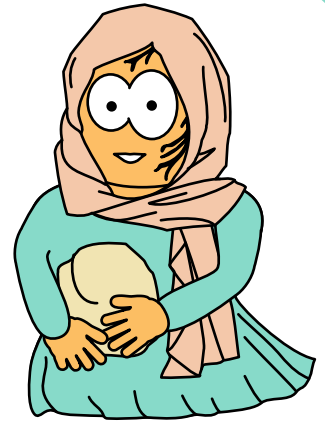


# Bible Heroes

Ruth

Teachers  
Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

Chapter 2 is the perfect place to meet Ruth and assess her character. Her grand gesture in chapter one is now a reality and she's dirt poor. Naomi's relatives may have helped find them somewhere to stay, but none have taken the two widows into their household to provide for them. Now harvest has come and provision must be gathered for winter. Gleaning is back breaking, it's humbling, it's not always fruitful, and a lone woman is very vulnerable in a field of hired men. As the text suggests Ruth is childless, Naomi was probably only in her forties, but Ruth is determined and goes alone to glean. There in her lowest moment, in her poverty and obedience, God provides, and provides in abundance.

Main Passage : Ruth 2

Additional passages : Ruth 1, Leviticus 19:9-10

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Ruth gave Naomi a kiss and picked up the big basket. Outside the house everything still looked strange. This was not Ruth's land, or her people, but when her husband died she had followed her mother in Law, Naomi, back to where her husband was born, back to Bethlehem.

Everywhere Ruth went people stared at her. They avoided her in the street and whispered about her as she passed "She's a Moabite" some would say, "she followed Naomi" others would whisper, "she should have stayed with her own people." was the favourite one, just loud enough for her to hear. Ruth just carried on walking, she came because she was part of Naomi's family, she would not leave Naomi alone, and now she needed to find food.

Beyond the town she could see the men in the fields. They were moving in one long line, cutting the wheat down, taking every grain they could manage. Ruth had learned from Naomi that the law said she would be allowed to glean, to pick up any leftover grain, but she also knew it was dangerous, the men were not always well behaved in the fields, far away from town. Naomi had tried to stop her but she knew there would not be enough food for winter if she did not try.

Ruth found a field with a wide margin where the men were already far away and started to scan the ground. After clearing the edges of the field she ventured in further. There, a handful of full stalks, what a great start. She placed them in her basket and looked for more. Moving forward she picked up another couple of fallen heads of barley and as she straightened she realised she was being watched. The man in charge of the line was staring at her, and coming her way, he would throw her off the field for sure. "Please let me glean", she said, before he managed to say anything. He stopped walking, sighed, turned and walked away.

Ruth didn't look up again until her back felt like a broken twig, her fingers were scratched from dry stalks and she had enough barley to bake a few loaves of bread. Then she went to a tree and rested from the heat of the sun for a few minutes. As soon as she was able she was gleaning again until she heard the man in charge walking over to her again. He wasn't alone this time. The man with him looked important, he wasn't dressed like the other men and he wasn't sweaty from working the the fields.

"She is the Moabite, Boaz, the one who came back from Moab with Naomi" the man in charge said, "she asked to glean". Boaz looked at her kindly and instead of throwing her off his field he said, "Listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the people who work for me. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled."

Ruth was shocked by such kindness, she bowed so low her face touched the ground "Why have I found such favour —me a foreigner?" Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law, how you left your homeland. May the Lord repay you for what you have done."

Not only did Boaz tell the men to protect Ruth, he also told them to deliberately drop more barley for her to collect, Boaz even shared the men's food with her. God had blessed her by sending her to Boaz's field, and by evening her basket was so full she needed to stop.

Being poor was hard for Ruth, but if she hadn't been poor she would not have needed to glean, and God would not have introduced her to Boaz. That's the end of today's story but not the end of the story for Ruth and Boaz!

**Today's hero is Ruth because she shows us the gift of Poverty**