

Ruth

Welcome to the story of Ruth! As the caring leader of your small group of kids, you are an important part of their Spark experience. You also support the other Rotation leaders by being a consistent and friendly presence with your group. Use these Small Group Builders, Conversation Sparks, and Transition Tips to generate conversation and build relationships with your kids. Have fun as you grow in faith together!

Small Group Builders

Try these tips to build relationships, trust, and friendship with your small group of kids when you have a few minutes at the beginning of Sunday school or between activities.

- **Name Change**

Naomi changed her name to Mara. If you could change your name, what would you change it to? Share your ideas with your friends.

- **My House**

Lots of this story is about moving and living in different places. Share with each other any times you may have moved. Talk about the apartment or house where you live. What are your favorite parts of your home?

- **Hope-Filled**

Naomi lost hope after her husband and sons died. Ruth always had hope. Talk about some times that fill you with hope. What sorts of things make you feel hope?

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- Why did Naomi want Ruth to leave her?
- What could Ruth and Naomi make for dinner from the barley Ruth collected?
- Name 3 ways that Ruth took care of Naomi.
- Explain the term mother-in-law.
- I wonder how Ruth felt about leaving her home and going to Bethlehem. How do people feel when they have to leave their home?
- Can you think of anything else that happened in Bethlehem? Are there any ways these events are connected?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Barley Hop**

Barley is a small grain that crushes easily. Ruth and Naomi arrived in Bethlehem during the barley harvest. Pretend there is barley on the floor and you have to carefully hop over the barley.

- **Marching to Bethlehem**

Naomi and Ruth went all the way to Bethlehem on foot. It was a long way to go. Start marching to Bethlehem right now. Left, right, left, right, swing those arms.

- **God Cares for Us**

Stroll along your path and repeat these words to all you see: "God cares for us."

- **Joyful Jump**

You are so excited that God loves us that you are jumping for joy. Raise those arms and jump, jump, jump for joy!

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- **Group Work**

To work in the fields and do the harvesting takes a group of people. Talk about some other kinds of work that need a group. What are the advantages and disadvantages of group work? Do you like group work or would you rather work alone?

- **Law Breakers**

Jewish law said that Ruth did not have to stay with Naomi, and Boaz did not have to care for them. Ruth broke the local laws to show her love and loyalty to Naomi. Talk about what message God is sending us through this story.

- **Where Do You Belong?**

Boaz asked his servant, "To whom does this woman belong?" In Bible times, women were possessions who were owned by men. Today our discussion is about places where you belong. Talk about all the places where you feel you belong.

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- Think about how hard it might have been for two women to walk cross-country by themselves. What kinds of problems might they have encountered?
- Talk about how the word *commitment* is different from the word *love*.
- Why is loyalty important with your friends and family?
- Talk about ways that God's grace comes to us in hard times through other people.
- Why are relationships so important in God's world?
- How can we work to bring love and loyalty to all of our relationships?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Loyal Following**

Ruth was loyal to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and followed her. Choose a leader of the group and follow them, doing exactly what they do to prove your loyalty.

- **No Rest**

Pretend you have been working all day on your feet and now you need to get back home. You are so tired that you are dragging your feet.

- **Homeward Hop**

You are hopping home. No stopping, just keep hopping.

- **Go Gleaning**

Gleaning is hard work. Ruth had to pick up each individual piece of grain from the field. Get going and pretend to glean the grain from the floor. This is your dinner.

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- **Family Care**

God wants families to take care of each other like Ruth took care of Naomi. Talk about ways that your family takes care of each other. Remember—caring is a two-way street.

- **New Neighbors**

Ruth was new to Bethlehem. The neighbors were pointing and talking about the new people. Talk about what happens when there are new kids at school or at church. How do we offer hospitality to new neighbors?

- **Foot Rubs**

Ruth was on her feet all day gleaning the grain. Her feet were tired. Give each other foot rubs. How does that feel?

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- How do you think Boaz felt to have a stranger working in his fields?
- Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to stay with her. What does it mean to be *determined*?
- Name two ways that family members love and care for each other. Why is this important?
- Naomi felt very sad when her husband and sons died. How did Ruth help her to go on with her life?
- The Jewish laws provided for poor people to gather food through gleaning the leftover grain. What ways do we provide food for people who don't have enough? Why is this important?
- How is God at work even in hard times?

Transition Tips

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- **Reaping Rhythm**

When harvesting, first you reap the grain by cutting the stalks. Imagine you are walking between two rows of grains. Use your sickle (a curved hoe) to cut first to the left and then to the right. Get the group rhythm going for the entire row.

- **Graceful Pace**

God's world is a grace-filled place. As you go to your next activity, stroll gracefully along your path. Use your arms gracefully, too.

- **Stomp, Stomp, Stomp, Clap**

Practice this rhythm: stomp, stomp, stomp, clap. When you clap, remember to keep your feet still. Now learn these words and put it all together as your move along. "Ruth and Boaz, Naomi, too. Loved each other and God did, too!"

- **Leap of Faith**

Ruth and Naomi took a leap of faith as they headed back to Bethlehem alone. Leap along your path as you transition to another activity.