

Esther
Leader Guide
(NASB and ESV)

A MAN AND
A WOMAN FOR
SUCH A TIME
AS THIS

Esther Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)
© 2010, 2013, 2019, 2020 Precept
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422

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4th Edition (11/2020)

USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**ESTHER
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Esther 1–2

HISTORICAL SETTING

To begin your first discussion you can ask your group about the timing and setting of Esther. Tell your group to look at “The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther” chart as a visual aid for this part of your discussion. Also, use the map when appropriate.

When did the events of Esther 1 take place?

In the 3rd year of King Ahasuerus—Xerxes

He ruled the Persian kingdom from his throne in Susa.

What main events in Israel’s history took place before the events of Esther? Discuss information in the cross-references on Day Five, also.

Because of sin in Judah and Jerusalem by the people who didn’t listen to God’s messengers, His prophets, the Jews were exiled in three stages by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

The Jews’ exile or captivity lasted 70 years.

2 Kings 24:8-16

Babylon destroyed the city and the temple; they took the people and temple articles.

Daniel 5

Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon used the gold and silver vessels from God’s temple at a feast he gave for 1,000 of his nobles. That very night he lost his kingdom.

The Medes and Persians conquered the Babylonians—Chaldeans.

Darius the Mede received the kingdom. Cyrus the Persian reigned with him.

2 Chronicles 36:9-23

At the end of the 70 years, the Lord stirred Cyrus’s spirit to proclaim that the Jews could return to build the Lord’s house in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 44:24-45:7

This was prophesied by Isaiah about Cyrus more than 100 years before Cyrus was born.

The timeline shows that the temple was completed prior to the time of Esther.

ESTHER 1

Verses 1-4

What happened and when?

King Ahasuerus ruled over 127 provinces in the kingdom of Persia and Media.

In his 3rd year as king, he gave a banquet / feast for his princes, attendants, army, and nobles (ESV—officials, servants, army, nobles, governors). Then he displayed / showed before them for 180 days

- the riches of his royal glory
- the splendor of his greatness

Verses 5-9

What are these verses about?

The king then had a banquet / feast, for seven days for all the people in Susa.

He seemed to want his entire kingdom to know how great he was.

Queen Vashti also gave a banquet / feast for the women.

Verses 10-12

What happened in these verses?

The king wanted to display / show his queen's beauty also.
On the seventh day, when his heart was merry with wine, he sent for her.

But Queen Vashti refused to come before him and those gathered with him.
Then the king became angry.

Give time for your group to discuss if this kind of thing has happened to any of them or people they know.

Sometimes when not thinking clearly, people want to display what they have.

Consider what provokes this—pride, self-focus, feelings of . . .

You might also discuss how to handle refusals from others.

Verses 13-22

What was the result?

The king asked counsel of his wise men, his seven princes of Persia and Media.

Memucan pointed out that the Queen had wronged all men in the kingdom.

The king and his men also thought that her refusal would be an example for all wives to refuse their husbands. There would be plenty of contempt and anger / wrath.

An edict / royal order was proposed and accepted that Vashti no longer be queen. She was deposed and she could no longer go into the king's presence.

It also stated that a man was to be master in his own house / household and was to be the one in the family who spoke the language of his own people.

NOTE: Some who lived in the provinces of the Persian Empire had been brought there from other nations. Therefore, the language of a particular family could have been something other than Persian. Speaking the language of one's own people carried with it some authority over the family.

The purpose of the edict / decree was for wives to honor their husbands.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what they noted as a possible theme for chapter 1.

King Ahasuerus displayed / showed, and Queen Vashti refused; edict / order

ESTHER 2

What was the time of the events in this chapter?

You might direct your group to look at “The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther” as a visual aid at this point. Maybe even note Esther 1 and Esther 2 on the timeline.

Verse 16 says that it was the seventh year of Ahasuerus, four years after Esther 1:3. There was at least a twelve-month period from verses 1-4 to verse 16.

Verses 1-4

How do the events continue from chapter 1?

When the king's anger had subsided / abated, he remembered Vashti.

- What she had done
- What was decreed against her

The solution presented by the king's servants was for beautiful young virgins to be brought to him. From them a new queen was to be selected.

Again the king took the suggestion from those around him.

Verses 5-7

Who is introduced in these verses and what did you learn about him?

Mordecai

A Jew

Great-grandson of one taken from Jerusalem into exile with King Jeconiah

Brought up his uncle's daughter

Took her as his own daughter

According to the timeline, which exile was that?

Mordecai's great-grandfather was taken in the second exile in 597 B.C.

Mordecai's family did not return to Jerusalem when Cyrus made his decree at the end of the exile.

NOTE: If your group studied Ezra, they might remember that it was only those whose spirits God stirred who returned.

Who else is introduced in these verses and how is she described?

Esther

Hadassah—probably her Hebrew name

Mordecai's cousin

Parents dead

Beautiful

What word associated with Esther also described Vashti and the virgins the king was looking for?

Beautiful

The king wanted a beautiful wife like the one he had.

In chapter 1, he wanted to display Vashti's beauty.

Verses 8-11

What happened in these verses?

Esther was taken to the king's harem as one of the beautiful young virgins.

Hegai favored her and gave her seven choice maids / chosen young women, cosmetics, and the best place in the harem.

According to Mordecai's instructions, she didn't disclose that she was a Jew.

According to Ezra 4, why might Mordecai have told Esther not to reveal her people to anyone? You might use “The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther” timeline as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Ezra 4:1-6

King Cyrus of Persia made a decree that Jews who wanted to return to Judah and Jerusalem after the 70 years of exile should go and rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem.

Zerubbabel led the first group to return to their land.

When the Jews got there and began rebuilding, there were enemies who lived close around them.

They didn’t want the Jews to build anything. For years the enemies tried to frustrate or frighten the Jews to keep them from rebuilding.

They even wrote an accusation against the Jews in Judah to King Ahasuerus in the beginning of his reign.

That was shortly before the events in Esther 2.

Verses 12-14

What happened to the women taken to the harem?

12 months of beautification / beautifying

6 months with oil

6 months with spices and cosmetics / ointments

1 night with the king

Taking with her whatever she wanted from the harem

Next morning

Returned to second harem as a concubine

From then on, she was only with the king when he called for her.

Verses 15-18

What happened to Esther?

When her turn came, she used wisdom in taking with her only what Hegai advised.

Hegai was not the only one who favored Esther. All who saw her did.

Her turn was the 10th month in the 7th year of King Ahasuerus.

He loved and favored her and made her queen.

Great banquet / feast for Esther

Holiday (ESV—granted a remission of taxes) for all provinces
Gifts from the king

You might ask your group what they learned from their lists about Vashti and Esther.

Verses 19-23

How does this chapter end?

Mordecai sat at the king's gate, a place of prominence.

He heard of a plot against the king and told Esther who told the king in Mordecai's name.
The plotters were hanged, and Mordecai's name was written in the king's chronicles.

Ask your group what they noted as a possible theme for Esther 2 on their At a Glance chart.

Esther chosen as Queen

To end this discussion, you might ask what lessons for life they learned from Esther 1 and 2.

**ESTHER
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis:

- Esther 3–4

REVIEW

To begin your discussion you can ask your group how Esther 3 begins.

“After these events / things”

To review Esther 1–2 you can ask, “After what events / things?”

If they can’t review from memory, then tell them to look at their At A Glance chart for this information.

Esther 1

King Ahasuerus displayed his riches and splendor.
He called for Queen Vashti to display her beauty, but she refused.
She was removed as queen.

Esther 2

Beautiful young virgins were brought to the king.
Esther was loved and favored over all and made queen.
Mordecai’s name was written in the chronicles.

ESTHER 3

When did the events of this chapter take place?

Verse 7 says that it was the 12th year of King Ahasuerus.
Five years after chapter 2, when Esther was made queen

If your group noted on “The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther” when Esther 1 and 2 took place, then they might want to do the same for Esther 3.

Verses 1-6

Who was introduced, and what happened in these verses?

King Ahasuerus promoted Haman above all his other princes.

Mordecai refused to bow to Haman, even though the king commanded it.

How was Haman described in verses 1 and 10?

Haman the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews

What was Mordecai's stated reason for not bowing to Haman?

Verse 4, he was a Jew.

Ask about the cross-references which might relate to why Mordecai didn't bow to Haman.

Exodus 17:8-16

Amalek attacked Israel when they came out of Egypt.

Joshua led Israel to win the battle, but the Lord said He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. He wanted Amalek's memory utterly blotted out.

Numbers 24:7

In this prophecy about Israel, Balaam said Israel's king and kingdom will be exalted over Agag.

1 Samuel 15

Saul, Israel's first king was told by the Lord to utterly destroy Amalek whose king was Agag. God said He wanted to punish Amalek for what they did in Exodus 17 (ESV—I have noted what Amalek did to Israel).

Saul spared Agag, the king of Amalek.

Samuel, the Lord's prophet, confronted Saul and killed Agag himself.

NOTE: Some commentaries say that Haman was not a descendant of this Agag.

What was Haman's reaction to Mordecai's refusal to bow?

Rage / fury, and a desire to destroy all Jews throughout Ahasuerus's kingdom

Verses 7-11

What happened in these verses? Also ask about the cross-references.

Haman chose the day he wanted to carry out the destruction.

Pur, the lot, was cast to determine the day.

Proverbs 16:33

The Lord directs the outcome of casting the lot.

Acts 1:15-26

Lots were used by the apostles to choose the twelfth one to replace Judas.
The Lord chose Matthias.

Then he went to the king with a plan to decree the destruction.

He was willing to pay 10,000 talents, a vast amount, to accomplish his plan.

The king gave him authority to destroy the people he told the king about.

It doesn't say that he told the king they were the Jews. He called them "certain people."

Verses 12-15

How does this chapter end? Tell your group to look at the chart "Two Edicts" in the Appendix.

On the 13th day of the 1st month, Haman dictated to the king's scribes what he wanted in the edict.

The edict was to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews in one day, the 13th day of the 12th month.

There were 11 months to send out the letters to the 127 provinces and prepare for the destruction.

Haman and the king sat down to drink while the city of Susa was in confusion.

Would this edict have affected the Jews in Judah who had returned from the 70 years of exile? Relate this to the cross-references in Ezra 1 and 4.

Ezra 1:1-3; 4:6-16

Judah was part of King Ahasuerus's kingdom. It was ruled over by the Persian Empire from the time of Cyrus.

Their enemies close by had written King Ahasuerus, and later King Artaxerxes, to stop them from rebuilding the city of Jerusalem.

The Jews there would also be destroyed.

You might give time for your group to discuss what they learned about the three men in this chapter—the king, Haman, and Mordecai. Ask what they learned from each that is appropriate for application.

How does Proverbs 6:16-19 relate to Haman?

Haman was haughty and devised a wicked plan to shed innocent blood.

Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart again and ask about a theme for this chapter.

Haman's plot to destroy the Jews

ESTHER 4

Verses 1-3

What was Mordecai's reaction when he heard of Haman's plot?

Public and bitter wailing / or cry
Sackcloth and ashes

Ask what your group learned about sackcloth and ashes from the cross-references.

These were signs of mourning, humility, and repentance.
Fasting was included sometimes.

Lead the discussion back to Esther 4.

What was the reaction of the Jews in King Ahasuerus's provinces?

Great mourning with fasting, weeping, wailing / lamenting, sackcloth, and ashes

Verses 4-8

How did Esther respond to Mordecai's sackcloth, and what happened?

Great anguish (ESV—deeply distressed) when she heard
But she didn't know the reason for the sackcloth.

She sent clothes to him so he would remove the sackcloth and come to the king's gate.

Mordecai refused the clothes and told Hathach about Haman's plan to destroy the Jews.

He even sent a copy of the edict / decree to Esther. He wanted her to plead for the Jews before the king.

Verses 9-12

What did Esther say?

The king had not summoned her for 30 days.

Anyone who went to him without being summoned was killed unless he extended his scepter to that one.

Verses 13-17

What was Mordecai’s reasoning and response back to Esther?

If she remained / kept silent and the Jews were destroyed, so would she be.
She was the only one of her father’s house, so it would end with her death.

But he also said relief and deliverance for the Jews would come from another source.

How did he know that? Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about this statement Mordecai made. What was it based on?

Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-16

God promised to make a great nation of Abraham and give him and his descendants / offspring a certain land (Israel, the land of promise) forever.

Jeremiah 31:27-37

He spoke of a new covenant with Israel forever. And God said that if His fixed order for day and night depart, then Israel will not remain a nation before Him forever. If the heaven and earth can be measured, then He’ll cast off Israel.

Ezekiel 37:19-28

God’s everlasting covenant of peace is for Israel when He gathers them from all the nations and cleanses them, when He sanctifies them.

It seems that Mordecai knew these promises from the Lord about the Jews.

NOTE: Jeremiah prophesied to the Jews in Jerusalem before, during, and after the exiles to Babylon. Ezekiel prophesied to the Jews in exile. Mordecai’s forefather had been taken to Babylon in the second exile. It’s possible he heard both Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s prophecies regarding Israel and passed on the information to his family.

What was Mordecai’s last point of reasoning to Esther?

She might have attained royalty for such a time as this.

How did she reply the last time? And ask what your group learned from the cross-references about fasting that fits this context in Esther 4.

Assemble / gather the Jews in Susa to fast for her for 3 days.
She and her maids / young women would do the same.

2 Samuel 12:16 and Joel 2:11-17

Fasting was done to make requests of the Lord.

Then she would go to the king.

If she perished, then she perished.

What is a possible theme for Esther 4? Tell your group to look at the At a Glance chart.

Mordecai told Esther about Haman’s plan, edict / decree—If I perish, I perish

What was Esther willing to lay down to save her people?

Relate this to Mark 8:34-38 as the final application for this discussion.

She risked her life.

To follow Jesus

Deny self

Take up cross—death to self

Lose life for His sake

**ESTHER
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- Esther 5–7
- God in Esther

REVIEW

To begin your discussion, you can ask your group what the main events are of Esther 1–4. They might look at their At A Glance chart for this information. They might also look at “The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther” chart.

Esther 1 3rd year of Ahasuerus’s reign
King Ahasuerus displayed his riches and splendor.
Queen Vashti was removed as queen.

Esther 2 7th year of Ahasuerus’s reign
Esther was made queen.
Mordecai’s name was written in the chronicles.

Esther 3 12th year of Ahasuerus’s reign
Haman plotted to destroy the Jews.

Esther 4
Mordecai informed Esther to go to the king

How did Esther 4 end? What was Esther’s request to Mordecai?

All the Jews in Susa were to fast for her 3 days before she went to the king to plead with him for her people.

ESTHER 5

What are the events of this chapter?

On the 3rd day, the last day of fasting for Esther, she went to the king.

Again she was favored—2:9, 15, 17.

When King Ahasuerus asked for her request, she invited Haman and him to a banquet / feast.

Esther exhibited wisdom and humility before the king.

You might ask if this is a good example of making requests, and if so, how does it apply to those in your group. How did Esther use her beauty and status for good?

What does this chapter say about Haman?

He was glad and pleased of heart (ESV—joyful and glad of heart) to be invited two days in a row to a banquet / feast with the king and queen until he saw Mordecai.

Mordecai still didn't honor Haman.

So Haman's glad heart turned to anger again.

When he went home, he built himself up before his wife and friends, those who changed their minds the next day. Haman displayed his greatness as King Ahasuerus did in chapter 1.

You might give time for your group to briefly discuss how people still do this today.

What was the suggestion to make Haman feel better?

Their suggestion was to hang Mordecai and end Haman's displeasure.

He had gallows built 50 cubits—75 feet—high, which seems a bit extreme.

His hatred for the Jews and especially Mordecai was extreme.

The good things in his life were reduced because of it. His happiness was robbed by his hatred.

You can give time to discuss application of this.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what they noted as a possible theme for Esther 5.

Esther went to the king, first banquet / feast

ESTHER 6

What happened in this chapter?

The king couldn't sleep, and it was read to him about Mordecai informing him of the plot in 2:21-23.

Haman went to see the king about hanging Mordecai.

When planning how the king might honor him, Haman discovered that Mordecai was the one to be honored.

Haman was the one mourning in this chapter.

But when he talked about it to his friends and wife, they predicted his fall before the Jews.

Ask about a chapter theme for Esther 6.

King honored Mordecai

ESTHER 7

What happened when Haman went to Esther's second banquet / feast?

The king asked Esther again what her request was.

He was willing to give her half of his kingdom.

Again, Esther exhibited humility in exposing Haman and his plan to destroy her and her people.

What happened when the king discovered who Haman wanted to destroy?

Haman was terrified.

The king left in anger / wrath.

Haman wanted to beg Esther for his life.

When the king returned, he thought that Haman was trying to assault Esther.

Haman was taken away and hanged on the gallows he intended for Mordecai.

Mordecai was honored as Haman wanted to be, and Haman was hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai.

The predictions that his wife and friends made were true.

He fell before the Jew.

Ask what application your group saw in this chapter.

Ask what they wrote as a chapter theme on their At a Glance chart.

Haman was hanged

GOD

For the last part of your discussion, you might ask your group how they've seen God in Esther.

ESTHER
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4

Lesson emphasis:

- Esther 8–10

REVIEW

To begin your discussion you can ask your group what the main events are of Esther 1–7. They might look at their At A Glance chart for this information.

Esther 1 3rd year of Ahasuerus’s reign
King Ahasuerus displayed his riches and splendor.
Queen Vashti was removed as queen.

Esther 2 7th year of his reign, about 4 years after chapter 1
Esther was made queen.
Mordecai’s name was written in the chronicles.

Esther 3 12th year of his reign, about 5 years after Esther became queen
Haman plotted to destroy the Jews.

Esther 4 Mordecai informed Esther to go to the king.

Esther 5 Esther went to the king

Esther 6 King Ahasuerus honored Mordecai

Esther 7 Esther exposed Haman to the king; Haman was hanged

The events of Esther 3–7 took place within a few days during the 12th year of Ahasuerus’s reign.

When did chapters 8–10 take place?

During the same year as chapters 3–7.

If your group is noting the chapters of Esther on their timelines, then you can ask if they’ve done that for these chapters. Note Esther 3–10 close to 473, the Feast of Purim.

ESTHER 8

How does the chapter begin?

On that day—the day Haman was hung

Verses 1-8

What are the events on that day?

Esther disclosed to the king her relationship to Mordecai.

The king gave Mordecai his signet ring, which indicated authority.

King Ahasuerus gave Haman's house to Queen Esther, which probably meant all that Haman had. She then set Mordecai over it all.

When Esther wept and pleaded / implored with the king to prevent Haman's plan, the king again extended / held out his golden scepter.

He could not revoke the letters to destroy the Jews because injunctions or statutes / ordinances signed by the king couldn't be revoked according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, Daniel 6:8, 12, 15.

To correct the situation the king told Esther and Mordecai to write to the Jews as they saw fit and seal it with his signet ring.

Verses 9-14

How did Mordecai's edict compare or contrast to Haman's?

The chart on the "Two Edicts" is a good visual aid for this part of the discussion.

Scribes were called on the 23rd day of the 3rd month to write Mordecai's edict.

That was about 9 months prior to the day the Jews were to be destroyed according to Haman's edict.

Mordecai's edict specifically mentioned it was to the Jews as well as to the leaders and people. It was written in the language and script of the Jews as well as everyone else's.

Both Haman's and Mordecai's edicts were sealed with the king's ring and sent by couriers riding steeds / swift horses. This probably indicates that these were the fastest and strongest horses.

The Jews were granted to assemble and destroy, kill, and annihilate the entire army of any people or province who attacked them. They could kill those who tried to fulfill Haman's decree—avenging themselves.

Both edicts gave the right to plunder.

Both of the edicts called for action on the 13th day of Adar, the 12th month.

Verses 15-17

What was the response to Mordecai and the decree?

When Mordecai went out in royal robes and a large / great crown of gold, the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. Contrast this with the response to Haman’s decree in 3:15.

Light, gladness, joy, and honor for the Jews.

A feast and a holiday for the Jews in every province.

Many became Jews, because of their dread / fear of the Jews.

According to the cross-references on Day Two, what does “became Jews” / “declared themselves Jews” mean?

Servants bought from other nations were to be circumcised as the Jews were—God’s covenant in their flesh.

The sabbath was to be kept holy by those from other nations who visited or lived in Israel. They, along with slaves in Israel, could celebrate the Passover like the native of the land if they were circumcised.

The same laws applied to all of them.

Ruth the Moabitess left her land and went with Naomi when she returned to Bethlehem in Israel. She said, “Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.” She married Boaz, an Israelite, and birthed Obed, the grandfather of King David.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask about a theme for Esther 8.

Esther and Mordecai’s decree / edict to the Jews

ESTHER 9

When did this chapter take place?

13th day of Adar, the 12th month

the day Haman wanted to destroy the Jews

the day Esther and Mordecai saved the Jews

Verses 1-19

What happened?

The Jews assembled / gathered against any who tried to harm them so that no one could.

Relate this to Haman. He couldn't stand before Mordecai the Jew.

The Jews killed 500 men in Susa, along with Haman's 10 sons.
But they didn't take any plunder.

In the provinces, they killed 75,000 on that one day and again didn't take any plunder.

The king offered to grant Esther a further request, and she asked for the Jews in Susa to have one more day to do according to the edict and for Haman's ten sons to be hanged.

What happened on the 14th of Adar? Why hang dead men?

300 killed in Susa and Haman's 10 dead sons hanged

What do the cross-references in Deuteronomy and Galatians say about one who is hanged?

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Galatians 3:13

Whoever is hanged is seen as accursed of / cursed by God.

What else happened on the 14th of Adar?

The Jews in the provinces spent this day feasting and rejoicing (ESV—made that a day of feasting and gladness), while the Jews in Susa feasted and rejoiced on the 15th of the month.

Verses 20-32

What resulted from these two days?

Mordecai recorded the events and sent letters to celebrate the 14th and 15th of Adar annually with feasting, rejoicing / gladness, and sending portions / gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

The days were called Purim after Pur, the lot, and were for the Jews, their descendants / offspring, and all who allied themselves with them (ESV—joined them).

Esther and Mordecai wrote to confirm the second letter

—words of peace and truth

—to establish Purim with instructions for their times of fasting and lamentations.

Let your group discuss what celebrating Purim would mean to a Jew today. It's still an annual holiday for them.

What is a possible theme for Esther 9?

Jews defeated their enemies in 127 provinces; Purim

ESTHER 10

Who is the focus of this chapter? What does the text say about him?

Mordecai

authority, strength (ESV—power and might)
king advanced him to greatness (high honor)

second to King Ahasuerus
great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen
(ESV—popular with multitude of his brothers)
sought the good / welfare of his people—the Jews
spoke for the welfare of his whole nation (ESV—spoke peace to all his people)

Tell your group to look again at their At a Glance chart and ask what they noted as a theme for this last chapter in Esther.

Mordecai, 2nd to king, sought good for his people and whole nation's welfare

Ask if anyone noted a Segment Division on their Esther at a Glance chart.

One segment division some may have noted:

Chapter 1	3 rd year of Ahasuerus's reign
Chapter 2	7 th year
Chapters 3–10	12 th year

How do the ways Mordecai and Haman used their authority contrast?

You might end by asking your group how God spoke to them

through the lives of Mordecai and Esther,
through what they learned about God,
through studying the book of Esther.