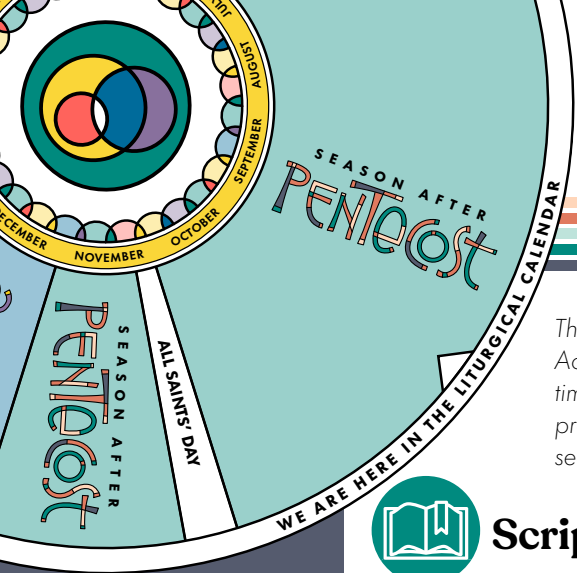


# Esther 7:1-6

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday between September 25 and October 1



The Season after Pentecost is the period between the Day of Pentecost and the First Sunday of Advent. This season makes up half of the calendar year, and its liturgical color is green. It is a time to focus on the life and growth of the Church in the world, empowered by the gift of the presence of the Holy Spirit. 12th-century mystic Hildegard von Bingen captured the essence of this season when she wrote, "The Holy Spirit is the greening power of God. Our task is to blossom."



## Scripture

If time allows, recap the story of Esther before reading the scripture.

So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.



## Questions

- This story of Queen Esther uses humor and irony to explore difficult topics of people who have power and people who don't, tension between people groups, consequences of hurting people, and standing up to injustice. What was your favorite part of the story?
- Haman was offended when the Jewish people would not bow to him. He didn't want to understand why this was. Instead, he tricked the king into thinking they were the king's enemies—this is called discrimination. Discrimination is the unfair practice of treating a person or group differently from others. When have you seen discrimination? How does it make you feel?
- When have you spoken up when you saw something unkind or unfair? Share what that experience was like for you.
- Queen Esther petitioned the king to change the law which would kill her people. A petition is a request to change something, often made to a government official or public entity. What petition can you offer to make your school, community, or country a fairer, safer place for all people?

### Look it Up!

Explore the life of Ruby Bridges.

At age six, she bravely stood up for fairness and equality by being the first Black student to integrate an all-white school. It was difficult and scary, but with the help of her community, she changed history.

If your group identifies a specific need they can act on now, make a plan together for how to make a petition. Let the group discuss ways to offer support through the process and follow up with each other about how it went.





## Activity

### Materials:

Paper Writing utensils

Tell participants Esther asked the king to save the Jewish people. A request to the government is called a petition. Esther had to be brave to do this. The laws of the time would have allowed the king to kill her if he didn't like her request.

Explain how many governments allow people to petition. In the United States of America, the First Amendment to the Constitution gives us the right to petition without punishment. If you are in another country, mention your rights to petition your government.

Together, design a pretend government for your group. Name your country, and come up with five silly and outlandish laws. Decide who will be the leader, and what their title will be. Split participants into groups of two to three. If your whole group is less than five, this can be done individually. Instruct each group to come up with a petition. They can petition to change any of the laws they came up with, which will help make things fair for everyone.

Give participants a few minutes to work. When the petitions are ready, tell participants to walk around to other groups and have others sign their petition if they agree. If doing this virtually, have participants explain each petition while the rest raise their hands to signal voting. Finally, have each group present their petition to the leader, mentioning how many people agreed. Share how part of being a good leader is listening to what a majority of the people want. The leader can accept or reject the petition, and explain why they made their choice.

To wrap up, discuss how we can use our rights and help our governments make the world more like God's kingdom of love and justice.

### Alternate Activity

Tell participants the king in the story about Queen Esther may have also been known as Xerxes (pronounced zerk-seez). Explain that everyone had to do what Xerxes wanted because he was the king. Xerxes wanted to make his kingdom powerful and that didn't always mean helping the people.

Play a round of "Xerxes says" (Simon Says) with silly moves, getting increasingly more complicated as the game goes on. After some rounds, but before the participants get too frustrated, take a break and remind them how Esther had to be brave to petition (ask) the king to change the rule. Define the word petition.

Ask participants to list caregivers in their lives (parents, grandparents, teachers). Tell them these people love them and help them make choices. Play Simon Says again, but this time use your name instead of Simon. Tell the children if they don't want to do the action, they can petition to do a different action instead. Come up with a signal to know they want to petition. Accept most of their petitions, and find compromises if needed. Talk about how the game was more fun because you made choices together.



## Micropractice

Sometimes we petition God for change or justice, but we forget about our petitions. Make a list of three prayers you are bringing to God. Before bed or when you wake up in the morning, take a moment of silence to look at your list once a day. Thank God as you notice changes and growth.



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: [illustratedministry.com/minirevBAP18](https://illustratedministry.com/minirevBAP18)



## Prayer

Dear God, you are always present to us. Thank you for seeing us each day. Help us have faith you are really listening. We love you, and we trust you. Amen.

What is Your  
PETITION.


QUEEN ESTHER?

(It shall be  
GRANTED)

YOU.

If I have won your


FAVOR,

 KING,

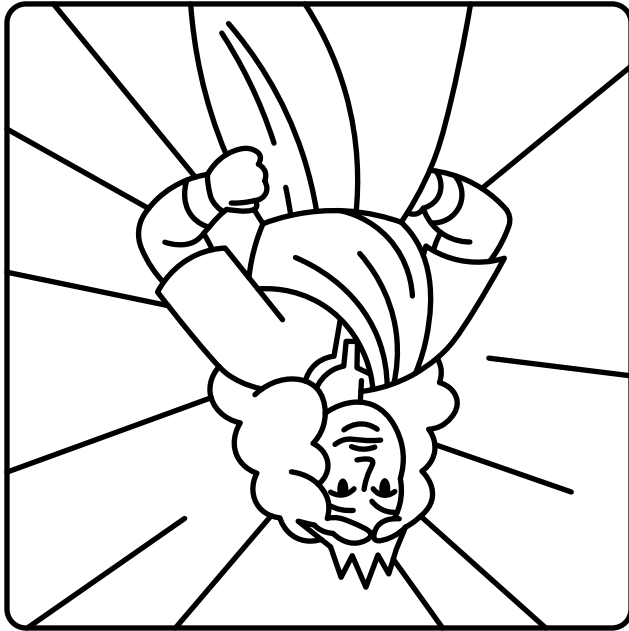
AND IF IT PLEASES THE KING,

LET MY LIFE BE GIVEN  me-

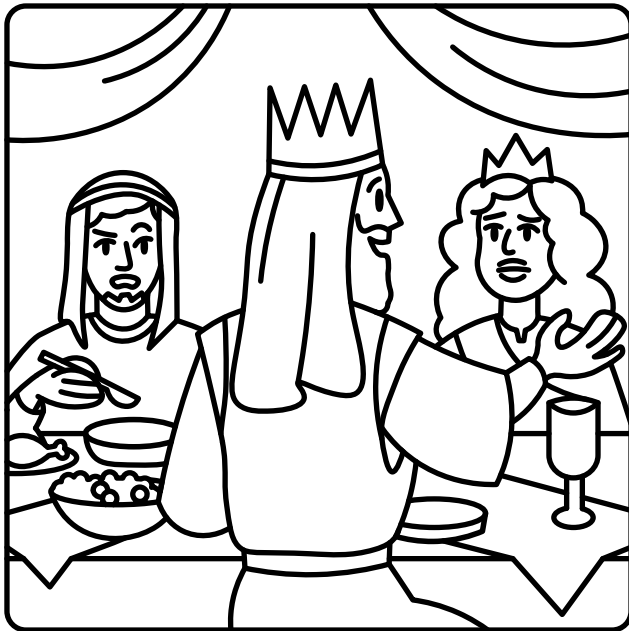
& the lives of my PEOPLE-

THAT IS  MY REQUEST.

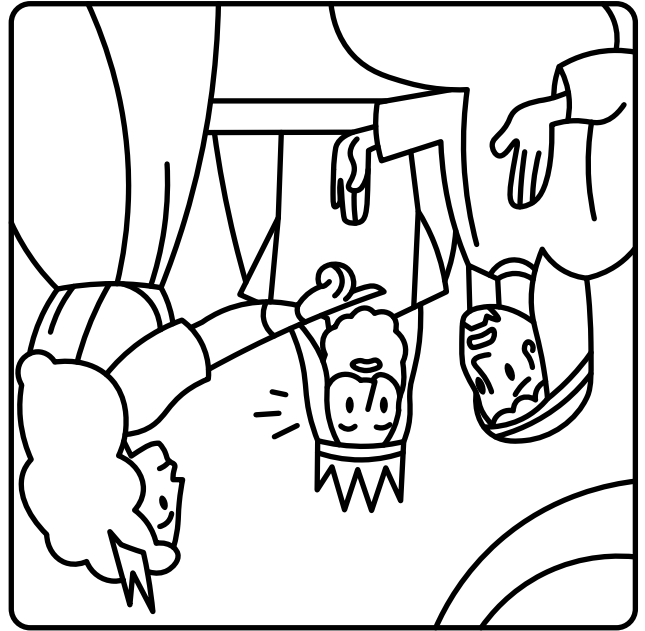




1. Once there was a young girl from Israel named Esther who was living in a land far away from her home. She was brave and kind, and soon became Queen of the Persian kingdom.



2. One day, Queen Esther invited the king and his most important official, Haman, to a big, fancy dinner. The king was so happy, he exclaimed, "Queen Esther, I will give you anything—even half my kingdom! So tell me, what do you want?"



4. The king was surprised, "Who was it that tricked me?" Queen Esther pointed to Haman and said, "Haman was the one who tricked you! He is your real enemy, not my people." Haman was terrified; his mean lies were found out and now he must face the consequences for deceiving the king.



3. Queen Esther was feeling nervous and brave. She took a deep breath and said, "I want you to stop the plan to kill the Jewish people in your kingdom. You've been tricked into thinking they're your enemy, but they're not. They are my people: my friends and my relatives. Please let them live!"