



Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

The story of Ruth

Theme: Ruth – the ordinary saint

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Today, as part of our month looking at saints, we are going to focus on Saint Ruth.

Ruth doesn’t fit into the normal ‘guidelines’ for a saint... she wasn’t a Christian (she wasn’t even a Jew!) and she didn’t perform any miracles. November 1st is the feast day of St. Ruth the Matriarch although St. Ruth is not actually the Patron Saint of any particular group – not even Great Grandparents! She has been sanctified not necessarily because of what she did – but because of who she was: the Great Grandmother of King David.

However, she showed many of the traits that we associate with saints. She was kind, she was loyal and she cared for other people – in particular, her mother-in-law, Naomi.

As children, we often have ‘relatives’ who aren’t relatives at all – but are granted that status because of their relationship to the family. This session will invite your group to explore what it means to have intergenerational relationships – particularly where everyone is treated with equal respect because of what they bring to the relationship, irrespective of their age or knowledge.

Be aware of those amongst your group who may have lost an (older) family member and still feel their loss as well as those who, perhaps, never knew their grandparents. They might have an idealised version of what a grandparent is.



Exploring the story of Ruth provides us with a great opportunity to build stronger links with older members of our church community: adopt a Nana/Grandpa. What might they bring to the relationship? What might they gain?

Please note – the story of Ruth is spread over several chapters in the Book of Ruth but much of it is important in this story. Obviously do not try to read the whole story from the Bible – this is one occasion when it might be advisable to read the story from a Bible Storybook and to supplement it with a few verses from the Bible version.

Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen

In-person game – Islands

In the story of Ruth, we see examples of kindness, people helping other people to do well in life. This game is always a favourite with children and one where we often see them helping each other out to beat the leaders and win.



You will need: music and newspaper.

Place pages of newspaper around the room on the floor, one piece per child. When the music plays, the group move around the room. When the music stops, they must run to stand on the safety of a paper island before the sharks (adults) get them. Anyone not on an island is out. You can be as strict as you would like on how much of their feet needs to be on the island. Each round, the leaders should remove a few islands, making the game harder, you can also tear them to make the islands smaller. You can have more than one child on an island which provides the group with the opportunity to try to help someone else win.

Alternative game – Sweet gleaning

In the story of Ruth, Boaz told his workers to leave extra grain and wheat around the edge of the field for Ruth to come and glean. This game plays with the idea of taking what you would like (gleaning) as well as an opportunity to think about others before ourselves.

You will need: a dice, a card showing the dice rules, and a load of sweets and chocolates (a variety is important).

Sit the group in a circle, on the floor is best. Place the pile of sweet treats in the centre. Ask if anyone can see their favourites in the pile. Explain that we will each roll take it in turns to roll a dice, then you follow the instruction against the number you roll, only the person rolling the dice makes the move. (this game works best if you kept a fast pace to it)

Dice rules

Roll a 1 – take a sweet from the centre

Roll a 2 – give a sweet from the centre to someone else

Roll a 3 – take a sweet from the centre

Roll a 4 – no action taken

Roll a 5 – take a sweet from someone else's pile

Roll a six – roll again

The game continues until all sweets are removed from the centre or until you say it is finished, depending on how your group is doing.

At the end of the game, you will see that some have lots (like Boaz) and others have little or none (like Ruth and Naomi). Explain to the group that you will not be asking them to put all the sweets in a bowl so that they can be shared out evenly, but you hope that if they see someone in the group is without or has less, that they will practice kindness. (Have a bag of extras ready to bless those who don't have much if necessary)

This game can lead to a good conversation about sharing. Be aware that some children may struggle to share for reasons other than selfishness e.g. they may have to hoard food as a coping mechanism, they may have autism and will stick to the original rules.



Experience

For this story we recommend using a story book Bible version – check for authenticity to the original Bible version. Alternatively use the text from the Postcard Home.

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: A cartoon version of Ruth's story by Crossroad Kids
<https://youtu.be/SDmjO7X8ELI?si=pL1TGERMLbJS9S0n>

Over fives: The full story as animation by Kids' Ministry Tools
https://youtu.be/liMSAB6zCDQ?si=i2_j4qwZPIyjHfwf

Songs to support the story

Under fives: I'm awesome, I'm fabulous by Little worship company
<https://youtu.be/QZkqAk64e8?si=Kcl7gsHPjNSVWT1N>

Five to elevens: Give a little kindness by Chatthill Kids
https://youtu.be/apAJh7T_fW?si=YZwtyusnn1NpEpxq

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the passage: Board Game (Ruth 1:1-22)

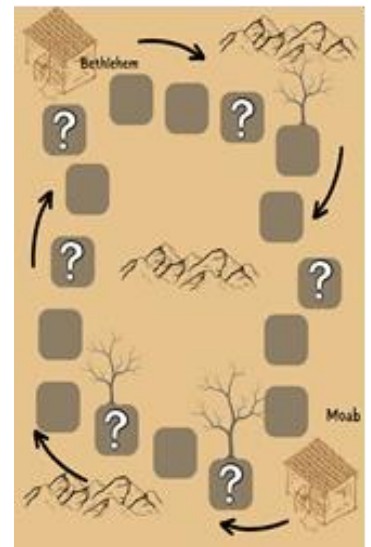
Work in small groups to create your own board game to tell the story of Ruth and Naomi's journey. You could use a template, like the one here, to explore the first journey Naomi made with her family and the journey back from Moab with Ruth; you might prefer to make a simpler board which shows the single journey home from Moab.

Create a board using a template, a large blank piece of paper or large pieces of paper placed to create a path for a human-sized board game.

Make an even number of 'chance' spaces, using a question mark symbol. Half of your 'chance' squares should have positive actions which mean moving forward a small number of spaces. Discuss as a group what positive things might have happened on Naomi and Ruth's journey (such as: a friend offering them food, them sharing happy memories about their family). Half should be negative actions that mean having to move backwards (like running out of food or losing a bag). When the group has agreed, write them onto the 'chance' squares.

Use small world figures or coloured cardboard disks as counters. Take it in turns to roll a dice and move your piece, following any instructions on 'chance' squares. The winner is the first person to reach the final square.

If you are making a human-sized board game, you are your own counter. Step the number of spaces that you roll - but you might have to step backwards carefully if you land on a negative 'chance' space. A large foam dice would make the giant game even more fun!





Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.

Ruth's place in her family tree is very important (Ruth 4:16-22), the modern parable this week is about a very special Grandma.



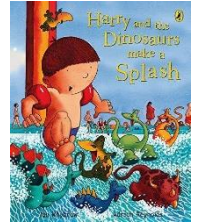
'Birdhouse' by Blanca Gomez

<https://youtu.be/sfu0o7FDjuA?si=lqmBKx1udWBcvfw8>

'Harry and the Dinosaurs make a splash'

by Ian Whybrow and Adrian Reynolds

<https://youtu.be/xFShmlGKzW8?si=g6Z9wbv9wLXwUvbi>



Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- Is being kind and loyal ordinary or is it special?
- Do you have to be a Christian to do good things?
- Do you have any stories to share about grandparents or about a friendship with an older person?
- I wonder where God is in this story?
- If this is such a normal story about a normal person, why do you think it is included in our Bible?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder if you have someone older who is special to you? I wonder why they're special?
- I wonder what you've done that you think was kind? How have you been kind this week?
- I wonder what the kindest thing is that someone else has done to you?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "what's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- Two piece jigsaw puzzles or magnets – Think about the people we like to stick with and go on adventures with. Where do you go with them? What is your favourite thing to do?
- Small bag or lunchbox – Talk about what you need when you are going on a journey – are there things that are too big to take with you?
- Baby doll and blankets – Using imaginative play, explore caring for a baby as Ruth and Boaz cared for Baby Obed.
- Gleaning game – Use an assortment of objects, such as buttons or building blocks, and try to pick out the ones that are all the same size, leaving all the little ones behind. You could even do this with edible items, checking for allergies first and avoiding anything that might be a choke hazard. Talk about how farmers in the Bible left crops at the edge of fields at harvest time so poor families could have something to eat.
- A crown – Ruth was King David's Nana, and even related to Jesus.
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (A cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always loves us!)



Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Creative prayer - Braided ear of wheat

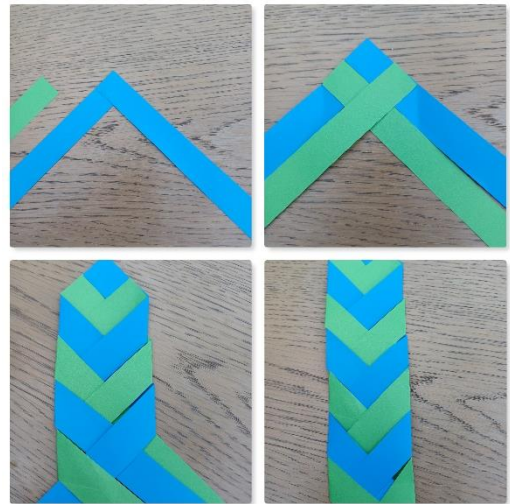
You will need:

Four strips of coloured paper, two of one colour and two of another. (1-1.5 cm wide and about 15cms long)

Glue or tape

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Ruth 1:16

Ruth helps us think about loyalty and faithfulness. Ruth stays faithful to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and leaves her own community to join Naomi's. Not only this, but she becomes faithful to Naomi's God and becomes an ancestor of David- an amazingly important woman and an ordinary saint! In this creative prayer, the braid helps to remember how Ruth joined her life together with Naomi and with God.



Pray:

Who would you like to pray for or give thanks for?

Choose one colour to represent God and another colour to represent yourself or someone you know. As you braid the strips together, they become stronger. Pray that you and the person you have chosen will grow closer to God.

Take your two first colour strips and glue the tops together at right angles. Then glue the two strips of the second colour over the top as in the photograph. Fold the colour 1 strips over the colour 2 strips and continue all the way to the end, then secure the ends with glue or tape.

Spoken prayer

We remember and say thank you for all the ordinary saints in our lives...

For...teachers and storytellers

who make God's stories come alive for us

We say thank you!

For...parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins,

sisters, and brothers who love and care for us

and who share the story of your love with us.

We say thank you!

For... all the musicians who sing and play your praises.

We say thank you!

For...our church families, for all those who have been a part of this faith family.

We say thank you!

We remember and say thank for all the people, the ordinary saints, in our lives **Amen**

Encourage the children to think of their own ideas for ordinary saints and add to this prayer



Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Bunch of flowers for a “Nan”

Create a bunch of flowers for someone special, especially someone who represents a Grandma figure in their life.

Ruth 1: 8-10 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.” Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.”

There are many ways to make flowers, here are two of them.

Tissue paper flowers

What you need:

- Tissue paper
- Lollipop stick or pipe cleaners
- Glue

What you do:

Tear the tissue paper into sections, tearing the different colours into different sizes so that you can gather them together to create a bunch. Attach them to sticks or a pipe cleaner. Make a few to create a bunch.



Cake case flowers

What you need:

- Lollipop sticks
- Cake cases
- Glue
- Buttons

What you do:

Either use patterned cake cases as the flower, glue it to a stick and glue a button in the middle or use white cases and paint them. Once dry, glue a stick to it. Make a few to create a bunch.

If you are feeling particularly ambitious, why not see what other methods of making flowers you can find – maybe crochet or knitted flowers, origami, pipe cleaners, wrapping wool round the tines of a fork..... lots of different ideas out there, or come up with your own!





Ordinary things being amazing

In the story of Ruth we see ordinary kindness and loyalty. Ruth is an ordinary saint. She doesn't do any miracles, she doesn't do anything that we can't do too. She was simply kind and loyal. Have some fun doing some science experiments using ordinary things like cinnamon and cotton pads. See how ordinary things can be amazing, just like Ruth.

Water and pencil bag (outside) Take a sandwich bag of water (keep it sealed). Calmly take a sharp pencil and thrust it through the bag, from one side and out the other. See how the bag doesn't leak. Try it with adding more and more pencils. *The reason the bag doesn't leak is because the bag's long chain polymers wrap around the pencil creating a seal.*

Balloon Rockets on a string (outside) Take a balloon and use sticky tape to attach a straw to it. (Sometimes easier to do once the balloon is inflated, do not tie the end). Now thread the string through the straw. You will need someone to hold the balloon one end and another person to hold the string further away. Let go of the balloon and watch it whizz along the string. What adaptations could you do to make it go further? *The air in the balloon propels the balloon forwards along the string.*

Standing on a paper cup challenge (inside) Stand on a paper cup and watch it break, how could you use more cups and cardboard to achieve this goal? Try spacing several cups out evenly and then place a sheet of cardboard on the top. You should find the cups can now hold your weight. Carefully try a second layer. Ask a heavier person to try to stand on your cup tower, do the cups hold their weight too? *When we stood on one cup it broke straight away as we expected. This is because all our weight was pushing down on the cup, compressing it. However, if you arrange the cups neatly spaced apart and place a piece of cardboard over the top, the weight is spread out meaning there isn't too much weight on any one cup.*

Milky Rainbow (inside) Take a cotton pad and use coloured markers to make dots over the cotton pad, leave space between the marks. Now place your pad in whole milk and watch what happens. Can you make a perfect rainbow pattern by planning your design first? What happens when you add a drop of dish soap to the milk? *The science behind this experiment lies in the properties of milk, which contains fats and proteins, and the chemistry of dish soap, designed to break down grease. When dish soap is added to the milk, it races around to bond with the fat molecules, causing the swirling motion that moves the colours.*

Dry marker pictures (inside) Use a dry marker to draw a simple shape on the bottom of a glass bowl. Slowly and carefully pour water into the bowl and watch your drawings peel off in one piece. Can you pick them up using the back of your hand? *The marker leaves behind mixture of pigments and a type of alcohol mixed together. The alcohol dissolves and the pigments are left behind as a solid. Glass is so smooth that the solid slides right off when it gets wet!*

Paper cup catapults (inside) Take a paper cup and remove the base carefully. Take a balloon and cut off the round base carefully, tie a knot in the loose end. Tape the balloon to the base of the cup – securely. Now place a few cotton/foil balls or marshmallows in the cup, pull back the balloon and let it pop back. Watch your balls fly out. Which missiles work best? *When you pull back the balloon it creates tension. This is then released when you let go, forcing air pressure through the cup, taking the missiles with it.*



Hydrophobic cinnamon (inside) Fill a bowl/cup with water. Sprinkle a layer of cinnamon on top of the water. Now with your fingers pointing downwards, plunge slowly your hand in the water through the cinnamon. Then lift your hand back out. What did you notice – the cinnamon is dry on your hand. *Cinnamon contains a compound called cinnamaldehyde, which is responsible for its characteristic flavour and aroma. This compound is not water-soluble, meaning it cannot dissolve in water. It is hydrophobic – not afraid of water but not able to be dissolved. Instead, it requires a solvent with a similar chemical structure, such as alcohol, to dissolve effectively.*

Sand and magnet drawings (inside) Place coloured sand in a tray. Place one magnet in the tray and another underneath, making sure they attach to each other. Now draw a shape or write your name in the sand by dragging the magnet from underneath. Watch the magnet in the tray move as if by itself. *The magnets are attracted to each other and so you can make one move, simply by moving the other.*

Paper plate frisbee – how can you make a paper plate fly like a frisbee? (Outside) Take two paper plates and cut out the centre section. Then attach them together to create a spaceship shape. Decorate your frisbee and watch it fly. *This is all about air lift and the sturdiness of the paper V of a paper plate.*

Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Ruth was King David's Grandma and an ancestor of Jesus. She took care of her mother-in-law, someone of a different generation, even though they weren't blood relatives. Can you do something this week that shows kindness or builds relationship with someone from an older generation? Perhaps you could even share the story of Ruth together!
 - Ruth didn't do any miracles to make her a saint, but she played her part in God's story through her kindness. Random acts of kindness are kind things you do for people without any reason other than just to be kind – not because you'll get anything out of it. Can you do some random acts of kindness this week? Even if you can't do something like helping someone or giving them something, you can always pray for them and ask God to bless them.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of Ruth with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **St Andrew**.

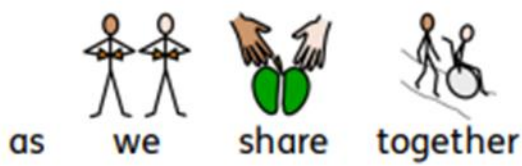




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



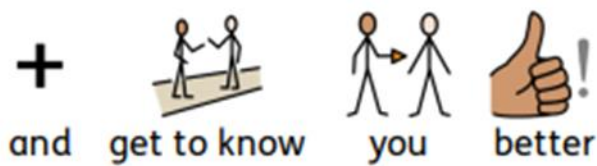
as we share together



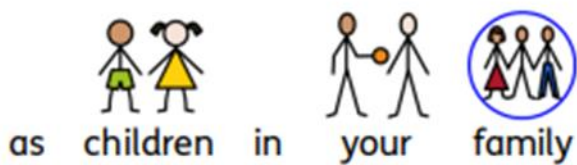
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



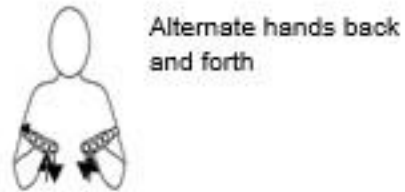
as children in your family



Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth

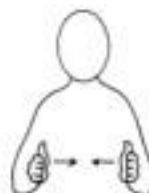




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