

celloutlines | overview of theme

INTRODUCTORY NOTES FOR LEADERS

Welcome to the 2010 summer cell notes – all based around the story of Esther!

The book of Esther is one of the most intriguing books of the Old Testament and has everything to capture the attention of today's young people: a beautiful heroine, a dastardly villain, an extremely proud, rich king, and a courageous leading man. The story includes a beauty pageant, an assassination plot, a planned holocaust, some grisly deaths and above all the inspiration of a young person who, displaying tremendous wisdom and courage, rises up to fulfil her destiny. God is not mentioned once in this book, but the evidence of Him at work is obvious throughout the unfolding of the dramatic events that take place.

We believe that the book of Esther will challenge and inspire your cell group this summer and encourage them to dig deeper into God to find him at work in all areas of their lives.

We aim to inspire them with hope and faith, and a sense of purpose and destiny, that they will know that they have been chosen and set apart for 'such a time as this'. Over the course of the five weeks the following themes will be explored through the Bible studies.

Week One: Who's In Control?

Sovereignty: understanding that God is always at work in and around our lives, even when we can't see what he's up to, trusting and waiting on God, knowing that God is always in control.

Week Two: Who, Me?

Chosen: We have all been chosen by God and can be used by him, regardless of our background or past history.

Beautiful: what it means to be beautiful on the inside, not just the outside.

Week Three: Speak Out

Justice: speaking out for the rights of the oppressed and marginalized groups in our world.

Week Four: For Such A Time As This

Destiny: called 'for such a time as this', God's divine purpose for each of our lives, how we can make a difference and what that means for us here and now.

Week Five: Let's Celebrate

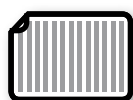
Celebration: the importance of celebrating God's greatness and goodness.

Celebrating our time together.

Each cell group is split into four sections.

Welcome: This will include an icebreaker activity to get the group warmed up and ready to discuss and study together.

Word: This section will be the main content of the study and may be split into sub-sections. It will include bible reading, group discussion and group activities.



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Prayer: This section gives you ideas for how to get the group praying together with activities around the theme of the study.

Application: Where applicable this section gives suggestions for allowing the group to think through how they are going to apply what they have learnt to their day to day lives and to commit to practical outworking of this when they go home.

Flexibility

Please take a flexible approach to each cell, adapting the group activities and discussion questions as necessary for your group. For example: if you have an older group they may not want to participate in all the games. (There are alternative suggestions for some activities for older groups so you can choose the most relevant) On the other hand, with a younger group, you may need to skip some questions in the discussion sections.

The Persian Times

Each day there are three fictional newspaper articles designed to bring the story of Esther to life in an unusual and fun way. Over the course of the five days they will outline the main events in the story as seen through the eyes of modern day reporters. These reporters are not Jews, and so are reporting the events from the outside looking in. It should be assumed that periods of time have elapsed between each article. The stories have obviously been embellished and contain more than just facts but hopefully will add some fun to the group time. You may wish to explain the above facts to your group before you begin so they are aware that it is not text from the Bible! Ask for three different group members to each read an article at the indicated place in the cell group.

Esther Factfile

Your young people will have read the Esther fact file in week three of the July material. This will ensure they have read the book of Esther and have a basic understanding of the plot and the main characters.

You Tube

Some of the days suggest that you use You Tube clips to illustrate a point (particularly if you have an older group who may not wish to participate in all the suggested games). You will need internet access to show these clips.

Further Resources and References

'Luv Esther: A Book For Such A Time As This.' Nancy Goudie. 2006. New Wine Ministries

'Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity' Charles Swindoll. 1997. Thomas Nelson

'Esther: Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries.' Debra Reid. 2008. Inter- Varsity Press

The Spirit Of The Disciplines. Dallas Willard. 1996. Hodder & Stoughton

Celebration of Discipline. Roger Foster. 1999. Hodder & Stoughton

The Vision and the Vow. Pete Greig. 2004. Relevant Books

'Esther' The Living Word Library.

<http://www.wordlibrary.co.uk/article.php?id=159&type=bible>

'Esther of the Bible'. <http://estherofthebible.com/sample.html>