

Alley Rundown—February 14th, 2021

Today's Bible Story: Family Ties (Ruth and Boaz) • Ruth

Today's Key Question: When is it hard to be kind?

Today's Bottom Line: Be kind to your family and friends.

Monthly Memory Verse: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:12 (NIV)

CG: Dude Perfect Filler Videos

"What's up Alley? Good to see you all. February is already off to a great start as we discover more about God's idea of kindness. Last week we did some work in trying to define kindness and how to notice it. But we discovered that even if we really know about kindness, it can still be hard to practice kindness."

"Let's start with a pretty big question: when does it feel most difficult to be kind? Maybe think about it this way: when are you least likely to show kindness?"

"Take a minute and chat with your neighbors about that. Ready? Go!"

As kids talk, walk around and engage their conversations. Feel free to use some of what you heard when the group is back together. Bring everyone back together and discuss some of the examples.

"Those were some great conversations! Family, not liking the other person, you take the situation or the person for granted. Yeah, I'm guessing a lot of you share the same struggles when it comes to showing kindness."

"Last week we mentioned that even though we know it's important to be kind, we don't always choose to show kindness. Like we all just mentioned, we have a ton of reasons why it's difficult to show kindness. But if you think about it, a lot of the time it all comes down to how much showing kindness might cost us. I'm not just talking about how much money you'd spend to be kind. Being kind could cost us our time or energy. It could cost us our reputations. I might even cost us a few friendships. Choosing kindness isn't always easy. How can choose to show kindness even when it might cost us something?"

"That's a great question; one that the writers of the Bible address at times throughout many of the books. Today, though, let's head to a book found early on in our Old Testament—Ruth. It is a small book—you might have even flipped past it many times before. Let me catch you up on Ruth's story."

"First, there was a woman named . . . Naomi. You were expecting me to say Ruth. Don't worry, she'll come along soon. Naomi had a husband and two sons. Second, due to a famine, or lack of food, in their hometown of Bethlehem, Naomi and her family left Bethlehem and moved to another land—a place called Moab. And third—while they were there, her sons married women from Moab. And tragically, Naomi's husband and two sons all died.

So as our story starts, Naomi was alone, except for her two daughters-in-law, though she knew she probably would have to say goodbye to them, too. I mean, why would they stick around still if they didn't have husbands and children to stay for?

"I'm guessing you know the name of at least one of her daughter-in-laws? That's right. Ruth. And the other was Orpah."

"But finally, in the midst of all the tragedy, Naomi got a glimmer of good news—the famine in her homeland was over, and so she decided to head back home to Bethlehem. And the time came to part ways with the only remaining family she had in Moab."

Open the Bible to Ruth 1:8 (NIV) and read.

"Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me."

"Naomi knew they still had a chance at a good life—a fresh start—if they just started over in Moab."

"Orpah agreed with Naomi and went back home. But listen to what Ruth said!"

Open the Bible to Ruth 1:16 (NIV) and read.

"But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."

"This is quite incredible! Ruth refused to return home and, instead, pledged to stay with her grieving mother-in-law. Ruth showed incredible kindness to Naomi, even though it would cost her comfort, security, and safety. Let's explore some more with the help of this week's episode! Take a look!"

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 11:30)

I love this story because it's so easy to see the impact that kindness, true kindness, can make. But it's also important to see that true kindness might also cost us something. Think about it—the easy choice for Ruth would have been to go back to Moab and start back over again. But instead, she STUCK (hold up glue) to Naomi and went with her instead.

"Boaz could have only cared about the dollar signs he would lose by letting the poor have the loose grain (holds up barley) that fell to the ground, but he even went above and beyond, allowing Ruth to pick grain from the field, giving her more than she asked for, and protecting her while she provided for Naomi. And then he eventually bought back the family land AND married Ruth (hold up flip flop.)!

"And let's not forget God's role in all of this. God cared for the poor among His people through the gleaning in the field. In His kindness, God brought all of these people and events together in order to care for Naomi and Ruth in their brokenness and to help continue their story. God truly was the One who protected Naomi and Ruth under His wings (hold up feather).

“But what about us? What can we learn from this? Well, maybe you’ve considered showing kindness but the cost made you second guess it. Maybe you knew it would take more time than you were willing to give, or maybe it would involve giving up something. Maybe it would cost you some of your reputation or how you look to a certain group of people.

“In Ruth’s story, kindness was shown between family members or relatives—mother-in-laws and family protectors. Why is it so hard to be kind to the people closest to us? Sure, your siblings might get on your nerves one and a while or you don’t feel like doing what your mom asked. But even those closest to us—friends and family—deserve our kindness. Kindness matters and can make a huge difference.”

“Today as we close our talk, think about this question:”

SLIDE: Key Question

*“**When is it hard to be kind?** Consider the ways that you often pause or struggle to show kindness. And talk about the **WHY** together. If you’re not sure where to start, don’t worry. You’ll have a chance to talk this out with your group. Before you go to groups, let’s pray and thank God for His kindness to us. Let’s ask God to help be kind, even when it’s difficult. Let’s pray.”*

Lead group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, dismiss kids to All Together Activities.