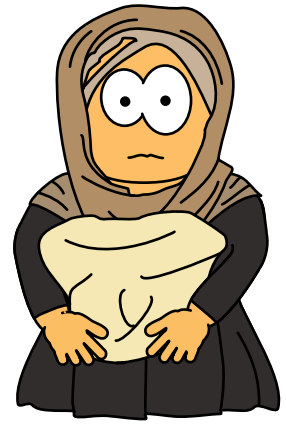


Bible Heroes

Naomi

Teachers Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

Naomi's life seems like it couldn't get any more unfortunate, she is desolate, a widow with nothing to rely on but the generosity of others. With 2 girls, probably still teenagers, to care for there seems little hope, but God hasn't abandoned her, no matter what she thinks. Being a widow is a simple concept but a deep one, widows are constantly referenced throughout scripture, and Ruth's loyalty to Naomi is astounding. Oprah did the sensible thing, both for Naomi and for herself, be careful not to paint her in a bad light.

Main Passage : Ruth 1

Who do you rely on? Who supports you? Who buys you food, and clothes, and gives you a place to live?

Today's hero was supported by her husband, his name was Elimelek and her name was Naomi. Naomi had 2 sons and they were a happy family until a famine came and there wasn't enough food for all the people. Elimelek came home one day and told Naomi they were leaving. They would travel to Moab where there was food.

So Naomi, Elimelek and the 2 boys travelled to their new home, they may have been foreigners but they liked their new home. The 2 boys found 2 girls from Moab and decided to marry them. When Elimelek died everybody was very sad but Naomi knew her sons would support them and so she stayed in Moab. Then something terrible happened, both of Naomi's sons died.

What would Naomi do? She didn't have anyone to support her anymore. Naomi even thought God had abandoned her.

Naomi decided to go back home. At home she had aunts and uncles and cousins, perhaps they would help her? If they couldn't help them then there were Jewish laws about supporting widows (women whose husbands had died) and though it would be really difficult she would survive. But what about her son's wives, what should Naomi do about them?

When Naomi lived people would often get married when they were very young, both of the girls were still young and their parents lived in Moab. If Naomi took the girls with her then they would be far from home, they would lose their family, their religion, their friends. If Naomi took the girls with her they would be 3 widows, 3 mouths to feed, 3 sets of hands to beg.

Once the house was packed up Naomi turned to the girls to tell them the news.

"Go home to your mothers house, go home and marry again" Naomi said "your parents will look after you, they will support you"

"No" cried the girls "No, we will stay with you, we will travel with you"

"Go back home" replied Naomi, "I am too old for another husband, too old for more children, go back to your parents, I have nothing I can offer you.

So one of the girls, her name was Orpah, picked up her belongings, kissed Naomi on the cheek and with tears in her eyes set off for her parents house. But the other girl, her name was Ruth, wouldn't go. Naomi begged her to leave like Orpah but Ruth clung to her dress and **would - not - let - go.**

Then Ruth said something amazing. She told Naomi that nothing would make her leave, that she would support Naomi. She would travel where Naomi travelled, Naomi's home would be her home, Naomi's people would be her people, Naomi's religion would be her religion, even if Naomi died Ruth would stay and one day be buried in the same place. Nothing, not even death would separate her from Naomi.

Finally Naomi realised she was not alone, she was supported by Ruth. God had not abandoned her. Ruth would get nothing, she would have to work hard, own little, have no husband and no children. Even though Ruth didn't know Naomi's God she showed his love, and one day God would bless her, but that's another story. God did not abandon Naomi, he does not abandon anyone, ever!

Today's hero is Naomi because she shows us the gift of Support