

### Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

### Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

### Icebreaker

Question: How good are you at keeping secrets?

- Nobody tells me secrets. I guess that answers the question.
- It depends on the secret.
- I like to post people's secrets on my secret Twitter account. Is that bad?
- I can keep a secret. I'm like a vault.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Read Esther 2:19-3:15

### The Story of Evil

There are so many subplots in this story. Secrecy, assassination plots, concubines, obedience, disobedience, and more. Which one of these subplots seems to be most important to the king, to Mordecai, to Esther, to the reader?

Question: How can we see the providence of God so far in this story?

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How do you tend to see God at work you your life? What do you tend to see?

- Fate
- Coincidence
- Design
- Divine Providence
- Destiny
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Four years are between the end of chapter 2 and verse 1 of chapter 3. We meet a new character in verse 1. What is significant about Haman? Why was Mordecai not promoted? (1 Samuel 15:1-8)

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Question: Why won't Mordecai bow to Haman?

- Personality differences
- Religious reasons
- The old family squabble
- He was probably old and his knees hurt
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Has there been a time in your life when your loyalties to God were tested? Can you think of any current issues that might test our loyalties to God?

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In conflicts of conscience, are you more of a

- Mordecai - pacifist protesters
- Ahasuerus - easily swayed
- Haman - enraged politician
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What two things does Haman tell the king to get the king on Haman's team against Mordecai? What does Haman appeal to?

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Question: Why do you think Haman was able to turn his personal squabble against Mordecai into a genocidal plan against the Jews?

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The conflict between Haman and Mordecai is more than just a family feud. This is the conflict of all conflicts. It's the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. This conflict goes back to the Seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent. It's the battle between the reign of Christ and the reign of the antichrist. It's the same battle that is raging today. Our enemy, the devil, is prowling around like a lion looking for someone to devour.

How does it make you feel to know that the battle raging in Esther 3, is the same battle we are fighting today? Who is our real enemy?

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## The Story of Goodness

The month of Nisan. The first month of the Jewish religious calendar, which began in spring with the Passover (Ex. 12:1-2). While the Jews prepared to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt, Haman plotted their destruction. (From ESV Study Bible notes)

What would the people of God be thinking about at passover? How would the current events around them shape their memory of passover?

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But we also should remember that we don't stand in the same place as Esther and Mordecai. We stand in the age of fulfillment. The Seed of the woman has already come and has crushed the Serpent's head. *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.* (Colossians 2:15)

For Discussion: Though the battle rages, the war is over. How does this give you comfort today, and tomorrow?

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## Work It Out!

One thing I'll do differently because of this sermon:

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