know it came from you.

(rolls up his sleeping bag, tiptoes to where SAUL is sleeping. Puts the rolled sleeping bag down next to SAUL.

Tears a strip (Velcro) from the bottom of Saul's cloak)

I'll leave my sleeping bag here, and take this piece of cloth as proof I was here and could have done something much worse to the King if I had wanted to. Maybe this will convince him that he doesn't need to be jealous or afraid of me.

(DAVID takes a couple of steps back, then gets a running start, jumps over SAUL and heads out the 'mouth' of the cave)

DAVID

I need to find Jonathan.

(looks around)

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

JONATHAN

(enters)

I'm here, David. I was so worried about you! I didn't know my father would decide to stay in the same cave you were hiding in!

DAVID

I know! It was a little scary when he and his soldiers came so close to where I was. God protected me, that's for sure.

JONATHAN

What did you do? How did you escape?

DAVID

(hands him the piece of cloth)

Your father didn't even see me. He was sound asleep. Tomorrow, give this to him. Let him know that I have not done him any wrong, and that the Lord is our judge.

JONATHAN

OK, I will.

DAVID

Thanks!

JONATHAN

David, you've always been my friend. But now I know you'll be a great King, the greatest King in Israel.

DAVID

No, Jonathan. Our true King is the Lord.

(end scene—SONG)

SONG

(end SONG)

ACT III

SCENE: AT THE PARK

BRYAN

Why didn't David just stand up for himself? He was strong and brave. I'll bet he could have punched Saul and made him quit it.

SUE

That wouldn't have solved anything. I think it was more brave to walk away from the problem.

ENRIQUE

It sure helped that he had Jonathan for a friend.

BRYAN

Yeah, friends are good to have, but hard to find.

SUE

We're your friends, Bryan!

BRYAN

(scuffs his toe in the dirt, looking down. Trying not to cry)

Maybe if I run away and hide in a cave you can bring me pizza and chocolate chip cookies?

ENRIQUE

(sarcastic, which means saying the exact opposite of what he means)

Great idea!

(more serious)

Except the nearest cave is, like, a thousand miles away.

SUE

I hate when the other kids act mean but I don't know what to do. I can't beat them up for you.

BRYAN

Duh! I know that!

SUE

But I can strike them out sometimes.

ENRIQUE

Yeah, you throw the best of any girl I know!

BRYAN

You are a pretty good pitcher, Sue.

SUE

I just wish they didn't take it out on you when they strike out or do something else dumb in the game. It's like they think if they pick on some other kid, that no one will notice what a loser they really are.

BRYAN

I didn't think of that.

(he brightens up, starts to smile)

ENRIQUE

(to Sue)

So the next time you strike one of those guys out, you and I will be ready to make sure they don't get all mean and bullying.

SUE

(softly)

It makes me feel all nervous inside. When they start picking on Bryan, and the other kids, I just want to stick my fingers in my ears and pretend I don't hear them.

BRYAN

Hey, it's okay. You don't have to stick up for me. If you do they'll just start saying mean things to you, too.

ENRIQUE

But that's just it! The only way they'll stop is if we start standing up for you!

SUE

Are you sure it will work?

ENRIQUE

Of course I'm sure! It worked for Queen Esther!

SUE

Queen Esther? You mean another person from the Bible?

BRYAN

Oh, yeah! It's a really cool story.

SUE

I don't remember that Bible story. What happened?

ENRIQUE

Well.. Esther was a young girl when the King needed a new Queen. He searched through the whole Kingdom to find the most beautiful girls to choose from and he chose her.

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

SUE

That leaves me out!

BRYAN

(loyally)

Does not! You're pretty and you can pitch!

SUE

Yeah, whatever. I bet she was amazing.

ENRIQUE

Actually, she was just a simple, ordinary girl until she allowed God to use her to do something amazing.

BRYAN

She was a hero, just like David. She saved her people from being totally killed by their enemies.

SUE

How'd she do it? A giant slingshot?

BRYAN

Nope. She just talked.

ENRIQUE

Something you're good at, that's for sure!

SUE

You've gotta be kidding.

ENRIQUE

About you being good at talking? Nope. Totally serious.

SUE

No, you crazy kid. About her saving her people by talking!

BRYAN

Well, there was a little more to it than that. Basically she stood up for her people, like standing up for her friends.

SUE

Ok, tell me more!

(end SCENE, change SCENE)

SCENE: AT XERXES PALACE

(The women's part of the palace. Girls cluster together. ESTHER sits by herself. She looks nervous)

PERSIAN GIRLS

(May say this in chorus, or the lines can be divided between various speakers.)

(optional verse to add more lines)

We're the prettiest girls
From the cities and Towns
But we're jealous of Esther
'Cause she wears the crown

(Singsong, taunting)

You're too skinny,
You're too fat,
You're the Queen
But you ain't all that!

GIRL 1

You make a lousy Queen!

GIRL 2

Just because you win a beauty pageant. They should have picked me instead.

GIRL 1

You? You don't know anything about being a Queen, either.

GIRL 2

I know it takes more than just being pretty.

GIRL 1

Yeah, it takes brains. Too bad you don't have any.

GIRL 2

I've got more than SHE (pointing at ESTHER) does!

(ESTHER tries to ignore them, they move closer, flanking her)

GIRL 1

How long has it been since you even saw the King?

ESTHER

He's been very busy.

GIRL 2

Sure he has...and you're getting older and uglier!

PERSIAN GIRLS

Ugly, ugly, ugly!

ESTHER

(hands over her ears, trying to drown out the sound)

Stop that!

PERSIAN GIRLS

(mocking)

Stop that, stop that! Stop that!

(MORDECAI enters, and GIRL 1 sees him)

GIRL 1

Oh girls! Guess who came to visit Queen Esther? Her geeky cousin Mordecai!

(ESTHER hurries to other side of the stage to meet MORDECAI)

MORDECAI

Terrible news, Esther. Our people, the Israelites, are going to be killed! Our enemy Haman got the King to sign a decree that we are all to be executed in a month!

ESTHER

Why?

MORDECAI

He's a tattletale, and worse he's a liar. He claims we are plotting against the King.

ESTHER

(worried)

The King likes him better than me, Mordecai. I haven't even seen the King for weeks. And the law says I can't go to him unless he sends for me.

MORDECAI

Esther, you are the only hope of our people. You must go to the King anyway.

ESTHER

But he can have me killed for that!

MORDECAI

God will protect you, but you must be brave.

THE COURAGE TO STAND STRONG/ Sara Boepple

ESTHER

I don't know, Mordecai. The King might not believe me.

MORDECAI

You have to show him the difference between Haman and you. Trust him to be able to tell which of you is trustworthy and which is the liar.

ESTHER

(Sighs) Tell our people to pray for me, Mordecai. I'm going to need the Lord's help!

(MORDECAI leaves and ESTHER Crosses
back to the girls on the other side of the stage)

GIRL 1

The King won't see you, you know. Because you're ugly! And stupid!

ESTHER

(Picks up her crown, puts it on her head)

I'm NOT ugly! And I'm NOT stupid! (softer) but I am scared. What if he doesn't like me anymore?
What if he'd rather be friends with mean old Haman than me?

(end SCENE, SONG)

SONG

(End SONG)

SCENE: XERXES PALACE

ESTHER

I couldn't ask him to withdraw the decree -the law says once the King signs a decree it can never be withdrawn. But I convinced him to change it...instead of our people being executed, the decree now says that our people have the right to defend themselves.

MORDECAI

You stood up for what is right. You stood up for our people.

ESTHER

I reminded him of what was fair. The rest is up to God!

(ESTHER and MORDECAI are joined by ISRAELITES on one side of the stage. SONS OF HAMAN enter on the other side.

SONS OF HAMAN

We're the sons of Haman
We're mean and we're tough
We're taking what's yours, enough is enough!
(they bang on their shields)

ISRAELITES

You're mean and you're tough and you've got lots of pride, but you forgot one thing—God is on OUR SIDE!

(ISRAELITES yell, produce prop swords from their robes, and charge the SONS OF HAMAN, who turn and run off stage, followed by ISRAELITES. This is a lot of fun for the kids. Will take a little execution on the part of the adults. You may try having them run down off the stage and along the aisle to the back of the sanctuary, where they can change out of their robes and leave the props safely out of the way)

(end SCENE, change SCENE)

SCENE: AT THE PARK

SUE

Queen Esther did save her people, didn't she?

ENRIQUE

They all did it together. Together, they trusted the Lord. They prayed together, worked together, and stood up for each other against their enemies.

BRYAN

True teamwork.

SUE

I guess that's why there's so much about baseball in the Bible—teamwork!

ENRIQUE

About baseball? In the Bible?

SUE

Of course! Adam and Eve played in the big inning, the prodigal son made a home run —

BRYAN

And David struck out Goliath!
(all three of them laugh)

ENRIQUE

I guess there is a lot about baseball in the Bible. But best of all there's a lot about lessons for life.

SUE

Speak up!

BRYAN

Be brave because God is on your side!

ENRIQUE

Do what's right even when other people aren't!

ALL

(together)

And stand up for what you believe!

(end SCENE, SONG)

SONG

(End SONG)

CURTAIN