

# LESSON 5

## RUTH AND NAOMI

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### Moab

Moab was a land located east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites were descendants of Moab, a son of Lot by his elder daughter. Moab was one of the nations that oppressed Israel during the period of the judges, so there was hostility between the two nations. The famine must have been quite severe in Israel for Elimelech to move his family there.

#### Gleaning

Gleaning was the gathering of grain that fell to the ground during the harvesting of fruit that was not ripe at first picking. Old Testament law established the right of the poor to glean the staple crops of grain, olives, and grapes (Lev 19:9-10; Deut 24:19-22). This important social mechanism helped meet the needs of the poor without robbing them of the self-respect associated with honest toil. Ruth provides an excellent example of gleaning. Here, the young widow picks up loose grain behind harvesters in the fields of Boaz, making full use of the generous law.

#### Widows

Widowed women were particularly vulnerable and powerless in the ancient world. Widows were taken advantage of or ignored. They were almost always poverty-stricken. The fact that Ruth was willing to face the almost sure fate of poverty showed her selfless love for her mother-in-law.

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

The story of Ruth and Naomi illustrates a beautiful picture of true love. Your students may have different concepts of love; they experience love from their parents, from teachers, and from brothers and sisters at church. They are also exposed to different expressions of "love" on television and in movies. Regardless of what kind of understanding your students may have about love, it is important for them to understand what God's love is.

The story of Ruth and Naomi centers around one very important aspect of God's love: self-sacrifice. The Bible tells us, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us" (1 Jn 3:16). This is the ultimate expression of self-sacrifice, to lay down one's life for another. This kind of love is not just a feeling (like a person might see on television or in the movies), and is not merely something that we just say. Instead, this kind of love is shown through actions. 1 John 3:18 tell us, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth." True love is shown through actions, such as those done

### BIBLE TEXT

Ruth 1-2

### BIBLE TRUTH

God is pleased when we love our family members by taking care of them.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To love every one of our family members through self-sacrifice and actions.

### MEMORY VERSE

"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

(1 John 3:18)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord, we thank You for Your wonderful love and mercy this past week. We thank You for keeping each one of us and our families safe and peaceful. Help us to love our families like You have loved us, O Lord. Hallelujah! Amen.

by Ruth for Naomi. Naomi expressed her love through words, but followed through with her actions.

Help your students understand that love is not a matter of words, but of actions. This means caring about others before themselves, offering help when people are in trouble, and giving up what they might want, even when it's hard. Is this hard? Yes it is, because no one in their own strength could ever love God or his neighbor more than himself. However, we know that if we rely on the love of God and let Him fill us, God will give us the power to love others with His special love.

Your students experience the most love at home, from their parents, siblings, and other family members. They probably have also begun to show love to their family members as well through giving hugs and saying, "I love you." But most children have not yet learned to show their love to their family through self-sacrifice. For example, when their parents ask them to do some chores, they might complain and say they're busy playing, but we can help them realize that one way to show love to their parents is to sacrifice their play time to help their parents.

## VOCABULARY

**famine:** when food crops won't grow and there is not enough food

**harvest:** to gather grain, fruit, etc., when it becomes ripe or ready for eating

**relative:** a person in the same family

**grain:** seeds of certain plants (like barley or wheat) used to make food

**glean:** to pick up leftover grain in the fields during harvest

**sacrifice:** to give up something for someone else

## REVIEW

Last week, we learned about a man with great strength who led Israel. What was his name? (Samson.) What was the secret of his great strength? (He had never cut his hair, because he had dedicated himself to God as a Nazirite.) Although God used him mightily, Samson didn't always make wise decisions. What were some better choices he could have made? (His choice of friends and wives.) We can see how much our friends can influence our lives, so it's important to choose our friends wisely.

Today, we will be learning about two special women and how they had great love for one another.

## BIBLE STORY

### Naomi's Family

During the time when judges were ruling Israel, there was a famine in the country. A famine occurs when there isn't enough food because crops won't grow. So, a man by the name of Elimelech from the tribe of Ephrath took his wife Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and moved from Bethlehem in Judah to the country of Moab.

[You may want to draw on the board a simple family tree diagram with stick figures and names.] While they were there, Elimelech died [cross out Elimelech's stick figure], and Naomi was left with only her two sons.

Later, Naomi's sons each married a woman from Moab. One was named Orpah and the other, Ruth. [Draw the wives in the family tree.] About ten years later, Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without a husband or sons. [Cross out Mahlon and Chilion's stick figures.]

### Naomi Tells Her Daughters-in-law to Go Home

When Naomi heard that the Lord had given His people a good harvest, she and her two daughters-in-law prepared

to leave Moab to go to the land of Judah. As they were going down the road, Naomi said to them, "Go, return to your mothers. I pray that the Lord will be as good to you as you have been to me and my husband and two sons. May He give each of you another husband."

Naomi kissed them, and they cried and said, "We want to go with you and live in your country."

But she replied, "My daughters, why don't you return home? What good will it do you to go with me? Do you think I will have more sons for you to marry? You must go back home, because I am too old to marry again. Even if I got married tonight and had more sons, would you wait for them to get old enough to marry? No, my daughters! Life is harder for me than it is for you, because the Lord has turned against me."

### Ruth Stays with Naomi

They cried again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth kept holding on to her. After this, Naomi said to Ruth, "Look, your sister-in-law is returning to her country and to her gods! Why not go with her?"

Ruth answered, "Please don't tell me to leave you and return home! I will go where you go and live where you live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. I will die where you die, and I will be buried beside you. May the Lord punish me, if anything but death makes me leave you!" After Naomi saw that Ruth had made up her mind to go with her, she stopped urging her to go back.

Boys and girls, why do you think Ruth wanted to go with Naomi? Naomi was very old and Ruth was very young; Ruth could have left, married, and had her own family. What made Ruth want to stick with her mother-in-law? (Ruth loved Naomi and didn't want her to be alone.)

What did Ruth have to give up or sacrifice in order to go with Naomi? (She gave up a chance to go back to her own home and be married to a man from her own country.) How did Ruth show her love to Naomi? Did she only tell Naomi, "I love you," or just hug and kiss her? (No, she not only said that she wanted to go with Naomi, but she also sacrificed her future and actually went with her.)

### **Naomi and Ruth Go to Bethlehem**

When the two women reached Bethlehem, the whole town was excited to see them. The women who lived there asked, "Can this really be Naomi?"

But she told them, "Don't call me Naomi any longer! Call me Mara, because God Himself has made my life bitter. I had everything when I left, but the Lord brought me back with nothing. How can you still call me Naomi, when God has turned against me and made my life so hard?"

### **Ruth Goes Out to Gather Grain**

The barley harvest was just beginning when Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem from Moab. Naomi's husband Elimelech had a relative named Boaz, who was a rich and important man.

One day, Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me see if I can find someone who will let me glean (or pick up the grain left in the fields) by the harvest workers."

Naomi answered, "My daughter, go ahead." So Ruth went out and started gleaning in a field owned by Boaz.

### **Ruth Meets Boaz**

When Boaz returned from Bethlehem, he went out to his field and said to his harvest workers, "May the Lord be with you!"

They replied, "May the Lord bless you!" [Divide the class in half and have them practice greeting one another in this way. One half begins by saying, "May the Lord be with you," and the other half responds, "May the Lord bless you!"]

Boaz asked the man in charge of the harvest workers, "Who is that young woman?"

The man answered, "She is that woman from Moab

who came back with Naomi. She asked if she could pick up the grain left behind by the harvest workers, and then she went straight to work in the field. Since morning, she has worked without stopping, except for a short break in the shade."

Boaz went over to Ruth and said, "Take my advice and don't work in anyone else's fields. Stay here with my servant girls and follow along behind them as they gather up what the men have cut. I have told the men not to bother you, and whenever you are thirsty, you can drink from the water jars they have filled."

Ruth bowed down to the ground and said, "You know that I come from another country. Why are you so good to me?"

Boaz answered, "I've heard what you've done for your mother-in-law since your husband died. You even left your own father and mother to come and live in a foreign land among people you don't know. I pray that the Lord God of Israel will reward you for what you have done. Since you have come to Him for help, I pray that He will be very good to you!"

Ruth replied, "Sir, it is good of you to speak kindly to me and make me feel so welcome, though I'm not even one of your servant girls." You see, boys and girls, other people around Ruth saw how much she loved Naomi. How do you think others knew that Ruth loved Naomi? (The people of Bethlehem knew that Ruth really loved her mother-in-law because she showed it in her actions of following Naomi back to Bethlehem and gleaning in the fields so that Naomi would have food to eat.)

### **Ruth Eats with Boaz**

At mealtime, Boaz said to Ruth, "Come, eat with us. Have some bread and dip it in the sauce." Right away she sat down with the workers, and Boaz handed her some roasted grain. Ruth ate until she was satisfied and saved some for later.

When Ruth got up to go back to work, Boaz told his men, "Don't stop her, even if she picks up grain from where it is stacked. Be sure to leave some stalks of grain on the ground for her to glean, and don't bother her!"

### **Naomi Finds Out About Boaz**

Ruth worked in the field until evening, and after she had pounded the grain off the stalks, she had a large basket full of grain. She took the grain to town and showed Naomi how much she had picked up. She also gave her the food she saved from her lunch.

Naomi said, "Where did you work today? Whose field was it? God bless the man who treated you so well!" Then Ruth told her that she had worked in the field of a man named Boaz.

"May the Lord bless him!" Naomi replied. "The Lord has shown that He is still kind to the living and to the dead. Boaz is a close relative of ours."

Ruth told her, "He even said I could stay in the field

with his workers until they had finished gathering all his grain."

Naomi replied, "My daughter, it's good that you can work with his servant girls, because something bad could happen to you in someone else's field." From then on, Ruth kept close to Boaz' servant girls while she picked up grain in the field.

Ruth lived with Naomi until the barley and wheat were all harvested.

Boys and girls, Naomi said that the Lord was kind to her and Ruth. Why do you think that the Lord was being kind to them? (The Lord was pleased that Ruth had been showing her love to her mother-in-law through self-sacrifice and actions.)

### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **After Naomi's family moved to Moab, which of her family members died?** Her husband and two sons.
2. **After they died, what did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to do?** She told them to go back to their mothers' homes.
3. **Who refused to go home?** Ruth.
4. **Where did Ruth and Naomi go?** They went back to Naomi's hometown, Bethlehem.
5. **How did Ruth find food for herself and Naomi?** She gleaned, or picked up the leftover grain in the fields.
6. **Whose field did she work in?** Boaz's.

### MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18)**

### SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

#### Spiritual Teaching (1)

God wants us to love each of our family members. The most famous passage in the Book of Ruth is rendered by Ruth to Naomi:

*But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you,  
Or to turn back from following after you;  
For wherever you go, I will go;  
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;  
Your people shall be my people,  
And your God, my God.  
Where you die, I will die,  
And there will I be buried.  
The LORD do so to me, and more also,  
If anything but death parts you and me."*

(Ruth 1:16-18)

#### Life Application (1)

In this beautiful expression of devotion and loyalty to Naomi, Ruth also makes known her devotion to the Lord, which, as we learn later in the story, becomes rewarded in full.

1. Give each student a piece of plain paper, folded in thirds.
2. Ask the students to write at the top of the middle column "My Family". Have the students write down the names (or titles, such as "mom," "brother," etc.) of each family member they live with in this column, while making sure to leave plenty of space between each name.
3. Ask the students to think about how much each family member loves them. Have the students write "... loves me" at the top of the left column. Then, in the left column, ask them to write down how each family member has shown love to them.

4. Ask the students to think about how much they love each of their family members. Have the students write, "I love..." at the top of the right column. Then ask them to write down how they have shown love to each of their family members. Don't worry if the students cannot think of anything. They will complete this in the next step.

...loves me	My family	I love...

### Spiritual Teaching (2)

We should love each of our family members/church members through self-sacrifice and actions. Have the students turn to the Bible and read 1 John 3:18. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

### Life Application (2)

Direct the students' attention to the board. Write these 3 categories on the board: brothers and sisters at home or in the church, mom and dad, grandparents (or any relatives that students live with).

Have the students brainstorm some things that they can DO (actions, self-sacrifice) to show that they love these people. Give them an example such as, "help wash the dishes" next to "mom and dad," or "let them play with the toys first" next to "brothers and sisters."

Ask the students to read over what they have written in the right column of their paper from the first Life Application. Are there any family members/church members to whom they have not shown their love? Are there any family members/church members to whom they have only shown love by saying it?

In the right column, ask the students to use a different color to write down what they would do to show love to these family members/church members (encourage them to use the ideas that you have brainstormed as a class).

Remind your students that there are so many people who call themselves followers of Jesus Christ, yet ignore the plight of the poor in their midst. Apostle John calls us to a life where we lay down our life for the brethren. Read 1 John 3:16-17. "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

Many of us have enough to share with other people. Many people are in need and we need to be able to help them. The Lord Jesus is not happy when people come to us for help and we turn them away with some excuse. The Lord calls us to lay down our life for others.

For example, if a person in the church comes to us in sickness, not only do we need to pray for that person, we also need to actively do something to help them during their time of need. James 2:14-17 tells us that, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." God wants us to be a helping hand. Loving the brethren isn't worth anything if we shut up our hands to the needs of the poor in church or in society.

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 ACTIVITIES
 

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1

**Family Portrait Mobile****Objective:** To help students understand the importance of family.**Materials**

- Completed Spiritual Teachings and Life Application
- Yarn or string
- White cardstock or light-colored construction paper, two to three sheets per student
- Single-hole punch
- Bright-colored construction paper, one sheet per student
- Hangers, one per student
- Tape or stapler

**Instructions**

1. Have students draw and color each of their family members, selves included, on approximately 1/4 of the sheet of cardstock or construction paper.
2. Help students punch a hole above the heads of each figure.
3. Have students cut around each person (they don't need to cut exactly along the lines), and make sure they include the hole.
4. Have students write on the back of each person what they will do to show their love to this family member based on their sheet from Spiritual Teachings and Life Application.
5. Have the students write the memory verse on the back of their own figure.
6. Help students tie a piece of string or yarn to each figure, and tie the other end to the hanger.
7. Have students write "My Family" on the bright-colored construction paper and decorate it.
8. Attach the bright-colored construction paper to the hanger with tape or a stapler.

2

**Show Love to Others****Objective:** To remind students to show love to others.**Instructions:** Sing to the following verses to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me".

Helping others is the way,  
 To show God's love every day.  
 Jesus in me helps me be  
 Kind and good to all I see.

Show love to others,  
 Show love to others,  
 Show love to others,  
 Whoever they may be.

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 HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY
 

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1. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18)
2. B
3. A
4. True
5. True
6. you, you, my, my
7. gleaned, Boaz
8. She listened to her instructions and provided for her.
9. Answers may vary.
10. Answers may vary.

E1 Year 1 Book 4 Lesson 5—Ruth and Naomi

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** God is pleased when we love our family members by taking care of them.

**Lesson Objective:** To love every one of our family members through self-sacrifice and actions.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(1 John 3:18)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

1. Write down the memory verse for this week.
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## Multiple Choice

2. \_\_\_\_\_ : Naomi and her family \_\_\_\_\_.
- Moved to Egypt because there was a war in the land of Canaan
  - Moved to Moab because there was a famine in the land of Canaan
  - Stayed in the land of Canaan all their lives
3. \_\_\_\_\_ : Boaz happened to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- A close relative of Naomi's husband
  - The mayor of the city of Bethlehem
  - A priest who worked in the tabernacle but also owned land

## True or False

4. Naomi had a husband and two sons. \_\_\_\_\_
5. After Naomi's husband and sons died, there was food again in the land of Canaan. Only Ruth followed her to Bethlehem. \_\_\_\_\_

## Fill In the Blank

my you gleaned my Boaz you

6. When Ruth refused to leave her mother-in-law, she said, "Please don't tell me to leave you and return home! I will go where \_\_\_\_\_ go and live where \_\_\_\_\_ live. Your people will be \_\_\_\_\_ people, and your God will be \_\_\_\_\_ God.
7. While they were in Bethlehem, Ruth \_\_\_\_\_ in the fields belonging to \_\_\_\_\_ in order to get food for her and Naomi.

## Short Answer

8. How did Ruth show her love to Naomi?
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## Life Application

9. In this week's Bible story, we learned about what Ruth did to show her love to her mother-in-law Naomi, and how much it pleased God. Write down what you can do every day to show your love to your parents through actions and self-sacrifice.
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10. Work with your mom or dad. Ask your parent to share about how he/she has experienced love from someone who sacrificed something for him/her. Write a summary of your parent's story on another piece of paper.