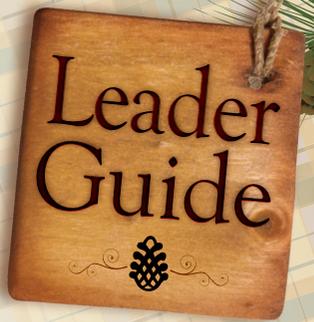


Session 1



Women begin exploring the book of Ruth and discover that no matter what life gives us, we can all choose to make God our firm foundation.



Hello, Leader!

Thank you for leading this session at Cozy Mountain Lodge. The purpose of this session is to help women stand firm on the foundation of a relationship with God. You'll be introducing women to the Bible book of Ruth and leading them in study of Ruth 1. You will need to connect with the Worship Leader before your session. The songs and activities that she leads intentionally tie to your session, so please talk ahead of time to understand how your roles and content support each other.

Our team at Group is praying for you!

Supplies

- a variety of items that can be used as building materials, such as Legos, playing cards, drinking straws, Styrofoam cups, building blocks, and toothpicks
- paper lunch bags, 1 per group of 4 women
- Cozy Cabin Kits*, 1 per woman
- fine-tipped felt markers, several for each table (for best results, choose darker colors such as brown, black, blue, or green)
- *Music of Cozy Mountain Lodge* CD*
- CD player or sound system



*You'll find this in the Cozy Mountain Lodge Director's Kit. Additional copies are available from Group Publishing (group.com or 800-447-1070) or your church resource supplier.

Hearty Hint

Expect a lot of sharing and laughing. To avoid raising your voice to get women's attention, bring along an attention-grabbing noisemaker.

Setup

Getting Ready for Session 1

- Read through this guide several times. You'll follow the content exactly as it's written. You don't have to memorize it; just be comfortable with the content. It's OK to read from this guide as you're leading women. Look for the content in bold type for the text you will be speaking aloud.
- Place an assortment of building supplies into each brown paper bag. For example, you might put a few drinking straws, a handful of toothpicks, and two Styrofoam cups into one bag and a big handful of Legos and a few playing cards in another. Women will be building a little house with these supplies, but some building materials should be easier to work with than others. Don't try to be "fair" in what you put in—just try to put a variety of items so that some will be easier to work with and others will present more of a challenge. Fold the top of each bag down so no one can see what they are getting until you're ready for women to use these.
- Place fine-tipped felt markers on each table so women can have access to them when they need them.
- During this session, you'll read Ruth 1 aloud. You can do this yourself, or you may want to invite another woman to read it. If you choose someone else, be sure to invite her ahead of time so she has time to become familiar with this passage.
- Play the *Music of Cozy Mountain Lodge* CD as women arrive, and then continue playing it softly as they talk in small groups. Background music is great for setting a comfortable tone in your room.
- Pray! Ask God to open the hearts of women to each other and to him.

Start

Welcome

The Cozy Mountain Lodge Director will open this session with a welcome and any announcements, and then she'll introduce the Worship Leader, who will lead women in an opening activity where they will get into small groups. She will also lead a time of singing. The Worship Leader will then introduce you.

Getting Started

Greet everyone enthusiastically!

Say: Here we are at Cozy Mountain Lodge. Let's take a few minutes to get to know each other better. Turn to page 11 in your Cozy Mountain Lodge Participant Guide. You're going to be using this guide in every session of our retreat, so be sure you keep it with you.

On page 11 you'll see a few discussion questions under the heading "My Dream Lodge." Take about 5 minutes to share your responses with the women in your Getaway Group. Don't continue to the next section—just discuss the questions in that section.

While women are talking, deliver a paper bag of building supplies to each group. After about 5 minutes, have women return their attention to you.

Let's jump right into the fun with a little building project. I've delivered a bag of building supplies to each group. I'd like you to take about 5 minutes to build a mountain lodge. Perhaps you can make one just like someone in your group described! Work with what you have to make a lodge.

Some groups will likely be happy with what they find in their bags, while others will complain they weren't given good items. For those that complain to you, simply smile and encourage them to build what they can with what they've got.

After about 5 minutes, call time and invite women to glance around the room from their seats and view the lodges of those nearby. Then ask:

If you had to sum up your building experience in one word, what would it be?

Have women call out their words. Repeat these into the microphone as they are said so everyone can hear them.

There are a variety of opinions and feelings here! Let's go a little deeper in exploring this activity. You'll find discussion questions on page 11 of your guide under the heading "Building a Lodge." Take about 8 minutes to discuss these with your Getaway Group.

After about 8 minutes, have women return their attention to you.



Say: In our activity it's true that some groups had better building materials than others. And in life, it seems that some of us have been provided with better building materials, as well. Some might have had a childhood filled with love and affirmation, while others did not. Some might have had the opportunity for quality education, while others did not. Some have had good health, fulfilling jobs, meaningful relationships...and others have not. Many of these things seem to be out of our control, and they often seem unfair. One thing that everyone had in common, however, was the foundation. We all were building on our tables and had a common foundation for our buildings.

During our time at Cozy Mountain Lodge, we're going to look closely at two women from the Bible and see how they dealt with what seems to have been some low-quality "building materials." But they chose a common foundation. The true account of these women, Naomi and Ruth, is told in the Bible in the book of Ruth. Let's read the first part of their story together.

God's Word



Read Ruth 1 aloud, or have a woman you've asked ahead of time read it aloud. Invite women to follow along in their own Bibles, or they can find the text from the Bible beginning on page 5 of their guides. After you've read this, have women

discuss the questions on page 12 of their guides. These questions begin with the heading "Naomi and Ruth."

After about 10 minutes of discussion, have women return their attention to you.



Continued...

Say: These women had to deal with famine, moving away from the support of family and friends, the death of husbands (and for Naomi, her sons), fear of being without money or a home, and so much more. No wonder Naomi felt that God had made her life bitter. But notice that even though she felt that life was difficult, she never turned away from God. He was still her foundation. And when Ruth clung to Naomi and proclaimed her devotion, Ruth says, "Your God will be my God." She must have known Naomi long enough to know of her faith in God, and Ruth determined that she wanted this for her life, as well.

These women chose God as the foundation of their lives. No matter what else was given to them for building materials, they had a firm foundation with their faith in God. We'll discover more about what happens because of their choice to build their lives upon the foundation of God as we go deeper into this story. But we have the same choice to make

that Ruth and Naomi had. Will we make God the foundation for our lives?

In Luke 6:46-49, Jesus tells about this important decision for each of us. Read this passage from your Bible or from page 13 of the guide.

My Foundation

As we spend time together during this retreat, we're going to build something to remind us of what we learn. The first part of our building is the foundation. Each of you has a little packet of wood pieces. I'd like each person to take the foundation piece from that packet. Hold up the piece women should be looking for. They'll also see a picture of it in their guide on page 12.



Reflect for a moment on the songs we've sung, the verses we've read, the women we've begun to learn about. Think about where you are with God right now and whether you are standing on the firm foundation of a relationship with him. Even if you are already a Christian, you might not be placing your feet on this foundation—you might be wandering into the shifting sand of worries and doubts. Now is a time when you can commit or recommit your life to God.

Use a marker to write a phrase, a verse, or a few words that represent your thoughts at this time on this foundation piece. You don't have to share this with anyone—it's just between you and God. When you're done, you can tuck this in your tote bag, as we'll add onto it later.



Play "My Help Comes From the Lord" (track 7 on the *Music of Cozy Mountain Lodge* CD) softly as women reflect and write. When the song is over, close this session in prayer, asking God to help each woman find peace in knowing the strength of God as the foundation for her life.





Cozy Mountain Lodge | Session 1 Leader Guide

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