

# THE **STORY** BEFORE THE **STORY**

*Esther 4:12-17*

## **BIG IDEA**

*Wade into God's river to join God in what He is doing.*

## **INTRO TO THE FAMILY GUIDE**

Thank you for opening this guide. We are glad that you've decided to *continue the conversation*. Below you will find discussion questions geared toward adults and families. Whatever unit you are in, we would love for you to interact with each other and dig deeper into what we learned today. If you are alone, feel free to pick up the phone to call, text, or digitally interact with a friend on these questions.

The age-based questions for families cover 4 different stages of life—preschoolers, elementary students, middle schoolers, and teens. Parents, it's always awesome to model vulnerability with your children, so, even though each section does not specifically invite parents to share please do so.

## **SUMMARY FOR THIS WEEK**

We begin our family guide with some description of the 4 characters which will help you answer some of the questions that follow:

- Xerxes the king is disengaged and he seems to be motivated by comfort for the first half of the story
- Haman is driven by power which is an attempt to cover his deep insecurity. Jealousy and hatred are out of control. The king is a pawn. What is Probably comfort. He is powerful but crooked. Haman is a lot like Satan--wants to be like God.
- Esther is unsure of her identity and she hides it. She starts off as a pawn...the orphan kid but she becomes the queen. She seems "wishy washy". She reluctantly begins to engage in large measures because she trusts Mordecai. Later her courage is on full display. She is motivated by faith.

- Mordeci saved the kings' life before our story even begins. He is straight shooting and direct. He is motivated by mission because of his security. He sees the bigger picture and invites those around him to do the same.
- The fifth character is God Himself. The Hero.

## **PRESCHOOL**

1. Have you ever felt scared to do something before?
2. What did Esther do when she felt scared? (She had the people fast and pray with her, she chose to trust God in the midst of uncertainty.)

## **ELEMENTARY**

1. When Esther got scared what did she do?
  2. What are some things you can do when you feel scared?
  3. Pull out a phone or tablet and take a look at the selfie camera and then the panorama view. What things do you notice about each? Remember to keep your eyes on God's big panorama picture rather than your selfie mode.
- Xerxes the king is disengaged and he seems to be motivated by comfort for the first half of the story. The king is a pawn.
  - Haman is driven by power which is an attempt to cover his deep insecurity. Jealousy and hatred are out of control. He is powerful but crooked. Haman is a lot like Satan-- wants to be like God.
  - Esther is unsure of her identity and she hides it. She starts off as a pawn--the orphan kid. But, she becomes the queen. She seems "wishy washy". She reluctantly begins to engage in large measure because she trusts Mordecai. Later her courage is on full display. She is motivated by faith.
  - Mordeci saved the kings' life before our story even begins. He is straight shooting and direct. He is motivated by mission because of his security. He sees the bigger picture and invites those around him to do the same.
  - The fifth character is God Himself. The Hero.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

1. Which of the four characters do you identify with the most: Esther, Mordecai, Haman or the king (see the bullet points above for some descriptors of each character). Explain why you chose this person. Talk about which character you would like to be and why (Parents, point out that these good desires are desires that come from their redeemed heart. Consider celebrating this with them!).
2. When Esther was faced with uncertainty and risk in her future, she chose to trust God in the midst of the unknown and act in faith. What are some ways you can act in faith right now?
3. Pull out a phone or tablet and take a look at the selfie camera and then the panorama view. What things do you notice about each? Remember to keep your eyes on God's big panorama picture rather than your selfie mode. Share any ideas that will help us to do this!

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

1. Which of the four characters do you identify with the most: Esther, Mordecai, Haman or the king (see notes and quotes above for some descriptors of each character). Explain why you chose this person. Talk about which character you would like to be and why (these good desires you identify are desires that come from your own redeemed heart; we can be super grateful to God for these desires that He has placed in our hearts.).
2. This virus is a time to grow. Does God have something better for us than the "normal" we long for? Is he calling us to something beyond that? Explain your answer.