

The Story of Ruth





In the time of the Judges in the city of Bethlehem a famine came. Food was scarce, and people were worried.

Alimelech looked at his family and worried how he would feed them. After much thought he decided to move them all to Moab.

In Moab both of his sons, Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.

But this story ends sadly. Ten years later Alimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion all died. Naomi, Alimelech's wife was left without her husband or her sons. During all of this Naomi hears there is food again in Bethlehem. She loads up all her stuff and prepares to move back.



Orpah and Ruth pack to go with Naomi, but she speaks up.

“You can’t go with me. I pray God shows you as much love as you have shown me. May He give you a new husband and bless you greatly.” She hugged them and started to go.

“No!” they said. “We will go with you,” and they clung to her.

“Do I have more sons for you to marry? Even if I got married and became pregnant tonight, would you want to wait 20 years? No, go home to your parents.”

Orpah listened to Naomi and left, but Ruth still refused to go.



“Go follow Orpah,” said Naomi shooing her.

Ruth shook her head, “You can not dissuade me. Where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. May God deal with me if I ever leave you.”

Naomi saw Ruth would go with her, so she stopped trying to persuade her.



They arrived in Bethlehem and the whole town crowded around in excitement. “Is that Naomi? Who is that with her?”

“Is that a Moabite, why is she here?”

Naomi greeted them all, “I have returned, but do not call me Naomi. I am no longer delightful, like my name says. God has made my life bitter. Call me Mara.”



Naomi and Ruth settle into their life in Bethlehem. It is hard, they have no husbands to work or plant the fields. Naomi is old and unable to do many things. They do not have food.

Finally Ruth asks Naomi, “Can I go out into the fields and gather the grain left behind?”

God had commanded the Israelites to leave part of their fields unharvested so the poor and the stranger could gather what was left behind to get food.

Naomi thought for a moment and then said, “Go my daughter.”



Ruth went and gathered grain in the field of Boaz, Naomi's relative. One day as she gathered grain she Boaz arrive and greet everyone.

“Good morning!” He yelled boisterously. “God be with you!”

They all returned the greeting and Boaz took the time to greet many of the workers.

Eventually Boaz talked to the manager, “Who is that young woman?”

“That is Ruth, a Moabite woman who returned with Naomi. She asked to gather from the fields. She's work hard all morning.”

Boaz nodded his head as he listened, then sought out Ruth.

“Please stay here and only gather from these fields. Stay by my female workers. I've told everyone to treat you with respect.”



She bowed and said, “Why are you showing me such favor? I am a stranger.”

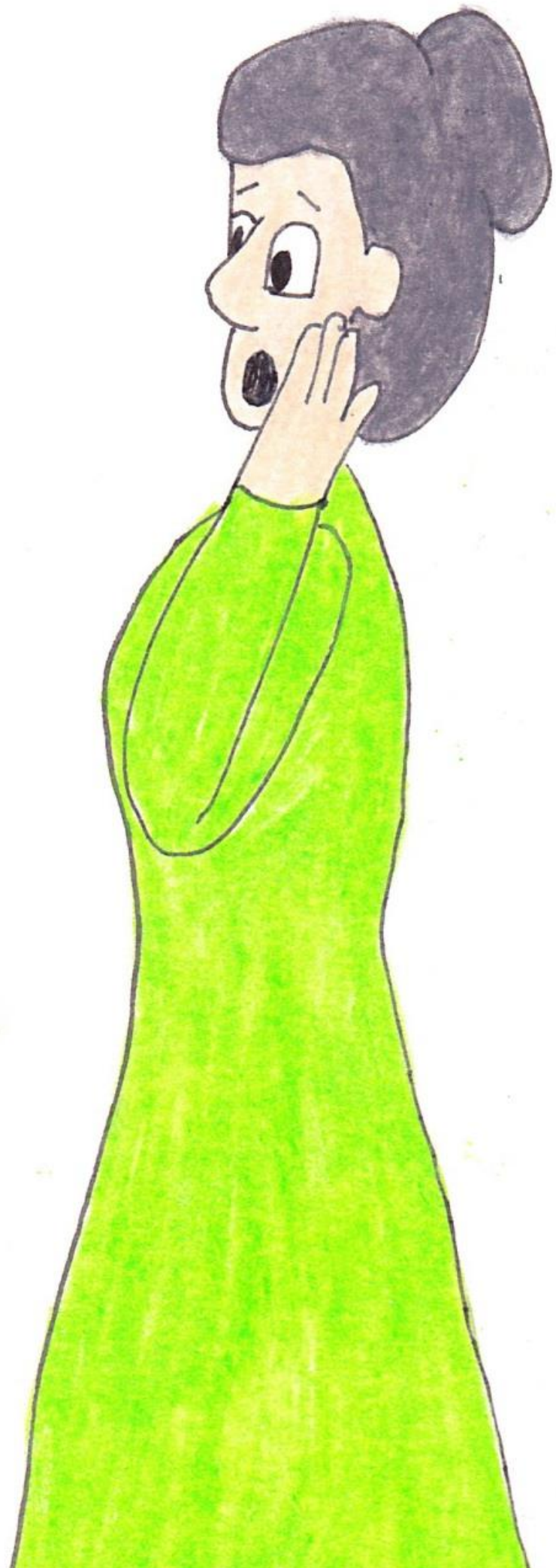
He smiled and answered, “I have heard all about you and how you take care of Naomi. May God reward you for all you have done and may you find refuge under God’s wings as chick’s do under their mother’s wings.”

“Sir,” she said, “You have been so kind to me, you encouraged me, shared with me. Thank you.”

At lunchtime Boaz invited her over to eat with him. “Here have this, it’s my favorite.”

Ruth ate and enjoyed herself, and she had so much food she wrapped it up to save for Naomi.

As she walked off Boaz called his men over, “Let her gather grain among you, drop some for her, but be subtle don’t let her know you are doing it.”



Ruth gathered enough that day to feed her and Naomi for weeks, maybe months.

When Ruth got home she showed Naomi all she had gathered and her leftovers from lunch.

“Surely God blessed us,” said Naomi in delight. “What field did you work in?”

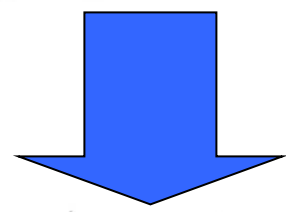
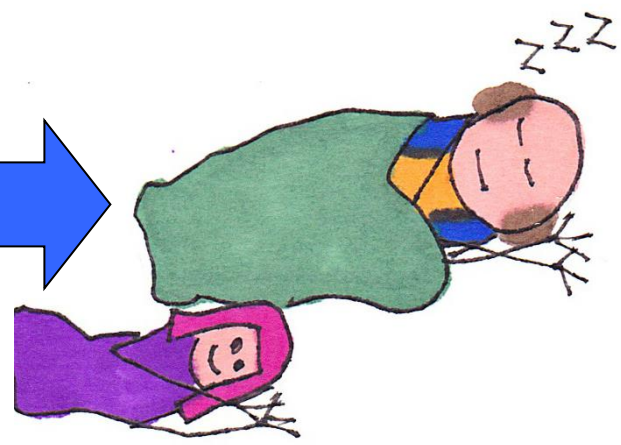
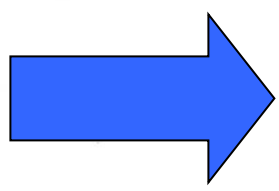
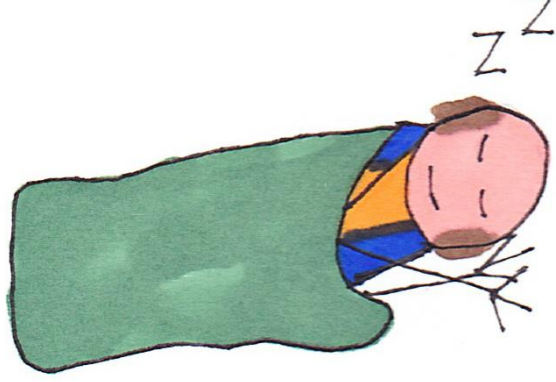
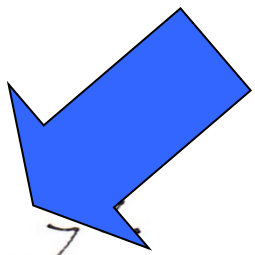
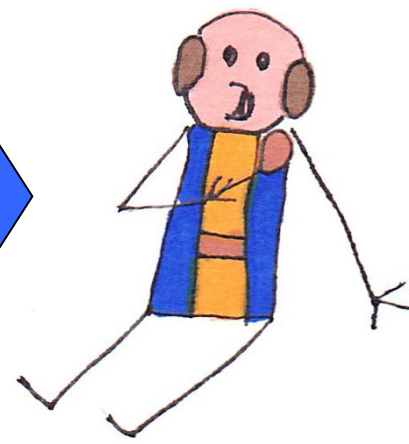
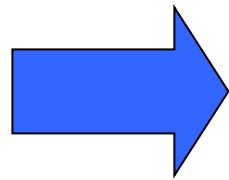
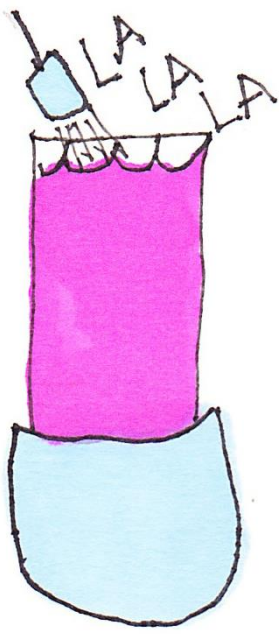
“I worked in Boaz’s fields.”

“May God bless him, for he remembers his family. He is one of our redeemers.”

A redeemer is a male relative who can rescue you if your husband or father has died by marrying you.

Ruth kept talking, “He told me to stay at his fields until they are done.”

“Ruth you have been blessed. Boaz will protect you!”



Ruth continued to work at Boaz's fields until the harvest was done. Through it all Naomi wondered when Boaz would say something to Ruth. Day after day, week after week nothing happened.

“Ruth, here is what you need to do to get Boaz. Go get cleaned up, put on your best dress and visit him at the threshing floor. After he's eaten and he's laid down to rest, go lay down by him. When he wakes up, he'll tell you what to do.”

Ruth nodded and went to get ready.



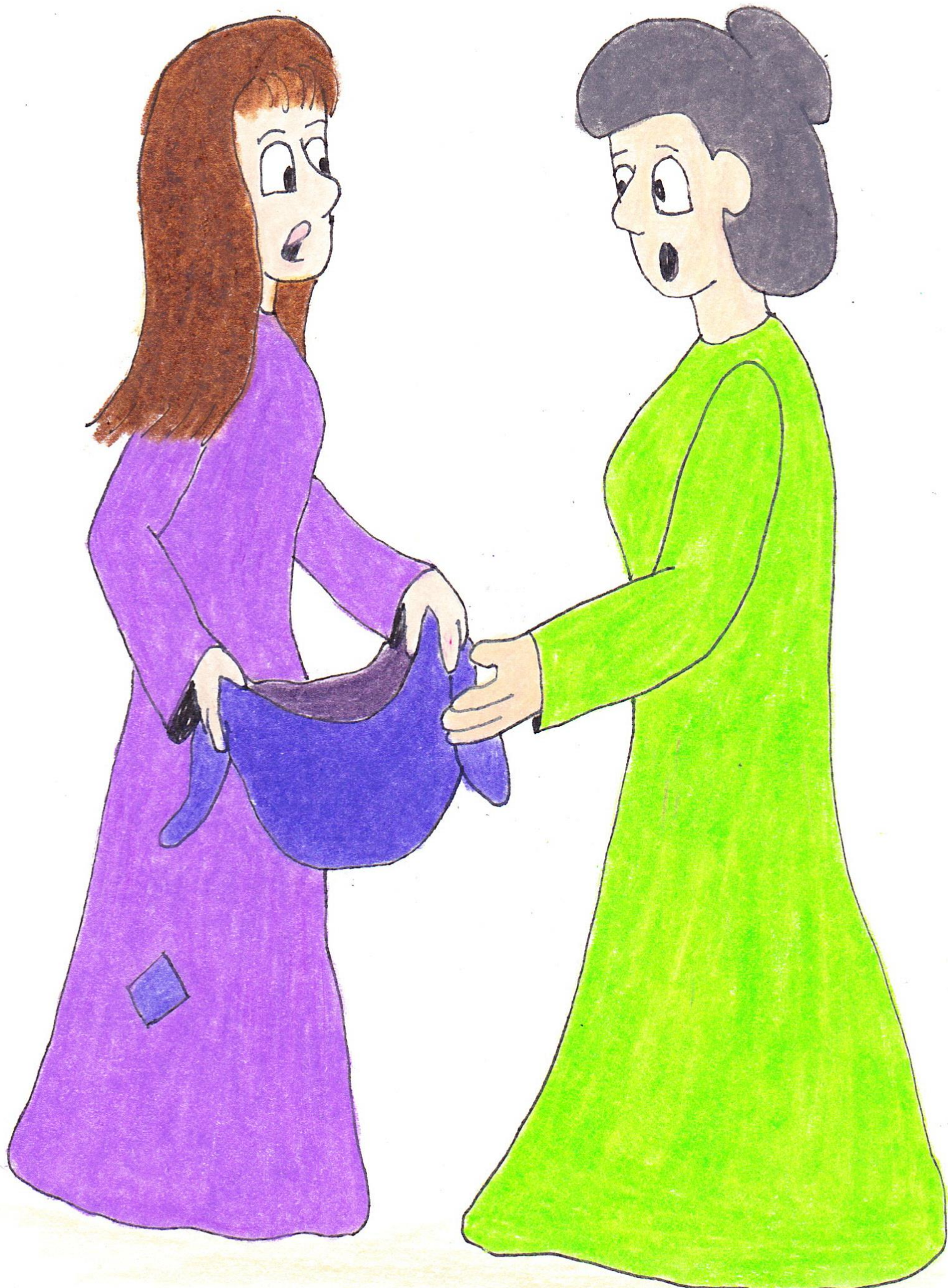
That night after Boaz had eaten and had laid down to rest, Ruth went in and laid down at his feet.

IN the middle of the night Boaz woke up in surprise. “Who’s there?”

“It’s Ruth,” she answered quietly. “Spread your cloak over me and protect me like a mother eagle does her chicks. You are my kinsman redeemer.”

He smiled at her, “God bless you for choosing me. You could have chosen a younger man, but you didn’t.”

Boaz stopped, “Wait, there is a problem. Another man is a closer redeemer than I. Stay here tonight, and tomorrow I will settle this.”



The next morning Boaz gave Ruth as much barley as she could carry.

Naomi could hardly wait as Ruth walked through the door, “What happened?”

“He said he’d take care of everything,” Ruth sighed happily. “Oh Naomi, he’s so kind. He sent food for us to eat.”

“He will fix it all today, just you wait,” Naomi declared with a decisive nod.



As soon as Boaz had eaten, he headed to the city gates to solve the problem. Soon Boaz saw the man he was looking for.

“Jotham come here,” Boaz called out, “and you sirs, if you would witness for us. Naomi wants to sell the land belonging to Elimelech. If you want to buy it say so, but if not I will.”

“What?” Jotham said, “Of course I want it.”

“Wonderful! When is the wedding?”

“Wedding? I’m not getting married,” sputtered Jotham.

“Why if you redeem the land, you must also marry Ruth, the Moabitess,” answered Boaz.

“Well, I can’t do that,” Jotham looked around angrily. “It will ruin my child’s inheritance. You do it.”



Boaz stood up and spoke to the elders, “You are all witnesses, and I will acquire Elimelech’s land and marry Ruth.”

The elders replied, “We are witnesses. May she give you many children. May you become powerful like Perez, son of Judah.”

Boaz and Ruth married. They were all happy together.

All of the women told Naomi, “Praise God for giving you such a redeemer.”

Ruth had many children, her first son was named Obed. Obed had a son named Jesse, Jesse had a son named David. David had a many time great-grandson named Jesus. And just like Boaz redeemed Ruth and rescued her, so did Jesus rescue us.

Questions

Younger Kids

1. Why did Naomi, Elimelech, and their sons move to Moab?
2. What does Ruth say when Naomi tells her to go home?
3. What does Ruth do to get them food? What can you do to help your family?
4. What does Boaz do to be able to marry Ruth?

Middle Kids

1. What is the significance of this story happening during “the time of the Judges?” What is going on then?
2. Read Ruth 2:1. What is Boaz known as? How do people describe you?
3. Read Ruth 2:4. What did Boaz do when first greeting his workers? Do you pray for people you know?
4. Read Ruth 2:6-7 and 11-13. What does it say about Ruth? What are people saying about her?

Older Guys

1. Read Ruth 1:1. Was it a wise decision to move? Think about the repercussions to the family.
2. Read Ruth 1:8-9. What is Naomi's prayer for Ruth and Orpah? Do you pray for others when grieving, especially the other people affected by that grief?
3. Read Ruth 1:14-17. What does Orpah do? What does Ruth do? How steadfast is your faith?
4. Read Ruth 1:19. What is the reaction to Naomi's return? How would people react to your return?
5. Read Ruth 1:20-21. What is Naomi's response to their greeting? Do you act happy when you're sad?
6. Read Ruth 2:12. What does Boaz pray for Ruth? Look back and 1:8-9. Compare these prayers. Do they come true?
7. Read Ruth 2:21-23. Who does Ruth go to for counsel? Who do you go to for counsel? Is it the right person?

8. Look at this story as a whole. What parallels do you see with the Redemption story of Jesus?

For Single Guys

Do a character study of Boaz. Look for: interaction with employees, businessmen, Ruth; character qualities; how does he approach work

For Single Women

Do a character study of Ruth. Look for: interaction with Boaz, Naomi; advice taken; character qualities; how she approaches work

Married/Older people

Study Naomi. What parenting roles does she assume, who is she taking on a father's role, when is she taking on a mother's role? What advice does she give, when does she give it? What is her character? What is her prayer life

Activities

1. Read the book of Ruth and find “It just so happened” or similar phrases, these are examples of God’s providence. How often does that happen in the book?
2. Do some yard work. Is it hard? Imagine doing that all day long for weeks and weeks.
3. Hide small toys in a room and try to glean them, like Ruth gleaned the grain that fell.

Online

1. Ruth memory helps for the story- <http://michellepaige.blogspot.com/2011/10/sunday-school-craft-for-book-of-ruth.html>
2. Ruth lapbook and notebooking pages- <http://www.thinkingkidsblog.org/2013/04/24/free-printable-notebook-pages-bible-road-trip-year-one-week-sixteen/>
3. Ruth activities and craft- <http://nurseryrhymesandfuntimes.blogspot.com/2011/10/kids-in-word-ruth.html>
4. Ruth lesson and coloring page- <http://ministry-to-children.com/ruth-bible-lesson/>