

Ruth Gleans In The Fields

Ruth 2

MEMORY VERSE

RUTH 2:12

“The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A package of plastic drinking straws, a slice of bread and a clear sandwich bag.

Popcorn (either pre-popped or popped in class), needles, and thread.

A picnic basket filled with napkins, cookies or graham crackers, cups, a bottle of juice, sliced fruit, and a large blanket to sit on.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Gleaners

What is gleaning? Make the idea more concrete with this activity. Take a package of plastic drinking straws and scatter them all over the floor. Tell your class that after you say, “Go,” the one who picks up the most straws wins a prize.

Have everyone be seated for the prize bestowing ceremony. Give the winner one slice of bread in a clear sandwich bag. Explain: It would take a long time to gather enough stalks of grain to make even one loaf of bread. Then you would have to thresh it by beating it until it came out of the husk. Do not forget you need to bake it! And if that’s not enough to make you hungry, think about doing it all over again the next day.

In God's law, there was a provision that required those who had land and crops to leave some grain for those who were poor. How can we help those who are in need today?

LESSON TIME!

Naomi had experienced severe hardships. She had left Israel with a husband and two sons and returned home widowed and poor. Though she felt bitterness and pain (1:20), Naomi had a God who loved and cared about her. Naomi and Ruth returned without any help or resources, but God would be their help. He is the helper of the helpless. **God always provides for His children.**

RUTH 2:1-3

There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.

So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

Lush fields and olive groves surrounded the town of Bethlehem. God used the abundant harvest to teach His people to care for others by instructing them to leave provision for the poor (Deuteronomy 24:19).

When the wheat and barley were ready to be harvested, reapers were hired to cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles. The corners of the fields, along with any grain that was dropped, was to be left for the poor to glean. This was God's way to provide for the poor and to prevent owners from hoarding.

Ruth wasted no time in setting out to work in the fields gleaning grain to provide for her and her mother-in-law. She was not afraid to admit her need or work hard to supply it. When she went out to the fields, she had no idea that it was God behind the scenes providing for her.

Ruth would soon learn that God is worthy of trust. He has a plan for us—a plan to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). It is God who is at work in our life because He cares for us. **God always provides for His children.**

RUTH 2:4-7

Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"

Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

"And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

Ruth had no idea what God had planned. She found herself in the field of Boaz who was from the clan of Elimelech, a close relative of Naomi's deceased husband. Ruth was not in his field by mere chance.

Boaz was a man of outstanding qualities, and he made an impact on those who worked for him. When he greeted them with the blessing, "The Lord be with you," they responded similarly. It seems faith in the Lord was an active part of their life.

Boaz took notice of the new young woman in his field among the gleaners and asked who she was. The foreman informed him that she was a Moabitess woman who had returned from Moab with Naomi and had gleaned in the field "from morning until now."

Ruth performed her task faithfully, though it was menial and probably very tiring. What is our attitude when we are given a task that we do not really want to do? Let us serve God faithfully, even when the task is difficult.

RUTH 2:8-13

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.

"Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.

"The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

Foreigners were not always warmly welcomed in Israel, but Boaz gladly welcomed Ruth. Her kindness and generosity to her mother-in-law had been witnessed by those around her. Boaz instructed Ruth to follow directly behind his reapers in order to pick up the choicest grain as it was dropped.

Actions reveal true character. Ruth displayed loyalty, kindness, and a willingness to work hard as she supported Naomi. Ruth's reputation for good character became her most valuable asset.

How is your reputation? Do people see a person who lives a godly life, showing kindness and concern for others? A good reputation is built upon godly character and kindness toward others. Let them see Jesus living in you as you walk in the Spirit. No matter what group of people or surroundings one is in, a person who consistently lives a life of faith glorifies God and makes an impact on the lives of others.

Boaz also noted that Ruth had placed her trust in God (verse 12)—just as a small chick would seek refuge under the wings of its mother hen. Boaz gave Ruth a place of honor among his servants. Ruth responded with humility. Soon God would use Boaz to carry out His plan of blessing upon Ruth's life

Popcorn Necklace

Pop some corn during class time or at home before class to make "necklaces" to eat or to hang in the trees at home for the birds (Matt. 6:26). Give each child a needle and a long piece of thread on which to string the popcorn, letting them snack while they work. Use close supervision with the needles, especially with young children.

OPTIONAL: Notice that they ate parched grain in Ruth 2:14, this could have been like popcorn or popped wheat which can be easily made from a bag of pearl barley (found in the rice and bean section of most grocery stores). Just put a little at a time in a skillet with a little oil and keep it moving over medium heat. Add salt to taste.

RUTH 2:14-16

Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.

And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

"Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

Boaz continues his kindness to Ruth, inviting her to eat the good food provided for him and his harvesters. Ruth was not left to fend for herself as gleaners usually were. Boaz saw to it that his servants would abundantly provide her, purposely allowing grain from the bundles to fall in her path. As a result, Ruth had provisions to feed Naomi and herself for many days.

Ruth must have felt totally overwhelmed with awe because of what was happening. Could you imagine what was going on in her heart as God was blessing her? Although she was living in a foreign land, poor and all alone, Ruth was in the care of a loving God who was abundantly providing for her every need. Though there was danger beyond the fields of Boaz, Ruth found refuge and protection as she worked in his fields.

RUTH 2:17-23

So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives."

Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field."

So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Ruth could have called it a day, but she continued to glean until evening. Then to finish the job she beat out the grain from the stalks. It came out to half a bushel weighing about 30 pounds. This is an unusually generous amount for one day's work.

A good question to ask ourselves at the end of the day when we are getting ready for bed, "Where have I gleaned today? What have I done or accomplished to be a blessing to others and to God?" We need to seize every day and take the opportunity to live unto the Lord that He may be glorified through our lives.

Ruth quickly returned to Naomi to share with her all that had happened. Naomi was excited and full of questions; but before Ruth could answer anything, Naomi prayed a blessing upon the man who blessed her. Ruth told her that she worked in the field of Boaz.

Although Naomi had struggled with bitterness, her faith in God was still alive; she praised God for guiding Ruth to the field of Boaz, acknowledging God's goodness to them. **God always provides for His children.** There may be times we struggle with bitterness

over our circumstances, but we must never despair—God is at work in our lives.

Ruth was learning quickly that she could trust in God. As Naomi acknowledged, it was not just by chance that Ruth ended up in the field of Boaz who happened to be a close relative, able to serve as their kinsman redeemer (a redeemer of property and persons--Deuteronomy 25:5-10) through marriage to Ruth.

Ruth was invited to remain in the fields of Boaz for the remainder of the harvest. Naturally, Naomi encouraged Ruth to accept Boaz's generosity. Ruth continued to faithfully work in the fields while living with Naomi.

Again, God was at work in Naomi and Ruth's lives despite their seemingly desperate circumstances. It was much more than coincidence that Ruth began gleaning in the field of Boaz. God had a plan that would meet their every need. **God always provides for His children.**

Boaz and Ruth would become the ancestors of Israel's greatest kings including King David and the Eternal King, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Naomi realized, we can realize that God is at work and has a plan for our lives. He is with us through the good times as well as the bad. Our circumstances do not overcome the power of God; God overcomes all circumstances so that He may be glorified. God gives us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). We can trust in Him.

Picnic

Place a cloth tablecloth in a wicker basket, then add paper napkins, cookies or graham crackers, cups, a bottle of juice, some sliced fruit or other extras. Bring a big folded blanket to spread out on the floor.

Call the kids to come to a picnic, have them participate in spreading out the blanket, and passing out the napkins and cups.

Before you pass out the snacks or drinks, ask the children if they think you have brought some food. How did they know that you brought food? Go ahead and pass out the snack. Just like they “knew” you would bring the food, in an even greater way, they can know that **God always provides for His children.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for all of God’s provisions. He exceedingly, abundantly provides for all of our needs in Christ Jesus. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.