

WEEK
TWO

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

Communicator Guide

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Family Ties
Ruth and Naomi
Ruth 1-2

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When is it hard to be kind?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Be kind to the people closest to you.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"You are God's chosen people.
You are holy and dearly loved.
So put on tender mercy and
kindness as if they were your
clothes. Don't be proud.
Be gentle and patient."
Colossians 3:12, NIRV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Kindness—Showing others they are
valuable by how you treat them

BASIC TRUTH

I should treat others the way
I want to be treated.

WEEK 2

Key Question: **When is it hard to be kind?** If kindness is something we know should be a part of our lives, why do we find it difficult to show kindness to others? Often we find it's easier to show kindness to strangers than those who are closest to us. We hope that through this question and the discussion that will follow, preteens will start to understand how they can show kindness to the people they love.

In week 2, we head to **Ruth 1** and **2**, where we find Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Both of their husbands had died, and Ruth had the opportunity to return home to her family. Instead, she chose to show kindness to Naomi and stay with her. Ruth's kindness didn't go unnoticed. Boaz saw how Ruth had treated Naomi and offered kindness to Ruth, changing her life in a huge way.

Bottom Line: **Be kind to the people closest to you.** When it comes to our family and friends, we can often find ourselves taking them for granted. We hope that through the story of Ruth, kids will learn to show kindness to the people who care about them the most.

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Some of you may have trouble offering kindness or seeing who needs kindness. If that's you, go to God! Ask God to give you the eyes to see those in need of words of encouragement or a helping hand. At your school, in your neighborhood, and in your home, there are people needing someone like you to show them the kindness of Jesus!"

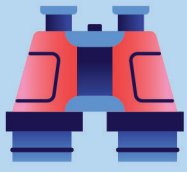
"As we head to Small Groups, we want you to consider this question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"What does kindness look like?"

"I realize some of you may have trouble coming up with examples of kindness. However, don't worry! We are so excited you are here to participate in discussions with your Small Group Leaders. They can help you come up with examples. But before we leave, let's pray together thanking God for Jesus and the example of kindness He was for all of us!"

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



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25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Kindness—Showing others they are
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BASIC TRUTH

**I should treat others the way
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LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game (World Aquatics Championships, Super Bowl, Nordic World Ski Championships), Black History Month, Valentine's Day, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

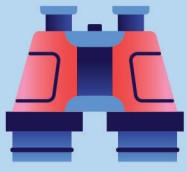
OPENER

HOST: "What's up, Adventurers! Thanks for making the trek out to [Name of Environment] today! For those who are new or those of you who may have forgotten, my name is [Name of Host], and you'll have to forgive me—I'm a little excited that you're here today!"

"Have you ever gotten in the car or on the bus in the morning going off to school and realized halfway there that you forgot something? Like a book, or a permission slip, or the fact that you had to dress up like Mark Twain for the live museum in English class?"

"Don't you hate that feeling? Being unprepared, not having the right stuff? Yeah, me too."

"Same thing when going on a trip, right? Or camping? If you don't have the right stuff with you, if you don't have the proper equipment, you're hosed. Thankfully, we brought some equipment this morning for a fun—and challenging—game. Who's up for some 'In-TENT-sity'?"



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SLIDE: "IN-TENT-SITY"

Choose two Small Groups to participate and invite them up to the stage. Take a moment to introduce the Small Group Leaders and their groups to the crowd.

Then have each team move to opposite sides of the room and open the boxes there—revealing unassembled camping tents.

"Yep. We're putting up some tents today! Not gonna lie, this game will require some patience. Many a father has chucked these things in the river after messing them up. But I have faith in you! The first Small Group to complete the task becomes our 'In-TENT-Sity' champion—and gets to hang out in the tent for the story later!

"I'm ready. The teams are ready. Let's get set . . . and go!

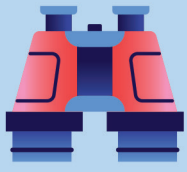
AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

Keep the energy up by cheering on each team, giving a play-by-play on the assembly. The first group finished is the winner—but have the second team finish their tent as well. Once both tents have been completed, lead the Large Group in applause and direct both small groups back to their seats.

"Fantastic! Of all the games we've played in [Name of Environment], this game was easily the most . . . in-tents. See what I did there?

"I know, I know, all my jokes can't be winners. I'll go work on my material while the rest of you jump to your feet and let's welcome [Name of Worship Leader] to the stage as they lead us in worship to our amazing God!"

Host exits as Worship Leader enters.



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WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hi, everyone! I'm so thankful for these moments we share together each week to worship God. Let's lift our voices and sing God's praise.

AUDIO: "SING YOUR PRAISE" / TRACK 2 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "SING YOUR PRAISE" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"As we live out each day, we can reflect the character of God. We can show what God is like with the way we love the people around us. We can choose to give kindness wherever we go. Sing this with me.

AUDIO: "GIVE A LITTLE KINDNESS" / TRACK 8 FROM THIS LOVE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "GIVE A LITTLE KINDNESS" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

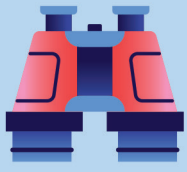
"Yes—I'm so thankful for the kindness God gives us! We can follow God by giving kindness away. Nicely done, friends. Before we continue in worship, let's watch this.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"In Psalm 86:15, David prayed: 'Lord, you are a God who is tender and kind. You are gracious. You are slow to get angry. You are faithful and full of love.' (NirV) Last week we taught you a new song called 'Your Love,' and we get to sing it again now. Soak up these words and sing them in worship to God. Let's go!"

AUDIO: "YOUR LOVE" / TRACK 7 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "YOUR LOVE" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leader exits. Have the winners of the opening challenge pick a spot in or around one of the tents during the next story segment.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everybody! Welcome to my favorite time of the week! Looking at the two additions on either side of the room . . . has anyone ever slept in a tent before? (Allow responses) Sometimes it can be super fun, right? And sometimes . . . depending on the weather, or the company . . . not so much.

Take a moment to tell a personal story about camping or something similar with family and/or siblings. The story could sound something like the following.

"When I look at the tents set up in [Name of Environment], I am reminded of a time I went camping with my family. We lived near a pond, and we'd often go and hang out there, sleep overnight in a tent—it was so cool!

"We'd spend the day fishing, playing games, and eating food cooked over a fire. Sounds like a ton of fun, but sometimes it wouldn't be—because of my little brother. Man, he could be annoying. He always found a way to ruin a good day. I remember one time he and I had to put the tent together by ourselves, which was a big deal because dad had never let us put up the tent without his help.

"Right away, my brother started complaining. Didn't want to help. Too hot. Too tired. I told him to quit it and help, but he ignored me and ran away in the woods. When I tracked him down, I made sure to tell him exactly how I felt, which was nothing nice! I dragged him back to where we were putting it together, and when I pulled out the instructions, he ignored me and started putting the tent together totally wrong!

"I yelled at him and called him a name, and he started crying and pushed me, so I pushed him, and he ran off and tattled on me, saying I was mean. My parents, of course, took his side, and because of him I had a horrible time. Although my opinion of him has changed over the years, I remember thinking that day my little brother was the worst!"

TENSION

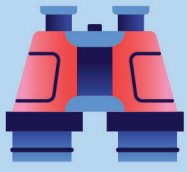
COMMUNICATOR: "Chances are, if you have friends, classmates, or siblings, you know what I'm talking about. Sometimes you don't get along with the people around you. Sometimes it's the worst with the people who know you the best!

"We argue. We get in fights. We're all fully aware of how we should treat people—patience and kindness and all that—but for some reason I don't always think of those things. And family . . . family can be the hardest to get along with sometimes.

"Your parents don't get why you're so frustrated, so you snap at them. Your friend posted something that made you look stupid, so you let them have it. And don't get me started about your brother or sister borrowing your stuff without asking!

"Why can it be so difficult to be kind to the people we love the most? Why does familiarity make it easier to find the perfect insult to hurt someone's feelings?

"All good questions. And we get to look for some answers by discovering truth from a book of the Bible that has a whole lot to do with family. I'm really excited you're here to learn all about it.



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TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Today we’re heading to the book of Ruth. It’s a smaller book in the Old Testament in the Bible that talks all about a person named . . . you guessed it, Ruth! I’ll need someone to help tell the story, though. Anyone game?”

Ask a volunteer to join you on the stage to play the role of Naomi.

Bring the volunteer playing Naomi to the tent opposite of where the winning Small Group is—this will represent Bethlehem.

“Meet Naomi. Smart, capable, and lovely. *(Indicate to the volunteer)* She was . . .

Choose an outgoing boy volunteer—and this could be fun because these volunteers are supposed to be “married.”

“. . . married to a man named Elimelek. Hey buddy! Wow. Elimelek. That’s a mouthful. I wonder if Naomi had a nickname for you. *(to Naomi)* What do you think?”

Ask the volunteer playing Naomi to come up with a nickname for Elimelek.

“Hmm. Not bad. I like ‘Lecky,’ though. *(pause for reaction)*

“Naomi and Lecky, happily married, had two sons.

Choose two of the biggest, tallest boys in the group to play the boys.

“Strapping young boys, both of you. They all lived in a town called Bethlehem. During a particularly hot and dry season, a terrible famine struck the land, causing little rain and food shortages. Unfortunately, Lecky liked to eat. So did the boys. They needed food. Since there wasn’t any due to the famine, the family of four packed up and moved east of the Dead Sea to Moab—where they found other people living happily, lots of food, and welcome relief from the famine.

Lead Naomi to the other tent where the winning small group is currently. This will represent Moab.

“Hey everyone, welcome Naomi and Lecky and the boys! *(pause)*

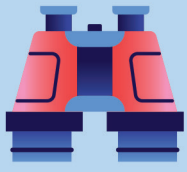
“After the move, Lecky and Naomi were so happy! Until . . . Elimelek died.

Allow time for the volunteer to act out dying. Then instruct Lecky to stand away from the tent and the acting.

“Sad times, sad times. But she still had her sons! And soon after . . .

Pull two female volunteers out of the Small Group that’s already in and around the tent. If no girls are in that Small Group, choose two from the Large Group.

“. . . they married two Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.



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Communicator directs Orpah and Ruth volunteers to stand with Naomi and the boys near the Moab tent.

"Happy times! Marriages, families, food . . . it was all going so great! Until, after a few years, her sons both died.

Allow time for the two boys to act out dying. With this age, it could be hilarious. Then instruct the two boys to step away from the tent and the acting.

"Wow. Such tragedy in one family. This left the three women—Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth—completely on their own in Moab.

"In the ancient world, it was hard to be a woman whose husband had died. In that society, it was the men who were the leaders of the home, the men who worked, the men who passed down inheritance to sons, and women with no husband would've had a rough go. These three would have been almost always without money . . . and totally ignored. Small Group, ignore them!

Pause while the Small Group acts this out. Then, lead Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth away from the tent to the middle of the room.

"The three were at a loss and getting worried. How would they find money and food? Who would provide for them? What would they do now? *(To the three volunteers)* Look worried. *(pause)* Okay, that's better.

"While they were wondering what to do next, Naomi found out that God had provided food for those back in Bethlehem! No more famine! In an instant, she decided to return to her hometown.

"As she started on her journey, the other two women insisted they come with. Naomi, though, stopped to tell Ruth and Orpah something unexpected.

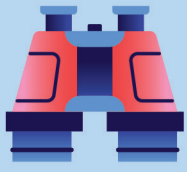
Open the Bible to Ruth 1:8b-9 (NirV) and read.

"Both of you go back. Each of you go to your own mother's home. You were kind to your husbands, [my sons], who have died. You have also been kind to me. So, may the Lord be just as kind to you. May the Lord help each of you find rest in the home of another husband."

"Understand that most people in Moab—maybe even including Orpah and Ruth—didn't know God the way Naomi did. The two daughters-in-law offered once again to join Naomi in Bethlehem, but Naomi insisted they return to Moab to start their lives over. It was a hard goodbye as they hugged each other because they had been through so much. But Naomi made a good point.

Open the Bible to Ruth 1:11-13 (NirV) and read.

"Go home, my daughters. Why would you want to come with me? Am I going to have any more sons who could become your husbands? Go home, my daughters. I'm too old to have another husband. Suppose I thought there was still some hope for me. Suppose I married a man tonight. And later I had sons by him. Would you wait until they grew up? Would you stay single until you could marry them?"



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“Orpah reluctantly headed back to Moab, but Ruth stayed. She wasn’t going anywhere. She spoke up and said,

Open the Bible to Ruth 1:16-17 (NirV) and read.

“Don’t try to make me leave you and go back! Where you go I’ll go. Where you stay I’ll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. Where you die I’ll die. And there my body will be buried. I won’t let even death separate you from me. If I do, may the Lord punish me greatly.”

“It was clear to Naomi; Ruth would be joining her in Bethlehem. That was amazing—because Ruth was basically leaving her family, her home, and everything she knew behind.

Lead Naomi and Ruth volunteers to the Bethlehem tent on the other side of the room.

“But kids, hear me. There was a bigger problem looming over Naomi’s head. Since her husband died, she had no way to really make any money.

“As they arrived back in Bethlehem, many were harvesting barley. Here’s some barley!

Take the bucket of shredded paper-like confetti and throw it out over the section of the large group on that side of the room. Make a mess!

“Can we get some harvesters?”

Have the kids mime “harvesting” food by picking up all the confetti.

“It was a welcome sight, because the last time Naomi was here, there was a terrible famine. No crops anywhere.

“Now, Israelite law directed that a small portion of the crop should be left for those in need. With no prospect of income, Ruth offered to walk the barley fields to gather any grain left behind by the harvesters so both ladies had food to eat.

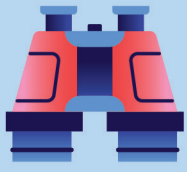
Have Ruth walk amongst the Large Group harvesters, gathering bits of paper confetti that people hand to her or that she picks up off the ground.

“Ruth gathered grain with the permission of the field’s owner, a man named Boaz.

Choose a boy volunteer from the group harvesting. For now, just have him stand in the middle of the group.

“In a twist, it turns out that he was from the same family as Naomi’s husband, Lecky. Boaz . . . was his relative! Talk about a soap opera!

“Ruth worked hard to gather enough food for Naomi and herself. Still, Boaz wanted to bless her even more, and give her more grain. He fed her a meal when she got hungry. If she got thirsty, he offered water from his water jars. Boaz even made sure that his men left extra grain behind for Ruth!



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"She wondered why Boaz was being so kind to her. It turned out that Boaz had heard about Ruth. Boaz said,

Open the Bible to Ruth 2:11-12 (NirV) and read.

"I've been told all about you. I've heard about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband died. I know that you left your father and mother. I know that you left your country. You came to live with people you didn't know before. May the LORD reward you for what you have done. May the LORD, the God of Israel, bless you richly."

"Oh, yeah. He's crushing all right. (to the large group) Did you harvest all of the barley? Great! Give it all to Ruth!

Have the large group try to hand all the confetti to Ruth. Then indicate to Ruth to act this next part out.

"That evening, Ruth returned to Naomi with a ton of food. Naomi was amazed to see how much grain she had gathered! After Naomi learned the fields belonged to Boaz, she explained he was a close relative.

"But the weight of providing for both women was worrisome to Naomi. She wanted to find a safe home for Ruth where she would be provided for. So, she decided to sell the family land.

Point at the boy volunteer playing Boaz.

"But wait! Boaz! In yet another twist, Boaz bought the land. He paid for everything. He saved Naomi and Ruth and saved the honor of his family name.

Have Boaz come up next to Ruth and Naomi.

"In short time, Ruth and Boaz were married. They had a son named Obed, and in yet another twist . . . Obed became the grandfather of King David! And the great-great-great-lots of greats grandfather of Jesus!"

APPLICATION

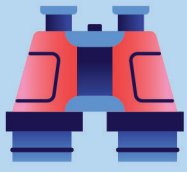
COMMUNICATOR: "Can we get a round of applause for all our volunteers? They got married and everything for this—let's give it up for them!"

Lead the large group in applause, then continue.

"When Naomi's husband passed away while living in Moab, she would have felt alone and lost. However, Ruth stood by her side. Despite it being a completely foreign land, not knowing anyone, and leaving her family, Ruth showed Naomi that she cared—and that she still mattered—by going with her back to Bethlehem.

"Once in Bethlehem, Ruth worked hard to feed not only herself but also Naomi by gathering barley. Nobody asked Ruth to do that, and no one even asked her to come back to Bethlehem with Naomi. In fact, Naomi insisted Ruth stay in Moab to start her life over, but she refused! Ruth opted to show extraordinary kindness to her mother-in-law. Because of her kindness, Ruth got to be part of the family line of Jesus! How cool is that?"

"Not only that, Boaz showed incredible kindness to both Naomi and Ruth—buying the land and saving their family name. I wonder . . . if Ruth never showed kindness to Naomi in the first place, would Boaz even have done what he did?"



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"Maybe not. Kindness is infectious.

"So many times, it is easier to show kindness to strangers instead of those who are closest to us. No matter how much we love our family and close friends, it can be hard to show them kindness when they get on our nerves! But you can still choose to be kind, just like Ruth, even when someone you love is pushing your buttons.

"When your little brother keeps interrupting your gaming night, you can show kindness by including him. If your mom is late picking you up at school, your response getting in the car can demonstrate kindness instead of rolling your eyes. When you lose your soccer game, your reaction can speak volumes."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "I'm not saying this is easy. In fact, showing kindness is really difficult, even for me! I can forget to show kindness, and at times, I don't want to display any kindness. But what if God could help us change that about us? What if we could show kindness to those closest to us? Before we get out of here, I want each of you to consider this question.

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"When is it hard to be kind?"

"Is it around specific people? Maybe it is at a certain time of day—like when you're tired? Could it be when you are trying to get your homework done? Think of an answer to share with your Small Groups. Before we head to groups, let's pray to thank God for Ruth's example and to help us show kindness to those around us!"

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP