

date: 12/3/17

Bible Passage: Ruth 1—4
(Ruth)

God Blesses

REMEMBER VERSE

**Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has
come to his people and redeemed them.**

Luke 1:68

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

My husband and I have been on a journey of faith and total dependence upon the Lord. My husband has been holding temporary contracts with various companies, hoping to gain a permanent position. It has always been our desire to depend on God for everything. However, surviving on one income in a recovering economy put this desire to the test.

When we received the news that we were expecting a baby, we couldn't have been happier. But I knew my husband was feeling the weight of responsibility as each contract came to an end. We prayed and asked God to show us what was next, trusting Him to take care of us.

Six weeks ago, we received a generous check in the mail. One of his designs was doing very well! Then two weeks ago a second check followed! I couldn't begin to express my gratitude. Every day, people are trying to save their homes, find work to support their families, and basically just survive a job market that feels as if it has been hit by a famine. My family shares this struggle. Trusting God each step of the way, we have felt Him taking care of us and blessing us with the reminder He is with us.

Our God is a God of love, redemption, and provision. We're all affected by the financial, political, and social climate of our world continually pressing against us. But we aren't crushed by the weight of this world. We have hope. Our God can redeem each situation we face and reveal His power to remind us who He is. He takes care of us not only today, but has provided a way to take care of us for all eternity. God blesses.

Angelina Pavone
ROCKHarbor Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

During the time of the judges a famine hit the land. A family from the tribe of Judah—Elimelech, his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Kilion—fled Bethlehem to live in Moab. After the death of her husband, Naomi was widowed—left with only her two sons and their Gentile, Moabite wives, Orpah and Ruth. Not long after the death of Elimelech, both Mahlon and Kilion also died. Naomi prepared herself and her daughters-in-law to return to her homeland. She had heard the Lord was providing food for His people and decided it would be a good time to leave this Gentile nation. Orpah returned to the home of her mother, while Ruth insisted upon staying with Naomi. She pledged to make her home with Naomi and worship the God of Israel as her God.

Shortly after returning to Bethlehem, Ruth began to gather leftover grain from the harvesters in a field. While she was gathering the grain, Boaz, the owner of the field, returned from town. He noticed Ruth immediately and asked his men about her; she had found favor in his eyes. Some suggest Boaz experienced love at first sight when he met Ruth. In any case, from this point forward their lives were intertwined, for this meeting resulted in marriage between Ruth and Boaz.

When Boaz married Ruth, he took on the role of kinsman-redeemer. It was the responsibility of the kinsman-redeemer to marry and raise up offspring to the dead kinsman. Another duty of the kinsman-redeemer was to purchase back any property or people who had been sold or relinquished to satisfy a debt of the deceased. If this new couple were to have children, the firstborn son would be considered the son of the deceased husband, therefore carrying on the family name.

Throughout the book of Ruth we see how God blessed and provided for Ruth and Naomi. God cared for their immediate and future needs by giving them Boaz as a loving and generous kinsman-redeemer. Just as God took care of Ruth, He also has taken care of us. The union of Boaz and Ruth is a symbol that reminds us of how Christ came to redeem—buy back—both Jew and Gentile to restore us to a relationship with God. Jesus is our kinsman-Redeemer.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

Have you ever talked with a newly engaged woman? What's one of the first stories she shares? It's the story of the proposal. This story naturally leads into the reason she fell in love with her fiancé and accepted his proposal. Each telling of this life-changing moment brings more and more anticipation of the day she will be married. A bride never tires of sharing her love story with anyone who will listen.

As followers of Christ, we have much in common with this new bride. We have been redeemed! Jesus Christ is our kinsman-Redeemer. He has blessed us by buying us back from the debt we owed. In its place He has given us a life that will continue even as we reach the end of our years on this earth. He has delivered us and invited us into a relationship that is likened to marriage. Our kinsman-Redeemer has asked us to marry Him. We are the bride of Christ! We are His church!

Pause this week and ask God to provide you with opportunities to share your story. He may provide a conversation with someone, or perhaps you'll be asked to share the story through an action of response to the work of His Spirit in your life.

Small Group

SECTION

EXPLORE:: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Sift and Sort

Ruth was invited to pick up the leftover grain from Boaz's fields. God provided a way to take care of her and Naomi. This activity will give children a glimpse into traditional harvesting techniques.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Mixing bowls (2, large)
- Flour or cornmeal 
- Coins (20)
- Rice (½ c., uncooked)
- Bowls (4, small)
- Paper towels

PREPARE AHEAD

Place enough flour or cornmeal in each large mixing bowl to fill it halfway to the top. Drop 10 coins in each bowl. Add one-fourth cup of uncooked rice into the same large bowls. Mix the contents.

SET UP

Place the bowls on the table.

RELATE

Welcome children, and invite them to explore the various items in the bowls with their hands. **What do you feel? What do you see? What are you finding in the bowls?** Encourage the children to carefully sift through the flour/cornmeal to extract the rice and the coins. Once they've removed the items from the flour, they can then place them into the small bowls on the table. **How long would it take you to find 100 coins this way? How long would it take you to pull out all the rice pieces? Would this be work you'd want to do every day? Why or why not? This gives you a little bit of an idea what gleaning, or harvesting, was like in Bible times, although they had better ways to do it. What do you think it would be like to have to pick out your food so carefully like this?**

Large Group

SECTION

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

God Blesses

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I Can Sing" and "Sincerely Yours," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

- [Mail Time intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time envelope](#)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

Luke 1:68

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

redeemed: bought back. Jesus paid the price of our sin so we can have eternal life.

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Praise: Hold hands up in the air and wiggle all fingers.

be to the Lord: Use right hand to make an *L* with index finger and thumb at left shoulder. Cross over front of body and end on right hip.

the God of Israel: Extend right hand in front of body with palm facing to side. Bring hand to rest fingertips just below chin.

because he has come to his people: Hold out both arms at sides of body and pull inward to hug chest.

and redeemed them: Place palms together in prayer motion.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- **What'sIt: Grain** (See optional image in Resources.)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What'sIt: Grain

During a time of famine and personal loss, God provided for Naomi and Ruth. He gave them a new home and provided food by allowing them to collect grain in the fields of their relative, Boaz. The grain helps us to remember that God cares for our needs and blesses us.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* intro clip and image. Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What'sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* sound effect. Have him whisper the identity of the What'sIt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'sIt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

(Volunteer's name), **what do you think grain is doing in the Wardrobe of Wonder?** Allow volunteer to give you some suggestions. If they're having difficulty, invite all the children to give suggestions. **How do we use grain? For food, that's right. Who eats food made from grain?** Allow children to share some ideas. Possible answers: horses, cows, sheep, and people. **We can make bread, cereal, pizza crust, crackers—all kinds of delicious things from grain!** I

wonder how the What'sIt will show up in today's part of The Big God Story? Friends, what do you think? Let's find out!

The Big God Story

Ruth 1—4

God Blesses

Storytelling Technique: Call and Response

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'sIt: Grain \(see optional image in Resources\)](#)
- [Harvesting image \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

Hello, friends! Before we begin The Big God Story, let's quiet our voices as we close our eyes and ask God to be the one to teach us. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

The last time we were together for The Big God Story, we heard God is merciful. Today we're going to hear more about how God shows His goodness as He takes care of His people. He blesses us by being with us all the time. When God blesses us, it means He gives us good things.

This part of The Big God Story begins during a time when the people of Israel were going through a famine. What is a famine? Pause for responses. A famine happens when there isn't enough food and water. During many famines, crops can't grow, so people can't earn money to provide for their families. During this famine in Israel, many families decided to leave and try to find a new home where they would have enough food and water. One of these families who left had a father named Elimelech, a mother, Naomi, and two sons. This family found a new home and settled in a land called Moab.

Years passed, and the two sons grew up and married. But then the father, Elimelech, died. A while later the sons died too! That left the mother, Naomi, with her sons' wives—Orpah and Ruth. The three women loved their husbands and were sad to be without them. Even worse, without their husbands to take care of them, they had no money for food. What would they do? Pause for children to give suggestions. Those are all good ideas. Let's jump back into God's story and see what they decided. Naomi said, "Go back to your mothers' homes. May the Lord show kindness to you, as you have shown to me and my family." The girls cried and cried. Can you show me your saddest face? Interact with children. Those are some pretty sad faces. Orpah and Ruth loved Naomi and didn't want to be without her, but she insisted. Orpah returned to her parents' home, but Ruth refused to leave. She held on to Naomi and said, "Don't make me leave you behind! Where you go I will go. Your God will be my God!" Was Naomi alone? Pause for responses. No, she wasn't. God blessed her. He provided someone to love her and stay with her so she wouldn't be alone again. Was God taking care of Naomi? Yes, He was! God is so good. Lead children in shouting, "... all the time!"

God had ended the famine in Bethlehem, so the two women left Moab to travel back to Naomi's hometown. It was harvest time when they arrived. What does *harvest* mean? Pause for responses. If I was growing a vineyard full of grapes and they were all bright purple and juicy, what would I do? That's right. I would pick them. When any food you grow is ready to eat, it's time to pick and gather it. *Tech: Cue Harvesting image.* That's called harvesting—picking and gathering what has grown. God had taken care of the needs of His people! He is so

good! Children shout, "... all the time"!

One day Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor" (Ruth 2:2). **Wait a minute! Where did we find grain earlier today?** Pause for responses. **Where?** Children will shout out the answer again. **In the Wardrobe of Wonder, that's right! That was the clue to The Big God Story. The grain was one way God took care of Ruth and Naomi! Ruth went out to a field and gathered any grain that was dropped behind the men as they were harvesting. Just then a man named Boaz greeted the harvesters in his field and said (cup hands around mouth), "The Lord be with you!" "The Lord bless you!" they called back. Let's try that together. When I say, "The Lord be with you!" you answer by saying, "The Lord bless you!" Are you ready? Let's try it.** Lead the children in a couple rounds of call-and-response blessings to one another.

When Boaz looked out into his field and saw Ruth gathering grain behind the other harvesters, he asked, "Who is that young woman?" The men answered, "She's the woman who came back to Bethlehem with Naomi. She asked if she could gather the leftover grain. She's been working in the field all day long!" When Boaz heard this, he told Ruth not to go to any other fields; he told her to stay close to the other servant girls. Boaz made sure that Ruth was safe in the field and had plenty of grain to gather and take home for her and Naomi. God was blessing Ruth and Naomi by taking care of their needs! He is so good! Children shout, "... all the time"!

It wasn't long until Boaz fell in love with Ruth and asked her to marry him. What do you think she said? Children answer. **She said yes! After they were married, they had a baby boy and named him Obed. God blessed His people. He gave Ruth a way to gather food and earn money. God gave Ruth a husband, Boaz a wife, and Naomi a family to love and care for her.**

God didn't just take care of this one family when Ruth and Boaz got married. He took care of all of us too. When Ruth and Boaz's son grew up, he had kids. When his kids grew up, they too had kids. It kept going until someone very special to us was born. Do you know who that is? He was born in Bethlehem and we celebrate His birthday on Christmas. Jesus, that's right! Jesus was a part of Ruth and Boaz's family. **And, because of Jesus, we get to be with God forever and ever! God is so good! Children shout, "... all the time!" God blesses us!**

RESPOND::: 20 min.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

Today in The Big God Story we heard about the ways God blessed Naomi and Ruth in a time when many sad things were happening in their lives. God provided a home and food for them when they didn't have a place to go or anything to eat. He gave Ruth a husband and Naomi a family to love. Just as God took care of them, He also takes care of us and blesses us.

I wonder ... How did Ruth feel when she moved to a new land with new people?

I wonder ... Did Ruth know God was taking care of her?

I wonder ... How can I know God is taking care of me?
I wonder ... How can I tell others that God will take care of them?

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)

RELATE

Take a moment before your children leave to send them out with a special blessing. Gather your small group in a circle and have them join hands. **Today we came together to offer words of care and even food to those in need. God blesses us and takes care of us! His Word says, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”** (Psalm 133:1). **Look for ways to show others God’s love and share His big story. And now before you head out into your week:**

Children, may you know that you are blessed by God. May you go out and be a blessing to others this week!

Send home Remember Verse cards and the HomeFront Weekly with your kids.