

Today's Suggested Schedule—February 2024, Week 2

Today's Bible Story: Family Ties (Ruth and Naomi) • *Ruth* 1–2

Today's Bottom Line: Be kind to the people closest to you.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.* Colossians 3:12 (ESV)

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.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray for any difficult family situations your few might be navigating. Ask God to give everyone patience and grace to extend to those they see most often. Pray that kids would take time to notice and thank the people who do kind things for them. Ask God to give them ideas for how they can make sure those people know they are valuable.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Hang Time
Welcome/Opener
Worship
Bible Story
Bottom Line
Prayer
Closer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration
Bible Story Review: Kind-Hoot
Application Activity: Kindness in Action
Memory Verse Activity: Happy Trails
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
Devotionals for Kids
Parent Cue App

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Story Exploration

The story of Ruth happened during the time of the judges. Naomi and her family went to the land of Moab. Naomi's sons married women from Moab. One of those women, Ruth, decided to stay with Naomi when she went back to her home in Israel.

God provided a redeemer for Ruth. Ruth was gathering leftover grain in a field when she met Boaz. Boaz was a wealthy man and a relative of Naomi's dead husband. Boaz redeemed Ruth—he agreed to take care of her—and he married her.

Let me tell you more about Boaz. Boaz was the son of a man named Salmon (SAL mahn) and a woman named Rahab. Do you remember Rahab (Joshua 2)? She welcomed the Israelite spies into her home when they scouted out Jericho. The Israelites kept Rahab and her family safe, and she became part of God's people.

Boaz was a family redeemer. He helped his close relatives who were in trouble. Boaz was kind to Ruth and Naomi because their husbands had died. In a similar way, Jesus is our Redeemer. We need help because we sin. Jesus bought our salvation by taking our punishment when He died on the cross.

A thousand years before Ruth lived, God promised Abraham that He was going to bless his family. Ruth was part of that family. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who grew up and had a son named Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David! Through this family, God planned to bring His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world.

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Ruth 1. Tell kids that today's Bible story comes from the Book of Ruth. Explain that the Book of Ruth is the third book of Old Testament History. It follows the Book of Joshua. Challenge kids to name the first eight books of the Old Testament.

The events of Ruth happened during the time of the judges, sometime after Joshua died. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Ruth 1:1-2. Remind kids that Naomi's family was from Bethlehem. Because of the famine, they moved to Moab. That's where they met Ruth and her sister Orpah.

- **Why do we need Jesus to be our Redeemer?**

Guide kids to recognize that without Jesus, we are slaves to sin and need someone to redeem us or pay the price to set us free. Jesus paid the penalty for sin by dying on the cross. He rose from the dead. Everyone who trusts in Him is freed from sin and death.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 6:6-7.)

- **Why do you think Jesus loves all people?**

Remind kids that God created all people in His image, and Jesus does not want anyone to be separated from Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Pet. 3:9.)

- **What evidence of God's grace have you seen in your own life?**

Lead kids to recall that grace is God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment. As sinners, we deserve death but God—by His grace—provides salvation through His Son, Jesus. God also graciously and freely gives us good gifts. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 2:4-7.)

1. Kind-Hoot

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: “Multiple Choice” Activity Page, index cards, markers, and timer

What You Do:

- Direct the kids to pair up.
- Give each pair three index cards and a marker.
- Instruct each team to write “A” on one card, “B” on the next, and “C” on the last one.
- One at a time, read a question from the “Multiple Choice” Activity Page, providing kids with three choices for answers.
- Set the timer for as long as you think is appropriate.
- With the help of their partner, instruct the team to decide on the correct answer (either A, B, or C).
- Direct each team to hold up the index card with the correct answer before the timer goes off, making sure their answer is hidden from other teams.
- Encourage each team to keep track of their own points and share how many questions they got correct at the end of the game.

What You Say:

“Wow! You must have been paying attention to today’s story. We can really learn from the kindness Ruth and Boaz showed. Ruth was kind to Naomi, and Boaz was kind to Ruth.

“Was it always easy for them to show kindness? (*No.*) What made it hard for Ruth in the beginning? (*Invite responses, like: She had to go to a new town.*) By choosing to stay with Naomi, Ruth showed Naomi that she still mattered. Ruth worked hard, gathered grain, and took care of Naomi. Because Ruth showed kindness to Naomi, Ruth also ended up getting to be part of the family line of Jesus.

“Just like them, you too can **[Bottom Line]** be kind to the people closest to you so they can experience God’s love and kindness through you.”

[Make It Personal] (*Describe a time when you showed kindness to a family member or a close friend even though they got on your nerves. What did you do? How did they react?*)

*2. Kindness in Action

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “Thank You Cards” Activity Page, pens, and markers

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to think about people in their lives who have been kind to them who they may struggle showing kindness to or forget to acknowledge their kindness.
 - *Some suggestions might include Mom, Dad, sibling, grandparent, etc.*
- Ask: “What are some ways these people have shown kindness toward you?”
- Instruct each kid to pick four people they would like to thank for being kind to them.
- Hand each kid four cards from the “Thank You Cards” Activity Page.
- Set out the pens and markers.
- At the top of each card, ask the kids to write the name of the family member or friend they want to thank.
- Instruct the kids to complete the sentence on each card by expressing why they are thankful or how that person has been kind to them.
 - *For example, “Dear Mom, thank you for always being there for me and helping me with my homework.”*
- If time permits, encourage the kids to color and decorate their cards however they choose to.

What You Say:

“Just like Ruth in our story today, we have people close to us who we can show kindness to. We have parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins who love and care for us. And we have lots of friends who need our kindness too!

“But sometimes, it’s easier to be kind to people we don’t know well, like strangers. We see our family and friends at their best . . . and their worst . . . just like Ruth and Naomi. Even though our family and close friends might make us feel upset sometimes, you can still choose to **[Bottom Line] be kind to the people closest to you.**

“Just like Ruth showed kindness to Naomi by being patient, you too can show kindness to the people closest to you by being patient. You can also show them kindness by thanking them. The thank you cards you made are amazing! Make sure you hand them out this week.”

3. Happy Trails

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Bibles, “Memory Verse Phrases” Activity Page, flashlights, and painter’s tape

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Colossians 3:12 using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Colossians in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find Colossians, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Colossians. Help the kids find the page. When they find Colossians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 3. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 3 in chapter 12.

- Keep out one Bible for kids to reference during the game, if needed.
- Use the painter’s tape to make two identical trails that have a few turns and dead ends. (*A maze can work also!*)
- Scatter the cards from the “Memory Verse Phrases” Activity Page throughout the trails face up, in random order.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Instruct each team to line up at the entrance to the trails.
- Give the first kid in line on each team a flashlight.
- *Optional: if possible, turn off the lights in your environment while playing the game.*
- When you say “go,” instruct the first kid on the team to trace the trail with the flashlight to find the first phrase, pick up the card, and bring it back to where their team is gathered.
- Once the first kid returns with the first card, direct them to hand the light to the next kid in line.
- Direct the second kid to trace the trail with their flashlight to find the second phrase of the verse, and bring it back to the team.
- Continue until all phrases have been brought back to the team.
- When a team has recovered all of the phrases of the verse, instruct that team to assemble the verse on the floor and say it three times.
- If you have time, repeat the game, and see if kids can go faster this round.

What You Say:

“In the verse, the author tells us that we are God’s chosen ones—holy and dearly loved. What do you think it looks like to be holy and dearly loved? (*Invite responses.*)

“Being *holy* means trying to be the best version of yourself and making good choices. It’s like being a super-good friend—always kind, helpful, and honest. And *dearly loved*, well, that’s like knowing you are so loved, like how your family loves you so much. God gave us family and friends so we could feel loved and experience God’s love through them. They can also experience God’s love through you when you choose to **[Bottom Line] be kind to the people closest to you.**”

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission?

"Dear God, thank You for the kindness You have shown us. We want to show the people closest to us that same kindness even when they get on our nerves or make us upset. We want to be a light and show kindness to those closest to us and brighten up their day and show them they matter. Help us to have the patience and strength to **[Bottom Line] be kind to the people closest to us** even when it's not easy. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show them their thank you cards and explain why they created them.

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

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.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #2.*

Story Exploration – No Supplies

1. Kind-Hoot

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need:

- Print "Multiple Choice" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Index cards, three cards for every two kids
- Markers, one for every two kids
- Timer, one for each Small Group

*2. Kindness in Action

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need:

- Print "Thank You Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, four cards for each kid
- Pens
- Markers

3. Happy Trails

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands-on experimentation and discovery

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid
- Print "Memory Verse Phrases" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, two sets for each Small Group
- Flashlights, two for each Small Group
- Painter's tape, one roll for each Small Group

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need:

- No Supplies

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.

Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app**