

Leadership Based Bible Stories
Lessons from Queen Esther

Discussion Points

1. Read the Book of Esther.

Icebreaker questions and questions to guide the discussion:

- Growing up, who was like a second set of parents to you?
- When you want to treat yourself what is something you do?
- What does this story sound like to you?
- How do you think Esther felt about being selected for the king's harem?
- What impresses you the most about Mordecai?
- Why would Mordecai prohibit Esther from revealing that she was a Jew?
- What is your opinion of beauty contests?
- What can you most relate to in the story?
- How are you feeling right now about your relationship with God?
- How can this group pray for you?

2. Scripture Verses: The book of Esther. Chapters One through Ten

- This book describes a fascinating story of God's providence that transpired back in Persia while many of God's people were resettling in Palestine.
- Many believe that Mordecai the Jew penned this book. Others do not think so.
- If the book was written during the days of King Ahasuerus, then the date would be about 475 B.C.

3. What is the setting of this story?

(Option - Small activity: Have the participants outline the story in their table groups in small group fashion and have some groups present)

- The book was written to show God's providential care for His people while they were in captivity and in a poor spiritual condition.
- The Esther story takes place in the time of the book of Ezra – between the first and second returns. The story takes place in Susa, one of the capital cities of the Persian Empire.
- More than a generation had passed since Cyrus defeated the Babylonians and allowed the Jews to return to Israel. Still, many Jews remained spread throughout the known world, making their home among their captors. The book of Esther features some of these expatriates.



- The story revolves around 10 banquets. (*Option – ask this question or make this a small group activity: Ask – What is the biggest bash you have attended in the last few years and who was invited?*)
- The reader is informed of the removal of the Persian queen Vashti. Her husband King Ahasuerus demanded that she appear before him and the leaders of the nation. Perhaps in a state of drunkenness, the king was demanding a lewd display on the part of the queen. She refused and the king removed her from her position as queen.
- To fill the position there was a nation-wide beauty contest. Young women would join the king's harem and then the king would decide which would be queen.
- Haman's murderous Plot.
- Mordecai's intercession
- Divine protection for God's people
- Mordecai receives honor
- Haman's Execution
- The Jews Avenged
- Purim Instituted – the annual Jewish feast of Purim came out of these events in Persia and celebrates the Jews' deliverance from their enemies. The Book of Esther recounts how the Feast of Purim came to be celebrated – a feast still observed today by the Jews in memory of Jehovah's sovereign, providential care of his people.
- Mordecai is elevated to a position of great prominence in his kingdom.

4. What do we know about Esther?

Esther was...

- Being raised by her cousin Mordecai because of the loss of her parents.
- Jewish.
- Instructed not to reveal that she was Jewish.
- Had the ability to win favor with others, particularly those in great authority. She was liked by her peers and all who knew her.
- Obedient.
- A risk taker.
- Clever and took advantage of God's timing.
- A worshipper of Yahweh.
- Persuasive.

5. What lessons can we take away from Esther and her story?

- We learn the value of integrity, gentleness and obedience.
- Leadership is work. Hard, but good work.
- Leadership is critical for a people to grow to maturity and to thrive.



- Leaders are stewards, not masters of the people or their resources. They are entrusted with the responsibility of exercising care and responsibility as they develop their people's potential for mission and productive work. Essentially, therefore, leaders are servants of the people.
- Integrity and maturity are critical for leadership work since leaders not only exercise influence but also have a symbolic role. The primary basis on which someone is suited for leadership is their character.
- Whether of small or large influence, leaders are providentially placed by God to make a difference.

6. How did God use Esther?

- God is involved in our work and workplace for His own glory and His good purposes.
- We are divinely placed. Our providence means that we are not accidental.
- She saved a nation.

Note:

This facilitator discussion was prepared by Ms. Cheryl Jagers.

Excerpts from the following sources were used:

- Benware, Paul N., "Survey of the Old Testament," Moody Publishers: Chicago, IL. 1993.
- "The Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study", Zondervan Bibles: Grand Rapids, MI and Serendipity House: Littleton, CO, 1998.
- Stevens, R. Paul, "Work Matters, A Biblical Perspective on Labor," W.M. B. Eerdmans, 2011