

High School Hero: Esther (name means: "Star" or "Hidden"; maybe " Hidden star")

Description: Lessons from the lives of teenagers in the bible meant to help teenagers with life today! All throughout the Bible, there are teenagers with a heroic faith in God, that led to a fruitful living. This summer, we are going to study the lives of teenagers in the bible, learn more about their heroic faith and make applications to the lives of high schoolers in 2020. **All that stands between you and a heroic story is total surrender.**

Context: Before the events of the book of Esther occurred, the Jews had been taken into exile by the Babylonians, then 70 years later, some Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel & Ezra. While some Jews were re-establishing the nation of Israel others had remained dispersed in different countries in the Ancient Near East. Most notably, an orphaned teenage girl named Esther who was being taken care of by her older cousin Mordecai. When the king of Persia goes on a yearlong search for the new queen, Esther is chosen as a candidate and ultimately becomes queen. Later on, Haman, an enemy of the Jews comes up with a plot to have the Jewish people annihilated because of his hatred for one Jew, Mordecai, who refused to bow down to Haman and give him the glory he craved. Mordecai then leaped into action and asked Queen Esther to use her position of influence to save the lives of many at the risk of her own life.

Passages that tell her story: The book of Esther, but specifically **4:1-17** (Mordecai requests help, Esther obliges with great risk); **5:1-3** (Esther boldly & courageously takes a risk); **8:1-4, 17** (the edict against the Jews is reversed, other people become Jews); **9:21-22, 28** (feast of Purim established)

Esther 4:7-14

Mordecai told him the whole story, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to direct her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. ⁹ So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai's message.

¹⁰ Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: ¹¹ "All the king's officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold

scepter. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days." ¹² So Hathach gave Esther's message to Mordecai.

¹³ Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. ¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

Heroic Story: Esther organizes a banquet, then requests another banquet, the king has a dream and plans to honor Mordecai, at the second banquet Esther makes the request to spare the Jews from Haman's plot. Haman is beheaded and a decree goes out that protects the Jews from their death sentence. Esther's courage saved her life and the entire Jewish nation.

¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die." ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Heroic Principle: Surrendered to God, you are always in the right place at the right time to respond boldly & courageously and take a risk for the good of others.

Heroic Application:

1. What difficult conversation have you been putting off that you know you need to have?
2. What conflict between you and a friend or family member do you need to resolve?
3. What challenge do you need to give to yourself, a close friend or group of friends to live or respond differently?