



PART I

I'M ON YOUR SIDE: CELEBRATING OUR MOTHER-DAUGHTER BOND



1.



WE ARE FAMILY



We Are Family (For Mom)

If you have decided to make this journaling journey with your daughter, it's because you understand just how important the bonds of family are.

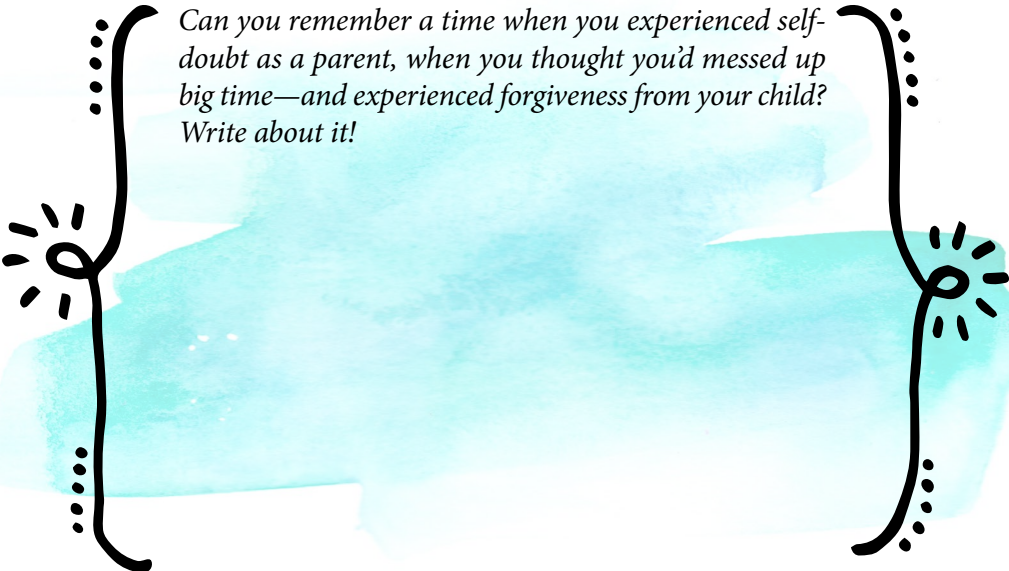
The first part of this journal, "I'm on Your Side," is meant to help you celebrate your unique and unrepeatable relationship. God chose each of you to help one another to heaven. That is a wonderful (although sometimes painful) thing!

Family is such a powerful word, and it means something a bit different for each of us. Families come in all shapes and sizes; some are bonded by ties of blood, adoption, or marriage. Others are more informally connected, though no less dear.

For some, the word *family* brings warm, cozy feelings; for others, it breeds feelings of anxiety or thoughts of disappointment. The reality is that we're often dealing with brokenness in our families because of past hurts or because of our own individual brokenness and sinfulness. But the hope we have is that God can heal and bring peace even through our brokenness and shortcomings. Through him we can overcome the challenges we face together as families.

It's so important for family members—in this case, mothers and daughters—to build up their relationship and to learn to trust each other. As a young woman, I had a hard time trusting people. When I became a mom, it was so important to me that my own children would genuinely trust me. I do everything I can think of to protect and nurture that sense of trust.

Sometimes we have to work at it together. I will never forget the accusing look on Ava's face when at the tender age of six she emerged, scarred for life from the terror of riding on Splash Mountain at Disney World in the name of "fun." (In hindsight, we might not have prepared her quite enough for that big drop—oops.) She refused to go on any more roller coasters. I thought our day was ruined, but it gave me a unique opportunity to salvage our time together. I acknowledged that we should have warned her a little better on that last ride and assured her that we would never ask her to do something that would put her in real danger. I was so proud of her—she nervously went on the next ride with me, reluctantly trusting, and she *loved* it. Whew!



Can you remember a time when you experienced self-doubt as a parent, when you thought you'd messed up big time—and experienced forgiveness from your child? Write about it!

What I love about this story and many other experiences we've had together is that they gave me the chance to reinforce to her that I am always "Team Ava." Whether she likes what I have to say or totally disagrees with my decisions, she knows that her mother (and the rest of her family) is *always* on her side. I want her to know that I will be there to guide and direct her to the best of my ability, because I love her and want her to become the best Ava she can possibly be.

This first chapter explores the family bond and the uniqueness of family life through building trust and strengthening the relationship as mother and daughter. —Lori

We Are Family

(For Daughter)

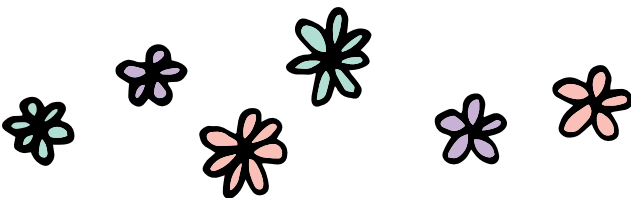
My family is made up of five people who love and trust each other. I love my family because I know that I can always go to them for help and they will be there to back me up. Another thing I love about my family is that we can all enjoy being together and laughing together, but we can also pray together and worship God together.

What do you love doing most with your family?




One of my favorite experiences with my family is whenever we play music together at our church. It really is great to be able to have a relationship with your family that connects you with God.


I can also rely a lot on my mother when I need someone to walk along with me on my path to knowing Jesus. I know that I can sit down with her and discuss my feelings about my faith because I feel like we can relate a lot to each other. I know she is always on “Team Ava.” —Ava



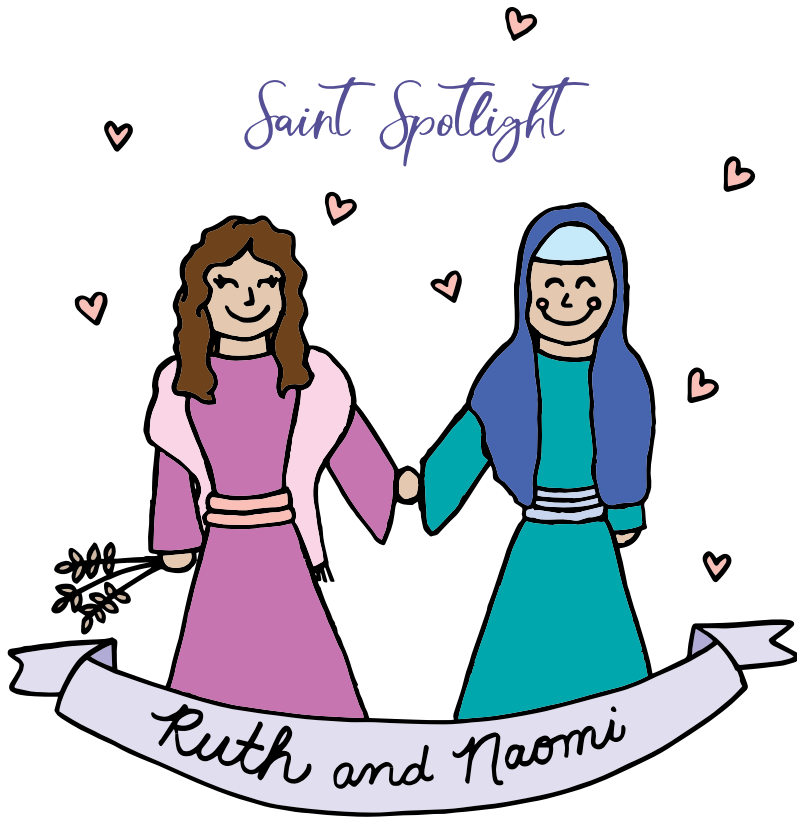
Getting to Know You

 *Mother, how would you finish these sentences?*

- The most memorable nickname I've ever received is _____
because _____.
- This is how I got that name _____.
- If I could trade roles with you for a day, I would _____
_____.
- My favorite family tradition is _____ because
_____.

 *Daughter, now it's your turn to write to your mom!*

- My favorite nickname is _____ because
_____.
- If I could pick any nickname for you, it would be _____
because _____.
- If I could trade roles with someone in our family for a day, it would be
_____ because _____
_____.
- My favorite family tradition is _____ because
_____.



The Old Testament book of Ruth is a retelling of Ruth and Naomi's incredible story of loyalty and family. It begins with great tragedy: Naomi loses her husband, Elimelech, and both of their sons, Mahlon and Chilon. Mahlon was Ruth's husband.

Naomi was an Israelite who moved with her family to Moab during a time of great famine. In her grief, Naomi decides to return empty-handed to her homeland (Bethlehem). One daughter-in-law, Ruth, who is a Moabite, declares she will not leave her mother-in-law. Ruth's loyalty, self-sacrifice, and commitment to Naomi, causing Ruth to leave behind all she had ever known to follow Naomi to a foreign land, not only blessed Naomi by protecting her and providing for her but also served as witness to their community. Their selfless love and dedication for each other, even in the most difficult of circumstances, ultimately brought happiness to this mother-in-law/daughter-in-law pair. And Ruth comes to be named in the genealogy of Christ (see Matthew 1:5).

Wisdom from the Book of Ruth

When Naomi urged her two daughters-in-law to return to their families after the deaths of their husbands, Ruth replied, “Do not press me to go back and abandon you! Wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God” (Ru 1:16).

Can you think of a time when you lost something or someone important to you? Did you want to be on your own (like Naomi), or did you feel better by being around those who understood how you felt (like Ruth)? What do you find most comforting when you feel sad?

Mom's Answer:



Daughter's Answer:

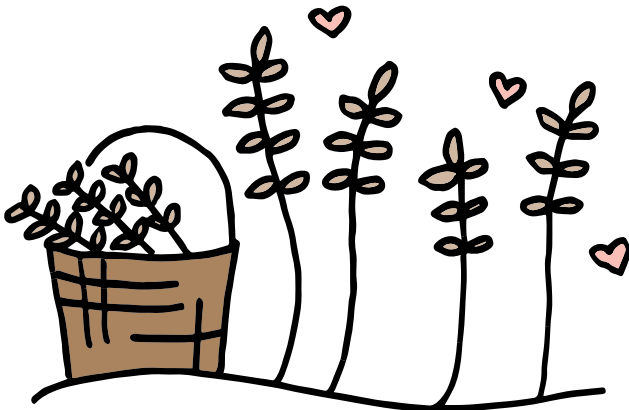




Let's Talk about It

Mom, if you and your daughter are unfamiliar with the book of Ruth, why not read it, together or on your own? Then, Mom, please finish these sentences.

- I am like Naomi when _____
_____ and I am like Ruth when _____
_____.
- Sometimes it's hard to make sacrifices for family in difficult situations.
I'll never forget when _____ stayed by my side
through a difficult time in my life.
- I tried really hard to let you know I was on *your* team when _____
_____.
- I think our family is unique because _____
_____.



My favorite recent memory of our family is _____

_____.

Daughter, now it's your turn!

- My favorite part of the story of Naomi and Ruth is _____

_____.

- I am most like Naomi when _____

_____ and I am like Ruth when _____

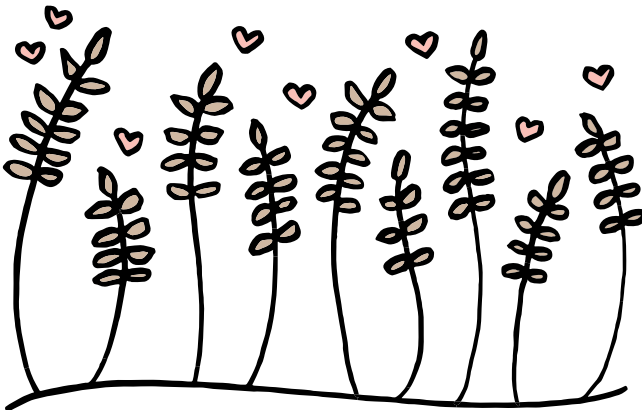
_____.

- One time when I realized that you were really on my team was _____

_____.

- Something that is really unique and that I love about our family is _____

_____.



A Moment with Scripture

Read both the verses below, aloud or to yourself; then pick one to memorize. Repeat it to yourself until you can say it without looking. Then illustrate it by drawing, doodling, or sketching what comes to mind. As you draw, ask God to show you how to apply it to your life.

