God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends.

Bible Verse
“This is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8b).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Children will find that being loyal means they can be counted on, discover that loyalty is sticking by someone no matter what, and find out what it means to be a true-blue friend and promise to be that kind of friend.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
Ruth stays with Naomi.

The book of Ruth begins with a family traveling from Israel to Moab to escape famine, a common act for people in those times when they couldn’t find food. However, Israel and Moab were bitter enemies. The Moabites had refused Israel passage through their land during the exodus from Egypt. In addition, Moab was one of Israel’s oppressors during the time of the judges, when the events in this story happened.

When her husband and sons died in Moab, Naomi was in a bad situation. In that day, widows were often ignored or mistreated and were nearly always poor. Naomi had no male relatives in Moab to take care of her, so after she heard that the famine in Israel was over, she must have decided her chances were better there. Naomi was not a young woman, and she was setting out on what was likely a difficult journey through rugged terrain around the southern end of the Dead Sea. She knew that it would be easier for her daughters-in-law if they stayed in their homeland with their families. The chances were good that Orpah and Ruth would be treated as outcasts in Israel.

When Naomi first told her daughters-in-law to return to their families, both refused (Ruth 1:1-10). When Naomi insisted, however, Orpah agreed to turn back (Ruth 1:11-14). Ruth, on the other hand, persisted, perhaps because she had put her faith in the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16-17; 2:12).

Prayer
- Read Proverbs 18:24 and Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.
- How can you be a good friend to children in your class?
- Dear God, help me be a better example of a friend to children in my class by…
Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

**SUPPLIES:** “In the Fields Name Tags” (p. 22), scissors, markers, tape or safety pins

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends.**
- Help children make name tags. Photocopy the “In the Fields Name Tags,” and follow the instructions.
- Tell children that the attention-getting signal you’ll use during this lesson is the *balloon squawker*. Ask children to respond to the sound by focusing their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you’ll have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

**Attention Grabber**

### Always Loyal

**SUPPLIES:** none

Show children the *feather ball*. Say: **When you bounce this ball against the wall, it’s supposed to turn around in the air after it hits the wall so the feathers trail behind it as it bounces back to you. Let’s see if that’s true.**

Ask: • **How many times do you think we’ll need to bounce it on the wall to prove that it will always turn around in the air?** (Twice; five times; once for everyone in the classroom.)

Have children line up about 3 or 4 feet away from a classroom wall. Show them how to hold the *feather ball* so the feathers are pointing away from the wall. Have each child hold the gizmo by the ball and toss it toward the wall. Every time, the *feather ball* will turn around in the air and return to the child ball-first. Let each child toss it several times.

Say: **You did a great job of testing this toy. I guess it really is true—no matter how many times we bounce it on the wall, the feather ball will always flip around in the air and return to us ball-first. We can count on it. Let’s talk about some other things we can count on.** Put the *feather ball* away, and then ask:

• **What are some things in our world that we can count on?** (That the sun will come up; that my parents love me.)

Ask: • **What things about Jesus can you count on?** (That he loves me; that he will come again.)

Say: **Let’s take a moment to thank Jesus that no matter what happens, we can count on him.** Have children fold their hands and bow their heads.

Pray: **Dearest Jesus, thank you so much for always**
loving me and always being there for me. Amen.

Say: It’s so great to know we can always count on God. And it feels wonderful to be around people we can count on.

Ask: • Who in your life can you count on? (My parents; my teachers; my grandparents.)

Say: God wants us to be people others can count on. Our Bible verse for today tells us ►“This is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God,” (Micah 6:8b). When we do the things in this verse—do what is right by being fair, love mercy by forgiving, and walk humbly with God by putting God first—other people can count on us.

Today we’re going to talk about a woman in the Bible who could be counted on. She was dependable, and she was loyal. That means no matter what happened, people knew that she’d be a good friend. God wants us to be like that, too. ►God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends.

Bible Exploration & Application

**Ruth and Naomi Pillow Pal**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, 3x5 index cards without lines, hole punch, yarn, scissors, cotton balls, markers, masking tape, flashlight

Ahead of time, prepare two index cards for each child. Place one card on top of the other. Punch holes approximately every half inch around the sides and about a quarter inch in from the edges. Cut a 2-foot length of yarn for each child.

Set out the supplies, and ask the children to gather around a table. Say: **Today our story is from the book of Ruth. Let’s take a look.** Show children where the book of Ruth is in the Bible. The book of Ruth tells the story of a family. The family had a dad named Elimelech (eh-LEE-meh-leck), a mom named Naomi, and two grown-up sons who lived in Bethlehem long before Jesus was born. I think this family loved each other and probably wanted what any other family wanted. They stuck together and were loyal to each other, like most families.

But life didn’t go the way they expected. These family members had to leave their home in Bethlehem to go to another land, called Moab, because there was a famine in the area around Bethlehem. A famine means they had no food and nothing would grow.

Ask: • Have you ever had to leave family or friends behind to move to a new place? What was that like? (Yes, last year we moved here from another state, and it was scary to come here; yes, we moved to a new home during the summer, and I miss my friends; no, I’ve always lived in the same house.)

• If you ever moved, did you stay in touch with the family and friends you left behind? Explain. (Yes, I still visit my cousins on holidays; no, I haven’t seen my friends in a long time because we live too far apart now.)
Say: Sometimes when we move, we have to say goodbye to old friends and make new friends in the new place. The family in our story met new people in Moab. The sons each married a woman from Moab—one named Ruth and one named Orpah. They lived in Moab for quite a few years. But then some sad things happened—the dad died, and that was very sad, but then both the sons died, too. That left only the three women—Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah. In those days, women whose husbands had died had a very hard time having enough money to live on. Usually, lots of people ignored them.

Naomi wanted to go back to Bethlehem, the town she came from. At first both Ruth and Orpah, Naomi’s daughters-in-law, wanted to be loyal and stick together with Naomi. But then Orpah decided not to go. She did not stay loyal to Naomi. It isn’t always easy to be loyal. But Ruth was loyal, so she went with Naomi to Bethlehem. ►**God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends.** Loyal friends are people we can count on day or night.

Hand each child two of the index cards you prepared before class, and hand out markers to share. Ask children to write their names in their best handwriting on one card and draw a heart on the other. Then hold up the glo-in-dark pen from the Bible Discovery Pak and say: Let’s think of some ways we show others that we are loyal to them, even when it’s hard. For example, if my parents tell me to do something I really don’t want to do but I obey anyway, that shows my loyalty to them. Or if a friend acts mean but I forgive him or her and don’t stay mad, that shows loyalty, too. Share a time it was hard for you to be loyal, and use this special pen to make a special mark on the heart you drew. You may wish to draw a symbol such as a cross or a smiley face, or you may wish to write a word that reminds you to be loyal.

Pass around the glo-in-dark pen, giving each child a turn to share and to use the pen. Allow the pen markings to dry for a few minutes. As children finish, have them look at the mark they made, and then ask:

• **Can you see the mark you made? Why or why not?** (No, it disappeared; I can just barely see the picture I drew.)

Say: The marks you made might be hard to see in normal light because we made them with a special pen. Just like the marks might not show easily, sometimes it’s hard to show loyalty.

Ask: • **Why is it important to be a loyal friend to others?** (A loyal friend can be trusted; so that others can count on me.)

• **Who is your most loyal friend?** (God; my mom; my dad.)

Say: **God is our most loyal friend, and he wants us to follow his example by being the kind of friend others can trust.** ►**God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends.** With God’s help, we can learn to be loyal to one another. Let’s make a craft called a Pillow Pal to give to a friend or family member. It will remind that person that we can be loyal friends day and night.

1. Give each child a piece of yarn. Ask the children to wrap a piece of masking tape tightly around one end of the yarn to form a makeshift needle.

2. Show them how to sew their index cards together. Make sure that the blank sides of the cards are lined up facing each other. Using the taped end, stitch from the back of the card to the front beginning at the top. Leave a section of yarn that is the length of an index card for tying the ends together later.

3. Before the children sew together the last few holes, have them insert four cotton balls in between the cards and then finish sewing. Tie the ends together in a bow.
If time permits, shine a flashlight on a finished Pillow Pal, heart side up, for about a minute. Darken the room, and show children the glowing marks on the heart.

Say: **Ruth and Naomi were loyal friends, and it showed. Give your Pillow Pal to a friend or to someone in your family to put under his or her pillow at night. The marks that you added to your Pillow Pal will glow in the dark at night when the lights are off and remind your friend that God is with him or her and that you are a loyal friend, too.**

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### HANDS-ON BIBLE

Have kids form pairs. If possible, pair nonreaders with readers. Have scissors, tape, and at least two colors of yarn available to the class. Give each child a piece of cardboard that is approximately 10x10 inches.

Say: **I’m going to give you an opportunity to show your loyalty and friendship to your partner right now. Open your Hands-On Bible to Ruth 1. Follow the instructions for the “Friendship Bracelet” activity in your Bible. When you’ve completed the instructions, give your bracelet to your partner.**

Help children find **Ruth 1** in their Hands-On Bibles. Explain the instructions for the activity as needed as you work with pairs.

Ask: • **How can we be there for our friends in this class?** (Pray together for one another; give hugs when someone needs them; make everyone feel welcome when they come.)

Say: **Let’s put on the bracelets our friends gave us. Every time you look at your bracelet, pray for your partner and the rest of the kids in our class.**

At the end of class, direct children to work with their families through the introduction of the book of Ruth in their Hands-On Bibles.

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### Spider-Web Tag

**SUPPLIES: Bible, masking tape**

Before class, use masking tape to create a grid on your classroom floor like the one shown in the margin. Make the grid as large as possible with as many lines as possible.

Have the children stand on the masking-tape lines. Choose a volunteer to be the spider. Say: **We’re going to play Spider-Web Tag. In this game, everyone must walk on the masking-tape lines—the spider web. If you get tagged by the spider, you must leave the game. If the spider is getting close to one of your classmates, you can reach out, grab your classmate by the hand, and gently pull him or her onto your strand of the web. The spider cannot reach across the web to catch you. As long as you’re holding hands, you’re safe. However, you can’t hold hands for more than five seconds. Ready? Here we go!**

Start the game and play for several minutes or until everyone has been tagged. After the game, ask:

• **What did you think when the spider got closer and closer to you?** (I was scared; I felt like I needed a friend to grab me.)
• How is someone saving you from the spider by giving you a helping hand an example of loyalty? (If you’re loyal, you reach out to help someone; if you’re loyal, you look for ways to help someone.)

• What would be an example in real life of when a friend gave you a helping hand? (Helping me clean my room; helping me with homework.)

• What would have happened if all of you had just thought about yourselves and nobody had grabbed anyone’s hand? (More people would have gotten out of the game; we wouldn’t have been loyal to one another.)

Say: In this game, all of you worked hard to save one another. That’s what loyalty is like. Loyalty means that we’re always ready to give our friends and our family a helping hand. It means that we try to help them without worrying about what happens to us. Listen to what the Bible says about lending a helping hand to others. Read Galatians 6:10 aloud.

Ask: • Who is someone you should do good to? (My best friend; my family.)

• Who are our “Christian brothers and sisters”? (The people in this class; my Sunday school teacher.)

Say: The people in our church are our family just as much as the people we live with. God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends.

Ask: • What can you do to be loyal to a friend or someone in your family? (I can help my little sister when her friends tease her; I can stick up for my friends; I can do nice things for my parents.)

Say: God is pleased when we’re loyal. But it isn’t always easy to be loyal. Let’s talk more about how we can be loyal to our family and friends.

True-Blue Friends

SUPPLIES: Bibles, washable blue markers, “True-Blue” handouts (p. 23), pencils, CD player

Before class, photocopy and cut apart the “True-Blue” handout. You’ll need one section for each child. Have the children form groups of three. Say: One way to describe someone who is very loyal is to say he or she is “true-blue.” To help you know what a true-blue friend is, let’s read a passage from the Bible.

Open your Bibles to John 15:9 and 12, and follow along as I read. Help any students who are having difficulty finding the passage, and read John 15:9, 12 aloud.

Ask: • What does this passage tell us about how Jesus feels about us? (He loves us; he cares what we do.)

• How does knowing this about Jesus help you love other people? (Jesus can be my example; Jesus is in my heart telling me how to love.)

Say: A true-blue friend loves people the way Jesus loves people. I’m going to read aloud some situations. After each one, discuss with your group members what a true-blue friend would do in that situation.
Read each of the following situations. After each one, give groups time to decide what a true-blue friend would do. Then have volunteers share their groups’ ideas with the rest of the class.

Situation 1—James and Brad were walking home from school one day. Brad said, “I’m going to float my new boat in the creek this afternoon. I’m not supposed to play by the creek, so I’m going to say that I was playing at your house. If my mom asks you, just tell her I spent the whole afternoon at your house.” What should James—as a true-blue friend to Brad—do?

Situation 2—Becca was eating cookies, drinking milk, and watching her favorite after-school program on TV. From where she sat, she watched as her dad pulled up to the driveway, stopped the car, got out, and moved two bicycles, a skateboard, a basketball, two jump-ropes, a baseball bat, a ball, a catcher’s glove, and a scooter from the driveway so he could drive his car into the garage. What should Becca—as a true-blue friend to her dad—do?

Situation 3—From where Sam was sitting, he could see every word on Hannah’s spelling test. Sam had just learned in Sunday school that cheating is wrong. Sam knew he shouldn’t peek, but spelling was his hardest subject, and his parents had promised him a trip to the ice cream store if he improved his grades. What should Sam—as a true-blue friend to Hannah and to his family—do?

After you’ve talked about each of the situations, say: Thanks for those great ideas about what a loyal friend would do. Loyal friends are always ready to help their family and friends. But we must first be loyal to God.

Our Bible verse says, “This is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8b). That means helping our friends do good things that will make God happy. Helping a friend do something that’s wrong would not be a loyal act. God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends. As we sing our key Bible verse song, we’ll make a promise to act like true-blue friends.

Cue the CD to “Walk Humbly” (Micah 6:8), track 2. Have children write their names on their handout sections. Have them write in names of people they will be “true-blue” to. Have the children color with the washable blue markers on the tip of one finger and put blue fingerprints on the handouts. After you have explained how to create the “True-Blue” friends promise cards, play “Walk Humbly” (Micah 6:8), and encourage the children to sing along. Lyrics can be found at the back of this teacher guide. Have children take their handouts home to remind them to be true-blue friends. Before leaving, have children wash hands or use wet wipes to remove blue ink from fingers.
**Closing**

**Stick Together**

**SUPPLIES**: None

Ask: • **What did you learn today?** (I learned to always be ready to help; I learned to stick by my friends; I learned to be loyal to my family and friends.)

Say: ►**God wants us to be loyal to our family, to our friends, and to him.** Another way to say that we’ll be loyal to people is to say that we’ll stick with them no matter what. When people stick together, they hold fast to one another. Let’s use these sticks to show our commitment to stick together right now. As you press your stick to the sculpture, name one person you will commit to sticking to, no matter what.

Give each child a Wikki Stix. If you have more children than Wikki Stix, cut the Wikki Stix in half. Have children press their Wikki Stix together to form a sculpture blob. Pass the sculpture around, and have each child shake it to see how well it sticks together.

Say: **When we all stick together, we’re very strong, just like this sculpture. It is hard to hurt us or separate us because loyalty is a strong bond that keeps us together. People who are loyal to each other help each other. Let’s stick our Wikki-Stix sculpture to the door. Then when your parents come to pick you up, you can explain that the sculpture reminds us that people who are loyal stick together and that ►**God wants us to be loyal to our family, to our friends, and to him.**

Have the class help press the Wikki-Stix sculpture onto the door. Then close in prayer, asking God to help your children be loyal to him and to others.

After kids leave, return the Wikki Stix to the Learning Lab for future lessons.

**Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.**

Photocopy the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week’s topic. Follow up the “Growing Together” activities next week by asking children what their families did together.
In the Fields Name Tags

Photocopy this page, and cut the name tags where indicated. Have the children decorate them and write their names on the blank lines.
True-Blue

Photocopy and cut apart this handout for use during the “True-Blue Friends” activity.

I promise to be

a True-Blue Friend,

loyal to my family,
loyal to my friends,
and loyal to my God.

I promise to be

a True-Blue Friend,

loyal to my family,
loyal to my friends,
and loyal to my God.

I promise to be

a True-Blue Friend,

loyal to my family,
loyal to my friends,
and loyal to my God.
Sweet Loyalty

Thaw a loaf of frozen bread dough, and separate bread dough into balls the size of your child’s fist. Pull each dough ball into a thin circle. Wrap each dough circle around a marshmallow, and pinch the dough together to seal the seams. Place the dough balls in a greased 9x13 pan. Put the pan in a warm place, and let the dough rise until doubled. Brush the dough with melted butter, and sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar. Bake according to package directions until golden. After they have cooled, bite into the sweet treats, and talk about how working together to create a treat is like the way we need to work together showing loyalty to one another.

True Blue

Talk with your child about what it means to be a true-blue friend. Then bake a batch of blueberry muffins with your child. Put the muffins in a basket lined with blue napkins or tissue paper. Design a card on blue paper that says, “We’re your true-blue friends.” Deliver the gift to a friend or family member.

Loyalty Rocks

Collect several smooth fist-sized rocks. Clean and dry them thoroughly. Then paint them with craft paints showing a bright sun and a picture of family and friends. Talk about ways you can be loyal to family and friends through rock-hard times and sunny bright times.

Me and My Shadow

Read the Key Verse, Micah 6:8b, and then turn off the lights except for one table lamp. Direct its light onto a wall. Take turns standing in front of the light so your shadow is cast on the wall. Have fun watching your shadows move. Act out movements that would portray acting justly or showing mercy. Make shadow pictures of different ways of walking. Try to imitate one another’s shadows. Then talk about specific ways of showing loyalty to one another this week.

Today your child learned that loyalty is important. The children practiced being loyal to one another. They learned that being loyal means being ready to lend a helping hand and to be “true-blue.” The children also learned that God is happy when they stick by their family members and friends.