

THE **STORY** BEFORE THE **STORY**

Ruth 3-4

Thank you for opening this guide. We are glad that you've decided to "continue the conversation." Below you will find discussion questions geared toward adults and families. Whatever "unit" you are in, we would love for you to interact with each other and dig deeper into what we learned today. If you are alone, feel free to pick up the phone to call, text, or digitally interact with a friend on these questions.

The age-based questions for families cover 4 different stages of life--preschoolers, elementary students, middle schoolers, and teens. Parents, it's always awesome to model vulnerability with your children, so, even though each section does not specifically invite parents to share please do so.

AGE-BASED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use the section that works best for those you are with.

ADULTS

1. Think of a time in your life in the past where things were disrupted in your life (for example, a flat tire, a car accident, the need for surgery, power outage in your house, the furnace or AC going out, etc). What emotions were stirred for you? What seeds for good or bad have you planted during those times?
2. "NEXT STEP": Write out the 5 things that are disrupted in your life right now.
3. Then ask yourself these questions:
 - a. What would it look like to control all that chaos?
 - b. What would it look like to let God speak into each one of those areas if I pause and realign and focus on God?
 - c. How would God redirect the chaos of my life?
4. Take some quality time to sit with Him and allow Him to Shepherd you in the struggle.

FAMILIES WITH PRESCHOOLERS

1. Has anything ever happened to you that made you feel sad, scared, or angry? (Some examples include: someone saying something unkind to you or not getting something you want.). Why did you feel sad? Why did you feel scared? Why were you angry? (You can have your preschoolers show you their sad or scared faces as you chat.)
2. What is a good thing to do when you feel sad, scared, or angry? (Explain to your children that when we feel sad, scared, or angry we can pray and ask God to help us remember that He always takes care of us and that we can trust Him no matter what. Remind them that Ruth trusted God even when sad things happened to her and her family.)

Activity: “Seeds of good deeds flower.” Find a piece of paper, a pair of scissors, something to write with, and tape or glue. Help your child cut out a circle for the middle of the flower and let them be creative cutting out petals to go around the circle. On each petal ask them to come up with a good thing they can do when they feel upset (trust, pray, ask for help, talk to mom or dad, etc.). Help them write their ideas down on each petal. Remind them that when Ruth was upset she chose to trust God.

FAMILIES WITH ELEMENTARY KIDS

1. Has something ever happened to you that you weren't planning on? (Give examples when needed.)
2. How did you feel when that happened? Talk about those feelings together as a family. Parents, it's great for kids to know you struggle too!
3. What are some good things you can do when you feel upset? (Talk to God, ask your parents for help, spend some time in God's word etc. Remind them that Ruth trusted God even when unexpected things happened to her and her family.)

Activity: “Seeds of good deeds flower.” Find a piece of paper, a pair of scissors, something to write with, and tape or glue. Help your child cut out a circle for the middle of the flower and let them be creative cutting out petals to go around the circle. On each petal ask them to come up with a good thing they can do when they feel upset (trust, pray, ask for help, talk to mom or dad, etc.). Help them write their ideas down on each petal. Remind them that when Ruth was upset she

chose to trust God. Think back on some of the stories that brought up frustration and reflect as a family on God's faithfulness in it.

FAMILIES WITH MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

1. Think of a time in your life in the past where things were disrupted in your life (for example, a bad grade, being bullied at school, the need for surgery, a friend moving away, or not getting invited to an event with friends).
2. What emotions did you feel? Think back on some of the stories that brought up frustration and reflect as a family on God's faithfulness in it.
3. What "seeds" for good or bad have you planted during those times? (Did you hold a grudge, get revenge, choose mistrust, turn to God, or forgive, etc.)
4. Find a sticky note or a piece of paper and write down a few ways you can sow "seeds" of righteousness in your life this week. Put this paper on your mirror or by your bed so it can be a reminder to you when you feel disrupted in life.

FAMILIES WITH TEENS

1. Think of a time in the past where things were disrupted in your life (for example, being cut from a sports team, the loss of a friendship, a fight with your parents). What emotions were stirred for you? What seeds for good or bad have you planted during those times? Then share with your family, friend or group what kind of "seeds" you planted. Now share how God was faithful in those same stories of disruptions in your life in the past.
2. "NEXT STEP": Write out the 5 things that are disrupted in your life right now.
3. Then ask yourself these questions:
 - a. What would it look like to control all that chaos?
 - b. What would it look like to let God speak into each one of those areas if I pause and realign and focus on God?
 - c. How would God redirect the chaos of my life?
4. Share as a family whichever parts you are comfortable sharing.