

3-6 | September 28

**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.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *When I'm afraid, I put my trust in you.* Psalm 56:3 (NIRV)

*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. Opening Activity

**What You Need:** Offering container

**What You Do:**

- Welcome kids to the group with a high five or fist bump.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Direct the kids to stand in the center of your group space.

*Play Together:*

- Say, "We're going to play a game called 'Would You Rather?' I'll read a question with two choices. If you pick the first choice, you'll go to this side of the room (*point clearly to the side of the room*). If you pick the second choice, you'll go to that side of the room (*point to the opposite side*). Ready?"
- Start off with a practice round.
  - *Would you rather eat pizza or hot dogs for the rest of the week?*
- One by one, ask one of the "Would You Rather?" questions below. As you read each option, point to the side of the room to indicate which side of the room kids are to travel to. Allow time for kids to move to their side.
- Invite a few kids to share why they chose what they did.

Would You Rather?

- Would you rather move to a brand-new country OR stay in your hometown forever?
- Would you rather have to start a new school OR be the new kid on a sports team?
- Would you rather go on an adventure without knowing the destination OR stay home where it's safe?
- Would you rather have to eat a meal you've never tried before OR only eat the same food for a whole year?
- Would you rather go on a roller coaster blindfolded OR not ride it at all?
- Would you rather have to do a big school presentation without preparation OR take a surprise test?

**What You Say:**

"Have you ever had to make a choice without knowing what's next? (*Invite responses.*) That can feel kind of scary. The good news is God doesn't leave us alone when things are uncertain.

**[Transition] Let's go to Large Group to hear a story about someone who had to step into the unknown, and how God gave them courage to do hard things!**

**Inclusive Pro Tips:**

- Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.
- For an option with less movement, allow kids to point or raise their hands instead of moving sides.

Lead your group to do worship and watch today's video lesson.

## 2. Bible Story Extension

**What You Need:** Coloring supplies, pencils, and plain paper

**What You Do:**

- Invite the kids to form pairs.
- Give each group a piece of plain paper.
- Set out the coloring supplies.
- Instruct kids to draw two lines across the paper to divide it into four sections.
- 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!’”
- 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!*
- Once everyone is finished, gather the kids together and have several groups share their drawings.
- 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 Tip:**

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

## 3. Ruth’s Journey Relay

**What You Need** “Story Sequence Cards” Activity Page, painter’s tape, and a basket or bin

**What You Do:**

- Before you begin, tape two start lines on one side of your group space.
- Place the “Story Sequence” Activity Pages in a basket or bin on the other side of the relay space.

- Divide kids into two teams. Be sure to mix up the readers and non-readers into each of the two teams.
- Instruct each team to line up behind a start line.

#### *Move Together:*

- 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.
- Once all the cards are collected, the teams are to work together to put the story cards in the correct order.
- The first team to place the cards in order correctly wins!

#### 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!

#### **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, NIV) 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!"**

***[Make It Personal] (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."***

***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.

#### **4. Pray and Dismiss**

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Say something like: "This month we've seen how God gives courage to all kinds of people when we trust Him. ***[Bottom Line] God can give you courage when you don't know what's next*** too!"
- Explain to kids that prayer is a conversation they can have with God anytime, anywhere, about anything!
- Invite kids to share any prayer requests they might have.
- Lead them in the call-and-response prayer below.
- Say each line slowly and clearly to give kids the opportunity to repeat after you.

**What You Say:**

*"God, You are AMAZING! (Repeat)  
Thank You for loving us, (Repeat)  
for guiding us, (Repeat)  
and for giving us courage (Repeat)  
when we're afraid. (Repeat)  
Help us to trust You (Repeat)  
no matter what comes our way, (Repeat)  
because YOU are with us always (Repeat)  
and You are the strongest! (Repeat)  
We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen! (Repeat) "*