

RUTH'S DECISION



Passages to Study: Ruth 1:1-22.

Read with the class: Ruth 1:1-19.

Texts for memorization:

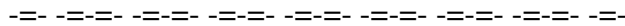
Younger: Ruth 1:16 "Thy people will be my people.....God."

Older Ruth 1:16.



OBJECTIVES: To teach that:

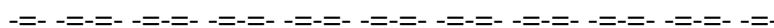
- 1. It is absolutely necessary to trust God at all times.
2. The person who leaves the place where God has placed him, puts his spiritual well-being in danger.
3. If one goes out of the will of God in order to solve some earthly problem, it will result in greater problems later on.
4. Failure to submit to God's will is one way to miss out on the blessing God has for the individual, while wholehearted obedience is the key to enter into the joy and blessings God has for them that trust Him.
5. God promises to fully recompense the person who is willing to give up all for Him.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: A road leading away from Bethlehem, with figures of Elimelech and Naomi along with their young sons walking away towards Moab.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Naomi and Elimelech travel towards the east with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion.
- Possibly they were part of a caravan of travellers or traders.
- They leave Bethlehem, which means "House of Bread" (or of Food).
- Bethlehem was located in an agricultural area, but these were times of scarcity.
- Elimelech means "God is my King".
Apl. Had Elimelech stopped paying attention to the orders of his King? Is his departure directed by the King?
- Naomi means "pleasant" or "delight".
- Mahlon means "sick", and Chilion "pining". Perhaps health problems of the children influenced the parents to seek something better for them.
Apl. When a problem affects those who are dear to us, it is very difficult to maintain confidence in God and not act on our own ideas. However, this is no excuse to step out of the will of God.
- The family goes towards Moab, an area that belonged to the descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew.
Sug. A map of the area would be helpful to show the children the location of Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, 8 kms. away. Moab lay to the southeast, on the other side of the Dead Sea.
- Elimelech and Naomi leave the Land of Promise, thus putting in danger the spiritual life of the family.
- In Moab the people worshipped the idol, Chemosh.
Cns. Many families are suffering today because of poor decisions made by parents and grandparents.
Sug. Stress the importance of how good parental example is needed since it has a deep and lasting effect on children.



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SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: Naomi's home in Moab with figures of Elimelech and Naomi and their grown sons. Remove the figure of Elimelech and add those of Ruth and Orpah. Then remove those of the two sons.

DEVELOPMENT:

- In Moab Naomi suffers three great losses, those of her husband and sons, leaving her with no one to help and provide for her.
- Naomi also feels a responsibility for her two daughters-in-law.
- In addition, she has lost fellowship with God.

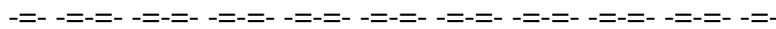
Cns. The family escaped the famine in their own country but find that the bread to be had in Moab does not satisfy their spiritual hunger.

- Naomi somehow receives word from her own country, precisely from the area where she lived and she tells her daughters-in-law of the changes that have occurred. There is bread there!

Cns. For the poor and hungry, this is good news.

Apl. For those who are spiritually poor and hungry, the gospel is good news, but it is necessary to respond to the invitation to "Come and eat."

Cmt. The Bible story does not reveal what Naomi related to the younger women about her past life but something about her faith in the Lord was enough to awaken a desire in the two women to accompany her.



SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: On the road returning to Bethlehem, figures of Naomi, Orpah and Ruth.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Leaving behind the graves of their three loved ones, Naomi starts her return journey to Bethlehem.

Cns. The teacher should think about the mixed feelings Naomi would have, especially after about 20 years of absence. No doubt she would be wondering how she would be received in Bethlehem.

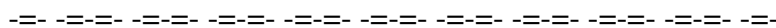
- The three women stop on their journey away from Moab.
- Orpah's heart is divided between her love for her mother-in-law and her desire to stay among her own people whom she knows.

Apl. A person who has a divided heart will never give God the first place in his/her life.

- Ruth expresses her firm decision to serve Naomi's God, identify herself with her people and share in whatever the future might hold.

Cns. A person that has been away from God, as was Naomi, does not always give good advice. Ejm. She urged her daughters-in-law to go back to Moab. Her faith could not see the blessing that was ahead for them.

Apl. Had Ruth perhaps seen something in her mother-in-law that showed her the reality of a living God?



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SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS: Verses 16 and 17 of Ruth chapter 1, written out and with figures that illustrate the various ideas.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Ruth's decision involved:
 1. Separation from her old life. "Entreat me not to leave thee." A definite step cutting her off from her former life.
 2. A choice to go in a new direction. "Whither thou goest, I will go." The value of a life is not measured so much by the distance run as by the direction taken.
 3. Renouncing former goals. "Where thou lodgest I will lodge." She wants to be with Naomi.
 4. Renouncing former friendships. "Thy people will be my people." She was willing to become part of a people she did not know and to enjoy their friendship.
 5. Renouncing false gods. "Thy God (will be) my God." Another decisive step. A true conversion.
 6. A lifetime commitment. "Where thou diest, I will die." When she decided that nothing would separate her from Naomi and her God, her decision was serious, solemn and irrevocable.
- Cns.** This is more than the promise to be with a person "until death do us part." Ruth intends to continue in the same place even after Naomi's life on earth is over.
- When Naomi saw that Ruth was resolute about accompanying her, she stopped trying to dissuade her.
- **RESOLUTE** means: Firm in her decision.
- Cmt.** Ruth's faith is an example of Hebrews 11:6 "Without faith it is impossible to please (God), for he that cometh to God must believe that He is (or that He exists), and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."
- God takes notice of all that is done in dependence and trust in Him with spiritual ends in view. Christ promised that the person willing to forsake his own things to follow Him would receive much more in return. (See Matthew 19:27-30)

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