

Small Group Leader Guide



Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Take a Snapshot
2. Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions
3. Verses to Take with You
4. Make It Personal with Prayer

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Devotionals for Kids
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Ruth

Ruth 1

(Supporting: Ruth 2-4)

Conversation Starter

When is it hard to be brave when you don't know what's next?

Bottom Line

God can give you courage when you don't know what's next.

Memory Verse

**"When I'm afraid, I put my trust in you."
Psalm 56:3**



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the Special Needs Resource Kit for more ideas for adapting each segment.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity

What You Need

- ☐ Offering Container
- ☐ Floor Tape
- ☐ Prepared Backpacks filled with "travel items"



Inclusive Pro Tips

Pair children with a buddy and participate as a pair.

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God for each preteen in your group and the unique experiences they are walking through. Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen you when you've faced something unfamiliar. Ask God to help the preteens understand that they don't have to figure out life on their own because God is always with them!

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Designate a starting line and a finish line for both teams with floor tape.
4. Divide the kids into two teams.
5. Instruct each team to line up behind a starting line.
6. Give each team a backpack filled with "travel items."
7. Explain how to play.
 - "Each person on your team will run this relay carrying things you might need for a trip! When it's your turn, you'll put the backpack on, travel to the finish line, and return to your team. The first team to have everyone finish wins!"
8. At your signal, start the relay.
9. Cheer the kids on as they go!

② What You Say

"Whew! Awesome job journeying back and forth with that pretty heavy backpack! **[TRANSITION]** Today's true story from the Bible is about someone who took an even longer journey. They didn't have all the answers, but there was one thing that they did know that was REALLY important. Let's go find out what God wants to show us today!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/5

Take a Snapshot

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Courage Starters" Activity Pages
- ☐ Pencils



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids in a circle and give each kid a pencil.
2. Place the strips from the "Courage Starters" Activity Page in the middle of the circle.
3. Explain what to do:
 - "Take a moment to reflect on what you discovered today in Ruth's story. Ruth didn't have all the answers, but there was one thing that she did know—she could trust God. Let's create one-liner sentences of encouragement or advice that you could share with someone who's going through something hard, or use it to encourage yourself!"
 - Instruct the kids to finish the statements on each strip with their encouragement or advice.
4. Invite several kids to share what they wrote.
5. Challenge the kids to give a strip to a friend, family member, or someone they know who could use some encouragement!
6. Ask:
 - "What do you hope someone feels when they read your courage strip?"

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate time when you had to trust God with something that felt uncertain. What did God teach you during that process?

Inclusive Pro Tips



Encourage kids to build their courage strip with symbols or pictures.

Not every kid will want to share out loud. Let them know it's okay to listen quietly, share with a leader one-on-one, or think about the prompt.

GROUPS 2/5

Bible Story Extension



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Coloring Supplies
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Plain Paper

① What You Do

1. Invite the kids to form pairs.
2. Give each group a piece of plain paper.
3. Set out the coloring supplies.
4. Instruct kids to draw two lines across the paper to divide it into four sections.
5. Explain what to do:
 - "You and your friend will tell the story of Ruth through pictures! Think about the moments you remember. What stood out to you? What surprised you? What made you say: 'Ruth's trust in God really helped her be brave!'"
6. Direct the groups to work together to create four scenes from the story of Ruth in the boxes.
 - *NOTE: This is not about artistic skill. Encourage symbols and stick figures!*
7. Once everyone is finished, gather the kids together and have several groups share their drawings.
8. Ask:
 - What do you think it felt like to be Ruth when she had to leave everything and trust God with her future?
 - How do you think God showed up for Ruth?
 - Since God is the same God who showed up for Ruth, what does that mean that you can believe about Him when you are facing something unknown?

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow kids to draw independently instead of as a group. Give space for individual expression.

GROUPS 3/5

Discussion Questions



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ No Supplies Needed

① What You Do

Ask the following:

1. What is the bravest thing you've ever done?
2. What would you say to a friend who's nervous about something new they have to do? How could you remind them that God is with them?
3. Why do you think quitting or giving up when life feels confusing is sometimes easier?
4. What are some truths you can remember about God that can help you be brave?
5. How can the Holy Spirit help you to be brave this week?

Inclusive Pro Tips



Read each question twice and give time to process before prompting the kids to respond.

Reduce the number of questions.

Provide a small ball to toss from kid to kid as each kid shares.

Provide fidget tools for every kid to hold while discussing.

Offer sentence starters to support students who struggle to express their ideas. Example:
 "The bravest thing I did was ____." "I would tell a friend who is nervous to ____."

GROUPS 4/5

Verses to Take with You



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Index Cards
- ☐ Markers



Inclusive Pro Tips

If any kids feel anxious about the activity, invite them to help you as a "verse coach" by cheering the teams on.

Write the verse on the cards in advance for each group.

Invite kids to create motions or actions for the verse instead of verbalizing.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a Bible.
2. Lead them to find Psalm 56:3 using the Bible Navigation tips.
3. Repeat the verse together several times.
4. Divide the kids into two teams.
5. Give each team index cards and markers.
 - *NOTE: The teams will put one word from the Memory Verse on each card. Adjust the number of cards you give each team based on the number of words in your translation. (There are 10 words with "Psalm 56:3" on one card in the NIV. There are 11 words with "Psalm 56:3" on one card in the NIV.)*
6. Give the teams a few moments to write one word from the verse on each card.
7. Explain and demonstrate how to play.
 - "Today, we'll review our Memory Verse with a twist! You'll work together with your team to put the verse cards in order silently. Only one person can touch the cards at a time, and you have to tag the next person when you're ready for them to go!"
8. Once both teams have placed their verse in order, instruct each team to read it out loud.
9. Check for accuracy and celebrate their teamwork!
10. Ask:
 - What does this verse remind us to do when we're scared?
 - Why is it important to remember God's Word when we face something hard?
11. **Optional: Introduce kids to the following Scripture references.**
 - **Ruth 1:16**—Share with the kids that Ruth chose to trust God, even when her future was unknown.
 - **Proverbs 3:5-6**—Ask: "How does this verse remind us of Ruth's choice to trust God?"
 - **Isaiah 41:10**—Encourage kids with this promise from God! Ask: "How does this promise from God make you feel?"
 - **Hebrews 11:1**—Even when we don't know what's next, even when we can't see it, we can have faith in Jesus and trust the plan God has for us

*Finding verses with 4th-5th graders

- ① Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for.
- ② When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers.
- ③ Once they find the chapter, explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

GROUPS 5/5

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at 1 Peter 5:7
- ☐ Backpack from Opening Activity
- ☐ Index Cards
- ☐ Pencils



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Set the backpack in the center.
3. Give each kid an index card and a pencil.
4. Invite the kids to write down a worry, fear, or prayer request.
5. You can give a few ideas to spark their thinking:
 - Wondering if you're going to make that sports team.
 - Nervous about standing up for a friend.
 - Worried about what others might think of you when you choose the right thing.
6. Pick a kid to read 1 Peter 5:7 from the Bible.
 - Turn all your worries over to him. He cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NIRV)
7. Ask: "How does it make you feel to know that God cares about the things you're worried about?"
8. Share with the kids that even when they don't understand what's ahead, they can share worries and fears with God because He cares and is with them.
9. Once everyone is finished, invite them to place their index card in the backpack. Encourage the kids that because God is with them and He goes with them in everything they face, they never have to carry anything alone!
10. Close your group in prayer.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Invite kids to draw symbols instead of writing full sentences.

Allow extra time to process and repeat the prompt as needed.

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Backpack, two for each Small Group
- ☐ Various travel items like Bibles, notebooks, playground balls, etc., 10 items for each Small Group
- ☐ Before group time:
 - Fill the backpacks with the travel items. The backpacks should be full and heavy.

Groups

Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Print "Courage Starters" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, two strips for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid

Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Plain paper, one sheet for every two kids

Discussion Questions

→ No Supplies Needed

Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Bibles, one for every kid
- ☐ Index cards, 20 for each Small Group
- ☐ Markers, enough for each Small Group to share

Pray and Dismiss

- ☐ Bible marked at 1 Peter 5:7, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Backpack from Opening Activity, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**