

**Applying It In My Life** ..... Group time – 30 minutes

1. A Medo-Persian king’s edicts could not be repealed. How might your words be different if you knew you could not undo them? Read James 3:7-9, and Ephesians 4:29. What do we learn from these verses about what should characterize a Christian’s words?
  
2. Mordecai and Esther’s situation was a desperate one. Tell about a time when you faced a seemingly hopeless situation (from a Lower Story, human perspective) but God miraculously turned things around. As you walked through that situation what helped you see God’s presence and power at work?
  
3. One lesson from Esther’s story is that with or without us God is going to accomplish His will. Tell about a time you entered into God’s story and got to be part of His plan or tell about a time you opted out and missed an opportunity to be part of God’s story. What steps can you take to be ready when God puts an opportunity before you? How can you invite God into that moment and be used to fulfill His purpose?

**Prayer Time** .....Group time - 15 minutes

Thank God that even if you can’t actually see Him, He is present at every point in your life. Ask for wisdom to see when God has placed you in a specific place or time to do a work for Him. Pray for the courage to stand for God when you face situations that are driven by the evil of this world.

Finish your prayer time by praying for the needs of those in your *Growth Group*. Take a few minutes to share prayer requests. Share where God has answered any previous prayer requests.

**THE STORY**  
***A Queen of Great Courage***

**The Hangover** **Esther 1**

**The Bachelor** **Esther 2**

- God is at work in Esther’s life and in her SITUATION.

**Criminal Intent** **Esther 3-4**

- God is always watching over His OWN.
  
- God wants to work His plan THROUGH us.

**Braveheart** **Esther 4-9**

*If \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_*

*For Each of Us*

1. Look for OPPORTUNITIES.
  2. Invite God into the PROCESS.
  3. Have the COURAGE to speak up.
- God is WORKING out the whole story – trust Him, follow Him.

## GROWTH GROUP HOMEWORK

Week of Feb. 24 – Mar. 2, 2014

### Getting Started.....Group time - 10 minutes

1. Describe the biggest, most lavish party you have ever attended? What was the occasion? What were your impressions of the event and the attitude or enjoyment of the host?

FOR GROWTH GROUP TIME

### Getting Into God's Word..... Group time - 35 minutes

Read *The Story*, Chapter 20 (In preparation to answer questions)

1. The book of Esther has been called the "godless book" because God's name is never mentioned. Prayer, the Law, sacrifices, and temple worship are also conspicuously absent. What do we learn from this story about God's work behind the scenes of history?



### ***South Shores Compassion Project***

South Shores is partnering with *Y- Malawi* and *World Vision* to bring hope to those struggling with poverty in Malawi. To help us understand the need, *World Vision* is providing the *Kisongo Trek*, a first-hand, visual experience of poverty in Africa. Plan on attending this together. It will be at *Coast Hills Church* in Aliso Viejo from February 28 - March 4. Sign up as a group on our website. Do it NOW!

2. The book of Esther is full of irony, such as Queen Vashti who would not come before the king when requested and Queen Esther who came before the king when not requested. What other examples of irony can you find in the story of Esther and Mordecai? Read Esther 4:12-14. How was God working His plan through Esther and the opportunity she had to save her people?
3. Read Esther 4:15-5:2. How did Esther respond to Mordecai's request to approach the king and beg for mercy for the Jewish people? What risk did Queen Esther take by approaching the king and how did she prepare for it? What factors accounted for Esther finding favor in the eyes of the king?
4. What characteristics marked the life and behavior of Mordecai? How did Mordecai respond when faced with Haman's hatred and potential disaster for the people of God? How does Mordecai model godly character as he seeks to follow God's Upper Story in his Lower Story circumstances?
5. Throughout this entire chapter, what strikes you about Esther's character, how she related to people and the risks she took? What led up to her decision to be a woman of courage, who was willing to be used by God? What can we learn and gain from her example?