



# God Blesses Ruth

*God blessed Ruth's love and faith by giving her a husband, Boaz.*

## *Lesson Focus*

Ruth proved her loyalty to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and to God by returning with Naomi to the land of Israel. God rewarded Ruth's faithfulness by providing a redeemer, Boaz, who married Ruth and took care of her and Naomi. Boaz's redemption of Ruth is a picture of Jesus' redemption of sinners.

## *Key Passages*

Ruth 1:16–17, 4:13–14, 4:16–17; Ephesians 1:7

## *Objectives*

- Students will be able to:
  - Compare Boaz's kindness toward Ruth with Jesus' kindness toward sinners.
  - Identify Ruth's place in the genealogy of Jesus.

## *Memory Verse*

**Psalm 34:17–18** When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

# Prepare to Share

## Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

During the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1), Naomi and Elimelech, natives of Bethlehem in Judah, with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, moved to the country of Moab to avoid a famine. Elimelech died in the land of Moab, and afterward the two sons married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. After about 10 years, the two sons died, leaving Naomi alone with her daughters-in-law.

In that time and culture, life was very difficult for a widow. Naomi told Ruth and Orpah to return to their own people as Naomi intended to return to hers. She explained that she was too old to have more sons, and even if she did, it would take too long for the sons to grow up to be the husbands of her daughters-in-law. Both daughters-in-law protested. Orpah finally did return to her people. But Ruth adamantly refused, declaring determined allegiance not only to Naomi but also to her people and to her God (Ruth 1:16-17). This is to be understood as more than personal loyalty and love to Naomi. Rather, Ruth declared her intent to forsake her family and the false religion of the Moabites and to attach herself to the true God and his covenant people. In that culture, Ruth took a radical and courageous step. Certainly, she must have loved Naomi, but this kind of commitment to Israel and to God, regardless of the lack of familial connections in Israel, was a nearly certain path to poverty. Though beloved by Ruth, Naomi was not in a position to provide for her material needs. Ruth's courage is much to be admired.

When Ruth and Naomi returned to make their home in Bethlehem, they were in the position of little more than beggars. This was evidenced in the manner Ruth obtained food for them, following harvesting field workers and picking up ("gleaning")

what little they dropped as they harvested. It was customary (and commanded in Leviticus 23:22) to allow the poor to gather food this way. The owner of the field, Boaz, compassionately instructed his young men to leave more than usual for Ruth, and Boaz recognized and admired the path this young Moabite woman had followed. His blessing to her makes it clear that she had not only been loyal to Naomi but had also entrusted herself to the Lord God of Israel: "A full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, *under whose wings you have come to take refuge*" (Ruth 2:12).

Boaz was a close relative of Naomi's husband, one who could be expected to take responsibility for the care of Ruth and Naomi. In chapter 3, after being instructed by Naomi, Ruth came to Boaz by night at the threshing floor in a manner intended to show that she wished to be under his care; and Boaz responded favorably, impressed with Ruth's virtue and her kindness in not pursuing younger men. Boaz was apparently much older than Ruth (Ruth 3:10-11).

The account culminates in chapter 4 when Boaz confronted a closer relative of Naomi with the opportunity he had to "redeem"—to buy back into the close family—the land that had belonged to Naomi's husband. The redemption of the land included, by custom in Israel, the responsibility to care for the widow of Elimelech (Naomi). The care also included Ruth since she was part of the family and, because she was a young woman, involved marriage to her for the continuation of the family name (Ruth 4:5). Naomi's closer relative was unwilling to get involved since it would affect the inheritance in his own family. Boaz was willing to marry Ruth, however, and God blessed them with a son (Ruth 4:13). Boaz's redemption and marriage to Ruth led to her occupying a place in Jesus' ancestry. Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:17; Matthew 1:1).

## Historical/Apologetics Background

The redemption of Ruth by Boaz is a touching story of commitment and compassion, but it is much more than that. Boaz is certainly a type of Christ, our Redeemer. While it was costly for Boaz to redeem Ruth, Jesus Christ paid so much more for his bride. He set aside the privileges of his deity (Godhood)

for our benefit (Philippians 2:5-11). For our sakes, he who was rich became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). He who was without sin became sin for us so that "in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Boaz went beyond the call of duty to show his love and concern for Ruth,

and Jesus more so. Because of Jesus' shed blood, we can have our sins forgiven (Ephesians 1:7) and be adopted into the family of God (Galatians 4:4-5).

Boaz demonstrated a heart of compassion for Naomi and Ruth when he redeemed them from their hopeless situation. According to the laws God gave to Moses, a close relative could redeem (buy back) a family member sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47-49), land that was sold due to hardship (Leviticus 25:23-28), and the family name through levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Levirate marriage (meaning "husband's brother") was intended to provide an heir for an Israelite man who died childless. This option applied to unmarried close male relatives, such as brothers and cousins, who wanted to keep the property in the family. In the case of Naomi, Boaz had to defer to a closer relative and give him the option of buying Naomi's land and marrying Ruth. This relative refused because of his

own children and gave up his legal right to the land and Ruth (Ruth 4:3-6), clearing the way for Boaz to redeem the land and marry Ruth to raise up an heir for Mahlon (Ruth 4:9-10).

Both Boaz and Ruth are described as "worthy" (Ruth 2:1, 3:11), which shows their godly character. Some may question the scene described at the threshing floor where Ruth lay at Boaz's feet in the night (Ruth 3:6-14). But Ruth's action did not signify any immorality but rather her desire to marry Boaz, a marriage he probably would not have initiated with a younger woman.

It is also significant in this account that Ruth was a Gentile (a non-Israelite). The picture of her being drawn into covenant in the nation of Israel recalls God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:4 that he would be the father of many nations. It also foreshadows God's promise that the Messiah, Jesus, would be a "light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32).

 Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

 **Come On In**

*As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.*

 **Memory Verse**

*We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.*

 Slide #2

**Psalm 34:17–18** When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

 **Studying God's Word**

**Introduction**

*Refer to Lesson 72 Theme Poster.* The judge we learned about in our last lesson was Samson. He was a Nazirite set apart by God to help save the Israelites from the Philistines. God gave Samson supernatural strength. He was able to do many mighty things. But he sinned by letting a woman he loved become more important to him than God. When Samson told Delilah the secret to his strength, she betrayed him to the Philistines for money they promised to give her.

God left Samson, and he was captured, blinded, and imprisoned. When Samson was brought before a large crowd of Philistines, he prayed for strength one more time. God answered his prayer, and Samson pushed down the pillars of the building they were in, killing about 3,000 Philistines!

*Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline.* Today we're going to look at another book of the Bible called the book of Ruth. The family we're going to read about lived during the same time as the judges. **NOTE:** According to the timeline, the lessons may seem out of order. We chose to cover Gideon and Samson first since they are both in the book of Judges. Ruth and Samuel were contemporaries but are found in different books.

We'll start today's lesson with a few words you'll need to know.

- ? When a woman marries a man, what does she call her husband's mother? *Mother-in-law.*

*Show Family Picture #1.* A mother-in-law is the mother of someone's husband or wife.

- ? What does the husband's mother call the wife of her son? *Daughter-in-law.*

*Show Family Picture #2.* The wife is now a daughter because she has married into the family.

 Slides #4–6

- ? Show Family Picture #3. Last question: what is the word used for a woman whose husband has died? *Widow.*

So, you've probably guessed that we're going to talk about a widow and a daughter-in-law. But we're also going to talk about another very important word, *redeem*. To help us with that, I'm going to pass out a treat to each of you. But **DO NOT** open it. Leave it there in front of you.

- ? Think of these treats as good things God blesses us with. What are some things God has given to us? *Allow answers as you pass out treats to each student. Home, family, food, toys, etc.*

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## **Ruth's Choice**

*Refer to the Map of Moab.* Let's begin with some background. There was a famine in Israel. Remember, a famine is when there's not enough food for everyone. Because of this famine, a man named Elimelech moved his family from Bethlehem to the country of Moab where there was more food.

 Slides #7-9

Elimelech lived in Moab with his wife, Naomi, and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Life seemed to go pretty well for them in Moab, they had food and a place to live. But things started going bad when Elimelech died, leaving Naomi to live as a widow.

*Refer to Family Picture #2.* Later, Naomi's two sons met and married women from Moab. Chilion married Orpah, and Mahlon married Ruth.

*Refer to the Family Picture #3.* Then some years later, both of Naomi's sons died, too. Now Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, who were also widows!

Wow! It seemed like Naomi lost everything. And that means you will all lose your treats. But hang in there! There may be a way you can buy them back. *Collect the treats and set aside.*

- This was a sad and scary time for these three women. It was very difficult to survive as a woman without a husband back then. Women couldn't go out and get a job to provide for themselves like they can now. But one day, Naomi heard that there was food again in Israel. So she decided to go back to her hometown of Bethlehem. She told Ruth and Orpah to go back to their families where they would be cared for. Orpah did as Naomi said, but Ruth did not want to leave Naomi alone.

### **Ruth 1:16-17**

*Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster.* Turn in your Bibles to the book of Ruth, chapter 1, in the Old Testament. It is after Joshua and Judges.

 Slide #10

- ? Who will read Ruth 1:16-17? *Assign readers.*
- ? Where did Ruth say she would go? *Wherever Naomi went.*

Ruth loved Naomi and promised to stay with her. Ruth also loved the true God—the same God Naomi worshipped.

- ? How long did Ruth say she would stay with her mother-in-law? Look at verse 17. *Until they died.*

Ruth was faithful to Naomi. She was willing to leave her family, her people, and their false gods in Moab and make Naomi's people, the Israelites, her own. She trusted in the true God and believed he was faithful to care for them, and she stayed with Naomi.

 Slide #11

*Refer to the Map of Moab.* So, Ruth traveled with Naomi back to Bethlehem in Judah. See their path here on the map? *Show the path from Moab to Bethlehem.*

When they got back to Bethlehem, these two women were poor and hungry. They didn't have any way to make a living—they were in big trouble! But Ruth was a hard worker and decided that she would go and pick up grain that was left after the workers harvested in the fields. Back then, that was how poor people could get food. The workers in the fields were supposed to leave some grain so that poor people could collect it. This was called "gleaning."

- ? How many of you think Ruth and Naomi were on their own to survive?  
*Show of hands.*
- ? How many believe God was in control and had a plan to help them?  
*Show of hands.*

Just as God planned it, Ruth ended up working in the field owned by a man named Boaz, who was a close relative of Naomi's husband, Elimelech. Remember that—it's important!

Boaz noticed Ruth and told his servants to leave more grain for her. Then Boaz spoke to Ruth and told her, "Don't go to anyone else's fields. Stay here in my fields to collect food so my workers can protect you and share their water with you."

Ruth was surprised and asked, "Why would someone like you show me such kindness, especially since I'm a foreigner from Moab?"

"Well," Boaz replied, "because I have heard about all that you've done to help Naomi." Then he prayed a blessing on Ruth, asking the Lord to reward and protect her.

Hey! Things are looking up, aren't they? Do you see how God sovereignly brought Boaz and Ruth together?

- ? *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster.* Who remembers what sovereign means? *God is in complete control of everything.*

We will see that God would use Boaz to greatly bless Ruth and Naomi. God would reward them just as Boaz had prayed.

Let's start the Class Notes. We will read the sentences and the three possible answers together. You will have to circle the letter of the correct answer.

► Pass out the Class Notes.

- ? Who will read #1 for us? Choose a reader. A. Moab. Have students complete #1.
- ? Who will read #2 about the women Naomi's sons married? Choose a reader. B. Ruth and Orpah. Have students complete #2.
- ? And #3? What happened to Naomi's husband and sons? Choose a reader. B. Died. Have students complete #3.
- ? Who will read #4? Choose a reader. C. Go back to their families. Have students complete #4.
- ? And #5? What did Ruth choose to do? Choose a reader. A. Go with Naomi to Bethlehem. Have students complete #5.
- ? Someone read #6. Whose field did Ruth end up working in? Choose a reader. B. Boaz. Have students complete #6.

 Slides #12-14

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## Boaz's Decision

- ? Show Lesson Theme Poster. Does anyone want to guess what happened after God brought Boaz and Ruth together? Allow guesses.
- ? What was the important point I told you to remember about Boaz? He was a close relative of Naomi's husband.

 Slide #15

Yes! Boaz was a relative of Naomi. Back in those days, the Israelite laws said that when a man died, his closest relative was responsible to see that the man's wife (widow) was cared for. This relative was called a redeemer. Let's learn what it means to redeem.

- ? Pass out one Redeem Coupon to each student. Remember how you received treats earlier? Then what happened to them? They were taken away.
- ? Right. But what do these coupons say on them? "Redeem for one treat."
- ? Hmm. What do you think that means? Allow discussion.

 Slide #16

There are a couple meanings to this word redeem. The first meaning is "to buy something back."

You could each buy back your treat by redeeming it with one of these coupons. Use your coupon as payment to buy back your treat. But don't eat it yet. Allow students to turn in coupons for a treat.

**Redeem:** to buy something back; to free someone from trouble or distress

What about the second meaning? Besides buying something back, redeem also means to free someone from trouble or distress. Naomi and Ruth were in desperate need. Both of them were widows, so they had no husbands to protect them or provide for them!

► Have students save their treats until the end of the lesson.

Since Boaz was a close relative, he knew he could do something about this problem. First, Naomi's husband had some land, but she couldn't farm it by herself, and she had no money to pay anyone to do it. So Boaz redeemed Naomi's land. He bought it and would farm it to help provide for Naomi. Then he married Ruth and brought her and Naomi into his family, redeeming both of them out of their distress.

#### Ruth 4:13-14

#### Slide #17

Turn to Ruth chapter 4. Follow along and listen carefully as I read these verses. *Read Ruth 4:13-14.*

Did you get all that? There's a lot of important information packed into those verses.

- ? Look at the first sentence in verse 13. What did Ruth become? *Boaz's wife.*
- ? God soon blessed Boaz's kindness and Ruth's faithfulness by giving them a child. Was it a boy or a girl? Look at the last word in that verse. *A boy.*
- ? In verse 14, the women of Bethlehem praised the Lord. What did they say? Naomi was not left without a what? *A redeemer.*
- ? Who was Naomi and Ruth's redeemer? *Boaz.*

#### Ruth 4:16-17

#### Slide #18

- ? Verses 16 and 17 give us some interesting information about this family. Who will read those verses for us? *Assign readers.*
- ? In verse 16, what does it say Naomi became to Boaz and Ruth's child? *His nurse.*

Naomi was no longer afraid and alone. She had her daughter-in-law, Ruth, her relative Boaz, and now a precious baby to help care for! She would be the baby's grandmother!

- ? What was the baby's name? *Obed.*
- ? This was a very special family. Look at the end of verse 17. Who was the grandson of Obed? *David.*
- ? How many of you have ever heard of David before? He's the one that fought Goliath. *Show of hands.*

Boaz and Ruth's son Obed grew up and had a son named Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David, who later became king of Israel!

- ? Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David. And guess who they were related to? I'll give you a hint: we learn about his special birth in the New Testament. *Jesus.*

David was in the family line of Jesus Christ! And because Ruth was faithful to God, he blessed her in a very special way by including her in the line of Jesus, the promised Messiah.



- ? Look at #7 on your Class Notes. What does it mean to redeem? Choose a reader. C. To buy something back or free someone from distress. Have students complete #7.
- ? Who will read #8? Choose a reader. A. Redeemed Naomi and married Ruth. Have students complete #8.
- ? What was the name of the child for #9? Choose a reader. B. Obed. Have students complete #9.
- ? Who will read #10? Choose a reader. C. Great-grandmother of David. Have students complete #10.

 Slides #19–20

## Christ's Sacrifice

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. In the book of Ruth, we see that Boaz was a redeemer. He agreed to buy Naomi's land, work it, and provide for both her and Ruth because he was a close relative. This was the custom in those days. The closest relative would come and rescue, or redeem, his family from a bad situation. What a marvelous picture of Jesus, the one who redeems sinners!

 Slide #21

There are many verses that describe Jesus as our Redeemer. But today, we'll look at one in the book of Ephesians.

### Ephesians 1:7

- ? Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to Ephesians 1:7 in the New Testament. Who will read that? Choose a reader.
- ? Who is this verse talking about when it says, "In him we have redemption"? Who is the "him"? *Jesus.*
- ? How does this verse say Jesus redeemed us? Through what? *Through his blood.*  
Jesus redeemed us—bought us back and rescued us from sin—with his own blood.
- ? Look at the verse again. Because Jesus died for us, what do we receive? *The forgiveness of our trespasses.*

 Slide #22

Trespasses is another word for sins. So this verse tells us that we are redeemed, or saved, from our sins because Jesus died in our place—he shed his blood for us on the cross. Notice the last part of that verse: Jesus redeemed us according to the riches of his grace.

- ? Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Who will read the definitions of gracious and merciful from the Attributes of God Poster? Choose volunteers to read. *Gracious: gives great gifts to his children even when they are not deserved. Merciful: kind to those in misery; withholds deserved punishment.*

It's not because of anything we did but because of God's grace and mercy that we are saved through Jesus Christ.

 Slides #23–24

## Application

*Refer to the Map of Moab.* Our lesson started during the time of the judges with a family of four leaving Israel because of a famine. Naomi experienced great sadness when she lost her husband and then her two sons. But God provided Ruth, her faithful daughter-in-law, to come with her back to Bethlehem.

*Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster.* When Naomi and Ruth were in trouble, Boaz saved them from the bad situation they were in—even though they had no way to pay him back. And because Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz were all faithful to God, he blessed their family with a baby—Obed, and their family line would one day include Jesus Christ.

Are you ready for a pop quiz?

- ? First question: What did we call Boaz because he bought the land and rescued Ruth and Naomi from their terrible situation? *A redeemer.*
- ? Next question: What do we call Jesus because he bought us back and rescued us from our terrible situation of being separated from God because of sin? *Our Redeemer.*

That's right! We are all sinners and have nothing to offer Jesus. We deserve only one thing—hell (separation from God)—because of our sins. But Jesus bought us back from sin. He paid the price when he died on the cross. Jesus is our Redeemer. He took the punishment for sin that we deserve and offers eternal life to everyone who trusts in him. Isn't that fabulous news? Let's eat our treats now and celebrate what Jesus did for us. *Allow students to eat their treats.*

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



## Group Prayer Time

*Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.*

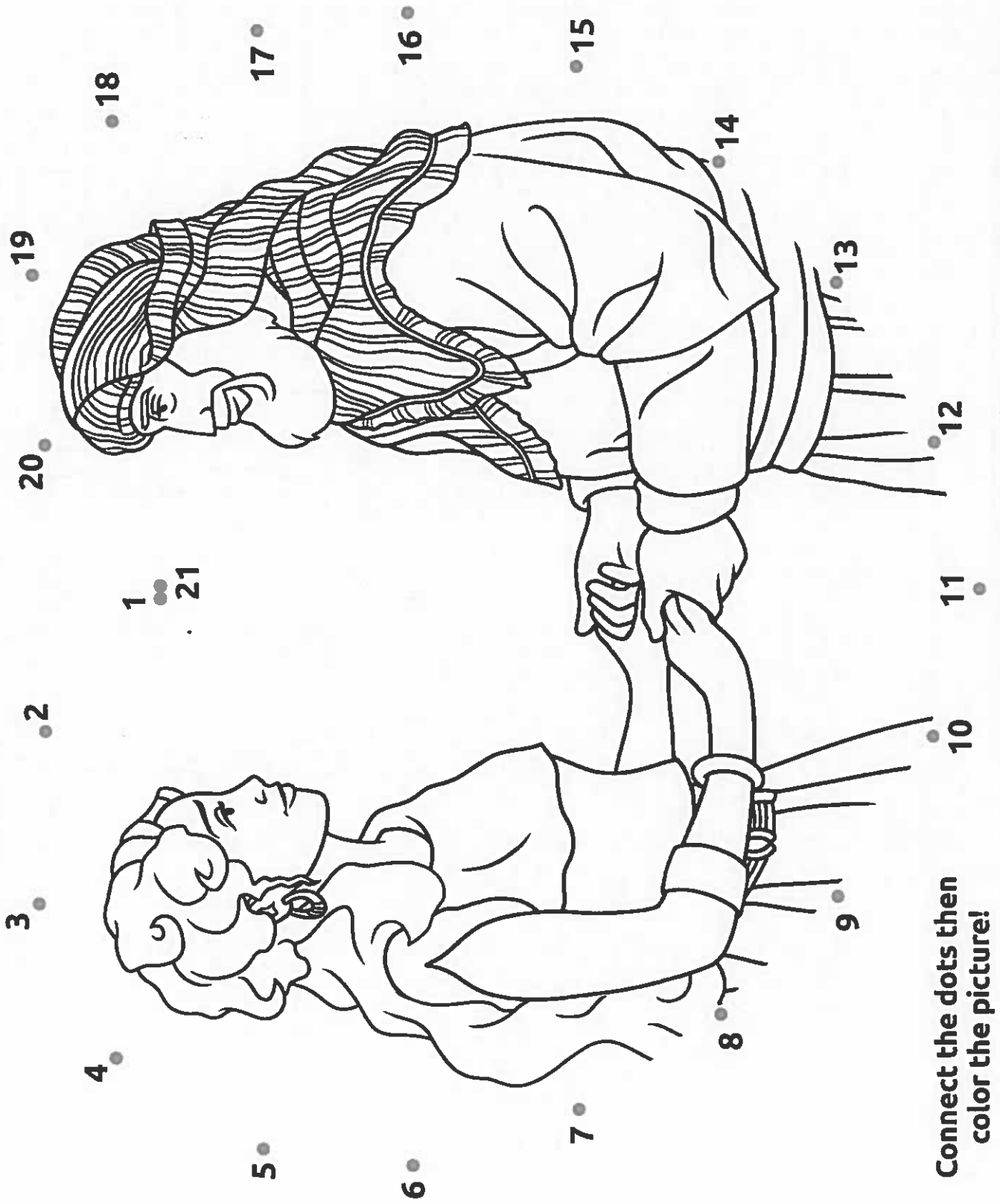
- Thank God for the real people in the Bible who were faithful and obedient to him, even in tough times.
- Praise God for giving Jesus to be our Redeemer.



## Lesson Review

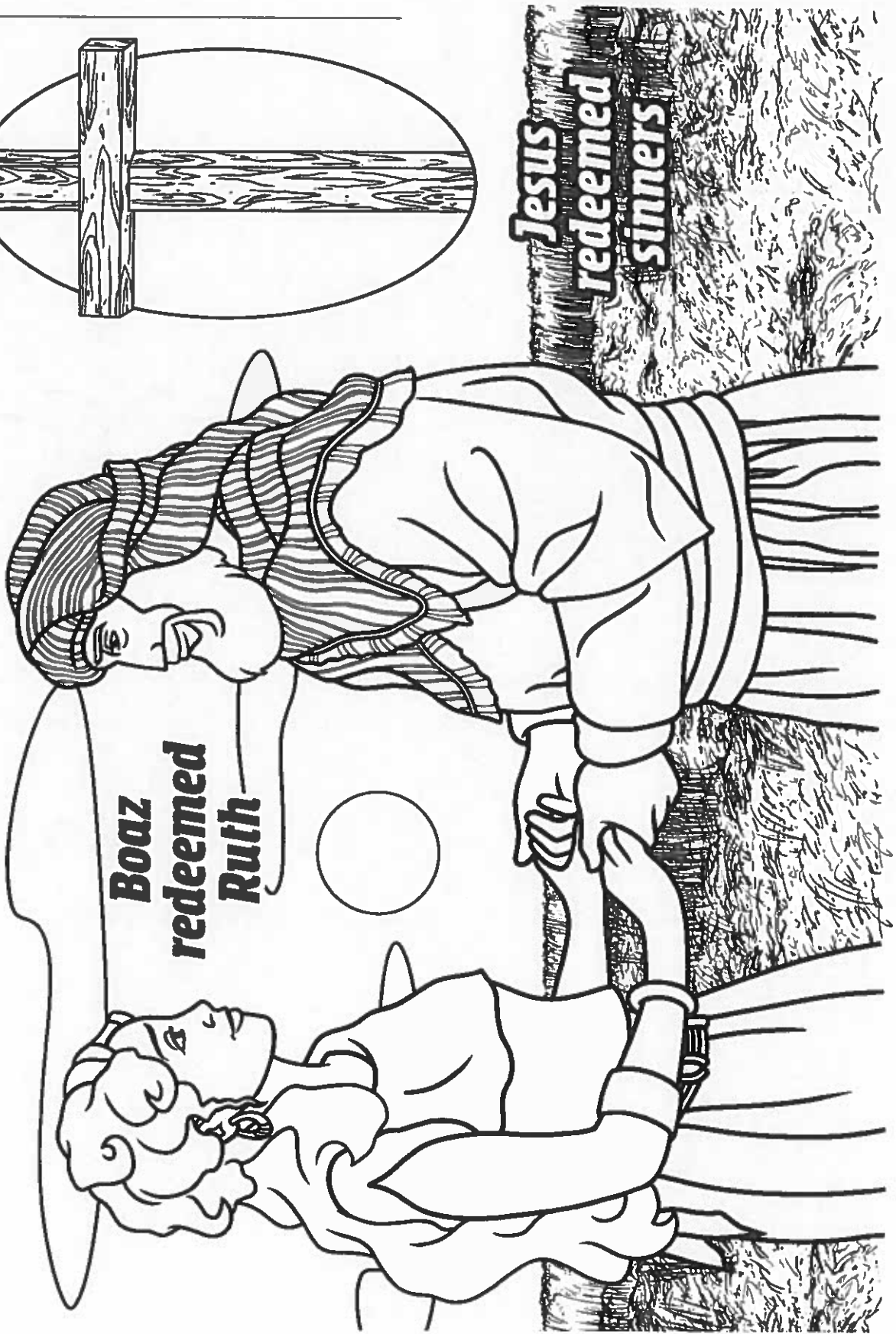
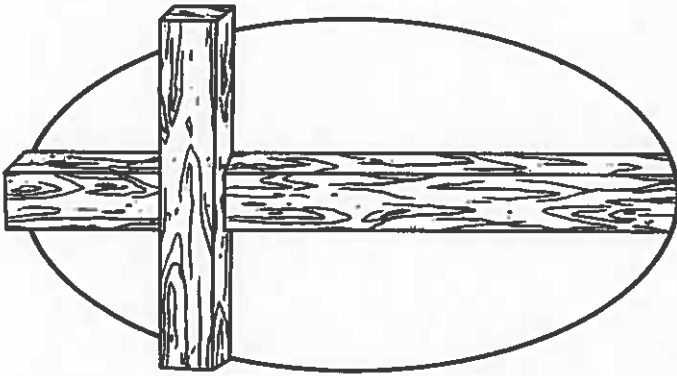
*We encourage you to play a lesson review game.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_



**Connect the dots then  
color the picture!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_





Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Word Search

BOAZ  
BETHLEHEM  
DAVID  
FAITHFUL  
FAMINE

FIELDS  
JESUS  
LOYAL  
NAOMI  
MOAB

OBED  
ORPAH  
REDEEMER  
RUTH  
WORK

