



elev8

life on another level

Student Workbook

YEAR 2

God's People
Ruth
– A Love that Endures

Bible Readings
Ruth 1-4



Learning Outcomes

At the end of this week you will be able to:

- Locate the theme of enduring love in the Bible.
- Express the theme or story in your own way.
- Apply your learning from the story to your own family and community.

Notes from Bible Reading

Scripture A word or phrase that stood out to me:

Observation What is happening in this Bible reading?

Application Something that I learned about who I am or how I should live:

Prayer What I would like to say to God, ask of God, or what I think God is saying to me:

Key Question What does Ruth's story tell us about love?

Engage

Go around the group and share one thing for each heading that has happened since you last met:

- Plus – What has been good or enjoyable?
- Minus – What has been difficult or painful?
- Interesting – What has been unusual or thought provoking?

Describe to the group the most valuable thing you have.

What makes it precious? What do you enjoy about it? How does it make you feel when you share with others this thing you value?

Five Fast Facts about Ruth:

1. The story takes place during the time of the judges, prior to Israel's establishment of a kingdom.
2. Ruth was a foreigner, a Moabite, which is significant in this story because Israel was deeply committed to the expansion of its own people, rather than inter-cultural relations. The early Israel nation generally distrusted foreigners because they feared the influence of other gods and religious practises infiltrating their communities.
3. Naomi's name in Hebrew means "pleasant". The new name that she takes on, after the death of her husband and sons is Mara, which in Hebrew means "bitter".
4. Boaz was a relative of Naomi, otherwise known as the word kinsmen in the story. He was very wealthy because he owned a field, had workers, and other slaves. This is in contrast to Ruth, who is a foreigner, a widow, and a woman, which in ancient times meant that Ruth was incredibly poor and vulnerable.
5. Boaz, through the birth of his son Obed, becomes an ancestor of King David, who in turn, is an ancestor of Jesus. In Israel's history the genealogy, or family tree, was of vital importance to show the path and purity of a family line throughout the generations.

Explore – Locate

- *What stood out to you in the Bible readings this week?*
- *What did you find meaningful or significant?*
- *Is there anything that you didn't understand or found confusing?*
- *Any questions or comments you may have?*

Read together: Ruth 1:1-22

In our culture today, the word love is used with such frequency; we sometimes fail to grasp its significance in our relationships. We use love to describe our feelings towards our favourite shoes, our boyfriend, food we enjoy, and God. Such a diverse use of the word can dilute its significance.

The story of Ruth, in many ways, is a story of love, devotion, and commitment. Love, in the deep sense of the word inasmuch as Ruth's love for her mother-in-law was truly costly and significant.

In our story, Ruth's husband dies and her mother-in-law, Naomi, decides to return to her homeland. Ruth insists that she will follow Naomi home, which means leaving behind the safety of her network of family, friends, and religion. Ruth is deeply devoted to Naomi, and this devotion can only be described as an enduring love.

(continued...)

Explore – Locate *(...continued)*

In a way, the story of Ruth's love for Naomi could be analogous to our own connection and relationship with God. We are foreigners to God in many ways, something other than what God is, yet God continues to pursue us, embrace us, and seek to love us as unique human beings created in the divine image.

God's love for us is so powerful that God would leave his "land", Heaven, to journey to our "homeland", Earth in the person Jesus, out of a deep love for humanity and a desire for connection.

Explore – Express

Get into smaller groups and choose one of the short stories found in Ruth to act out. Be creative! Retell the story in such a way that people know who the key characters are, what is going on, and the important themes that you've discovered.

Some ideas you may want to use could be:

- Ruth and Naomi leaving Moab to go back to Judah
- Ruth working for Boaz in the fields
- Boaz meeting with the elders at the town gate
- Naomi celebrating the birth of Ruth's son, Obed

Act out your scene to the group, and then reflect upon the ideas you express dramatically.

Explore – Integrate

Brainstorm around the word love. What does it mean to love? How do we love? Who do we love? What do we love?

How do you think Ruth would've felt as she left behind her family?

Can you think of a situation that may require you to leave your family?

What might that feel like?

Have you ever thought about God's love for us in the way described above? How do you think God feels about people if God is willing to leave behind his home to meet with us?

Share with the group some of your important relationships.

How do you demonstrate love to them?

Does that love cost you something? In what ways?

Extend

Discuss with your group the challenges you are tackling. Use the time to ask for any help you might need.

Questions that may be helpful include:

- What challenges are you working on at the moment?
- Do you need any support or assistance?
- Are there any challenges that you have completed that we need to recognise and celebrate?
- Are there any new challenges that you want to work on?

Encourage

Tell another student in your group something you value or appreciate about them.

Share one thing you would like to pray for and pray for one another.

Finish with this prayer;

Loving God,

Assist us to see your amazing love within our world. There are so many things of beauty, amazement, and wonder that we encounter everyday.

Help us to observe these things daily; keep our eyes fixed upon your love for us, and all of humanity.

We pray for the fruit of your spirit, God. We pray for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. May we exhibit these fruit each day.

Amen