Preschool–Grade 6

Ruth and Naomi

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Loyalty is a choice you keep making when it costs you something. Ruth chose Naomi and Naomi's God, and God used her faithfulness and Boaz's kindness in His bigger plan.
Bible passage: Ruth 1–4. Students read Ruth 1, Ruth 2 and Ruth 4:1–17 out loud themselves; the teacher tells Ruth 3 briefly.
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)* and "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." *Proverbs 17:17 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read all four chapters of Ruth. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: What Does It Cost? (5–10 minutes)

Write on the board: *time, money, popularity, comfort, being right.* Read each situation, and students say which of those it would cost to stay loyal: 1) Your friend's family moves, and keeping in touch takes effort. 2) Your group wants to leave someone out. 3) A family member needs help on the day of a fun event. Ask: *Is it still loyalty if it costs you nothing?* Say: "Today we'll read about a young woman whose loyalty cost her everything she knew."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Ruth 1. Old words in this chapter:

- **when the judges ruled** (1:1): before Israel had kings; **famine**: not enough food
- **sojourn** (1:1): live somewhere for a while; **Ephrathites** (1:2): people from the Bethlehem area
- **the LORD had visited his people** (1:6): God had come to help them
- **tarry** (1:13): wait; **clave** (1:14): held tight
- **intreat** (1:16): beg; **whither**: where; **lodgest**: stay the night
- **ought but death part thee and me** (1:17): if anything but death separates us
- **stedfastly minded** (1:18): firmly decided
- **Mara** (1:20): Naomi said to call her this because "the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me"

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Read out loud: Ruth 2. Old words in this chapter:

- **kinsman** (2:1): a relative; **a mighty man of wealth**: a rich, important man
- **glean** (2:2): pick up the grain the reapers leave; **ears of corn**: heads of grain
- **her hap was to light on** (2:3): she happened to come to; **damsel** (2:5): young woman
- **sheaves** (2:7): bundles of cut grain; **abide here fast by** (2:8): stay close to
- **recompense** (2:12): reward; **parched corn** (2:14): roasted grain; **sufficed**: full
- **handfuls of purpose** (2:16): handfuls dropped on purpose
- **ephah** (2:17): a large dry measure; **wrought** (2:19): worked

Tell Ruth 3 briefly (in your own words): Naomi wanted to seek **rest** for Ruth, a home where it would be well with her (3:1). Ruth went down to the threshing floor, where Boaz was **winnowing** barley (tossing it so the wind blows the chaff away), and did all that Naomi told her (3:2–6). She asked Boaz to do the part of a near kinsman for her (3:9). Boaz said, "all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman" (3:11). Because another kinsman was nearer, Boaz promised to settle it the right way in the morning (3:12–13), and he sent her home with six measures of barley so she would not go "empty unto thy mother in law" (3:15–17).

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Read out loud: Ruth 4:1–17. Old words in this passage:

- **Ho, such a one!** (4:1): "Hey, you!" (the man is not named)
- **elders** (4:2): the leaders of the city; **advertise** (4:4): tell, let you know
- **redeem** (4:4): buy back family land so it stays in the family
- **raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance** (4:5): keep the family name on the family land
- **mar mine own inheritance** (4:6): spoil what I will leave my own children
- **plucked off his shoe** (4:7): the way a deal was made sure in Israel; **testimony**: proof
- **witnesses** (4:9): people who saw it and can say so
- **Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah** (4:12): an ancestor of Boaz's family (4:18–21)
- **a restorer of thy life** (4:15): someone who gives new life and hope; **nourisher**: one who takes care of

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Naomi gave Orpah and Ruth good reasons to go back (1:11–13). Orpah went "unto her people, and unto her gods" (1:15). What does Ruth's answer, "thy God my God" (1:16), show was really at stake?
2. Boaz said Ruth had left "thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity" (2:11). What did her loyalty cost her? What might following God cost you?
3. Ruth "happened" to glean in the field of a kinsman (2:3, 2:20). Where else do you see God taking care of Ruth and Naomi in the story? (Look at 1:6 and 4:13.)
4. Gleaners picked up what the reapers left behind (2:2–3), but Boaz had his young men drop "handfuls of purpose" for Ruth (2:16). What is the difference between doing the minimum and being kind on purpose?
5. Boaz paid to redeem, buy back, what belonged to Elimelech's family (4:9–10). The Bible says we "were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold… But with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18–19). What did it cost Jesus to redeem us?
6. Ruth, a woman of Moab, became the great-grandmother of King David (4:17), and Jesus is called "the son of David" (Matthew 1:1). What does that tell you about who God welcomes?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Ruth 1:16: **intreat** means beg; **whither thou goest** means wherever you go; **lodgest** means you stay the night. In Proverbs 17:17, **adversity** means hard times. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Ruth 1:16 this week; keep working on Proverbs 17:17 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Ruth made a choice: 'thy God my God.' Every one of us has to make that choice too. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16), born in the family line of Ruth and Boaz (Matthew 1:1, 1:5). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Who in my life needs me to be loyal right now? What would it cost me?
2. Where can I be kind "on purpose" this week, like Boaz with the handfuls of purpose?
3. Write a short prayer telling God you choose Him, like Ruth: "thy God my God."
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: do one loyal thing that costs you something, and one kind thing on purpose. Pray Ruth 1:16 back to God.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Ruth's loyalty and Boaz's kindness. Help us stay faithful to You and to the people You've given us, even when it costs something. Thank You for Jesus, who redeemed us. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Ruth 3 is told, not read aloud, on purpose, to keep it brief at this age. If a student asks, stay with the text: Ruth followed Naomi's instructions, asked Boaz to act as near kinsman (3:9), and Boaz handled it openly and rightly before the elders (4:9–11). Don't add romance or details the Bible doesn't give.

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