

Naomi and Ruth

Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference

Ruth 1:1-22

Lesson Focus

Following in faith makes foreigners family.

Bible Memory Verse

"Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids will play a game and think about what it means to follow blindly.	Activity Pages, Coloring Pages	Blindfold (optional)
Circle Time Kids will be introduced to Ruth and Naomi's story.	Spark Song CD	Music source
Opening Prayer Kids will pray about following good things.	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Naomi and Ruth Kids will hear the story of Ruth and Naomi's circumstances and of how Ruth committed to staying with her mother-in-law. They will also learn a Bible Memory Verse.	Spark NRSV Bibles, Spark Story Bibles	None
Where Did You Go, Naomi? Kids will help Ruth follow Naomi by first finding her!	Leaflets	Pencils

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<p>Naomi and Ruth Thaumatrope Kids will create a thaumatrope showing how quickly life can change.</p>	Leaflets	Scissors, colored pencils, clear tape, pencils or small wooden dowels (1 per kid)
<p>The Book of Ruth Says . . . Kids will play a variation of “Simon Says” based on true or false statements from Ruth and Naomi’s story.</p>	None	None

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<p>Closing Conversation Kids will recap the lesson, recall the Bible Memory Verse, and look at the “Faith on the Go” leaflet options.</p>	Leaflets	None
<p>Closing Prayer Kids will pray to follow in the path of these faithful women.</p>	Family Pages	None

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and Coloring Page, and set them out for kids to try.

As kids arrive, clear a safe space and start a game of "Here I Am." One kid will be "It" and can shut eyes or be blindfolded. "It" will ask, "Where are you?" and the rest of the group will respond, "Here I am!" Specify that no running is allowed for safety. "It" will try to tag other classmates by repeating the question and listening for their voices. Act as a bumper to make sure "It" doesn't bump into anything. Once "It" is tagged, another person takes her or his place.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages
Coloring Pages

Supplies

Blindfold (optional)

Circle Time

Invite kids to sit in a circle. **For those of you who got to be "It" during the "Here I Am" game, what did it feel like to follow voices blindly?** Accept all answers. **Is anything in life like this?** Listen to kids' ideas. **Yes, often in life we have to do what we are told to do without knowing why. Or sometimes we move to a new place or have a new experience without knowing what will happen. That can feel like following blindly. It can be scary, exciting, or anything in between!**

Today we're going to hear a touching story about two people who loved each other very much. Though they weren't from the same place, didn't practice the same religion, and weren't even blood relatives, one decided to follow the other. Together they faced the future, through good times and bad.

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "Books of the Bible: Old Testament" (tracks 2 and 4 on Spark Song CD)

Song 2: "You've Got a Friend in Me" from the Toy Story movie soundtrack

Spark Resources

Spark Song CD

Supplies

Music source

Opening Prayer

For our opening prayer, I'm going to ask you to snap your fingers as quietly as you can every time I pause. If you haven't mastered snapping yet, just rub your thumb against a finger. Pause after each line of text and snap along with the kids.

**Dear God,
We like to follow
The smell of good food,
Our favorite friends,
The ice-cream truck,
Interesting bugs,
And funny bumper stickers.
Help us know how to follow you,
How to follow in faith.
Amen.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Naomi and Ruth

Invite kids with Spark NRSV Bibles to each find and sit with a buddy with a Spark Story Bible.

I'd like you to get comfy while I read you the first chapter of the book of Ruth from the Old Testament in the Bible. If shutting your eyes helps you see the story, you are welcome to do that. If anyone wants to follow along in the Spark NRSV Bible, we start on page 290. Read Ruth 1:1-22 aloud to the kids.

What did you hear that happened in that story? Invite kids to repeat what they remember.

Now please turn to your buddy and read together the Spark Story Bible version of the Naomi and Ruth story. Buddies read the story quietly together. If this doesn't work logistically, ask some older buddies to take turns reading this story aloud for the group. **Can you find Squiggles? What emotion do you see on his face?**

Discuss the following questions:

If you were Ruth, what do you think you would have done—stayed with Naomi or gone home? Listen to responses. **Raise your hand if you've been to another country.** Count hands. **How did it feel (or how might it feel) to be a foreigner, someone who wasn't from there?** Discuss how it might have felt to Naomi moving to Moab, and to Ruth, moving to Judah, especially since the Moabites had been enemies of the Israelites (the citizens of Judah). **Why do you think Ruth stayed with Naomi? How do you think this story will turn out?**

Spark Resources

Spark NRSV Bibles
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

None

Bible Memory Verse

"Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

The Bible Memory Verse is found on page 5 of the Spark NRSV Bible. Read it together, then see if you can say it taking turns, like a litany:

Older Buddy:
**Where you go,
where you lodge,
your people
and your God**

Younger Buddy:
**I will go;
I will lodge;
shall be my people,
my God.**

Younger buddies can help older buddies put a sticker by the verse in the Spark NRSV Bible.

Where Did You Go, Naomi?

Have you ever gone to the store with an adult, stopped to look at something, and before you knew it, found that your adult had disappeared? It's hard to follow someone when you can't find them. The same thing must have happened to Ruth; she can't find Naomi in the crowd of people! Look at Naomi's image in the picture frame and see if you can locate her on the leaflet.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Invite kids to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Naomi and Ruth Thaumatrope

Tell me what you think will happen in your future. Encourage kids to be honest, and listen without judgment. **Most of us imagine and hope for good things, but the truth is, most people have challenging things that happen in their lives too. We can't always change the circumstances of our lives, but we can decide how we will handle them when they happen.**

We're going to make an interesting thing with an interesting name: a thaumatrope [thaw-muh-trope]. It's a very old type of toy that can trick your eyes in a fun way!

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Scissors, colored pencils,
clear tape, pencils or small
wooden dowels (1 per kid)

Directions for creating a thaumatrope:

1. Keep buddies paired up so older buddies can assist younger buddies as needed.
2. Using colored pencils, fill in the outlines of Naomi, Elimelech, Mahlon, Ruth, Chilion, and Orpah.
3. Cut along the dashed lines.
4. Fold the picture in half along the line provided.
5. Tape a pencil or wooden dowel to the inside of the folded image in the center.
6. Fold the image over the pencil or wooden dowel. Tape all loose edges together.
7. Rotate the pencil swiftly between closed hands so the two images appear to become one image.

After kids have played with the thaumatrope, invite them to share what they're seeing. **Life can change quickly, just like what happens when you spin the thaumatrope. How has your life changed in the last year? Even when our lives change, God promises to always be with us.**

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special marking next to the item they find most interesting.

The Book of Ruth Says . . .

You've all played Simon Says, right? If someone is not familiar with Simon Says, invite an older kid to explain and lead a quick round of the game.

Spark Resources
None

Today, we're going to play a new game called "The Book of Ruth Says . . ." I'm going to say a line, and if you think it is indeed from the Book of Ruth, then you should act it out however you think that might look. But if you think it wasn't in the book of Ruth, then you should freeze!

Supplies
None

For example, I might say, "Ruth and Naomi got on their horses and left." If you remember that line being in the Bible story, you should pretend to get on a horse and ride away! If you don't think that was in the story, stand silently without moving. Get it wrong and take a seat. Let's see who can be the last one standing!

Invite kids to stand up and spread out.

Say the following lines for each turn. Each is followed by "yes" or "no" below to indicate whether it came from the book of Ruth.

Naomi's family left Bethlehem because of a flood. (no)

Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died on a spaceship. (no)

Naomi's sons were named Mahlon and Chilion; they died too. (yes)

Naomi told her daughters-in-law to return to their homes. (yes)

When Orpah went home, Ruth got mad. (no)

When the three women said goodbye, everyone cried. (yes)

Ruth was tricked into staying with Naomi. (no)

It's easy to move to a country full of people who hate your people. (no)

Ruth promised to stay with Naomi forever. (yes)

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Naomi and Ruth were in a really difficult situation. They were widows, which means their husbands had died. The Bible includes many stories about the importance of caring for widows. Naomi wanted the best for her daughters-in-law and told them to return home. Show me with your face how you think Naomi felt when Ruth decided to stay. Kids might show faces that are happy, concerned, confused, surprised, and so on. **Ruth and Naomi were strong. These two faithful women would figure out the future together.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Can anyone remember the Bible Memory Verse? Let's say it all together with the older buddies leading and the younger buddies responding:

Older Buddy:

**Where you go,
where you lodge,
your people
and your God**

Younger Buddy:

**I will go;
I will lodge;
shall be my people,
my God.**

Take a peek at the "Faith on the Go" options in your leaflet. Which ones would you like to do with your family?

Closing Prayer

Distribute Family Pages to kids and point out the Family Conversations to talk about at home.

Spark Resources
Family Pages

For our closing prayer, I will say something and I'd like you to respond, "I will follow."

Supplies
None

Let us pray.

God, sometimes it seems like it would be easier to stay home than go to church. But when you call . . . I will follow.

We learned today about two brave women who shared faith in you. When you call us in faith . . . I will follow.

It won't always be easy, but it will always be worth it; and so . . . I will follow.

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home their leaflets and Family Pages.