



Lesson 1—Our Creator *Gives Us Families*

Ruth 1:1-4:22

Memory Verse

“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me”
(Ruth 1:16,17)

Teacher’s Objective

At the end of the session, the students should be able to:

Define how Ruth was faithful and kind to Naomi

Locate on a map Bethlehem and the land of Moab

Describe the time in history this story took place and the key people in the story

Express in their own words how they can be of strong character even in today’s society

Materials Needed
See “Teaching Activities” for specific activities

Teacher’s Bible Study

The book of Ruth is a story of faithfulness, kindness, and integrity during a time in Israel’s history when people set out to please themselves and not God. It was a time when there was moral and spiritual decay (Judges 17:6). The story of Ruth and her family is important because Ruth showed loyalty to God and toward her family. Even though Ruth was a Moabite, Boaz was kind to her and Naomi by buying back land which guaranteed Ruth and Naomi’s inheritance. Finally, Ruth showed tremendous character when she left her land and pagan customs, to embrace Naomi’s family and the God of Israel.

God did reward Ruth for her faithfulness during a time in history when there was faithlessness. God gave her a husband (Boaz), a son (Obed), and an important position in the lineage of King David and Jesus Christ. Ruth is the great grandmother of David. It is important to note as well that while the Hebrews were God’s chosen people in the Old Testament, Ruth, a Gentile of Moab, had a relationship with God.

The book of Ruth is believed to have been written after the period of the judges (1375–1050 B.C.). No one knows for sure who wrote the book. Jewish tradition attributes the book to Samuel.

The book of Ruth is a call to responsible behavior and living. We could certainly say the same call applies today. Parents have a responsibility to provide moral and spiritual guidance for their children and to establish values consistent with the goals of Christianity, through their example as well as by formal religious instruction. Likewise, children have responsibilities toward their parents. While it is true that the obligation is first the parents to properly rear their child, it is also true that a child is responsible for his own actions after a certain age. A child is required by God to positively respond to his parents. He must love, respect, honor, and obey his parents. In so doing, he will contribute to harmony within the home, and receive for himself the blessings of obedience.

When telling this story emphasize with your students that God is there in our lives no matter how devastating the situation may seem at the time. God cares for each and every one of us. He has vast resources to work with; we must believe that He is in our life and we need only to call on Him. Reinforce, as well, that blessings do not necessarily mean financial prosperity. Our families and those individuals God brings into our lives are a blessing. We must love and respect our family members and friends. In so doing we give and receive blessings.

In preparation for this week’s lesson, read the entire story of Ruth. Be able to tell the story without reading it. In addition to this, read Deuteronomy 6:1–18 about the responsibility of parents, and Ephesians 5:21–6:4 which covers instruction about the family.

Presenting the Bible Story

Ruth 1:1-5

The distance between Bethlehem and Moab is approximately 60 miles

Ruth 1:6-18

Introduce memory verse

Sin separates you from God. Sin is anything that you think, say, or do that does not please God

Ruth 1:19-22

Ruth 2:1-3

Boaz means “man of standing”

Ruth 2:4-17

Even with the kind words Boaz spoke to Ruth, she remained humble

Ruth 2:18-23

Ruth 3:1-5

Winnowing means separating the grain from the chaff

Ruth 3:6-9

Will Boaz become Ruth’s kinsman-redeemer and provide her with the security of marriage?

A famine forced Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons to move from Bethlehem to a foreign land called Moab. The famine may have been God’s judgment on His people during a time of spiritual and moral decay (Judges 21:25). Moab was an enemy of Israel. *Naomi* means “pleasant, delightful, lovely.” Naomi knew and worshiped the one true God, but the Moabites did not know God at all. They worshiped many false gods.

Upon hearing that the famine had ended, Naomi decides to return home. Life had been difficult for Naomi with no husband and no sons. In spite of this, God faithfully provided for Naomi. God will meet our needs. Read (Philippians 4:19). It is in these verses we see a model for a beautiful relationship. Ruth and Orpah are faced with an important choice: go back to their families and the society infested with sin, or go with Naomi and adopt the customs of her people. Orpah turned back to her family. Ruth chose to stay with Naomi despite the three attempts by Naomi to encourage her to return home to Moab; Ruth chose a life with Naomi over her family.

Naomi was depressed and full of grief. She expressed this grief toward God (Ruth 1:13, 21). She wanted to be called *Mara* which means “bitter.” Her grief and depression was expressed when returning to Bethlehem without a husband or sons. This bitter attitude clouded her ability to see that God was providing her a blessing and she was not returning home empty-handed. The blessing was Ruth.

It was the right of the poor in Israel to gather the grain in the fields after the harvester went through. While gleaning, providence guided Ruth to the fields owned by Boaz, a near kinsman of Elimelech.

Boaz addressed Ruth as “my daughter” because of the age difference. Boaz not only spoke of his faith in God but he also exemplified his faith by action. He allowed Ruth to work alongside the servant girls. In doing this, Ruth was protected and she was also allowed to draw water and drink whenever she was thirsty. She was invited to eat the food provided for him and his harvesters. Boaz prayed to God asking that He reward Ruth for her kindness to Naomi.

If God had brought sadness to Naomi’s life temporarily, He could be depended upon to bring good. There was a levirate law which required a brother of a deceased man to marry his widow and raise up a son in his name (Deuteronomy 25:5–10). Even though Boaz was not a brother, he qualified by being a close relative.

Naomi now begins to act as a matchmaker. One may speculate that the kindness and care of Boaz had already made an impression upon Ruth. Naomi trusted that Boaz would act responsibly. She did not put Ruth in any danger. Ruth acts in unquestioned obedience to the directions of Naomi.

During the period of harvest great festivities were enjoyed. The ceremonial act of uncovering feet was considered very proper. It was an appeal to Boaz to assume his obligation under law for her. In other words, it was a marriage proposal. Boaz responded in honor. “Under your wing” is a metaphor for spreading the corner garment over her (read Ezekiel 16:8).

Ruth 3:10-15

Ephah is about 60 pounds

Ruth 3:16-18

Ruth 4:1-8

The passing of the sandal
symbolized Boaz's right
to walk on the land

Ruth 4:9-12

Ruth 4:13-22

The name *Obed*
means "worshiper."

Naomi the empty one
was now full, Naomi the
bitter one was now blessed

Art and Activities

**Explore the following ques-
tions with your students:**

Ruth's reference to a "close relative" shows her need for protection through marriage. Ruth's request to be under his wing beautifully fulfills Boaz's prayer for her that she find refuge under God's wings (2:12).

Boaz agreed to Ruth's proposal. Boaz praised her for her kindness and loyalty to her mother-in-law. He mentions how she did not go after a younger man. Boaz acted responsibly. He did not send Ruth home in the middle of the night, he protected the rights of her nearer kinsman. He made a vow.

Ruth gave Naomi a full report of the events. Naomi had done her job of matchmaking well. Now it was up to Boaz to settle the matter with the nearer kinsman.

The town gate is where business and civic affairs were taken care of. It is of some interest that the name of the other redeemer was not given. It may be poetic justice since he did not come forward sooner and tend to his responsibility. Boaz had a strategy. First he told of how Naomi had a field for sale because of her poverty. However, if at all possible, it would be best for the property to remain in the family. If the nearer kinsman did not want the property, Boaz would purchase it. Naturally the nearer kinsman said he would buy it. Then Boaz added, "If you redeem the property, you also acquire Ruth the Moabitess." As we read, when the nearer kinsman heard this, he refused his right to the property.

Boaz moved quickly to finalize the transaction. The elders were witness to Ruth becoming his wife, and he took possession of all that Elimelech owned. In addition to this, he would raise a son to continue the name of Elimelech. All the family members are then mentioned except for Orpah. She now faded into anonymity as the nearer kinsman had.

Ruth had been unable to conceive the entire time she was married to Mahlon. Now in her faithful obedience to God she was rewarded with a son. Naomi joyfully cared for her grandchild. Ruth was now considered by the women of Bethlehem to be of more worth than seven sons.

Teaching Activities

Activity Pages

Provide a copy of the Activity Page suitable for each of your students. Provide pencils and crayons.

Art Activity

Provide a Popsicle™ stick for each of your students family members. Using markers, draw faces and clothing on the sticks. Or, make a family tree. Draw a tree on a paper plate. With green construction paper cut out leaves. On each leaf write the name of a family member and then glue to the tree branches.

Explore the Subject

1. Discuss the choices Ruth made when she went with Naomi.
2. Do they think it was difficult, or easy, for Ruth to leave her home?
3. What if Ruth did not choose to follow God, but return to her pagan gods?

4. What are the lessons we have learned today from Ruth that we can apply to our lives?

Respond and Reinforce

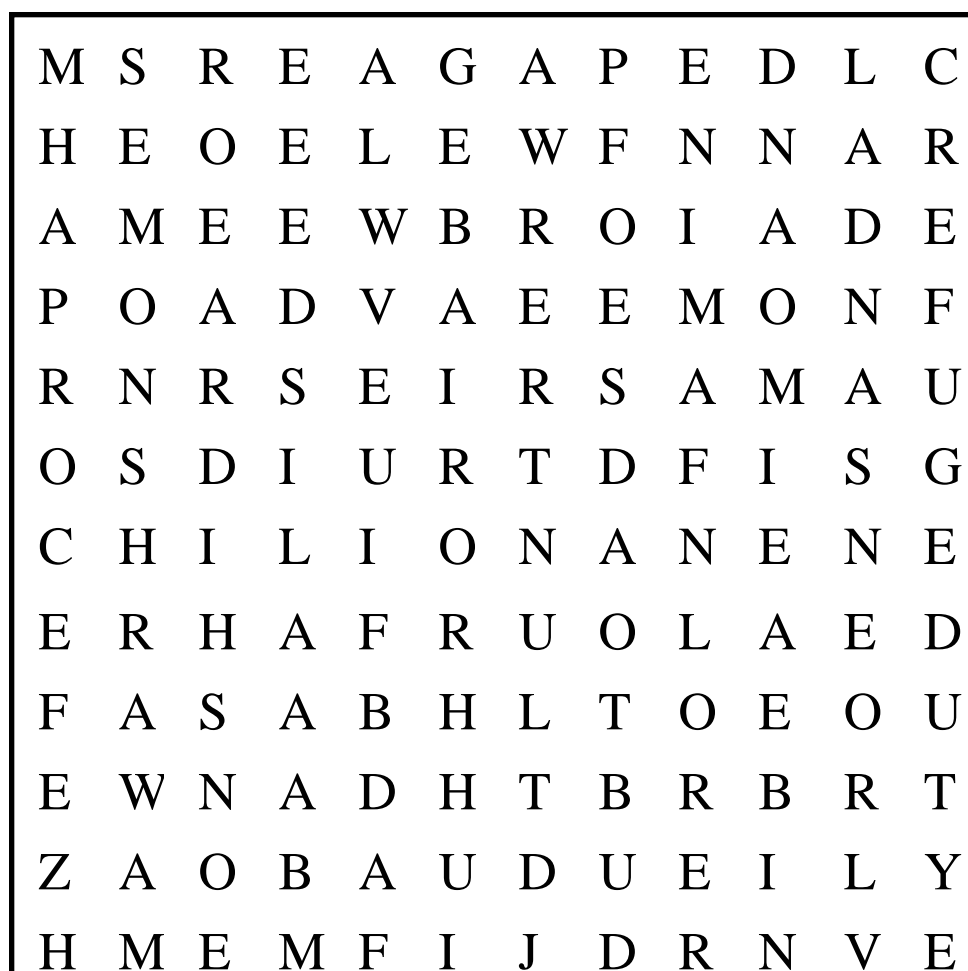
**Always close your
class with prayer**

1. As a child, are you responsible for your actions?
2. What does sin mean?
3. What is meant by faithful and kind?
4. Who were the key people in today's story?
5. Discuss memory verse.

Activity

Ruth and Boaz

Read the story of Ruth. Find the words hidden in the word search below.



FAMINE

JUDAH

MOAB

NAOMI

MAHLON

CHILION

ORPAH

RUTH

RELATIVE

BOAZ

GLEAN

REWARD

REFUGE

VIRTUOUS

DUTY

REDEEM

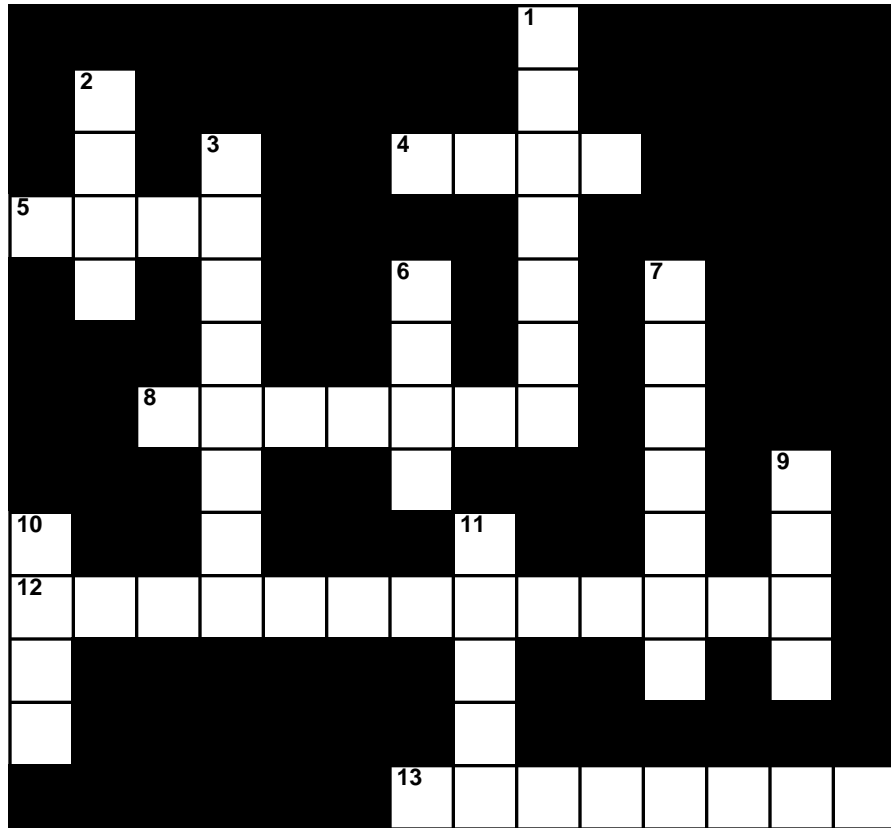
SANDAL

OBED

Activity

Kindness and Faith Ruth

Read the story of Ruth and complete the crossword below.



Across

4. Near kinsman of Naomi (Ruth 2:19,20).
5. "Call me _____: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me" (Ruth 1:20).
8. "Let me glean and gather after the reapers among the _____" (Ruth 2:7).
12. Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem in the beginning of _____" (Ruth 1:22).
13. "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his _____ to the living and to the dead" (Ruth 2:20).

Down

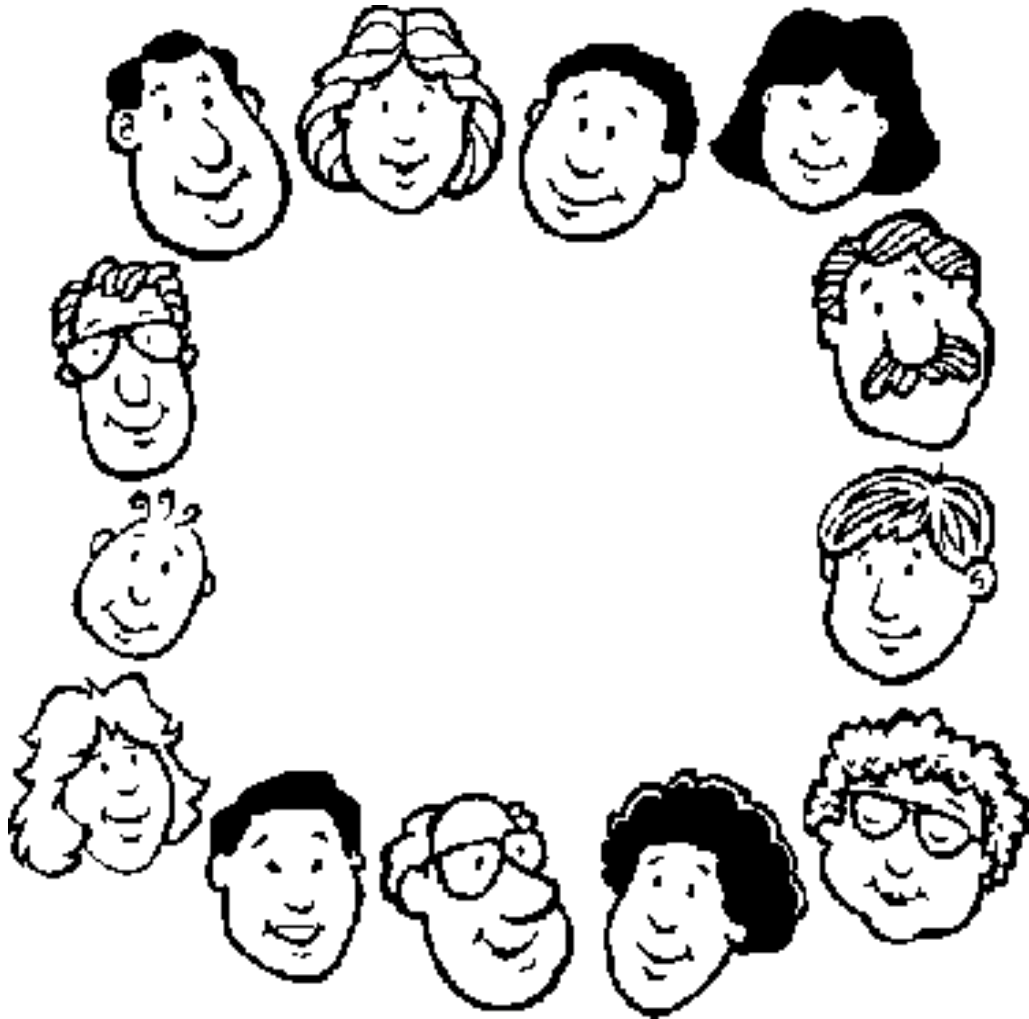
1. Person(s) who reap.
2. The country Naomi and Elimelech went into to escape the famine in Judah.
3. Steadfast to and in allegiance, and affection; constant; adhering to fact.
6. Concern and care for the well-being of another.
7. Relationship by birth or descent.
9. The mother of Obed.
10. The name of the son born to Ruth and Boaz.
11. The mother-in-law of Ruth.

Across: 4. Boaz; 5. Mara; 8. Sheaves; 12. barley harvest; 13. kindness. Down: 1. reapers; 2. Moab; 3. faithful; 6. love; 7. kindred; 9. Ruth; 10. Obed; 11. Naomi.

Activity

Our Creator Gives Us Families

Color the faces below. Draw a picture of your family within the circle of faces.



Write the names of your family:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____