

Lower Elementary

Ruth

Checklist

- ☐ paper plates
- ☐ dry spaghetti

Introduction:

Who are the people in your family?

What are some things they do for you? (feed you, buy you clothes, take you places, give you a home to live in)

Are these things important? Why?

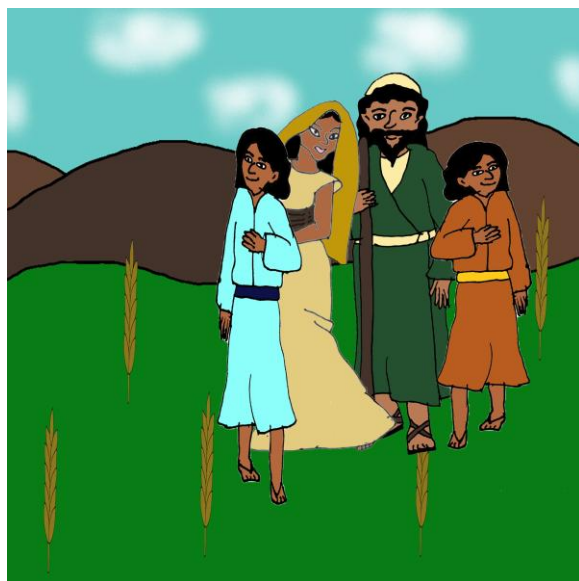
What are some things you do at home?

Are there ways you can help the people in your family?

What can you do to make their jobs easier?

It is important to show kindness to other people, just as they show kindness to us.

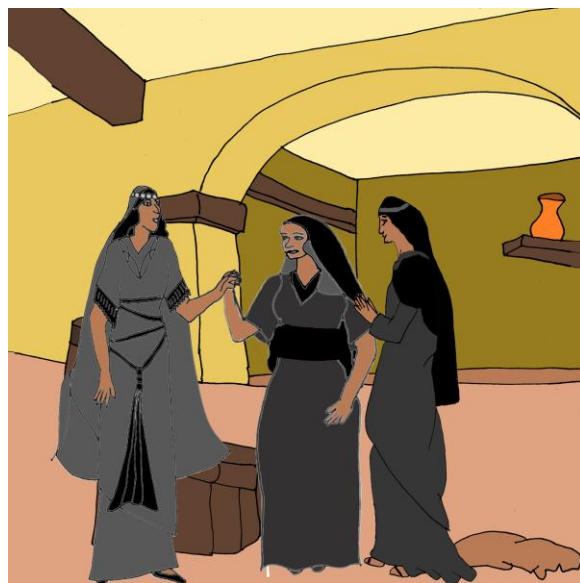
In the days of the judges, there was an Israelite family from the town of Ephrath, also known as Bethlehem. Elimelech and his wife Naomi had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They farmed their land year after year, until one year the crops just wouldn't grow. There wouldn't be enough food to feed their family. So, they immigrated to the neighboring country of Moab. The Moabites and the Israelites had not always gotten along, but when times are difficult, people must make difficult choices.



In Moab they were able to grow enough food, but their hard times were hardly over. Elimelech died, leaving his wife a widow to raise their two sons. The boys grew up and married two Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.



But after ten years in Moab, Naomi's sons also died, leaving Orpah and Ruth to be widows, too. Now Naomi felt all alone in the world. She had no family left in Moab. But back in Israel, the crops were growing well again. Naomi heard about this and decided it was time to move back home.



She hugged her two daughters-in-law goodbye and wished them well. But Ruth told Naomi she would not leave her. “Why?” asked Naomi, sarcastically. “So, I can have another son and when he grows up you will marry him?” But Naomi meant more to Ruth than just being her mother-in-law. Naomi was like a mother to her, and Naomi was determined to take care of her. “Look,” Naomi continued, “your sister-in-law is going to stay with her people and worship the way they do. This is your home, isn’t it?” “No,” Ruth told her. “My home is with you. I want to live where you live and worship God as you do.”



The two women settled in Bethlehem. When Naomi's relatives saw her again, they were excited, but she told them she didn't want to be known as Naomi anymore. "Call me Mara," she insisted, because the Hebrew word for bitter represented how she felt about her life.



Under God's laws, Israelite farmers would not take every bit of grain from the fields. Whatever they couldn't gather in big scoops had to be left for poor people and immigrants to come and get. God made this law so that no one would ever go hungry.



Naomi, now calling herself Mara, told Ruth to go to the field of her distant relative Boaz, and collect the leftover grain from his field.



Every day Boaz would walk through his fields to see how the harvest was going. “The Lord bless you!” he would call out to everyone, and they would reply back with, “And may the Lord bless you!” He was a fair and honest employer and his workers loved him.



“Who is that?” Boaz asked one day, when he was walking through the field and saw Naomi collecting the leftover grain.

“That’s Naomi’s daughter-in-law, Ruth,” they told him. “She has been working nonstop to take care of her mother-in-law...but she’s a Moabite, you know.”



Boaz was impressed by how devoted Ruth was to Naomi. He didn't care that she was a foreigner whose people had fought the Israelites before. He just saw her for what she was—a kind and selfless person.

Boaz walked up to Ruth in the field.

“You must have to visit many different fields to collect enough leftover grain for yourself and your mother-in-law. Come work for me instead. I will tell everyone they must treat you equally. Ruth was surprised by this.

“You know I'm an immigrant. Why are you being so kind to me?”

“You did a good thing coming to take care of Naomi,” Boaz replied. “You're very brave to come to a new country. I heard how you have chosen to follow God and pray that He will bless and protect you.”



Naomi began working in Boaz' field. Every day he would come out to say, "The Lord bless you!" she would call back to him, "And may the Lord bless you!"

Only going to one field was easier for Ruth, and she had more time to spend with Naomi. Because Boaz was such a kind man, Naomi told Ruth she should marry him.



Ruth proposed (which back then meant uncovering his feet while he slept on a pile of grain, instead of getting down on one knee) and he was flattered to be her choice. Because of how land was divided to be even between families back then, he first had to check with some other relatives (which back then meant taking off a sandal and shaking the sand out of it, not shaking hands). The other relatives agreed, and Ruth and Boaz were married.



Soon after they were married, the Lord blessed Ruth with a son, Obed. Naomi was filled with joy. “After I lost my husband and sons,” she said, “I didn’t think I would ever be happy again. But now, I have a daughter, a son-in-law, and a grandson. My life went from being so empty, to being so full.”

All of Naomi’s friends in the neighborhood called Obed, “Naomi’s Boy,” because she took care of him like he was her own son. “You have been so blessed by God,” they told her. “You have a beautiful grandson, and a daughter-in-law who loves you more than seven sons all put together!” When Obed grew up, he had a son named Jesse. Jesse would have eight sons...and the youngest, David, took care of their sheep.



Closing Discussion:



Naomi and her family left Israel because there was no food and moved to Moab. How would you feel moving to another country?

When Naomi was all alone, what did Ruth do to be a good friend to her? (come back to Israel with her?)

When we are kind to others, they see God through us. Do you think Ruth could see God through Naomi? How did this help Ruth choose to worship God?

God wants us to take care of our families and people who are older and need help. What can we do to help them?

Did Boaz care that Ruth wasn't from Israel? (no) Did he treat her as well as everyone else?

Does God love some people more than others? (no) Who should we show kindness to, the people who are like us, or everyone? (everyone)

Craft:

Paper plate and spaghetti wheat basket

Closing Activity:

Put children into groups of two. One child will stand arms length from the wall, and use their arms to lean forward so that their forehead is touching the wall. Use a pillow to cushion their heads.

Then, have them fold their arms and straighten their legs so that only their forehead is holding them up.

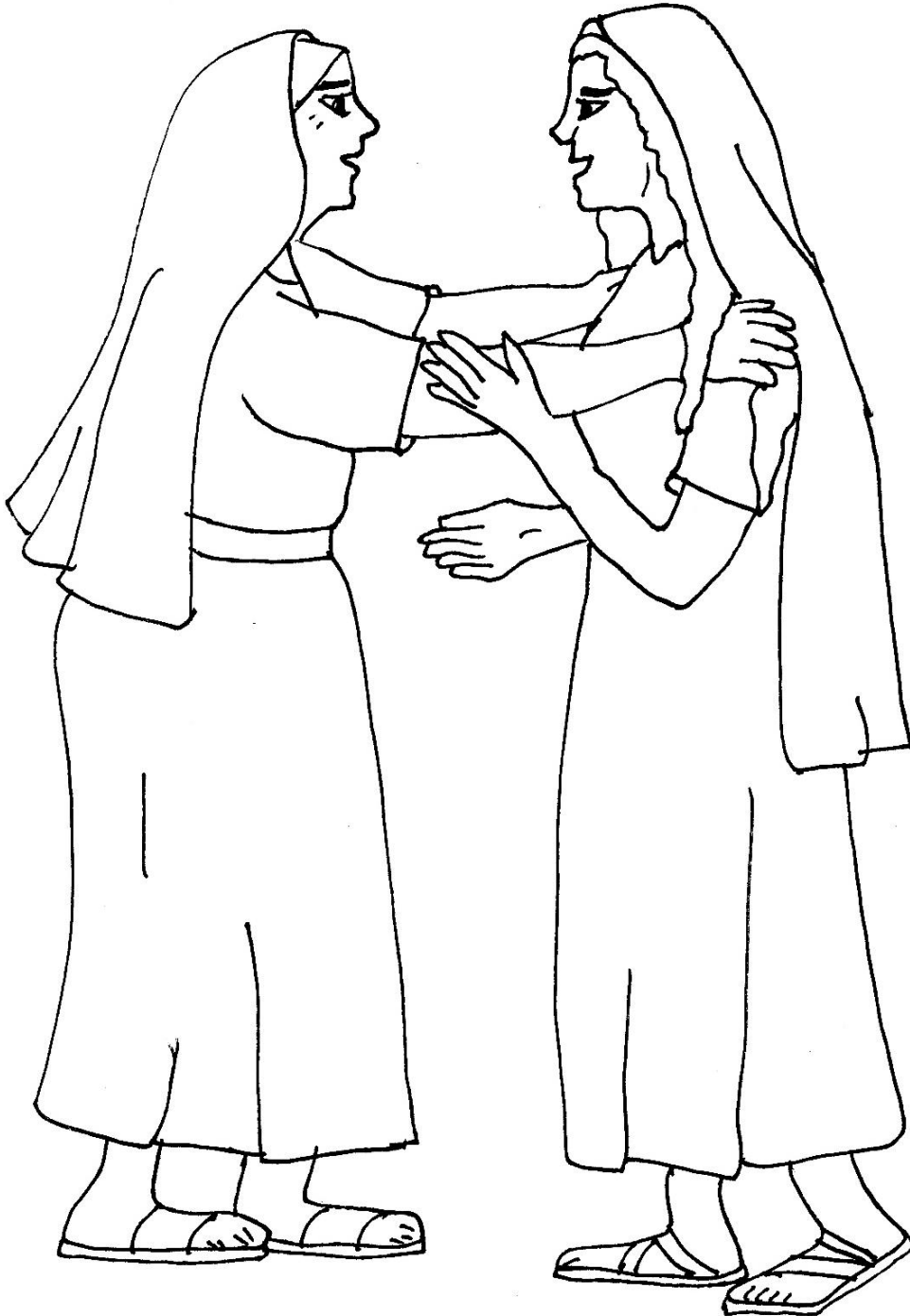
They must keep their bodies completely straight. Tell them to move their head away from the wall so they are standing up normally.

They won't be able to do it. Next, have their partners put their hands on their shoulders and gently, and slowly, help them to stand up straight, while not moving their arms or legs.

Having a friend to help us out can make all the difference between a task being somewhat difficult, and completely impossible.

How can we look for people who need help with the impossible?

Name: _____



Ruth answered, “Please don’t tell me to leave you and return home! I will go where you go, I will live where you live; your people will be my people, your God will be my God. ~ Ruth 1:16

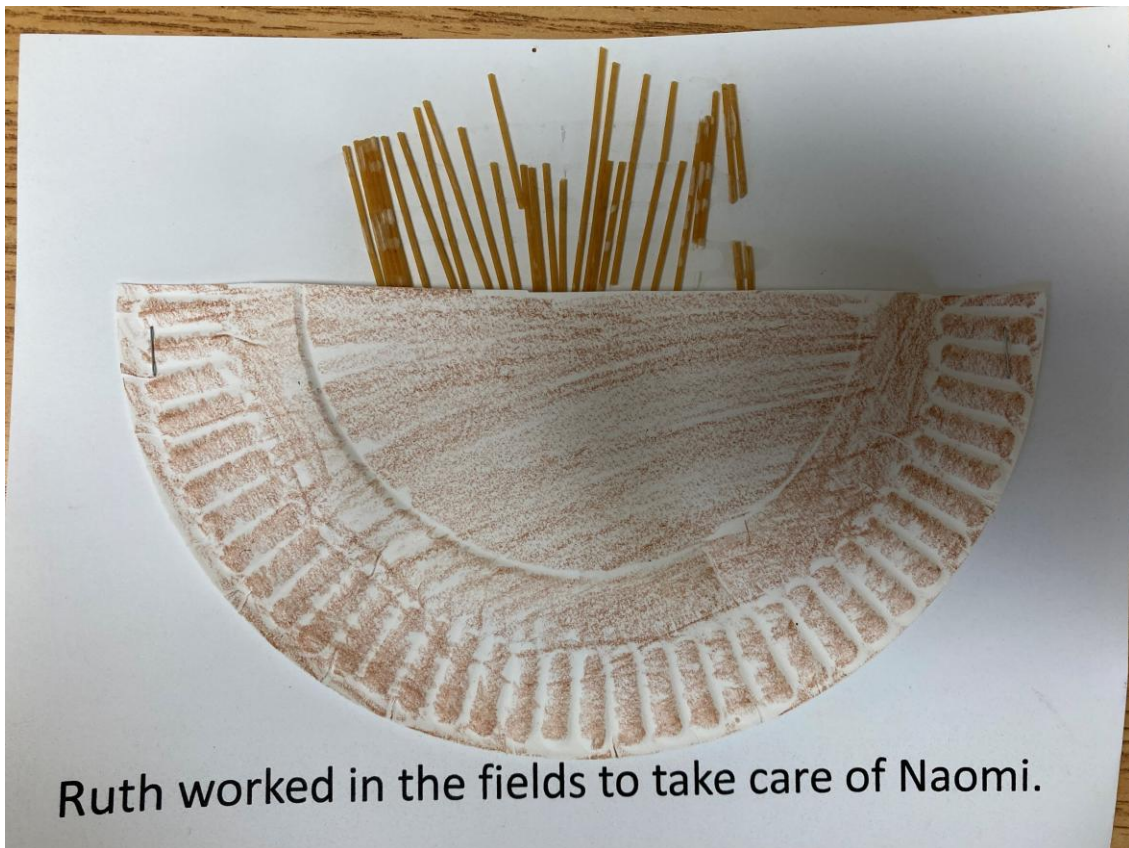
Materials: paper plates, cardstock, dry pasta

Teacher cuts 1/3 of paper plate off

Children color paper plates to look like baskets

Children glue paper plates to cardstock

Children glue pasta "grain" to top of plate



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