

Naomi and Ruth

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- small paper plates
- stapler
- hole punch
- yarn
- markers and stickers
- bird seed
- scissors



Scriptures

Ruth 1-2

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God takes care of all our needs

Behavioral Objective(s)

To show love to others through our actions

Memory Verse

"For wherever you go, I will go." (Ruth 1:16)



Bible Knowledge

Moab

Moab was the land east of the Dead Sea. In Genesis 19:30-38, it records that the Moabites were descendants of Lot and his incestuous relationship with his daughter. Therefore, the Israelites and Moabites were considered close relatives. The relationship between Israel and Moab is one that had its ups and downs. During the time of the judges, it was one of the nations that opposed Israel (Jdg 3:12). But today's lesson shows a more civil and peaceful coexistence between the two nations.

Life During the Time of Ruth

The story of Ruth takes place sometime during the period of the judges. These were dark days for Israel, when "all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (Jdg 17:6; 21:25). But Naomi and Ruth were a beautiful example of loyalty, friendship, and commitment, to God and to each other. Even though they were widows, that did not stop them from making the most of their lives. Ruth was hard-working and did what she could to provide

for herself and her mother-in-law.

When the wheat and barley were ready to be harvested, reapers were hired to cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles. Israelite law demanded that the corners of the field not be harvested. In addition, any grain that was dropped was to be left for the poor who picked it up and used it for their own good (Lev 19:9, 23: 22, Deut 24:19). The purpose of this law was to feed the poor and prevent the owners from hoarding. This law served as a type of welfare program, because widows had no means of providing for themselves.

There was almost nothing worse than being a widow in the ancient world. Widows were taken advantage of or ignored. They were almost always poverty-stricken. In addition to picking the left-over grains, God's law also provided that the nearest relative of the dead husband should care for the widow. In this case, Boaz had to ask one person who was a closer relative if he wanted to "redeem" Ruth. When the man declined, he removed his sandal, as a sign of a legal transaction in ancient Israel, and handed it over to Boaz. This indicated that he was giving up his right to Ruth. Then Boaz would be free to take Ruth as his wife (Ruth 4:5-10).



Understanding Your Students

Love can be a very abstract feeling to describe. Some have said it can make you feel fuzzy and warm inside. Others say that love can break your heart. Luckily, children at four and five years old don't think about love in such complicated ways. They tend to show their affection for others through very visible signs. They hug, kiss, hold hands, or snuggle close to those they care about. Reinforce to your students that these are wonderful ways for them to show love. There are many ways they can show love to others. As a class, brainstorm things your students can try to do to show love to their parents, for example. These suggestions can include things like house chores (e.g. cleaning,

helping a brother or a sister, feeding the pet, etc.) or other more specific behaviors (e.g. respecting one another, telling the truth, sacrificing their time or energy, etc.).

In today's story, Ruth demonstrated her love for her mother-in-law, Naomi, through many of her actions. She gave up her future to remarry and go home; she was submissive and followed Naomi back to her hometown; she went out to pick the leftover grains so they would have food to eat; she listened to the advice of Naomi and did as she asked. These are all ways Ruth showed how much she cared for her mother-in-law. Also, encourage the students that when they love someone, the things they do for one another don't seem like chores. They will want to do them with a glad and happy heart.



Vocabulary

Famine

a time when there is very little or no food or water in the land

Harvest

to collect the produce or food (i.e. grains, vegetables) of the land

Grain

wheat



Before You Teach

Ruth was a Moabite, but that didn't stop her from worshiping the true God, nor did it stop God from accepting her worship and blessing her greatly. She became the great-grandmother of King David and a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ.

What allowed Ruth to accept such a faith, since she was only a gentile? And what made God accept her? It likely had to do with the kind of person she was. Ruth's life exhibited admirable qualities: she was hardworking, loving, kind, faithful and brave. She was also meek, humble and submissive. These qualities made her heart open to God's quiet calling through Naomi. In today's society, many would say that people like Ruth just aren't smart enough to make it to the top. People like Ruth would be taken advantage of or be trampled upon as others seek to climb up the ladder of success. People who work

hard don't get rewarded. People are taught to be aggressive, not submissive. Yet, her qualities gained her a good reputation. God could see the kind of person she really was. God was at work behind the scenes, setting up the "chance meeting" with Boaz.

Today, success in life is equal to having a lot of material wealth. But we can see from the life of Ruth that she didn't have any physical luxuries until she met Boaz. Yet, she kept plugging away, doing what she had to; sometimes, even forgetting her status as a widow. Widows were supposed to be despised and ignored. Ruth paid no attention to anyone or anything and went about her life. While others may not see this as anything important, God sees and He blesses those who bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Even though Ruth was a Moabitess, God did not see her as anything less than worthy to be a part of the ancestry of our Lord and Savior. Let us learn from Ruth's character and life so that we may also be richly blessed.



Bible Story

Elimelech Moves to Moab

Do you remember the stories about Gideon and Samson? God had chosen them to help the Israelites fight off their enemies. Both Gideon and Samson were judges. These judges would also help the people in the land when they had problems. The Israelites knew they could come to the judges when they needed help.

During the time when these judges were ruling Israel, there was a famine in the country. That means there was very little food and people were very hungry. Now there was a man named Elimelech. He and his family were also very hungry. They lived in a place called Bethlehem, and there wasn't any more food for them there. So, Elimelech decided to move. He took his wife Naomi and their two sons and moved away from Bethlehem, into the country of Moab. Moab was a neighboring country to Israel. While they were living in Moab, Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons. It was a hard life for her. But soon, her sons grew up, and they married women from Moab. Naomi was happy that her sons had their own families. But ten years later, something horrible happened. Naomi's two sons also died. That means Naomi didn't have her husband or her two sons anymore. How do you think she must have felt? Probably very, very sad. Now Naomi only had her two daughters-in-law staying with her.

Naomi Moves Back to Bethlehem

Do you remember why Naomi and her family moved to Moab in the first place? There was no food in Bethlehem. Now, many years later, back home in Bethlehem, God was helping His people and giving them good harvests. When Naomi heard that there was food back home in Bethlehem, she decided to go back. Naomi left Moab with her two daughters-in-law and set out on the road back to Bethlehem. As they were walking on the road, Naomi spoke to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

"You should go back to your own mothers. I am old and I will be alright when I get back to my homeland. May the Lord be as good to you as you have been to my sons and to me. May the Lord give each of you another husband." Naomi said all these things because she knew Orpah and Ruth were still young. If

they went back to their own homes, they could probably marry again. So Naomi kissed her two daughters-in-law good-bye.

But the two daughters-in-law cried aloud and said to Naomi, "We will go with you and live in your country and with your people."

But Naomi pleaded, "Go home to your mothers. I have nothing for you. I have no more sons to be your husbands. I am an old woman. But you still have a chance at a better life. Go back to your homes."

Ruth Stays With Naomi

When the two daughters-in-law heard this, they cried again. But Orpah decided that it would be better to go home. So Orpah kissed Naomi good-bye and returned home to her own mother. But Ruth didn't want to leave Naomi. Naomi tried to talk to her again.

She said, "Orpah is going back to her people. Go back with her."

However, Ruth had decided to stay with Naomi. Ruth told Naomi, "Don't tell me to leave you. I will go where you go. I will live where you live. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. I will die where you die, and I will be buried next to you. May the Lord punish me if I ever leave you."

When Naomi heard all this, she realized that Ruth had made up her mind to go with her, so she stopped pushing her away. The two of them traveled on the road that took them back to Bethlehem.

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was talking about them.

"Can this be the Naomi that left many years ago? Is she now returning home?"

Naomi was happy to be in her own hometown. She was glad her friends still remembered her. But she was sad too. When she left Bethlehem a long time ago, she had her whole family with her. Now she was back by herself. Only Ruth stayed with her. So Naomi told her friends not to call her Naomi anymore but to call her Mara. Mara means bitter. Bitter can mean something that doesn't taste good. Bitter can also mean when you feel bad because terrible things have happened to you. Naomi's life had been bitter. Naomi had left with a husband and two sons, but they all had died and she returned home years later alone, with Ruth. She went away full, but came back home empty.

Ruth Goes to Gather Food

Now when Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, it was the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth asked Naomi, "Let me go to the fields with the farmers. I will follow the people who cut the grain and pick up the leftover grain, so that we can have food to eat."

Naomi thought that this was a good idea, so she said yes. Ruth went to work in the field, picking up leftover grains. It was hard work but Ruth did not complain. As it turned out, Ruth was working in a field that belonged to Boaz. Boaz was the land owner and he was very well respected by all. That means he was a good owner who was fair with all his workers. That day when Ruth was in the field, Boaz came to check on his workers.

He greeted his workers, "The Lord be with you!"

His workers called back, "The Lord bless you!"

As Boaz walked around the field, he saw Ruth working hard, picking up the leftover grains. Boaz had never seen her before and so he asked one of his workers, "Who is that young woman?"

"She is the woman who came back from Moab with Naomi," replied the worker. The worker added, "She has worked hard since morning and took only a short rest."

Boaz had heard all about what Ruth had done for her mother-in-law and he wanted to help. He told Ruth to stay in his field to work.

"Don't go work in another field. Do not go away from here," Boaz told Ruth. "You can stay with my servant girls and when you are thirsty, go get a drink from the water jars that the men have filled."

Ruth was touched by Boaz's kindness. He spoke kindly to her even though she was not one of his people. She asked Boaz why was he being so kind to her, especially since she was from Moab. Boaz replied, "I have been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law. You have been very kind to her and you show her great love. May God be kind to you for what you have done."

When it was time to eat, Boaz told Ruth to come and have some bread. She sat down with the harvesters and ate until she was full. She even had some left over. After eating, Ruth went back to work picking up grain from the field. Boaz gave orders to his men to help Ruth. Since she didn't know much about a farmer's work, he told them to just let her go and pick anywhere, even if it was the wrong place. He also told them to pull out some stalks from the bundle and leave them for her to pick up to make sure she would have enough. After a full day's work, Ruth had a big basket of grain. She carried this big basket back to Naomi. Ruth also gave Naomi the bread that she had left over.

Naomi was surprised by how much food she had brought back. She asked Ruth where she had worked. Ruth told her that she worked in the field that belonged to Boaz.

Naomi was pleased and said, "God is good. God helped you find a good place to pick grain." So Ruth stayed and worked in Boaz's field every day until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. Even though she and Naomi had come to Bethlehem with nothing, God had taken care of them and given them enough food to eat.



Check For Understanding

1. **Why did Elimelech and his family move to Moab from Bethlehem?** (There was a famine in the land.)
2. **What happened to Elimelech and his sons after many years of living in Moab?** (Elimelech and his sons all died.)
3. **What did Naomi decide to do after her**

sons died? (She decided to go home to Bethlehem.)

4. **What did Naomi ask her daughters-in-law to do?** (She told them to go back to their own homes.)
5. **What did Orpah do? What about Ruth?** (Orpah went home, but Ruth stayed with Naomi.)
6. **What did Ruth do when she got to Bethlehem?** (She went to work in the fields to pick grain so there would be

food for her and Naomi to eat.)

7. **How was Boaz nice to Ruth?** (He gave her bread to eat and told his servants to leave extra grain for her.)

8. **Why was Boaz nice to Ruth?** (He heard what she had done for Naomi.)

9. **How was Ruth kind to Naomi? How did she love her?** (She followed her to her homeland even though she was from Moab; she picked grains to feed her and Naomi.)



Life Application Story

Showing Love To Mom and Dad and God

One afternoon, Mrs. Lewis was folding some clothes she had just taken out of the dryer. Tommy happened to walk by the family room and saw his mother.

"Mom, do you need some help folding the clothes?" Tommy asked.

"Well, it's very nice of you to offer," replied Mrs. Lewis with a smile.

Tommy sat down next to the laundry basket. Now that he sat so close to the clothes, he noticed that there sure were a lot of them to fold.

"Wow, Mom. This looks like a lot of work."

"Well, there are four of us in the family and we do have to change every day," said Mrs. Lewis.

Tommy grabbed a shirt out of the pile. He tried to match the sleeves but it didn't turn out quite as neat as his mother's.

"Hmmm, maybe I can give you a few tips," said Mrs. Lewis.

Tommy and his mother spent the next few minutes going through all the clothes in the pile. Soon, they were done.

"Whew, that really was a lot of clothes," said Tommy, as he lay down on the carpet. "But it wasn't that hard, once I got the hang of it."

"Thanks for your help, Tommy," Mrs. Lewis said. "I really appreciate your help."

"Well," said Tommy, "at church, Mrs. Laurie did ask us to do something this week that would show our love to our family. One of the things we talked about in class was doing some chores. Did I show you some love, Mom?"

"You sure did. And you know what, when you show love to your family, you are also showing love to God because you are obeying His commands," replied Mrs. Lewis.

As Tommy and his mother were talking, they suddenly heard Mr. Lewis yelling something from the kitchen.

"Can someone grab me the wrench, please?" Mr. Lewis said loudly.

Mr. Lewis was fixing the leaky pipe underneath the kitchen sink. Every time Mr. Lewis needed to use a different tool, he had to get up from under the sink to get it from the tool box and bend down again to fix the pipe. Julie was getting a snack from the fridge when she heard her father yell from under the sink.

"Hey, Dad. I didn't even know you were there," she said.

"I really need help. I don't want to get up because my left hand is holding onto the leaky part that I want to fix. Can you help me out here?"

"Sure, it looks like you need some help," Julie said.

"Great. I need someone to hand me the right tool when I need it and put it back when I'm not using it," said Mr. Lewis.

"Okay," Julie said.

"I need a wrench first, please. It is the one that is already on the top of the table," Mr. Lewis requested.

"Here you go, Dad," Julie said as she handed the wrench to Mr. Lewis.

Tommy and his mother walked into the kitchen just as Julie gave the wrench to Mr. Lewis.

"Well," Mrs. Lewis said. "It looks like both of you are great helpers today. Both of you are following the command of God to show love to your family."

Julie smiled. With everyone's help, Mr. Lewis quickly fixed the leaky pipe.

"We make a great team," Mr. Lewis said as he cleaned his hands. Both Julie and Tommy were happy that they could help their parents out. They were glad that they were able to obey God too.

Questions to Think About:

1. **How did Tommy show love to his mother and God?** (He helped his mom fold the clothes and listened to her words.)
2. **How did Julie help her father out?** (She handed him tools to fix the sink.)



Activity 1

Ruth Was Full of Love

Look at the picture of Ruth. What is she doing? Connect the dots to find out. Then color in the picture. Color in the letters in each word below that describe the kind of person Ruth was. How can we be like Ruth (loving and kind)?



Activity 2

How Can We Show Love?

Look at each picture. How is each person showing love? In the blank space, draw how you can show love to another person.

1. He is picking up the pencil so that no one will trip over it.
2. She is sharing her things.
3. She is helping someone who is hurt.
4. I can _____.



Activity 3

Bird Feeders

Materials:

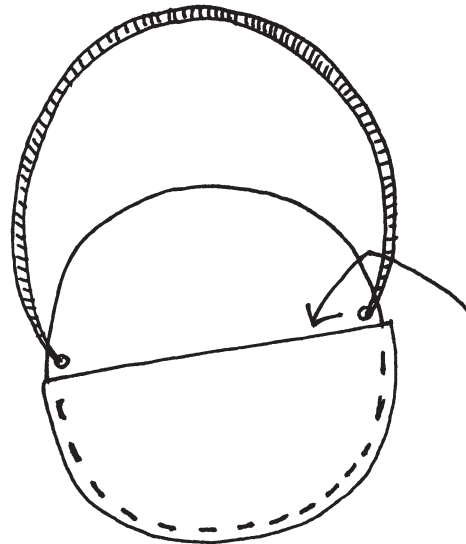
1. small paper plates
2. stapler
3. hole punch
4. scissors
5. yarn
6. markers and stickers
7. bird seed

Directions:

1. Give each student two paper plates.
2. Have each child cut one of the paper plates in half.

3. **How did they show they loved God?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **How can you show love to the people around you?** (Allow students to answer.)
5. **How can you show God you love Him?** (Allow students to answer.)

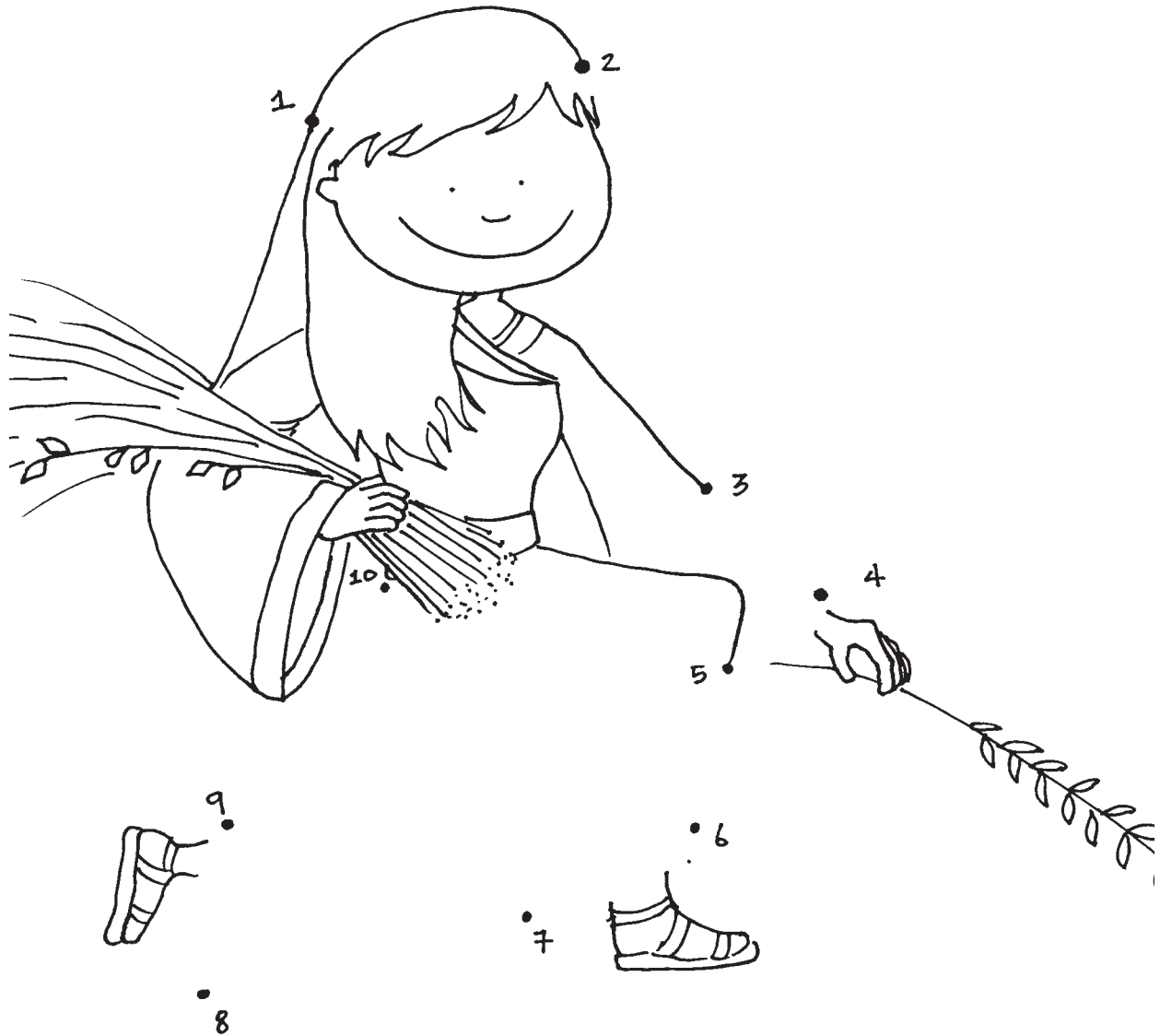
3. Line up the whole paper plate with the half paper plate and staple along the bottom edges to create a small pocket.
4. Punch two holes at the top of the whole paper plate and thread yarn through to create a loop for hanging.
5. Allow students to decorate their feeders with markers and stickers.
6. Once the feeders are complete, help the students put a bit of birdseed into the pocket so they can bring it home to hang.
7. As the students make their bird feeder, discuss how God took care of Ruth and Naomi. Talk about how God can take care of all of His creations. The bird feeders can remind the students of how much God loves everything He has created.



Activity 11:1

Ruth was Full of Love

Look at the picture of Ruth. What is she doing? Connect the dots to find out. Then color in the picture. Color in the letters in each word below that describe the kind of person Ruth was. How can we be like Ruth?



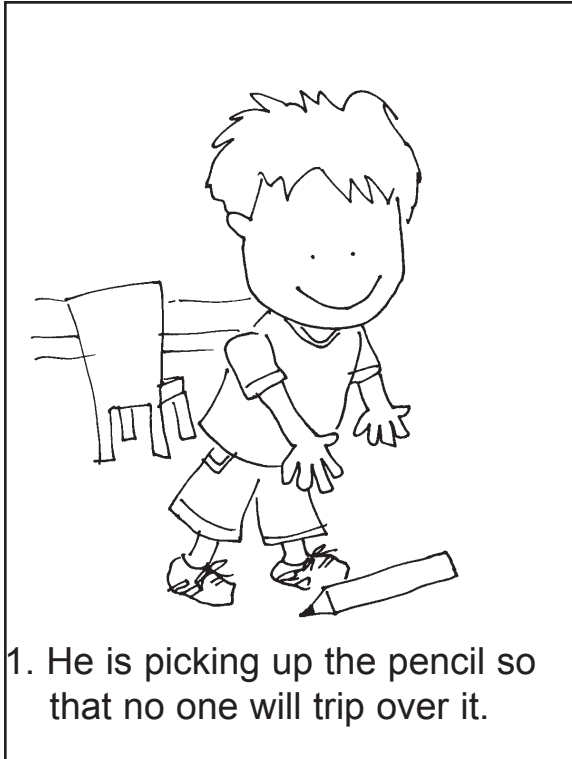
LOVING & KIND



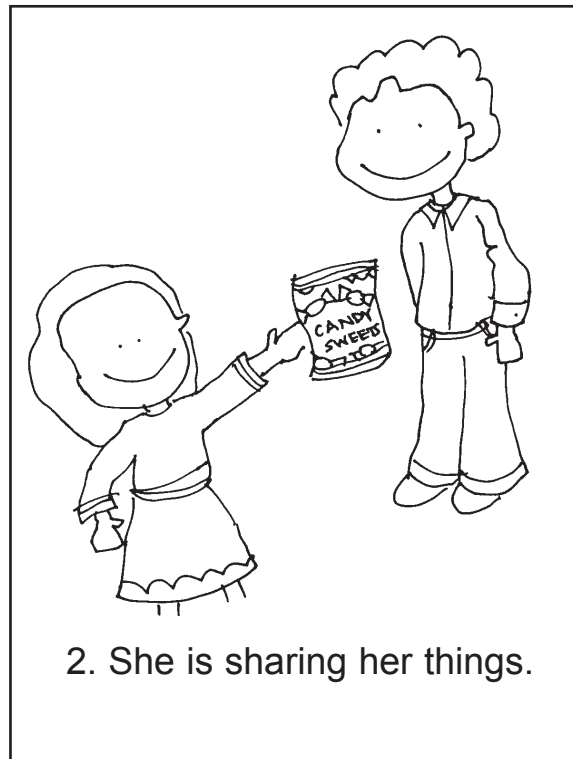
Activity 11:2

How Can We Show Love?

Look at each picture. How is each person showing love? In the blank space, draw how you can show love to another person.



1. He is picking up the pencil so that no one will trip over it.



2. She is sharing her things.



3. She is helping someone who is hurt.

4. I can _____
_____.