



RUTH & NAOMI

RUTH 1-4

GOAL

- ▶ To help children learn the power of faithful love. Beyond this, children can get a picture of how much God loves them.
-

CHARACTERS

- ▶ **Ruth:** She was the widowed daughter-in-law of Naomi. She pledged to remain with Naomi and to care for her. She eventually married Boaz.

Naomi: She was Ruth's mother-in-law. She returned to Israel after a long absence, and she brought Ruth with her.

Boaz: He was a kinsman of Naomi's late husband. He married Ruth and preserved the family legacy

MEMORY VERSE

- ▶ **Ruth 1:16:** Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.
-

OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read Ruth 1-4:** With their husbands dead, Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi clung to each other. They returned to Naomi's homeland where Ruth began searching for grain. The field from which she chose to glean was the property of one of their relatives, Boaz. Boaz chose to marry Ruth, honoring her and protecting her in a beautiful picture of redemptive love.



SUGGESTIONS

Ruth's story is one of faith and love. Yes, she fell in love with Boaz, which makes this book a lovely little romance; but the greatest love shown in this story is Ruth's love for Naomi and the Lord. For Ruth, following Naomi to Israel was a leap of faith in the name of love.

In Israel she was a foreigner from a land of idol worshippers. She would be looked down upon and judged by others. Naomi's own sons had broken Moses' law against marrying foreigners by taking Ruth and Orpah as their wives, so it would be unlikely that Ruth would find a new husband in Israel and have children. Without God, following Naomi into Israel would have had very lonely consequences for Ruth.

Because she was unlikely to find a new husband, choosing to follow Naomi to Israel was a choice to live in poverty and hard labor. Ruth and Naomi had no money and no family that they knew of to help them. It would be up to Ruth to ensure their survival. Without God, moving to Israel would not lead to prosperity and comfort.

Despite all of these possibilities, she loved God and Naomi more than any hardship she might face in Israel. Staying in Moab would mean living without God, and that would be worse than anything living in Israel could bring her way. Ruth decided that it was worth the risk. God repaid Ruth's faithfulness with a marriage to a good and respected man, a son, prosperity, and happiness. And as if that weren't enough, because Ruth chose God, she was made part of the line of King David and, even more important, Jesus.

God's love for those who love him is amazing and unlimited.



**PRE-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▷ **Cleaning Game | Supplies:** several different colors of construction paper cut into strips.

Cut different colors of construction paper into strips to serve as wheat for the game—a paper shredder would be the easiest way to do this. Use as many colors of construction paper as there will be teams. Be sure to cut up plenty of construction paper for each team to gather, and make sure it's an equal amount for each team. Divide the children into three or four teams. Scatter and mix all the colors of wheat onto the floor. On "go" all the teams are to gather their own color wheat and place it in the designated team basket. The team that gathers all of their wheat first wins the game.

**MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING**

▷ **Ruth 1:16:** Ruth gave up everything she knew and an assured future of family and comfort because she loved Naomi and the Lord. Her choice to follow Naomi into Israel was an act of extreme faith in God's love and provision.

**POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▷ **Family Necklace | Supplies:** yarn or string and colored beads or other necklace materials.

Give each student a piece of string or yarn to make a necklace. Then, provide students with one bead or other piece of necklace material for every member of their family. Because Boaz was an extended family member, students may add beads for every family member they can think of, including aunts, uncles, and cousins.

**TAKE
HOME**

▷ Life will present us with situations in which we must choose the easy path or the difficult path. Following God does not mean everything we will be called to do will be difficult, but it can and does happen. It is important to understand that following God may be difficult, but it leads to abundant blessing. Ruth is a fantastic example of how choosing God can lead to a better life than we ever dreamed was possible.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: Why were people starving?

A1: There was a widespread famine in Israel.

Q1b: How long do you think you could survive on the food that is currently in your house?

TN: It kind of depends on how much food there is and what kind of food we have. Fresh fruits and vegetables won't last long, neither will any meat. Dry and canned goods will last the longest. While this is a rhetorical question for us, it was a very real question for the people of Israel at this time. What they had was all that there was. There was no food to be had from their own gardens or to buy from anyone else. If they wanted to survive, people had to move out of the famine-affected area.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What were the names of the sons' wives?

A2: Naomi's sons married Ruth and Orpah.

Q2b: Why do you think brides in China wear red instead of white?

TN: Students likely will not know the answer to this question, but let them suggest some answers. Explain to the students that in Chinese culture, white is typically used at funerals and is a color of mourning, but red is the color of celebration. While red often is a color used at celebrations in America, white is used for decorations and dresses at weddings. This is just one small example of how cultures can be different. In addition, women's roles and responsibilities are different between cultures and have changed over time, too. At the time of this story, women typically were not educated and were not allowed to have jobs. So when their fathers or husbands died, they were left without a way to provide for themselves. Women had to rely on their extended family members to survive. This is what happened to Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: Did Naomi want her daughters-in-law to go with her to Israel?

A3: No, Naomi wanted her daughters to stay in Moab to start new families.

Q3b: How would you react if you spent the night at your friend's house, and he asked if you wanted to stay forever?

TN: It might be fun for a little bit, but after a while, we would start to miss our own home, our family, our rooms, and all of our stuff. There is a level of comfort we can find only at home. Naomi had lived in Moab for 10 years. After her husband and sons died, she just wanted the comfort of home—a place where she knew the people, the language, and their God.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What did Naomi tell people to call her?

A4: Naomi told people to call her Bitter.

Q4b: If you could change your name, what would you change it to?

TN: Let students answer. In Hebrew, the name Naomi means “pleasantness.” After her husband and both of her sons were dead, Naomi didn’t see much pleasantness in her life, so she asked everyone to call her Mara, which means “bitter.”



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: From whose field did Ruth collect scraps of grain?

A5: Ruth collected scraps of grain from Boaz's field.

Q5b: Have you ever received hand-me-down clothing?

TN: Hand-me-downs are clothes that are still in good condition that older siblings, relatives, or friends have worn and grown out of or no longer want and are given to someone else who can wear them. The clothes are still good, so continuing to use them is a way to save money and reduce waste. Similarly, gleaning was a way to reduce waste and care for the less fortunate. Gleaning was something done during the harvest. The reapers would go through the fields of wheat and collect the cut stalks, but some of the spears of grain would fall from the bundles. The gleaners would follow the reapers through the fields and collect the fallen grain. This practice allowed the less fortunate to get wheat that they could not afford to buy.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: Why couldn't Boaz marry Ruth right away?

A6: There was another man who was more closely related than Boaz.

Q6b: There is only one blueberry muffin left, and you and your friend reach for it. How do you decide who gets it?

TN: There are a number of ways to decide without getting into an argument. The easiest way is to determine who really wants it most. That is what Boaz did with this other male relative. He brought Ruth to this relative's attention and asked if he would be interested in marrying her. He didn't hide this information, he was honest. Boaz loved Ruth, but he didn't let his love for her make him do something foolish.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



Q7a: Ruth and Boaz's son would be whose grandfather?

A7: Ruth and Boaz's son would be the grandfather of King David.

Q7b: Can you think of another person in the Bible whose love saved someone?

TN: Jesus! His love for us led Him to come to earth to save us from the curse of sin and death. His sacrifice has ensured that everyone who believes in and loves Him will have a happy ending like the one we read in the story of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.



**MEMORY
VERSE**



Ruth 1: 16: Your people shall be my people, and you God my God.

.....

BIG IDEA



God repays our faithfulness with blessings and His unconditional love.

.....

**CLOSING
PRAYER**



Dear God, thank You for giving us the story of Ruth and Boaz. Thank you for loving us and wanting us to be part of Your family. Please help us to make choices based on our love for You and our families. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



In the days when God used judges to lead Israel, famine was widespread across the land. There was hardly any food to eat, nor water to drink. People were starving, and many families decided to move away in hope of a better life. One such family was that of a man named Elimelech, who took his wife, Naomi, and their two sons to the land of Moab. They were certain that they could make a better life there and were excited with the prospect of starting a new chapter.

SLIDE 2



Once they got there, tragedy struck—Elimelech, died. His two sons took Moabite wives named Ruth and Orpah, and they lived in Moab for 10 years. Disaster struck the family again when both of Naomi's sons died. This was devastating. Who was going to provide for Naomi, Ruth and Orpah or protect them? They were left to fend for themselves.

SLIDE 3



Naomi decided to go back to Israel, to the land she knew so well, to the people she understood, a language she knew, and a community who would accept her in her grief. She wanted her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to stay in their land and start new families. But Ruth resisted, "No. I will go wherever you go. I want to be part of your people. I want to worship your God as well!" So Ruth and Naomi began their journey to the land of Israel.





LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 4



After a long journey, they arrived in Naomi's hometown, Bethlehem. The entire town came out to welcome her back. They were so surprised to see Naomi after more than 10 years. Equally, they were also surprised at how old and sad she seemed. "Naomi, is that you?" they asked with excitement. Naomi did not share their excitement. "Call me 'Bitter,' not Naomi. I have had a bitter experience," she said.

SLIDE 5



Naomi and Ruth had arrived at harvest time, and the people were busy gathering grain. Naomi and Ruth had no sons, husbands, or wealth. They desperately needed food. Naomi was too old to gather grain, so Ruth happily went out to see what she could find. She ended up gathering the leftover scraps in a field that belonged to a man named Boaz. This man was very rich and well-known for his noble character. He was kind to everyone, and he loved God.

As Ruth gathered grain, everyone seemed to notice her. After all, she was from a different culture, she had different clothes, and a different language. Boaz saw how hard she worked. He asked one of his managers, "Who is this girl who has been reaping in my field?" "Ah, that is Ruth, the daughter-in-law of Naomi," he replied. So Boaz was very kind to Ruth and made sure that everyone respected her and let her gather all the grain she needed. In fact, he even let her eat with his servants. When Ruth came home after a hard day's work, she told Naomi all about the kind man named Boaz. She explained how he took special interest in her. Naomi remembered that Boaz was a relative to her dead husband, Elimelech.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Now, it was tradition in those days for the closest relative of the family to help in time of need. Naomi saw this as a great opportunity for Boaz to be the family rescuer, or kinsman redeemer as they called it. She told Ruth that she must continue gleaning from his field. After all, he had been so kind. Why go anywhere else?

Day after day, Ruth gathered in his fields. Boaz offered her protection, food, and kindness. Day after day, they grew to enjoy being near one another.

Naomi was hoping this would happen. Boaz admired Ruth. Ruth admired Boaz. So Naomi came up with a plan. She told Ruth, "Late at night, I want you to go and wake up Boaz. It is time for you to let him know that you want him to marry you. You want his protection, his security, and his love."

SLIDE 6



Late one night, she came to Boaz as he slept outdoors on the threshing floor. "I am Ruth, your servant. Please protect me." Boaz did. There was just one problem. There was another relative of Elimelech who was closer in relation than Boaz. It was technically his responsibility to care for Naomi and Ruth and provide Ruth with a son. So Boaz, being the gentleman that he was, had a town meeting and invited the man. He presented the opportunity to him, and to Boaz's delight, the man refused.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 7



With that technicality cleared up, Ruth and Boaz were married. Soon, they had a baby boy, bringing great joy to both of them and to Naomi who was able to help raise him. Naomi, the old woman who had experienced so much sorrow, was now filled with new vibrancy and joy. This son would not only become the grandfather of Israel's great King David, but Jesus would be one of his descendants.