

- Erase the chalkboard and have someone list responses as members suggest them. They may mention: go on a mission trip; minister in a homeless shelter; agree to serve in a new way; take a public stand on a moral issue; speak up when someone is making critical statements about church leadership; share one's personal testimony with an unbeliever; contribute to a benevolence fund; commit to a career in missions or ministry.

Group discussion

- Use the following questions to lead the class in a group discussion.
 - What are the benefits of taking such risks?
 - Do those benefits outweigh the risks?
 - Are there some risks not worth taking? Why? When?
 - What changes would make those risks worth it?

Wrapping It Up

- **Next week we will see what happened when Esther took her risk. Maybe next week we could also hear from some of you about what happened when you took a risk to be obedient to God's leading in your life.**

- Call on someone to lead the class in prayer.



Faith at Home

With your family think through what makes a risk worth taking. Start by talking about risks that are not worth taking (depending on your family's make-up you might mention copying someone's homework, texting while driving, premarital sex, getting drunk). Then help them decide when it would be right to take a risk. Be sure that God's will and God's glory figure into the discussion rather than just the possibility of personal benefit.

Teacher's Toolbox

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

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Esther 4-7

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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

Thinking about risk

- Write on the chalkboard: RISK.
- **What is risk? What does the verb, risk, mean? What does it mean to risk?** Wait for responses. Then suggest this definition: "to expose oneself to injury, damage or loss."
- **Why would someone risk on purpose? Why would someone intentionally expose himself or herself to injury, damage or loss?** Wait for responses, which may include: because of the hope of a greater gain, because of the need of a greater cause, in order to help or protect someone else or something else of great value.
- **People like to talk about risk. If you look online or in a book of quotations, you'll find many sayings related to risk. Here are a few (display Item 2):**
 - **The important thing is this: To be able at any moment to sacrifice**

- what we are for what we could become. (Charles Dubois)
- Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. (Helen Keller)
 - You've got to go out on a limb sometimes because that's where the fruit is. (Will Rogers)
 - A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are for. (John A. Shedd)
 - To win you have to risk loss. (Jean-Claude Killy)
 - Living at risk is jumping off the cliff and building your wings on the way down. (Ray Bradbury)
 - Today we are going to look at a couple of people who were willing to risk. One disobeyed a law he believed to be unjust. The other agreed to expose herself to possible death in order to help her people. Either or both could have avoided taking the risk, but because they risked, they had a part in changing history.

Exploring God's Word

Four monologues

- Hand one of these monologues to each of four different persons (cut apart Item 1). Have them read them aloud in the numbered order.

1. Haman

My name is Haman, which means “magnificent.” Very appropriate since I am the most highly placed noble in the entire kingdom. No one but the king himself is more revered and honored. Everything in my life is perfect, except one little thing, a “little man” named Mordecai who refuses to obey the king’s command to kneel down to me. Every time I see him standing there in defiance it makes my blood boil. I would like to do away with him and everyone like him.

2. Mordecai

My name is Mordecai, which does, indeed, mean “little man.” Haman may despise me and ridicule me all he likes, but I am not about to bow down to a man like him. He may have the king fooled, but we know what kind of self-centered, prideful, egotistical, wicked person he is. And don’t blame my refusal to honor Haman for his murderous plot against the Jews. He may use me as the excuse, but Haman alone bears full responsibility for that evil scheme.

3. Xerxes

My name is Xerxes, king of Persia. When you are king, you have to depend on other people. You have to put somebody in charge. And when you put somebody in charge, you need to trust him and give him latitude to do the things he thinks should be done.

So, when Haman, whom I had elevated above all the other nobles in the kingdom, said there was a group of people who were a problem and needed to be eliminated, I gave him free reign. I can’t be troubled by countless details. That’s what I have Haman for.

4. Esther

My name is Esther, queen of Persia, for four years now, ever since King Xerxes chose me to replace Vashti who had angered him. Just because I’m queen doesn’t mean I have any power, authority, or even influence. When my cousin Mordecai asked me to intervene with the king, he was asking me to risk my life. At first I resisted the idea, but then Mordecai helped me see that refusing to risk showed a lack of courage, faith, commitment, and compassion. And refusing to risk can be much more dangerous than risking itself.

- After the monologues, have someone read aloud Esther 4:1-17.

Question and answer

- **What did Mordecai ask Esther to do?** (go to the king and plead for her people)
- **What did Esther point out as a problem with Mordecai’s request?** (entering the king’s presence uninvited was punishable by death unless the king acted specifically and immediately to spare that person’s life)
- **What did Mordecai warn**

Esther? (her silence would cause the destruction of herself and her family while God provided relief and deliverance in some other way)

- **What did Esther ask Mordecai to do?** (gather the Jews of Susa to fast for her as she prepared to risk her life in approaching the king)

Group assignments

- Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one a one chapter, Esther 5, 6 or 7.
- Ask each group to study the chapter and make a list of five adjectives describing each of these persons: Esther; Haman; and Xerxes.
- Allow 7-10 minutes for study. Meanwhile, erase the chalkboard and divide it into three columns, headed: Esther, Haman, and Xerxes.
- Then let each group, in order, tell the story from its assigned chapter and list adjectives in each column of the chalkboard.

Making It Personal

Brainstorming

- **What are some ways that a believer today might be called upon by God to “risk,” to expose himself or herself to injury, damage or loss for the sake of other people or the Kingdom of God?**

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RISK

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