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 - thought about Vashti
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- ___ 6. If I had been Esther, when Xerxes crowned me as queen, I would have...
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- reported it at once
 - joined in the conspiracy
 - thought, "Now's my chance to become Esther's king"
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- Allow members 3-5 minutes to work on the sheets. Then let volunteers share any "D" answers they came up with on their own.

Wrapping It Up

- Write on the chalkboard: God is still working.
- Ask members to share recent examples that show God at work in world events. (You may want to provide a copy of Sunday's newspaper for them to look through in a search for examples.)
- After a few minutes, ask volunteers to share personal examples of how God changed circumstances and situations in their own lives.
- Conclude with a season of prayer, thanking God for continuing to be involved in the world He created.

Faith at Home

Share Esther's story with your family, pointing out the many twists and turns. Help them to see that the story is true to life: we never know what will happen next, but God is always in control. Ask them to think of "surprising twists" they have seen in their own lives and in the lives of people they know. Then ask them how God was glorified in some of those unexpected changes.

Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word
and God's Word into your class*

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Esther 1-3

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HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.



Faith at Home – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.



Getting Started

Queen for a day

- Give each person an index card and pencil.
- **In the early days of television there was a popular program called "Queen for a Day." Each week a woman was selected to be rescued from the problems and drudgery of her normal life and—for one day—to be treated like a queen. What if you had the chance to be queen—or king—for a day? What would you want to do during that day? Write down a few ideas on the index card. You have 60 seconds to write. Then pass them in. Don't put your name on the card.**
- After 60 seconds, collect the cards and shuffle them. Then begin reading them aloud. Don't feel that you have to read all the cards. Choose the best ones and quit reading while members are still wanting more, rather than after they have already gotten bored.
- **Today we begin a study of the story of Esther, a commoner who**

became queen—not for a day, but for the rest of her life. What did Esther do when she got to be queen? She risked her life for the sake of her people. But we'll get to that later in the story. First, let's see how Esther became queen. Open your Bibles to the Book of Esther, chapter one.

Exploring God's Word

Study guide

● Give each person a pencil and a copy of the following, but without the suggested answers (duplicate Item 1).

Study Guide

In your group, have each section of verses read aloud. Next, find the answers to the questions for that section. Then go on to the next section.

Esther 1:1-9.

1. Who were the King and Queen of Persia as the story begins? (Xerxes and Vashti)
2. How would you characterize the king? (wealthy, powerful, ostentatious, materialistic)

Esther 1:10-22.

3. Why did Xerxes become angry with Vashti? (she refused to come to the king's banquet)
4. What was Memucan's primary fear? (that other women would follow Vashti's lead in showing disrespect to their husbands)
5. What action did Xerxes take? (deposed Vashti as queen and proclaimed that every man should rule his own household)

Esther 2:1-18.

6. What was Xerxes' plan for replacing his queen? (ordered beautiful young virgins be brought to his harem from which he would choose the one who pleased him most)
7. Whom did Xerxes choose to be his new queen? (Esther)
8. What do we know about her background? (her Jewish name was Hadassah, she was the cousin of Mordecai who raised her when her parents died)

Esther 2:19-23.

9. How did Mordecai save the king's life? (learned of a plot to assassinate him and reported it to Esther who, in turn, told the king)
10. Since the king knew of Mordecai's deed, how did he reward him? (no reward is mentioned)

Discussion questions (spend one or two minutes on each):

- Who do you think are the heroes and villains in the story so far? Why?
- How do you explain the fact that a poor Jewish captive was suddenly elevated to the position of queen of Persia?
- Have members get into groups

of three to seven persons. Tell groups to choose a leader and begin working on the study guide.

- Allow 15-18 minutes for groups to read, study, and answer the questions. Then lead the class to compare their answers.

Scripture reading

- **If we compare the month and the year of Xerxes' reign mentioned in Esther 2:16 and 3:7, we find that the events in today's study took place about four years after Esther became queen.**
 - Have someone read aloud Esther 3:1-11.
 - **Verses 12-15 give the details of the proclamation of death sent out by Haman: eleven months after the proclamation, on a single day, all the non-Jews of Persia were to slaughter the Jews of Persia and plunder their goods. The order went out in all the languages of the kingdom. Haman's murderous plot was set in motion.**
 - Have someone read aloud Esther 3:12-15.

Making It Personal

Interactive Bible study

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the following (duplicate Item 2). Encourage members to put themselves into the Bible passage and answer the questions.

Interactive Bible Study

- ___ 1. If I had been Vashti, when Xerxes called for me to come to his banquet, I would have...
 - A. refused to go
 - B. gone, but not had a good time
 - C. encouraged him to come to my party instead
 - D. _____
- ___ 2. If I had been Xerxes, when Vashti refused to come to me, I would have...
 - A. sent everybody home
 - B. crashed her party
 - C. not worried about it
 - D. _____
- ___ 3. If I had been Memucan, when the king asked me what to do about Vashti, I would have...
 - A. told him to get rid of her and find another queen
 - B. suggested he send her cards and flowers
 - C. encouraged him to forget the incident
 - D. _____
- ___ 4. If I had been Esther, when they came to get me for the king's harem, I would have...
 - A. hidden so they couldn't find me
 - B. looked forward to the change of scenery
 - C. demanded a signing bonus
 - D. _____

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