

# The Ishbane Conspiracy

## Introduction

### Book Study:

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*Time: about 60-90 minutes*

*Students will learn about the themes of “The Ishbane Conspiracy” by Randy Alcorn, what will be expected of them during the study, and why they will benefit from it.*

**Supplies:** Bibles, one copy of *The Ishbane Conspiracy* by Randy Alcorn per student and leader, *Home Alone* DVD, Hershey kisses and candy bars, white board, markers, .

Begin the study by giving a brief introduction of the general themes of the book (Peer Pressure, sexual purity, party lifestyle, standing up for what is right, the occult, suicide, Image, and Spiritual Warfare) and reading the following excerpt from the author, Randy Alcorn.

**The main characters in *The Ishbane Conspiracy* are 18, 19, and 20 years old. It’s a book about young people and the struggles thrust upon them by their culture and the enemies of their souls... My daughters Angela and Katrina helped me write this book. It was my first collaboration since writing a book with my wife, Nanci, 15 years ago, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I can’t think of two people I could have worked with who would have been more qualified and skilled, both spiritually and artistically. We read and discussed books in fiction writing, brainstormed characters and plots, stimulated one another’s thinking, prayed together, had lots of fun, and shared the frustrations and mind-numbing hard work of disciplined writing. Angela and Karina are true coauthors, not token ones. This is their book as much as it’s mine, and they have my deepest respect. Angela, Karina, and I – along with their mom Nanci – are pleased to offer this book to our Lord Jesus. We pray He’ll use it to make reader of all ages aware of the spiritual battles we face. May our eyes be opened to the strategies our accursed enemies are using to sabotage the lives of young people. And may we also see in a new light the King’s joyful alternative.**

Go through the following expectations of the book study.

1. You will need to read the assigned chapters every week, usually only 3 chapters.
2. You are expected to take the content seriously and to participate in open discussion and that what is discussed stays confidential. That means that anything that is said in these rooms remains in these rooms.
3. Pray for yourself and the other people doing the book study, that they may be open the truth that God is showing us about our culture today.
4. You will only get out of this study what you put into it and we, as leaders, are here to support you and to help equip you for the life that God has called you to live in today’s world.

Show students a bag of Hershey's kisses, but don't let them see the candy bars. Give each student a chocolate kiss and instruct them to not unwrap it yet.

Ask: **Who would like to give up your chocolate kiss?**

After students volunteer to give up their candy, tell them they can give the candy to anyone they wish. Once all those who want to give their candy away have done so, bring out the candy bars and give candy bars to the people who sacrificed their candy. If no one gave candy away, bring out the candy bars and show them what they missed.

Break into gender specific small groups and read aloud *Matthew 16:24-26*.

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life <sup>[a]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

<sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

Ask: **How is what Jesus said like what just happened with the candy? How is it different?**

**What is Jesus asking us to do in this passage?**

**If we aren't supposed to seek to save our lives, what should we seek?**

Have someone read aloud *Matthew 6:33* and *Mark 12:30*.

<sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

<sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. <sup>[a]</sup>

Ask: **What does it mean to seek God's kingdom and righteousness?**

**What priority does it make God if we love Him the way Jesus described?**

Say: **Part of seeking God is putting him above other things in our lives. It's easy to let things—even good things—come between us and our relationship with God.**

Ask: **What would hold you back from full participation in this study?**

Come back together into one group in front of the projector screen.

**Video Clip: *Home Alone*** (Activity based on *Innovative Tools* by Group Publishing)

*Students will watch a movie clip that explores what it means to do spiritual battle.*

*Clip Location:* Approximately 1:13:45 through 1:15:00 when the VCR counter is set at 0:00:00 when the studio logo appears at the start of the film. Be sure to preview this clip!

*Synopsis:* Kevin unrolls his battle plans and prepares his home with booby traps and obstacles for the coming invasion by burglars.

Say: **So, what is the big deal? Why is it important to even discuss these issues? Why even bring it up? Our culture is immensely secular and will consistently try and pull us away from God. We need to have a deeper understanding of how God calls us to live so that we can be a light to our world.**

Write the following quote on the white board before the study and reveal it to the group now:

“Sometimes the best way to see a thing is to look at its opposite.” – A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

Ask: **What do you think this quote means?**

Say: **We need to “Read the enemies playbook” and learn to combat Satan’s schemes.**

Read *1 Peter 5:8-9*.

<sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

<sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Break into groups of 3-4 and discuss the following questions:

Ask: **Do you believe in spiritual warfare? Why or why not?**

**Do you think Satan keeps a “lower profile” now than he did during Bible times?**

**What are some subtle “schemes” of Satan?**

Read aloud *Ephesians 6:10-13*.

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ask: **What are some weak areas in your life where Satan might attack?**

**What are some practical things that you could do to prepare for spiritual warfare?**

Say: **We don’t hear much about spiritual warfare in 21st-century America because we don’t see a battle raging before our eyes. Satan and his minions are alive and well—just better camouflaged. We need to wake up to the reality of the spiritual warfare around us, and get equipped to fight for our own defense and for the good of others.**

End in prayer.