

The Story of Ruth

A Read-Aloud Version for Families, with Three Questions to Talk About

Read this out loud at the dinner table, at bedtime, or with your grandchildren. It takes about three minutes.

1 A Sad Beginning

Long ago, in a town called Bethlehem, the food ran out. A woman named Naomi moved far away to a country called Moab with her husband and her two sons. While they lived there, Naomi's husband died. Her sons grew up and married two women from Moab named Orpah and Ruth. Then both of Naomi's sons died too. Naomi was heartbroken. She decided to go back home to Bethlehem.

2 Ruth's Promise

Naomi told Orpah and Ruth to stay in Moab with their own families. Orpah cried and went home. But Ruth would not leave. She said, "Wherever you go, I will go. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God." So the two of them walked all the way to Bethlehem together.

3 A Kind Man and a Field

Naomi and Ruth were very poor. Ruth went out to gather leftover grain so they would have something to eat. She happened to walk into a field that belonged to a man named Boaz. Boaz was kind. He made sure Ruth was safe, shared his lunch with her, and told his workers to drop extra grain on purpose so she would find it.

Gleaning: God told farmers to leave some of their crop behind so that people who were poor could come and pick it up.

4 A Family Again

Naomi was amazed. Boaz was part of her husband's family, and that meant he could be their redeemer. Ruth asked Boaz for his help, and he said yes. He went to the leaders of the town and did everything the right way. Boaz and Ruth were married, and God gave them a baby boy named Obed. Naomi held her grandson in her arms, and her friends said, "Blessed be the LORD!"

Redeemer: A family member who steps in to rescue relatives who are in trouble and cannot help themselves.

5 The Surprise at the End

Baby Obed grew up and became the grandfather of David, the greatest king of Israel. And many, many years later, another baby was born in Bethlehem, into that very same family. His name is Jesus. He is the Redeemer who came to rescue us.

God is always at work, even when we cannot see it.

That is the big idea of the book of Ruth.

Three Questions to Talk About

There are no wrong answers. Let everyone at the table have a turn, grown-ups too.

1 Ruth stayed.

Ruth stuck with Naomi when it was hard and when she did not have to. Who has stuck with you? Who is someone you want to stick with, no matter what?

For little ones: Who is someone who always takes care of you?

2 Boaz noticed.

Boaz saw someone who needed help and gave more than he had to. Who is someone our family could notice and help this week? What could we do?

For little ones: Who could we share something with this week?

3 God was working.

Naomi thought God had forgotten her, but He was working the whole time. Can you think of a time when something hard turned out to be part of something good?

For parents and grandparents: This is a good one for you to answer first. Tell a story from your own life about a time you could not see what God was doing until later.

Something to Do This Week

Boaz left extra grain on purpose. As a family, pick one way to leave something extra for someone else. Bake a double batch and give half away. Set an extra place at the table. Write a note to someone who is lonely. Then talk about how it went.

A Verse to Remember

“Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”

Ruth 1:16

Say it together a few times. See who can say it without looking by the end of the week.

A prayer to pray together: *Dear God, thank You that You are always working, even when we cannot see it. Help us to love people the way Ruth loved Naomi, and to notice people the way Boaz noticed Ruth. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us. Amen.*

Want to read it from the Bible? The book of Ruth is only four short chapters. Reading one chapter a night makes a good four-night family reading. Older children can take turns reading out loud.