Preschool–Grade 6

Ruth and Naomi

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Ruth was loyal to Naomi and chose Naomi's God when it would have been easier to turn back. God saw her loyalty and took care of her through Boaz's kindness.
Bible passage: Ruth 1–4. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And Ruth said, Intreat 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:" *Ruth 1:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Stay or Go? (5–10 minutes)

Read a situation. Kids stand up if a loyal friend would stay, and sit down if a loyal friend would leave. Examples: "Your friend is picked last for a team." "A new kid sits alone at lunch." "Your friends start making fun of someone." "Your grandma needs help raking leaves on a Saturday." Ask: *Why is it hard to stay loyal when it costs you something?* Say: "Today we will meet a young woman who could have gone home, but she stayed."

2. Bible story: Whither Thou Goest (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Ruth 1. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Sadness in Moab. In the days when the judges ruled, there was a **famine**, no food, in the land. Elimelech of Bethlehemjudah took his wife Naomi and their sons Mahlon and Chilion to **sojourn**, live for a while, in the country of Moab (Ruth 1:1–2). Elimelech died. The sons married Orpah and Ruth, women of Moab, and about ten years later both sons died too (1:3–5).

The choice on the road. Naomi heard that "the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread," so she started home (1:6–7). She told her daughters in law to go back to their mothers' houses, and they wept (1:8–13). **Look up Ruth 1:14.** Orpah kissed Naomi and went back "unto her people, and unto her gods" (1:15). But Ruth **clave**, held tight, to Naomi. **Look up Ruth 1:16–17.** Ruth promised to go where Naomi went, to take Naomi's people and Naomi's God, and to stay until death.

Back in Bethlehem. Look up Ruth 1:19. All the city was **moved**, stirred up, about them. Naomi said, "Call me Mara," because "the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me" (1:20). They came "in the beginning of barley harvest" (1:22).

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Gleaning in the field of Boaz. Naomi had a **kinsman**, a relative of her husband, "a mighty man of wealth," named Boaz (2:1). Ruth went to **glean**, to pick up the grain the reapers left behind, and "her hap was to light on" (she happened to come to) the part of the field that belonged to Boaz (2:2–3). **Look up Ruth 2:4.** Boaz greeted his reapers with a blessing, and they blessed him back. His servant told him Ruth had worked "even from the morning until now" (2:7). Boaz told her to stay in his field, close to his maidens, and to drink from the water the young men had drawn (2:8–9). Ruth bowed and asked why he was kind to "a stranger" (2:10). Boaz had heard all she did for Naomi (2:11). **Look up Ruth 2:12.** He blessed her by the LORD God of Israel, "under whose wings thou art come to trust," like a little bird safe under its mother's wings.

Handfuls of purpose. At mealtime Boaz gave Ruth bread and parched corn (roasted grain); she ate until she was **sufficed**, full, and had some left (2:14). **Look up Ruth 2:16.** Boaz told his young men to let fall "handfuls of purpose," grain dropped on purpose for her. She gleaned until evening and beat out about an **ephah** of barley, a large measure (2:17). She brought it to Naomi with the food she had saved from lunch (2:18). Naomi said Boaz was "one of our next kinsmen," close family (2:20). Ruth gleaned with Boaz's maidens to the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest (2:23).

A near kinsman. *(Told briefly on purpose.)* Naomi wanted Ruth to have a home where it would be well with her (3:1). Ruth did all that Naomi told her (3:5–6) and asked Boaz to help her, because he was a **near kinsman** (3:9). **Look up Ruth 3:11.** Boaz said all the city knew she was "a virtuous woman." But another kinsman was nearer, so Boaz would settle it the right way in the morning (3:12–13). He sent her home with six measures of barley, so she would not go "empty" to Naomi (3:15–17).

At the city gate. Boaz sat at the gate with ten elders (4:1–2). The nearer kinsman would not **redeem**, buy back, Elimelech's land and take Ruth as his wife (4:3–6). He drew off his shoe, the way Israel made such a deal sure (4:7–8). Boaz said, "Ye are witnesses this day" (4:9–10). **Look up Ruth 4:13.** Boaz married Ruth, and the LORD gave them a son. The women said Ruth loved Naomi and was better to her than seven sons (4:15). **Look up Ruth 4:17.** The baby was Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David.

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3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Orpah went back, and Ruth stayed (1:14). What did Ruth give up to go with Naomi? (Look at 2:11.)
2. Ruth said, "thy God my God" (1:16). Why do you think that was the most important part of her promise?
3. Boaz was kind on purpose (2:16). Name one way you could be kind on purpose to someone this week.
4. Ruth worked from morning until evening and then shared her food with Naomi (2:7, 2:17–18). What does that show about her?
5. Ruth did not know Boaz's field was the field of a kinsman (2:3, 2:20). How did God take care of her and Naomi?

Recall questions

1. Where did Naomi's family go when there was a famine? *(The country of Moab, Ruth 1:1)*
2. Whose field did Ruth glean in? *(Boaz's, 2:3)*
3. How much barley did Ruth have after the first day? *(About an ephah, 2:17)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **intreat** means beg, **whither** means where, **thou goest** means you go, and **lodgest** means you stay the night. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Ruth chose the one true God: 'thy God my God.' God loves you, and He wants you to follow Him too. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Ruth's great-grandson was King David, and Jesus Christ was born in David's family: 'Jesus Christ, the son of David' (Matthew 1:1, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: stick by someone who needs a friend, and do one kind thing on purpose, like Boaz.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Ruth 1:2: What were the names of Naomi's two sons? *(Mahlon and Chilion)*
2. Ruth 1:4: What were the names of the two women of Moab? *(Orpah and Ruth)*
3. Ruth 1:22: What harvest was beginning when they came to Bethlehem? *(Barley harvest)*
4. Ruth 2:4: What did Boaz say to the reapers? *("The LORD be with you")*
5. Ruth 2:14: What did Boaz reach to Ruth at mealtime? *(Parched corn)*
6. Ruth 2:16: What did Boaz tell the young men to let fall? *(Handfuls of purpose)*
7. Ruth 4:2: How many elders sat at the gate? *(Ten)*
8. Ruth 4:17: Who was Obed's grandson? *(David)*

   Early finishers can do the Ruth and Naomi word search or crossword (vbshq.com/bible-stories/ruth).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for taking care of Ruth and Naomi. Help us be loyal when it is hard, and kind on purpose like Boaz. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Ruth 3 is told briefly on purpose. If a child asks about it, keep to what's written: Naomi wanted a home for Ruth (3:1), Boaz was a near kinsman who could help (3:9, 3:12), and he did it the right way, in front of witnesses at the city gate (4:9–11). If a child has lost someone in their family, be gentle with Ruth 1:3–5, and point to how God cared for Naomi (4:14–16).

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