

Bible background

Ruth 1 and 2; Leviticus 19:9-10

Aim of lesson

To teach that kindness and care of old people or poor people pleases God.

Preparation required

In preparation, read the notes for both this and the next lesson. You will need a small packet of barley, a large tray, enough paper bags or cups for the class to have one each, and a measuring jug. Make 'tube' puppets from your activity sheet for Ruth and Naomi. You will need colouring materials, scissors, tape and, if you wish to reinforce all the puppets, three cardboard tubes similar to toilet roll centres, for each scholar during this or the next lesson.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Place the tray on the table or floor in front of the class. Tell them that the tray is a farmer's field. At harvest time the farmer collects in the sheaves of grain - corn, wheat or barley. He collects a lot and puts it in his barns, but as he collects it some of the grains are missed. As you explain this, slowly sprinkle a few grains over the tray. When you have a thin layer of grains on the tray, tell them that a long time ago God made a law that the poor people could collect the grains that were missed, so that they could have something to eat, because God cares for poor people and wants us to care too.
2. Let the children have a paper bag or cup each so that they can pretend to be poor people collecting the grain that was left. You may like to measure how much each one collects and tell them if it is enough for a loaf or a pan of soup for all their family etc.
3. Using the two puppets and the rhyme, tell the story of Ruth, including the amount of details and information appropriate to your class. Help the children to understand what it would have been like to depend on the land for your food. You couldn't just go to the shops when you wanted something. When there was a famine the people would be very hungry. Compare modern famines which the children may have seen or heard about. Ruth and Naomi would have been very poor when their husbands had died. Also explain that Ruth had heard about God from Naomi, and wanted to go to a land where she could learn more about him. Have the puppet of Ruth take back one of the bags of grain that the children collected. Repeat the rhyme allowing two children to hold the puppets and encouraging them all to join in the rhyme.
4. You may like to have the class make their own puppets now or during the next lesson.

Alternative activities

1. Dress up and act out working in the fields, gleaning, threshing etc.
2. The children can draw pictures to show how they can be kind helpers at home and school/nursery. Head the paper with '[child's name] is a kind helper like Ruth because..'
3. Make a card or present for a friend/family member who needs cheering up. This could be a two part activity which is continued next week if you are short of time.

Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children what Ruth had done that pleased God. Ask if they know of any poor people. How can they be kind to them?

Prayer

Ask what the children think Naomi would have prayed that night. Would one of them like to thank God for those who provide food for them.

Verse

'The Lord gives food to the hungry.' Psalm 146:7.

Rhyme

This is Naomi who's come back home.
Her family died and she was alone.
Naomi is old - too old to work now.
So how will she live? Do you know how?
This is Ruth, who's young and kind.
She has to work hard, but she doesn't mind.
Naomi told Ruth she should go,
But Ruth wouldn't leave her and she said 'No'.
Naomi said, 'I have nothing to give,
There is nothing to eat, so how will we live?'
Ruth said, 'Don't worry, I know what to do
I'll go to the fields and get something for you.'
She went to the fields and collected some grain
Then she went back to Naomi again.
I'm glad you've learnt about Ruth because
You can be kind as she always was.