

Discussion Questions

1. In *Ruth and the Green Book*, a girl named Ruth travels with her parents to visit her grandmother in Alabama. In what ways is the trip to Alabama different from Ruth's life in Chicago?
2. Why wouldn't the gas station attendant let Ruth and her mother use the restroom? Why did Ruth's mother say that the service station owners were the ones who should be ashamed of themselves?
3. Why does the family need cheering up after the first night on the road? Why does Ruth's mother think singing will cheer them up?
4. How do you think you might feel if your family was turned away from a hotel or gas station?
5. Which war did Ruth's father and Eddy fight in? Why did Ruth's father think the war would have changed things? What did he expect would have changed?
6. Why do you think people at Esso service stations were nice to Ruth's family?
7. The Esso Station attendant says a postman named Victor H. Green started the Green Book. How do you think he knew which businesses would serve African Americans?
8. What do you know about Jim Crow laws? Why didn't Ruth know about them before this trip?
9. Eddy tells Ruth's father that things might become dangerous as the family drives south. What might have happened, if the family had not learned about Esso stations and the Green Book?
10. Why doesn't Miss Melody take any money from Ruth's parents to stay at her home? What does Ruth mean when she says she's "going to do the same one day"?
11. The traveling salesmen all say they could not do their jobs without the Green Book. What would their jobs have been like if they had not had a guide like this one?
12. Why does Ruth give Brown Bear to the little boy at the inn? How have her feelings toward Brown Bear changed since the beginning of the car trip?
13. What does Ruth mean when she says the trip made her feel like part of one big family?
14. Do you think it was brave of Ruth's family to travel in the south during this time period?
15. How have laws and people's opinions about race changed since the 1950s, when this story takes place?