

WHEAT

Memory Verse: Ruth answered her, "Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." *Ruth 1:16*

Study Plan: You will learn the story of Ruth and how love is able to transform people's lives.



Step 1: Ruth in the Land of Moab Leader's Initials ____

The Book of Ruth in the Old Testament tells the story of a young woman from a foreign country who comes to live in Israel. Her love and faithfulness help to change the lives of those around her.

We have created a small booklet of the story of Ruth. It is at the end of this lesson plan. Print it up and fold in the middle to make a booklet.



Now, from your booklet, read page 1 and 2 of the booklet and discuss the following questions.

Ruth wanted to go to Bethlehem with Naomi. Do you think this was an easy decision to make? Why do you think Ruth did this? We know that the people of Moab and the people of Israel were enemies. How do you think that affected Ruth's decision to go with Naomi?

Have you ever gone to a new school where you don't know anyone there? What was it like? (If you haven't ever done this, imagine what it would feel like.)

Think about people who immigrate to this country. Ask your parents or grandparents if they were born in another country and then came here. What was it like for them?



Immigrants becoming citizens of the United States. What do you see?



A famous painting - The Gleaners by Jean-François Millet 1857

The practice of picking up “left-overs” in fields is called gleaning. We know that gleaning has been practiced for thousands of years. Gleaning still takes place today to help feed hungry people.

What do we do to feed the poor? Find out what is done in your church and in your community to help feed those who are hungry.

Do It!

- Draw a picture showing something that has happened in Page 1 and 2 on the blank last page in your Ruth booklet.
- Your leader can set up a game for you by scattering popsicle sticks over a grassy area and letting you pick them up so you try out gleaning. What do you think? Could you glean all day in the hot sun?
- Participate in supporting a local program to feed the hungry in your community, such as Souper Bowl Sunday.

Step 2: Ruth in Israel Leader’s Initials ____

Discern

In those times, it was the responsibility of relatives to take care of widows. When a woman’s husband died, a male relative would marry her so she would have a place to live, food to eat, and a place in society. This was the responsibility of male relatives because women had few rights in Biblical times.

Next, read the rest of the booklet and discuss the following questions:

Discuss

Why does Naomi believe she must find a husband for Ruth?
How does Boaz show his caring for Ruth and Naomi?
Who marries Ruth?
Why was ownership of land so important?

Do It!

Act out the story of Ruth, found in the *Leader’s List* on page 5. Perform as a skit, or use flannel board figures or puppets.

There are many animated videos of the Ruth story on YouTube. Watch one!



Step 3: The Power of Love Leader's Initials _____

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi discovers how much Ruth loves her not so much by her words, but by her actions.

What actions of Ruth show her love for Naomi?
Look at the picture to the right. How can you see that Ruth loves Naomi?

Have you ever shown someone how much you love them? Give an example.



A. Write a letter to someone special telling that person how much he or she means to you. You might want to decorate special paper to write your letter.

B. Do one of the following:

1. Cook or bake something using wheat flour or barley. Share it with your congregation or with your family.
2. Make a Ruth doll. Look online for simple ideas. One option is a sock doll.
You will need:

- A white sock
- A colored or striped sock
- Stuffing
- Thread and needle

1. Cut the sock as shown here:



2. Turn inside out, mark feet and hand-sew the feet, leaving an opening in the middle for turning and stuffing.



3. Turn and stuff. Use thin ribbon or heavy string to create a head



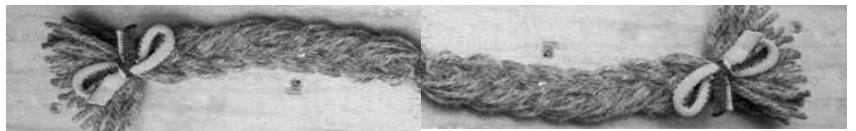
4. Cut part of the sock to form a dress, rolling the ribbed portion to form a collar.



5. Cut another section of sock for the hat and gather at top with a running stitch.



6. Create braids by cutting about 20 pieces of yarn, about 13 inches long. Braid, tie off ends and attach to head with stitches or glue.



7. Create facial features with small stitches or a felt tip pin.

Special credit to
www.missdaisypatterns.com for
the doll instructions



Leader's List:

Ruth Skit for Step 2

The Story of Ruth

Narrator A long time ago there was a young woman named Ruth who lived in the land of Moab. Ruth was married to a young man whose mother, Naomi, lived with them. Nearby lived Naomi's older son and his wife, Orpah. Years passed. Then the husbands of Ruth and Orpah died, It was a very sad time. Ruth and Orpah missed their husbands terribly, and Naomi missed her two sons. Besides feeling very sad, the women were worried about their future. In those days, a woman could not take a job and earn a living for herself. One day, Naomi sat down with the two women.

Naomi Ten years ago I came from the land of Israel. I was born, raised, and married there. We came here to Moab because there was no food in our town, Bethlehem. But now I want to go home. I hear that the crops have done well this year.

Ruth But, dear Naomi, what shall we do? We love you as if you were our own mother.

Naomi You are welcome to come with me if you like. But it would be better for you to return to the homes of your parents here in Moab. They could help each of you find a new husband. You should get married again and raise families of your own.

Narrator Ruth was crying, and then Orpah started crying. Naomi stopped trying to fight back her own tears. Orpah kissed Naomi; then she packed her things and returned to the home of her childhood. But Ruth clung to Naomi.

Ruth Please don't make me go back! I want to go wherever you go, and live wherever you live. I want to become one of the people of Israel, like you, and worship the one true God. When I die, I want to be buried beside you.

Naomi Then come with me, Ruth.

Narrator The two women set off for Israel on foot. They walked for many

days until they finally arrived in Bethlehem, the village where Naomi had grown up. Ruth and Naomi were tired. They had no more money. They were hungry and thirsty. Their feet were blistered and sore. People stopped and stared at them.

Woman Could this possibly be Naomi?

Naomi You must not call me Naomi anymore, for that name means 'pleasant'. Call me Mara, a name that means 'bitter' now, for that is how I feel. I left this town full and happy, but I am returning empty.

Narrator After a good night's sleep, Ruth was determined to do something.

Ruth I'll try to get something for us to eat. The barley is being harvested now. Perhaps I can gather some of the grain left over in the fields.

Narrator So Ruth left for the countryside. She found a barley field, and began to gather the grain. The field belonged to Boaz.

Boaz Who is that girl over there?

Worker She's new in town. She is Naomi's daughter-in-law from Moab. She was out here bright and early this morning, and has hardly stopped to rest.

Boaz Hello! It's quite all right. You can stay in my field and take whatever grain has fallen behind the reapers. When you get thirsty, come and drink from the water jars my servants fill.

Ruth Why are you being so kind to a stranger like me?

Boaz Well, I know who you are. You are Naomi's daughter-in-law. I've heard about how good you have been to her. You even left your own mother and father in Moab to come to Israel and make a home under the wings of the Lord God. May God bless you and your work!

Ruth Thank you. Thank you for your kindness.

Narrator At the end of the day, Ruth had gathered a lot of grain, enough barley to fill a large basket. That much barley would last a long time. She took it home to Naomi.

Naomi Where in the world did you get all of this, Ruth? Someone must

have been very kind to you. Bless his heart!

Narrator Ruth told Naomi about Boaz and what had happened that day. Some time later, Naomi talked to Ruth about Boaz. She said to Ruth,

Naomi In this country, when a man dies, it is the custom for his closest relative to take care of his family. Boaz is our relative. It would be natural and right for him to marry you.

Ruth All right, Naomi, I will do whatever you say.

Narrator So Ruth went down to the field where Boaz was working. When he went to sleep, Ruth sat down near him.

Boaz Who are you?

Ruth I am Ruth, your relative. I need the security of a good marriage.

Boaz Why, Ruth! May the Lord bless you. Your loyalty to me is as great as your loyalty to Naomi. You are willing to marry me instead of looking for a younger man? Everyone in Bethlehem knows that you are an outstanding woman. To take you as my wife would be an honor.

Narrator So Ruth and Boaz were married. Some time later, they had a son, whom they named Obed.

Naomi I am so happy to be a grandmother! Ruth, you have been a great blessing to me!

Narrator Obed grew up and became the father of Jesse. When he grew up, Jesse became the father of David, who was King of Israel.

Ruth had been loyal to Naomi in spite of her own sadness and grief. She had followed Naomi to Israel and worked hard to start a new life for both of them. Then Boaz showed kindness to Ruth. He took care of her and loved her. How can we be loving and kind like Ruth and Boaz

Print the next 4 pages, landscape, 2 sided, flip on short side, to create a booklet.

After a short while on the road, Naomi told her two daughters-in-law, "Go back. Go home and live with your mothers. May God give each of you a new home and a new husband!" She kissed them and they cried openly.



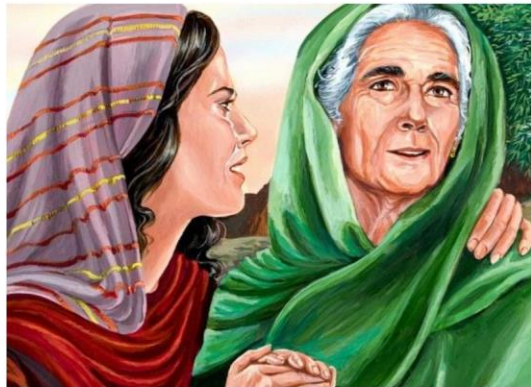
They said, "No, we're going on with you to your people."

But Naomi was firm: "Go back, my dear daughters. Why would you come with me? Your husbands have died and I have no more sons for you to marry. Go back, dear daughters—on your way, please!"

Again they cried. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye; but Ruth embraced her and held on.

Naomi said, "Look, Orpah is going back home to live with her own people and gods; go with her."

But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you; don't make me go home. Where you go, I will go; and where you live, I will live. Your people are my people, your God is my god; where you die, I will die, and that's where I will be buried."



You're my close relative, you know, you have the right to marry me."

He said, "You're right, I am a close relative to you, but there is one even closer than I am. So stay the rest of the night. In the morning, if he wants to marry you, he'll have his chance; but if he isn't interested, I'll do it. Now go back to sleep until morning."

When she came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did things go, Ruth?" Ruth told her everything. Naomi said, "We will wait until we find out how things turn out."



Boaz went straight to the public square to find the man who was a closer relative to Ruth and Naomi. They talked together. The man did not want to marry Ruth, so they decided that

Boaz would marry Ruth.

So Boaz married Ruth and they had a son, Obed.

And Naomi took the baby and held him in her arms, cuddling him and cooing over him.

Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David, the family lineage of Jesus!



The Story Of Ruth



In the days when judges led Israel, there was a famine in the land. A man from Bethlehem in Judah left home to live in the country of Moab with his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech; his wife's name was Naomi; his sons were named Mahlon and Kilion. They all went to the country of Moab and settled there. They lived there a long time and the boys grew up.



One day Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons. The sons married women from Moab; the name of the first was Orpah, the second Ruth. They lived there in Moab for the next ten years.

But then the two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, died. Now the woman was left without her sons or her husband.

One day she got herself and her two daughters-in-law together to leave the country of Moab and set out for home. So she started on the road back to the land of Judah.

"Take a bath. Put on some perfume. Get all dressed up and go to the party. When you see Boaz going off to sleep, watch where he lies down and then go there. Lie at his feet to let him know that you are available to him for marriage. Then wait and see what he says. He'll tell you what to do."

Ruth said, "If you say so, I'll do it, just as you've told me."

She went and put her mother-in-law's plan into action.

At the end of the party Ruth quietly followed to where Boaz was sleeping and she lay down to signal her availability for marriage.



In the middle of the night Boaz was suddenly startled and sat up. Surprise! There was a woman asleep at his feet!

He said, "And who are you?" She said, "I am Ruth. Take me under your protection."



When Naomi saw that Ruth had her heart set on going with her, she gave in. And so the two of them traveled on together to Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem the whole town was soon buzzing: "Is this really our Naomi? Has she come back after all this time?"

And so Naomi was back, and Ruth the foreigner with her, back from the country of Moab. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

One day Ruth said to Naomi, "I'm going to work; I'm going out to glean among the sheaves, following after some harvester who will treat me kindly."

Naomi said, "Go ahead, dear daughter."

And so Ruth set out. She went and started gleaning in a field, following in the wake of the harvesters. Eventually she ended up in the part of the field owned by Boaz, a relative of Naomi's husband.



When Boaz saw Ruth, he asked his young servant, "Who is this young woman? Where did she come from?"

The foreman said, "Why, that's the Moabite girl, the one who came with Naomi from the country of Moab. She asked permission. 'Let me glean,' she said, 'and gather among the sheaves following after your harvesters.' She's been at it steady ever since, from early morning until now, without so much as a break."



So Boaz spoke to Ruth: "Listen, my daughter. From now on don't go to any other field to glean—stay right here in this one. And stay close to my young women. Watch where they are harvesting and follow them. When you get thirsty, feel free to go and drink from the water buckets that my servants have filled."

She dropped to her knees, then bowed her face to the ground. "How does this happen that you should pick me out and treat me so kindly—me, a foreigner?"

Boaz answered her, "I've heard all about you—heard about the way you took care of your mother-in-law after the death of her husband and how you have come to live among strangers. God reward you well for what you've done."



She said, "Oh sir, such grace, such kindness—I don't deserve it. You've touched my heart, treated me like one of your own. And I don't even belong here!"

At the lunch break, Boaz said to her, "Come over here; eat some bread. Dip it in the wine."

So she joined the harvesters. Boaz passed the roasted grain to her. She ate her fill and even had some left over.

Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. When she threshed out what she had gathered, she ended up with nearly a full sack of barley! She gathered up her gleanings, went back to town, and showed her mother-in-law the results of her day's work.

Naomi asked her, "So where did you glean today? Ruth told her mother-in-law, "I worked in the fields of Boaz." Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "That man is a close relative of ours!"

So Ruth continued to glean in the fields daily until both the barley and wheat harvesting were finished. And she continued living with her mother-in-law.

One day Naomi said to Ruth, "My dear daughter, it is time for me to arrange a good home for you so you can have a happy life."

Tonight is the night of Boaz's barley harvest party at the threshing floor.

