Life: It's Not A Game

Lesson 1: The Challenge

**Lessons in this series:** **1**[2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/272/lesson/the-battle.php) [3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/273/lesson/the-opportunity.php) [4](http://www.teensundayschool.com/274/lesson/the-journey.php) [5](http://www.teensundayschool.com/275/lesson/the-need.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To help students understand that life is not a game, but a challenge
2. To educate students on the Old Testament story of Esther
3. To inspire students to accept God’s challenges in life and seize opportunities to serve Him

Topics

Abilities, Boldness, Endurance, Helping, Influence,  Obstacles, Perseverance

Scripture Memorization

Esther 4:14

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (10 minutes)

Just to break the ice, here are some “risk scenarios” for each student to respond to. Get each student to answer. Encourage them to be really honest.

Would You:
•    Go skydiving?
•    Go bungee jumping?
•    Ride shotgun in a racecar traveling 200 mph?
•    Walk on a tight rope wire stretched over the Grand Canyon?
•    Here’s a deeper one: If you had 20 friends gathered around you who didn’t know Jesus, would you (and could you) tell them about Jesus?

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

**General Discussion:**
• How many of you are risk-takers?
• What’s the biggest risk you have ever taken? Were you scared? Why/why not?
• How many of you like to play it safe? Why is that?

As you’ve probably caught on by now, we’re going to be talking about taking a risk today. Today, we’re going to discuss how life is a great challenge, a challenge that God wants us to accept.

Turn to the Old Testament book of Esther.

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

*(As we often do when there’s quite a bit of scripture to read, split up these passages among your group. You could have groups, pairs, or individuals read each section. Give groups about ten minutes to read and comprehend. Then call them all back together to combine their recently acquired knowledge. Simply ask each group to summarize what happens in each chapter. This exercise will take up 10-15 minutes, but is well worth it.)*

**Read Esther 2-7**

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| **Let’s review what we’ve learned:**•    Mordecai is Esther’s cousin.•    They are Jewish and were brought to this area to be put in captivity•    Esther is selected by the King of Persia to be queen•    A man named Haman is plotting to have the Jews wiped off the map•    Mordecai learns of this plot and tries to convince Esther to do something•    Esther accepts this challenge and exposes Haman’s plot•    Haman is killed; Mordecai is honored; Esther is a hero |

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What was Esther’s challenge in these verses? *(To make a request of the king concerning the Jews.)*
2. Esther decided to take a risk, what negative outcome could she have encountered? *(She could’ve been banished or killed.)*
3. Esther was put on earth and given the challenge of saving her people. How would you have felt in her situation?
4. What do you think you would have done? Why do you say that?

Have the students read Esther 4:14-15. Take a minute to try to commit verse 14 to memory.

MAKING IT REAL (15 minutes)

It is one thing to imagine being in Esther’s shoes.  The reality is, you face similar situations every day. You might not be in a situation where your actions could save or condemn an entire people-group, but God puts us in all kinds of situations where our willingness to take some risks for Him really matters.

When those situations arise, ask yourself what Mordecai asks Esther in 4:14, “Who knows that you were not made for such a time as this?”

**General Discussion:**
1. How can following Jesus be a challenge? What do we have to lose by following Him?
2. With any risk there are things to be lost but also things to be gained. What do you have to gain by following Christ?
3. What have you been put on earth to do?
4. What challenges are before you that require taking some risks for God?
5. When it comes to taking a risk, the outcome is usually determined by someone’s priorities. If the outcome is considered “worth it,” they’re willing to risk about anything. What is following Christ worth to you?
6. What are you willing to give up in order to have a relationship with Christ?
7. What wouldn’t you give up in order to have a relationship with Christ?

**Read Mark 8:36**
Jesus says we should risk everything in order to know Him, because there is nothing else worth having if we don’t have Him in our lives. I want you to think about that today.

Some of you are willing to risk your safety for an adrenaline rush. Some of you are willing to risk relationships for your own popularity or advantage.  But life’s not a game where we try to satisfy our own desires. It’s a challenge that God has given us.

What are you willing to risk for Him?

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Pray for your group. Ask if any of your students would like to join you in your prayer that you all take risks for God in the week ahead.