



FAITH AT HOME

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of December 4, 2022: Esther 4:1-17

Memory Verse

Esther 4:14: *"Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."*

Advent at Home II :

[Light the candle you lit last week]

The candle of hope is lit.
May hope burn deep in our hearts, minds, and souls.

[light the next candle]

Today we light the candle of peace. In a world soaked in violence, we pledge to be makers of peace. In our words, with every step we take, in our very breathing, may peace abide in us.

Let us Pray: Come, Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace, come. Help us to be light for those in darkness, and may you guide our feet in the way of peace. Amen.

After the reading, discuss how each person in the family prepares for Christmas.

(Selected content used & adapted
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Esther was raised by her older cousin, Mordecai, after her parents had died. Mordecai was a Jewish man who was taken as a prisoner by King Nebuchadnezzar when Nebuchadnezzar invaded and attacked Jerusalem. Mordecai and Esther were taken from their home in Jerusalem to Babylon. Mordecai ended up in the royal court of the king. The new king wanted a wife and there was a beauty contest to find a new wife for the king. The king chose Esther. She married King Xerxes and became the queen of Babylon.

One day while Mordecai was sitting outside the palace, he overheard someone wanting to kill the king. He told Esther and Esther told the king. They saved the king's life! Later the king made a man named Haman one of his most powerful officers. The king didn't know this man was evil. Haman was full of pride and did not like Mordecai. Haman made a plan to have Mordecai killed along with all the Jewish people in the land.

Remember, Esther was Jewish, but neither the king nor Haman knew this. The king listened to Haman and signed a law setting a day that all the Jewish people would be killed. Mordecai was so upset he tore his clothes and cried. Someone told Esther, so she sent her servant to find out why Mordecai was upset. He told the servant what Haman had tricked the king into planning and how Esther needed to talk to the king. Esther was afraid because anyone who went to see the king without an invitation could be killed. Mordecai told her, "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

Activity:

For Such a Time as This

Crowns: *You will need: strips of gold, silver, or white cardstock with cut out peaks like a crown and long enough to wrap round child's head with a little overlap, pencils, scissors, markers, crayons, stapler.*

Give each child a crown and ask them to draw some symbols from the story, for example praying hands, a love heart, a thumbs up hand to represent courage, a person shape to represent taking action or doing something, and a clock to represent 'such a time as this'. Fit the crown to their head and then staple or tape at appropriate point. Talk about Queen Esther and how she prayed and acted to make a difference in her time. Discuss with the children their ideas of what they can do to make a difference now.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to be quiet when we need to be quiet. Help us to speak up when we need to say something. Thank you for giving us Jesus who is the true king. Amen.

Esther knew she might be killed, but decided she must risk her life to save others - to save her people. Putting others first is what makes someone a hero! She went to the king and he was not angry, but invited her in to talk to him. She asked to give a banquet and invite Haman.

Esther was not only beautiful and kind, she was also wise. She knew she could not just accuse Haman of evil, but would have to be careful how she revealed what he had done. She also knew she would need God's help. She asked all the people to fast and pray to God. Esther also fasted and prayed.

When it was time for the banquet, Haman came proudly. Yet Esther revealed nothing to the king. Instead she invited them both to another banquet the next day. At the second banquet, Esther told the king how her people's lives were being threatened along with her own and asked for their lives to be spared. The king was angry because he loved Esther. He asked "who would do such a thing?" Esther pointed to Haman. The king then made a law allowing the Jewish people to come together and defend themselves. After this everyone in the land honored the Jewish people, Mordecai, and Queen Esther. She was a real hero in a real story.

Theme and Family Discussion: There is a time to act. Esther was afraid to act because of the fear of death. She decided that she had to do something. Good people cannot sit back when bad things are happening around them. Have you ever done something that was scary or difficult to do? How do we get ready for Christmas? In the story, they talked about fasting. Usually, fasting involves not eating. There are other ways we could "fast." We could fast for a day from social media. We could fast for a day from TV or video games. How can you "fast" in preparation for Christmas? Do we think God has a plan for our life? How might God use us to make the world better?