

THE FAITH OF A FOREIGN WOMAN

Bible Basis: Ruth 1:1–2:23

Bible Point: Boaz and Ruth are kind to others. I please God when I am kind.

Key Verse: May the Lord reward you for what you have done. May the God of Israel bless you richly.
—Ruth 2:12 NIV

Resource: *The Story for Children*, Chapter 9: “The Faith of a Foreign Woman”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff You Need: small rewards such as pencils, stickers, and erasers

Challenge a few volunteers to some simple tasks and offer a reward if they succeed. For instance, ask them to rub their heads in circles in one direction and their tummies in the other direction at the same time. Or ask them to do a backward crab walk across the room—or anything else you think of. Pass out rewards. Say, **You did something I asked you to do, so I’m rewarding you.** Ask:

- **Would you have done what I asked if I hadn’t offered a reward? Explain.**
- **Tell me about a reward you got for doing something right.**

Say, **In today’s Bible story, we’ll meet some people who did the right thing without hoping for a reward.**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff You Need: copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 9*, Word Bank PowerPoint slide and projection equipment or whiteboard and marker

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 9. You can also have children find Ruth 1 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story. When you come to a blank in the story, have children fill in the word from the Word Bank slide or from the list you have provided.

Use the PowerPoint slide or write these words where kids can see them: *grain, Ruth, Naomi, Boaz, field*. Review the words with children to make sure they recognize them.

RUTH IS KIND

In this story, you’ll find blanks. Pause at each blank and ask children to supply the correct word by choosing a word from the Word Bank: *grain, Ruth, Boaz, Naomi, field*. If you’d like, you can give some kind of visual cue about which word to choose, such as using a pointer.

After some good years, things got tough in Israel. A woman named Naomi and her family moved to the country of Moab, where there was food. Her sons grew up and married women from Moab. But then sadness came to _____ (Naomi). Her husband died. And then her sons died. So _____ (Naomi) decided to go back home to Israel. She had heard Israel had food now. The wife of one of her sons decided to go with her. This young woman's name was _____ (Ruth).

Now Ruth had never lived in Israel before. She would be a foreigner there. But she loved _____ (Naomi) and wanted to stay with her. So they traveled together to a town called Bethlehem.

Read Ruth 2:2. So _____ (Ruth) went out to pick up _____ (grain). It turned out that she was working in a _____ (field) that belonged to a man named _____ (Boaz).

Boaz saw the young woman and spoke to the man who was in charge of his workers. He asked, "Who is that young woman?"

The man replied, "She is from the country of Moab. She came back from there with _____ (Naomi). She said, 'Please let me pick up the _____ (grain) that is left in the _____ (field).' She has been working there from morning until now."

So the man named _____ (Boaz) said to the young woman named _____ (Ruth), "Stay in my _____ (field). Don't pick up _____ (grain) in any other _____ (field.) When you are thirsty, go and get a drink."

Ruth bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked, "Why are you being so kind to me? I'm from another country."

Boaz replied, "I've heard about everything you have done for _____ (Naomi). I know you came to live with people you didn't know."

Read Ruth 2:12.

When it was time to eat, the man named _____ (Boaz) said to _____ (Ruth), "Have some bread." She ate all she wanted. She even had some left over.

Ruth got up to pick up more _____ (grain). She worked in the _____ (field) until evening. Then she separated the barley from the straw and carried it back to town. At home, _____ (Naomi) saw how much Ruth had gathered. She asked, "Where did you pick up _____ (grain) today?"

Read Ruth 2:19b–20a.

Ruth was kind to _____ (Naomi.) Boaz was kind to _____ (Ruth). They were not kind because they wanted something back. They were kind because it was the right thing to do. We aren't kind to others to get a reward from people, but God blesses us when we are kind.

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 9*.

Ask children to look at the picture and tell you about Ruth and Boaz. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- Tell me some examples of kindness from this Bible story.
- Why do you think Boaz and Ruth were so kind to others? Did they get a reward?

Say, **Boaz and Ruth pleased God with their kindness to others. You can think of ways to please God with kindness, too.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GRAIN AND STRAW

Stuff You Need: generous amounts of two kinds of items to separate, such as two shapes of pasta, or two colors of paper cut into small pieces; bowls or small tubs, baskets

Mix up the two different pasta shapes or two colors of paper pieces in one tub. Say, **In the Bible story, Ruth separated the grain from the straw. We'll play a separating game today.** For a non-competitive game version, have children work in pairs. One child searches for one shape or color, and the other searches for the second shape or color. Transfer what they find to baskets. For a competitive version, assign children to teams and prepare a tub and basket for each team. Tell each team which shape to find. Each player runs to the tub, finds five pieces, and brings them back to the team's basket. Play for a specified amount of time then see which team has filled their basket the fullest.

- In the Bible story, how did Ruth show kindness to Naomi? How did Boaz show kindness to Ruth?
- Tell me some ways you can show kindness to other people.

Say, **Boaz and Ruth are good examples of being kind to others. We please God when we are kind.**

OPTION 2: KINDNESS CHARADES

Stuff You Need: index cards or scrap paper, markers, basket

Say, **Our Bible story was about people who showed kindness to others. Let's think of some ways to show kindness and see if we can guess them.** Have children think of ways to show kindness and write them on index cards. If your children are too young to write easily, have them whisper their ideas in your ear and you write them down. Fold the cards at least in half and put them in a basket. Have children take turns drawing a card from the basket and miming the action on the card for others to guess. If you'd like, you can assign children to teams and have one team act while the other guesses. Then talk about:

- Which of these kindness ideas do you think you could do for someone?
- When do you think you can show kindness to others?

Say, Boaz and Ruth showed kindness on regular days in their regular lives. That's what God wants us to do. We please him when we are kind.

OPTION 3: Kindness Counts

Stuff You Need: Kindness Counts Activity Sheet, colored pencils

Give an activity sheet and colored pencils to each child. Instruct the children to draw a cartoon of themselves helping someone in their life. Perhaps draw an example on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, showing the children how to divide the act of kindness into three to six different scenes.

OPTION 4: Naomi and Ruth

A Handprint Bouquet for Mothers

Stuff you need: washable paint (the color of flowers), paper plates, white paper, green construction paper, safety scissors, glue

1. Squirt a generous portion of paint on the paper plates.
2. Cover palms of hands in paint.
3. Make several handprints on the white paper.
4. Wash hands and allow paint to dry.
5. Cut out a stem and leaves using the green construction paper.
6. When handprints are dry, cut them out.
7. Arrange handprints so fingertips are pointing up. Hands may overlap. Glue together.
8. Glue the stem to the bottom of the handprint bouquet.
9. Add leaves to the stem.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Pray together, asking God to help you to be kind to someone this week. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 9*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.