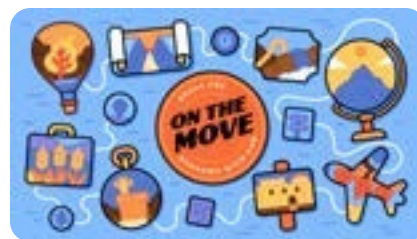


Small Group Leader Guide



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Ruth

Ruth 1

(Supporting: Ruth 2-4)

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**

Supplies that are NOT included in the activity bags

1. Bible Story Review- Ruth's Journey Relay

- bucket
- floor/wall tape

2. Application Activity- Courage Crossroads

- Paper
- marker
- use the marker to write "Courage" on one piece of paper and "Fear" on another.
- wall tape

3. Memory Verse Activity- Freeze

- Bible Marked at Psalm 56:3

4. Pray and Dismiss

- beanbag

Pray for your group before they arrive -> Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Recall a time when God gave you courage in an uncertain situation. Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to guide you when you didn't know what was next. Ask God to help you encourage the kids that they don't have to figure everything out on their own because the Holy Spirit will help them! Pray that the kids would see that stepping into the unknown with courage isn't about being fearless, but about trusting God no matter what. Ask God to help them listen when He leads them and to have the courage to take the next step.



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.

Ruth's Journey Relay

Bible Story Review



Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Story Sequence Cards" Activity Page
- ☐ Painter's Tape
- ☐ Basket or Bin



Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.

Adjust the pace or movement style
(FOR EXAMPLE, WALKING INSTEAD OF RUNNING).

Allow kids to work in pairs to retrieve their cards.

What You Do

1. Before you begin, tape two start lines on one side of your group space.
2. Place the "Story Sequence" Activity Pages in a basket or bin on the other side of the relay space.
3. Divide kids into two teams.
4. Instruct each team to line up behind a start line.

Move Together

1. One at a time, a kid from each team is to run to the basket, pick one card, and bring it back to their team.
2. Once all the cards are collected, the teams are to work together to put the story cards in the correct order.
3. The first team to place the cards in order correctly wins!
4. Keep the story cards up on the wall or table afterward so kids can revisit them during dismissal or discussion.

Story Sequence

- There was a famine in Bethlehem, so Naomi and her family moved to Moab.
- While they were in Moab, Naomi's husband and two sons died, leaving her with her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.
- Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem after hearing that God had provided food there.
- Orpah went back home to her family, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi, saying: "Where you go, I'll go. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God." (Ruth 1:16, NIV)
- To help provide food, Ruth went to gather grain in a field that happened to belong to a man named Boaz.
- Boaz showed kindness to Ruth! He told his workers to leave extra grain for her and made sure she was safe.
- Boaz had a special relationship to Naomi's family—he was someone who could protect Naomi's family. He was a family protector! So he later married Ruth.
- Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who became the grandfather of King David. Jesus was later born into this same family line!

Continued on the next page. ->

Ruth's Journey Relay

Bible Story Review



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What You Need

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Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.

Adjust the pace or movement style
(FOR EXAMPLE, WALKING INSTEAD OF RUNNING).

Allow kids to work in pairs to retrieve their cards.

What You Say

"Great teamwork, everyone! Ruth had a big choice to make. She chose to leave her home and follow her mother-in-law Naomi to a place she'd never been. She didn't have a job, she didn't know anyone, and she had NO idea what would happen next. The only thing she did know was that God was trustworthy. She had no idea what was going to happen in her life, but she wanted to follow Him.

"She told Naomi: 'Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God.' (RUTH 1:16, NIRV) What a bold, BRAVE, promise! Ruth meant it. And God was so honored by her trust in Him! God took care of everything she needed—He made sure she had food, was safe, and even provided a family protector in Boaz. And guess what? God did something even more amazing! God wove Ruth into Jesus' family tree! Ruth was Jesus great-great-many-times-great grandmother! God was so honored by Ruth's trust in Him that He wrote her into His great rescue plan for the whole world!

"Just like Ruth, you might not always know what's ahead—like a new grade, a new team, or a tough situation at home or school. But just like Ruth, there is something you can know: you can trust God. He is trustworthy, and He goes with you everywhere! And knowing God is with you and goes with you everywhere can give you courage. [BOTTOM LINE] God can give you courage when you don't know what's next!"

Transition -> Share about an age-appropriate time when you didn't know what would happen next. How did it make you feel? Were you nervous, unsure, or even afraid? Maybe it was starting a new job, trying out for a new hobby, or moving to a new place. What helped you get through that moment? Did you ask God to help you remember He is with you? Did you ask God to help give you courage to do the scary thing? How did you see God give you the courage to move forward? [BOTTOM LINE] God can give you courage when you don't know what's next."



There was a famine in Bethlehem, so Naomi and her family moved to Moab.



While they were in Moab, Naomi's husband and two sons died, leaving her with her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.



Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem after hearing that God had provided food there.



Orpah went back home to her family, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi, saying, "Where you go, I'll go. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God." (Ruth 1:16, NIV)



To help provide food, Ruth went to gather grain in a field that happened to belong to a man named Boaz.



Boaz showed kindness to Ruth! He told his workers to leave extra grain for her and made sure she was safe.



Boaz had a special relationship to Naomi's family—he was someone who could protect Naomi's family. He was a family protector! So he later married Ruth.



Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who became the grandfather of King David. Jesus was later born into this same family line!

Courage Crossroads

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Unknown Scenarios" Activity Page
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Marker
- ☐ Painter's Tape



Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.

Read scenarios more than once and allow additional time to process.

For an option with less movement, allow kids to point to show their choice.

What You Do

1. Before you begin, use the marker to write "Courage" on one piece of paper and "Fear" on another.
2. Tape the signs on opposite sides of the room.
→ Set the signs on the floor if taping them on the wall isn't an option.

Imagine Together

1. Gather the kids in the center of your group space.
2. One at a time, read a scenario from the "Unknown Scenarios" Activity Page.
3. Ask kids: "If this happened to you, how would you usually react—with courage or with fear?"
4. Instruct the kids to move to the sign that matches their answer.
5. After each scenario, pause and ask:
→ "What would make it easier to choose courage in that situation?"
→ "How could you ask God for help since He wants to give you courage?"
→ Continue until every scenario has been read.
→ End by reminding the kids: "God gives us courage through the Holy Spirit. We never face anything alone!"

What You Say

"You know, trying something new can feel a little scary, right? Has anyone ever felt nervous about trying something new? (INVITE RESPONSES.) How about a time you felt afraid but chose courage anyway? (INVITE RESPONSES.)"

"But we don't have to try and be courageous all by ourselves! When we follow Jesus, God Himself moves inside of us through His Holy Spirit. He is closer than close! So He goes with us every step of our lives. He is the strongest, and biggest, and most powerful, and He is always working for good. When we trust and believe that He goes with us, He can give us the courage to face what's in front of us when we don't know what's next. God is the strongest and He goes with us everywhere! And that can help us be brave!"

"So the next time you're at a courage crossroads, remember this: [BOTTOM LINE] God can give you courage when you don't know what's next. You never face anything alone!"

Unknown Scenarios

1. You're starting a new school and don't know anyone.
2. Your family is moving to a new town, and you're nervous about leaving everything behind.
3. You are trying out for a sports team, but you're afraid you won't be good enough.
4. You have to speak in front of the class for a presentation, but you feel really nervous.
5. Your friend is being left out, and you feel unsure about standing up for them.
6. You want to invite a friend to church, but you're scared they might say no.
7. You're learning a new skill (like playing an instrument or trying a new hobby), but it feels really hard.
8. You made a mistake and need to apologize to someone, but you're afraid of their reaction.
9. You're about to start a new grade, and you don't know what your teacher or classmates will be like.
10. You feel like God is leading you to do something kind for someone, but you don't know how they'll respond.

Freeze

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible Marked at Psalm 56:3
- ☐ Device for Playing Upbeat Music



Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.

Allow kids to have the job of calling out "Freeze!"

Repeat the entire verse every time the music stops to prompt the kid.

What You Do

1. Call on a kid to read Psalm 56:3 from the Bible to the group.
2. Repeat the verse several times.

Play Together:

1. Say, "We're going to play a freeze game to help us remember the verse!"
 2. Play the music while kids move around the room.
 3. Stop the music and yell, "FREEZE!"
 4. Call on a kid to say the first word of the verse.
 5. Play again. This time, when the music stops, direct the first kid to say the first word again, and a new kid to say the second word of the verse.
 6. Keep playing and adding one word at a time until you finish the whole verse together!
- If you have a smaller group, encourage the first kid to say the first word of the verse, and then the next word as the verse comes around again!
7. Play again if time allows.

Optional

Challenge:

Reverse the verse at the end and see if the kids can say the verse backward

What You Say

"Wow, you're learning Psalm 56:3 like CHAMPS! I love this verse, and it reminds us what to do when we're afraid: Put our trust in God. God invented you! You are His very own idea, and He thought about every detail about you when He made you! He loves you SO much that He sent Jesus to rescue you from sin so you could be close friends with Him again. And when you choose to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in you to be with you and help you every second of every day. God is closer than close because He loves you so much!"

"So when you feel nervous, scared, or unsure—like before a big move, trying something new, or standing up for a friend—know that God is with you! Ask the Holy Spirit to give you courage. Stop and take a moment to remember: When I'm afraid, I put my trust in You. Psalm 56:3 (NIRV) Just like God took care of Ruth when she didn't know what she was facing, God will take care of you. [BOTTOM LINE] God can give you courage when you don't know what's next!"

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ Beanbag


Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.

If any kids prefer to whisper to you instead of share aloud, allow them to do so. Let them hold the beanbag silently as a reminder that God hears their prayers!

Offer adaptive seating or fidget tools to all kids.

What You Do

1. Invite the kids to sit with you in a circle.
2. Share with the kids that prayer is a conversation they can have with God anytime, anywhere, about anything!

Reflect Together:

1. Say: "I'm going to toss this beanbag to one of you. When you catch it, say a two-word prayer request. Just two words! It could be something like a math test, my friend, feeling scared, or grandma sick."
2. Pause to give the kids a moment to think about their two words.
3. Begin tossing the beanbag around the circle until each kid gets a turn to share their two words.
4. After each kid shares, instruct them to pass the beanbag back to you as you say a one-sentence prayer for them.
5. Keep your prayers simple and affirming.
→ For example, if a kid's prayer request is "school's hard," you might say: "God, please help Jalen with his schoolwork."
6. Close in prayer.

What You Say

"God, thank You that we can talk to You anytime, anywhere, about anything. You are always listening because You care so deeply for us! Sometimes, we don't know what's going to happen next. When we feel nervous, confused, or even afraid, help us trust that You are with us, You are the strongest, and we can be brave because we go everywhere with You! We love You so much. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to show them the story sequence cards and share what they remember about Ruth's story! Encourage them to share that: [BOTTOM LINE] God can give you courage when you don't know what's next."