

THE FAITH OF A FOREIGN WOMAN

Bible Basis: Ruth 1:1–2:23

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

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

Resource: *The Story For Kids*, Chapter 9: “The Faith of a Foreign Woman”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff You Need: Optional: trophies or award ribbons

Open with a discussion about the difference between awards and rewards. If you brought in trophies or award ribbons, show them now and talk about what they were for. Ask the children to talk about the difference between *award* and *reward*. An award is something you earn by hard work and accomplishment. A reward is something you might get for doing a good deed or doing something that someone else wants you to do. “Re” is a clue that the word means you get something back.

- Tell me about a time when you got an award or a reward.
- How does the possibility of a reward motivate you to do the right thing?

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 Kids*, 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 Kids*, Chapter 9. As you come to words in the word bank throughout the Scripture passages, allow children to add the words from the bank. 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.

RUTH IS KIND

In this story, you’ll find blanks. Pause at each blank and ask the children to supply the correct word by choosing a word from the Word Bank: *grain*, *Ruth*, *Boaz*, *Naomi*, *field*, *Moab*, *Bethlehem*, *mother-in-law*, *gather*. 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. And 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 her _____ (mother-in-law) and wanted to stay with _____ (Naomi). So they traveled together to Israel and lived in a town called _____ (Bethlehem).

Read Ruth 2:2. So Ruth went out to _____ (gather) the _____ (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 _____ (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. She took only one short rest."

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

The woman named _____ (Ruth) bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked, "Why are you being so kind to me? I'm from _____ (Moab)."

Boaz replied, "I've heard about everything you have done for your _____ (mother-in-law) since the death of your husband. 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 _____ (gather) 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, her _____ (mother-in-law) 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 the children to look at the picture and tell you about the character qualities found in 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?

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 any or all of these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GRAIN AND STRAW

Stuff You Need: packing peanuts, coffee filters, tubs or boxes

Set out tubs of packing peanuts at the start line. Set out empty tubs or boxes at the finish line. Use one set of tubs for each team. Explain, **What Ruth did in Boaz's field is called gleaning. That means she was picking up what was left over after the harvesters had been through the field and tied up bundles of grain. In this game, we're going to pick up leftovers.** Have the children form groups of four. (If your class is small, use groups of two.) Two players on each team will reach into a tub of packing peanuts and try to carry what they grab to the other side of the room and put it in a tub there. The other two players from each team will carry coffee filters to use as baskets. They will pick up what the first two players drop along the way. See which group ends up with the most in the tub at the finish line.

- 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 the children think of ways to show kindness and write them on index cards. 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, assign children to teams and have one team act while the other guesses. Use standard rules and signals for playing charades. 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: THANK YOU!

Stuff You Need: copies of Thank You! Activity Sheet, card-making supplies

Give an activity sheet to each child. Brainstorm as a group about the many people from the church congregation who have shown them kindnesses—either personally or as a group. Be sure to add the pastor, pastor's wife, and other church personnel if they are not mentioned by the children. Have the children design a thank-you card for someone on the list. Encourage them to be specific in their message to the person they are thanking. Decorate these and deliver during the next week. Let students make more than one card if they want.

OPTION 4: ACTS OF KINDNESS

Stuff You Need: Bibles, paper, pens

For quite a while there was a movement for people to do random acts of kindness. Brainstorm with the group a list of kind acts the students do or have done in the past. Talk about whether it is easy to be kind to some people and not to others and why they think that is so.

Talk about some people whom the class thinks are kind. What makes a person kind?

Break the group into small groups and give each group a Bible, paper, and pen. Have each group find three instances of kindness in the Bible and record the location and a brief summary of the story.

Share the findings of the groups.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Pray together, asking God to show each child a person to be kind to 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.