Esther Issue 6 Leader Plan

The Enemy at the Table | November 12, 2026 | 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Tonight's teaching follows three movements. Esther makes the consequences of the decree personal. Haman's downfall exposes a wider responsibility. Esther receives resources and asks again for her people's lives. Help the group discover those movements in the words and actions of the text.

Lead the evening

Time	Reading and facilitation
7:00–7:18	Share highs, lows, significant moments, and prayer requests. Passing is welcome.
7:18–7:25	Recall the second banquet doorway. Read the inside front cover, Esther 7:1–10.
7:25–7:45	Read story pp. 1–9. Pause over Esther's wording, the king's responsibility, and the couch scene.
7:45–7:52	Read the centerfold, story pp. 10–11. Explore what Haman's downfall resolves and what it leaves behind.
7:52–7:55	Read the back cover, Esther 8:1–7.
7:55–8:12	Read story pp. 12–21. Follow the estate, ring, reunion, Sarai's request, and Esther's renewed plea.
8:12–8:19	Use member p. 3 to investigate the transfers of property and authority in pairs.
8:19–8:25	Choose one question from member p. 4 and write one action for the week.
8:25–8:30	Pray from the opening requests and the needs the passage has brought to mind.

Prepare five places in your Bible

Mark Esther 3:8–13, 7:3–4, 7:7–10, 8:1–6, and Genesis 41:42. Put member handouts and pens at each seat. The printed centerfold is story pp. 10–11. The front Scripture is 7:1–10 and the back is 8:1–7. The comic closes with 8:8b.

Use the new material while reading

Ask for discoveries at the marked pauses. Compare the two pleas before the centerfold; run the power-transfer activity after the story. Member p. 5 supplies dates and Scripture beside the panels; p. 6 identifies the people. Consult these as questions arise. If check-in runs to 7:20, trim two minutes from early banquet pauses. Begin prayer by 8:25.

Read Esther online

https://esther.gappjunction.com

Scan the code or use the address above. Sign in and choose Read Esther to open the digital issues.

Teach the Banquet Conversation

7:18–7:52 | Story pages 1–11 | Member pages 1–2

Listen for the wording of the request

After the first Scripture reading, follow every panel on pp. 1–5. The meal and service let Haman assume his place. At Esther's request, read 7:2–4 again. Ask one reader to locate 3:8 and another 3:13. Let them explain what Haman's description conceals and what Esther's words bring into view.

Teach the verbal connection. The three destructive verbs in 7:4 repeat the language of 3:13 in Hebrew. Esther names the order's consequences and places herself among those marked for death. The narrator has already shown us the king's authorization. Now the king has to hear its effect on someone he knows.

Teach the choice of address. The passive wording about being sold leaves the king's role implicit at first. The NET notes identify that restraint. In 7:6 she names Haman directly. Ask how the sequence makes a hard truth hearable. We can describe her words without claiming to know every calculation behind them.

If someone asks about the reference to slavery in 7:4, use leader p. 5. The final clause has translation difficulties. Keep the shared emphasis on a threat to life and the seriousness of her appeal.

Separate the narrator's account from the king's accusation

Continue through pp. 6–9. Haman's appeal to the authority he was given is added dialogue, grounded in the earlier grant of the ring. Pause briefly at the silent garden. Ask, "Who else has a responsibility here?" Xerxes gave his authorization in 3:10–11.

At the couch, read 7:7 before 7:8. We are told why Haman stayed. Xerxes returns to a scene he interprets as assault. Creasy imagines Haman clinging while begging, and the comic shows unwanted contact and Esther's resistance. The exact physical choreography is interpretation.

Compare Esther's request for her people in 7:3 with Haman's request for himself in 7:7. His fear is evident. A confession or attempt at repair is absent from the account. Ask what repentance would require us to notice about the people harmed.

Let the centerfold raise a further question

Read the report at upper left, command at upper right, and lower panorama. Harbona brings Mordecai's earlier loyalty into this decision. Compare Haman's purpose in 5:14 with the result in 7:10. Psalm 7:15–16 offers a related image of a trap returning upon its maker.

Read the last clause of 7:10, then recall 2:1. The king's anger has subsided before. Ask, "Whose crisis has ended?" Hear the answer from the families affected by the order. The back-cover reading will put their remaining danger into Esther's own request.

NET notes on Esther 7 • Translation notes on 7:4 • Howard on royal responsibility

Teach What Follows Haman's Fall

7:52–8:12 | Story pages 12–21 | Member page 3

Listen for three different transfers

Read the back cover, Esther 8:1–7. Ask the group to listen for property, royal authority, and responsibility for property. Follow story pp. 12–15 through the estate grant, family disclosure, reunion, and signet. Allow the warmth of the embrace to register before turning to the next request.

Verse 8:1 names Esther as the recipient of Haman's estate. Verse 8:2 names Mordecai as recipient of the king's ring and as the person Esther appoints over the estate. The comic gives family memory and affection to the reunion. Scripture gives the kinship disclosure and the transfers.

Let the people outside the room define their needs

On pp. 16–17, Sarai notices Esther's distress and offers companionship. Esther offers a room nearer to her, while Sarai asks to go home. The offer of closeness and the wish for freedom are different requests. Ask what an attentive friend must hear before choosing a response.

Then let Joel's news and Ada's question interrupt the relief. Joel can report Haman's death. He cannot report a change to the order. The family is invented, but the danger they identify is the reason for Esther's renewed biblical appeal. Sonder now asks us to judge the news from their home.

Watch Esther become more specific

On pp. 18–20 she crosses, kneels, receives the scepter, and asks for action. The comic stages a second unsummoned approach; 8:3–4 gives the pleading and scepter without specifying that entry. Mordecai joins after the scepter. The conversation rearranges 8:7, 8:6, and 8:5.

Ask how her request has developed since 7:3. At the banquet she asks for life. In 8:5 she asks for the harmful letters to be reversed. In 8:6 she explains why she cannot be content with a favorable outcome for herself. Let the group connect concern with the concrete action she requests.

Stop where the printed issue stops

Story p. 21 uses the legal constraint in 8:8b. The comic defers the first part of that verse to Issue 7. The king's apology is added dialogue. Note the adaptation choice if someone has the full verse open. The historical question about irrevocability is on leader p. 5.

8:12–8:30 Investigate respond and pray

Run the activity on leader p. 4 for seven minutes. Then choose one main question from member p. 4. At 8:24 give members a minute to write an action. Pray at 8:25 using the opening requests.

"God, help us hear the people affected by our decisions. Give us courage to speak truth, humility to own our part, and wisdom to use what we have been entrusted with. Keep us attentive when others are still waiting for relief. Amen."

Lead the Transfer of Power Activity

8:12–8:19 | Member page 3 | Answers and follow-up

Give everyone a task in the text

For two minutes, pairs read 8:1–2 and fill in the three rows. For two more, compare the signet with 3:10–11 and read 8:3–6. Use the last three minutes to hear one answer per row and identify the need still awaiting action. Keep both passages open.

Transfer	Answer from the passage	What it establishes
Haman's estate 8:1	Xerxes gives it to Esther.	Esther receives property. The grant reverses Haman's fortunes.
Royal signet 8:2a	Xerxes gives it to Mordecai after recovering it from Haman.	Mordecai receives delegated royal authority.
Estate management 8:2b	Esther appoints Mordecai over the estate.	Mordecai administers property given to Esther.

Answer the unresolved-need question

The people still face the destructive order. Esther asks for the letters to be reversed (8:5) and speaks of the devastation to her people and family (8:6). Receiving an estate or a ring does not itself change that order. Look for this answer in the verses before asking members to apply it.

Compare the two recipients of the ring

In 3:10–11 the king delegates power to Haman. In 8:2 it passes to Mordecai. Ask, "What would show responsible use of this authority now?" Possible answers include listening to those at risk, understanding the continuing order, and using the position to seek their protection. Keep those as obligations to consider at this point in the story.

Add the Joseph connection

Read Genesis 41:41–43 if time allows, or summarize the signet in verse 42. Creasy explicitly compares Mordecai's elevation with Joseph's. Pharaoh's signet accompanies Joseph's administrative appointment. The resemblance makes delegated authority and service visible across two biblical stories.

If someone asks whether Mordecai now owns the estate, point back to the two givers. Xerxes gives Esther the property; Esther places Mordecai over it. If someone asks whether the ring solves the danger, have them read the appeal that follows in 8:3–6.

Connect the activity to ordinary responsibility

Invite one example of being entrusted with something that affects others, such as a budget, a recommendation, a team decision, or another person's story. Ask whose needs the holder must learn before deciding how to use that trust.

Esther 8 • Genesis 41

Deeper Notes for the Leader

The difficult sentence about slavery in 7:4

The final Hebrew clause has two major readings. Some translations say the distress would not justify troubling the king. Others say the enemy could not compensate for the king's loss. An economic interpretation therefore needs qualification. Esther is making a desperate court petition. Her wording should be understood in that setting when discussing the reference to slavery.

The money offer in 3:9 helps explain the possible allusion in being sold. The narrative leaves the actual payment unrecorded. Keep the clear threat to life at the center of the discussion.

The ruler's anger and the community's danger

Compare 2:1 with 7:10. Both describe the subsiding of royal anger. This is a textual echo we can observe. The further judgment that emotional satisfaction can leave damage unresolved comes from reading that echo beside the renewed plea in 8:3–6. Howard's commentary helps direct attention to the king's earlier authorization and unreliable judgment.

Creasy's contributions to this issue

In the supplied transcript, the chapter 7 discussion after approximately 35 minutes imagines Haman groveling and clinging to Esther. His chapter 8 discussion after approximately 40 minutes highlights the estate reversal, the signet, and the Joseph parallel. He also pauses over the continuing decree. The exact couch gestures are dramatization. Use the text to distinguish what is narrated from what he pictures.

Providence and moral agency

Schifferdecker sees God's faithful care working through human courage and wisdom. That reading helps the group consider Esther's testimony and choices. The narrative also leaves people accountable for decisions made with real authority. Invite participants to explain how they perceive God's care without claiming that every event reveals a command or that courage guarantees quick success.

Persian context relevant to this passage

An estate is a source of resources and influence; a signet authorizes action in the king's name within the story. These functions explain why the transfers matter. The king's assertion that a sealed order cannot be revoked should be distinguished from a verified universal Persian legal rule. Ben Zion Katz questions whether surviving Persian and Greek evidence establishes that general rule.

For the execution, Hebrew etz refers to wood or a tree. Translations differ between gallows or hanging and a pole or impalement. The print edition follows the NLT's pole language. Fifty cubits is conventionally about 75 feet. The artist chooses the pictured mechanism and setting.

NET chapter 7 notes • UBS and SIL on 7:4 • Howard • Schifferdecker • Katz on Persian law

Responses for Our Conversation

All four questions from member page 4 | Invite the group's answers first

The examples below show how to ground a response in the passage. Use a follow-up when the group notices something different, and allow time for members to revise their own first impressions.

Esther gives the threatened people a face

Compare Haman's description of the Jews in 3:8 with Esther's words in 7:3–4. What becomes visible when she says "my life" and "my people"?

"Haman presents the Jews through their difference and alleged disobedience. Esther speaks as someone whose own life and family are at stake. The king must now connect his permission with the fate of a person before him. I hear her asking him to recognize the human meaning of the decision. Sonder asks whether I can extend that recognition beyond someone I already know."

Two people ask to live

Compare the pleas for life in 7:3 and 7:7. Whose lives concern each speaker? What evidence would help us distinguish fear of consequences from repentance?

"Esther asks for her people's lives alongside her own. Haman asks Esther to help him survive. His fear does not tell us everything about his inner state, but the narrator gives us no confession or repair. I would look for ownership of the harm, concern for those affected, and action to address it. That is a question I need to bring to my own requests for another chance."

Whose experience tells us the outcome

At 7:10 the king's anger subsides. By 8:6 Esther is still pleading. Whose experience should determine whether the problem has been addressed?

"The king can feel satisfied that Haman has been punished. Esther still sees her people under the order. Their continuing danger has to count in the assessment. I would ask whether the threatened households are safer and what still has to happen for them. Someone's relief at having dealt with a culprit is only one part of the evidence."

Stay with the people after the apparent ending

Where would you be tempted to stop the story and call it a success? What would it mean to keep listening to Ada or Sarai, and what action could you take for someone still waiting this week?

"I might stop at the execution, the reunion, or the ring. Ada's question makes me ask whether the harm has actually stopped. Sarai makes me ask whether my offer addresses what she wants. This week I could contact someone whose problem has faded from attention, ask what still needs doing, and agree on one useful step I can follow through."

Ada and Sarai are invented characters. Their scenes apply a question already present in Esther's renewed appeal. Members can answer with an ordinary example or keep their written action private.

Close with a name and a next step

Give a quiet minute for the response line on member p. 4. Invite two short contributions. Return to the prayer requests from the opening and the prayer on leader p. 3.