

Living For Others

Small Group Lesson



Ages
6-7

Power Point

God wants me to care about others.

Scripture Memory Verse

Show love in everything you do.

—1 Corinthians 16:14

Bible Lesson

Ruth shows love to her mother-in-law Naomi and God rewards her in a new land.

—Ruth 1:1-9,15-17;2:2-3,11-13,17-22

Overview

Ruth married an Israelite, but her husband later died. Her mother-in-law Naomi told her to go back to her people. Ruth chose to stay with Naomi, taking care of her and serving her God. While gathering grain for herself and Naomi, Ruth met her future husband, Boaz. God rewarded Ruth's faithfulness with a new family in her new homeland. Children are encouraged to follow Ruth's example by leaving their comfort zone to meet others' needs.

Discussion Questions

1. How were Ruth and Naomi related to each other? (*Ruth was Naomi's daughter-in-law; Ruth married Naomi's son.*)
2. What did Naomi tell Ruth and Orpah to do? (*Stay in Moab, and let her go back to Judah alone.*)
3. What did Ruth say back to Naomi? (*No...I will stay with you. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.*)
4. What other kind thing did Ruth do for Naomi? (*She gathered wheat for Naomi to eat, since she was too old to work.*)
5. Did God reward Ruth for her kindness to Naomi? (*Yes, God provided a rich, kind husband for Ruth, and a baby son.*)
6. What would you have done for Naomi if you were Ruth? (*Allow responses.*)

God Encounter

Materials: Two fashion dolls (such as Barbie), two action-figure dolls (such as Transformers or G.I. Joe).

(*Call a boy and a girl forward to help you present the story. The girl holds the two Barbies, and the boy holds the two action figures.*)

When kids play with dolls, why do you think they usually have more than one? (*When we're playing with them, we imagine that dolls are like people—and that they like having other dolls around.*) Pretend for a minute that there's only one doll. (*Have your child volunteers put one of the dolls behind their backs.*) What if this doll were hungry, and could not get food? What if they were lonely? (*Have your child volunteers bring the other dolls back, and have the dolls jump up and down for joy.*) Yay! I'm so happy! Someone cared enough to come back for me!

In today's Bible story, Ruth had a choice. She could have left her mother-in-law. After all, Naomi was just a grouchy old lady, and she wasn't Ruth's *real* mother anyway, was she? But Ruth cared about Naomi. She didn't want her to be alone. And God was watching. God was happy because **He wants us to care about others.**

The world is full of people who have lost family members, or who need a friend. Will you do what Ruth did? Will you reach out to people in need? If you do, God is showing His love through you! Isn't that exciting?

(Pray that God would help kids see situations where they can care about others every day.)



The Jesus Factor

If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honor you.

—John 12:26

Materials: Whiteboard and markers, sheets of construction paper or colored cardstock, markers.

Preparation: Write the verse on the whiteboard using one color of marker.

(Read the Jesus Factor verse aloud. Using a different color of marker, underline the key words: serve, servants, wherever, honor. Read aloud again, having kids kneel on one knee and hold hands out every time they hear the word “serve” or “servants.” Read again, adding a new motion: turning around in place when they hear “wherever.” Read a fourth time, and have kids tap their heads on “honor” along with the other motions. The fifth time, the kids read with you, doing all motions.)

This verse talks about being with Jesus. Does it mean going up to heaven to be with Jesus? No—being with Jesus is doing what He is doing. Jesus cared for others, and He teaches us to do the same. What are some of the ways we can show caring for others? *(Allow responses.)* To show you care for others, you have to walk over to them with your feet *(hold up a foot)* and reach out to them with your hands *(extend your hands out)*. We'll make “caring hands” and “caring feet” as reminders to do what Jesus is doing.

(Have children place a hand and a foot on colored paper and trace around. Cut out each hand and foot and write “I CARE” on each with markers. Children will take these home as reminders of the importance of caring for others.)

Small Group Activity

“Just Desserts”

Materials: Prepared sugar cookie dough, oven, baking sheet, several colors of decorator frosting in baggies, knives, paper plates.

Preparation: Before class, purchase prepared sugar-cookie dough and frosting. Spread dough on round baking sheet and bake until golden brown per package directions. Scoop colored icing into baggies and snip one corner off of each so that frosting dispenses neatly.

We have talked a lot today about why we should care for others. But did you know that it's sweet for you, too? Ruth could have left her mother-in-law, but she chose to stay with her. She cared for her mother-in-law by gathering food for her and being her friend. God rewarded her faithfulness by giving her a good husband, a child, and a new home. *(Bring out the giant cookie.)* Have you ever heard someone talk about “just desserts”? That means that people often get what they deserve, good or bad. Today, we're going to make a giant cookie as a reminder of the “just desserts” God gives to those who care for others.

(Kids take turns decorating the giant cookie. Encourage them to paint with the frosting, using a variety of colors and designs. Then say a prayer, thanking God for the happiness of serving Him. The group cuts and shares the cookie as a reminder of God's sweet rewards.)

Take-Home Challenge

Materials: Lesson 2 Ages 6-7 Take-Home Challenge from *Take-Home Challenges* CD-ROM.

Hand out this week's Take-Home Challenge and encourage kids to complete the activities with their families. Remind kids that you'll ask them for responses during next week's K.I.D.S. Church service.

Living For Others

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Ages
8-10

Power Point

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Scripture Memory Verse

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—1 Corinthians 16:14

Bible Lesson

Ruth shows love to her mother-in-law Naomi and God rewards her in a new land.

—Ruth 1:1-9,15-17;2:2-3,11-13,17-22

Overview

Ruth married an Israelite, but her husband later died. Her mother-in-law Naomi told her to go back to her people. Ruth chose to stay with Naomi, taking care of her and serving her God. While gathering grain for herself and Naomi, Ruth met her future husband, Boaz. God rewarded Ruth's faithfulness with a new family in her new homeland. Children are encouraged to follow Ruth's example by leaving their comfort zone to meet others' needs.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Naomi tell Ruth and Orpah to do? (*Stay in Moab. Don't worry about me—just look out for yourselves.*)
2. What did Ruth tell Naomi? (*Please don't make me leave! Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.*)
3. Why do you think Ruth insisted on staying with Naomi? (*Answers will vary. Point out that Ruth was worried about Naomi being older and not as able to take care of herself. Also, Ruth had seen the power of Naomi's God and didn't want to go back to her old, false gods.*)
4. How was Ruth rewarded for making a godly choice? (*God provided her with a rich, kind husband and a baby boy.*)
5. Ruth cared about Naomi because it was right, not because she expected a reward. Can you name anyone who still does this today? (*Allow responses.*)

God Encounter

Materials: Clear Ziploc gallon bag of whole wheat grain (available at a farm supply store), Bible.

(*Pass the bag of wheat around to the kids. Allow them to take a small quantity out to feel the texture.*) In Bible times, God commanded farmers to leave some of their grain in the field for the poor to “glean,” or gather after the harvest. This was a way to make sure no one went hungry.

To us, this plain wheat doesn't look like it would taste too great. But if you hadn't eaten all day, this wheat would taste pretty good. Likewise, a lot of people don't show kindness to their mothers-in-law or their stepmothers. What excuse do they often give? (*She's not my “real” mother. She's not nice to me.*) Ruth could have used that same excuse for her mother-in-law. Her husband had already died, so her obligation to her husband's mother was over, really. But Ruth knew that Naomi didn't have other family close and she wanted to stay close to the God whom Naomi and the Israelites worshiped. So, she clung to Naomi as family. She stayed and cared for her mother-in-law, because she knew it was what God wanted her to do.

The world looks at a person like Naomi and says, “She's not my problem.” God looks at a person like Naomi, and says, “I love her.” If we truly follow Jesus, we will show love to others. They may not be in our family, but they're part of God's family.

Are there times that you have treated others with selfishness? Are there times when you didn't take the time to care for others? Let's take a few minutes to look at what's inside our hearts. Ask God to give you a bigger heart for others.

(Pray over the kids, asking for God to help them change their hearts. Pray that God would open their eyes to more opportunities to care about others.)



The Jesus Factor

If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honor you.

—John 12:26

Materials: “Caring Hands, Caring Feet” handout from *Take-Home Challenges* CD-ROM, pencils, Bible.

Preparation: Print one copy of the “Caring Hands, Caring Feet” handout for each child.

(Have a child look up the Jesus Factor verse and read it aloud.) Jesus is telling us that if we serve Him, we stand with Him. That means that it doesn't matter where we are—school, home, church, or around town—if we are serving others, we are with Jesus. He may not be physically there with us. We may not be able to see Him. But He is there with us, blessing us and working through us as we reach out to others. When Ruth served her mother-in-law, she was really serving God. Likewise, when we do kind things for others, we are honoring God. We should serve Jesus with everything we have—including our hands and our feet.

(Pass out handouts and pencils.) Think of some ways you can serve others with your feet, and write them near the feet on your handout. Then think of some ways you can serve others with your hands, and write them near the hands.

(Give kids a few minutes to work quietly. Then have kids form pairs or trios and share responses. Have kids take their handouts home to use during the Take-Home Challenge.)

Small Group Activity

Hands and Feet Relay

Materials: Construction paper, markers, masking tape.

Preparation: Before class, mark a starting line about twenty feet from a wall with masking tape.

Today we learned how Ruth cared for her mother-in-law by doing chores with her hands and feet. When you have a chore or a job to do, do you like to get it done quickly? *(Allow responses.)* Are you ready to use your hands and feet to serve with speed and skill?

(Kids will complete a relay where they won't just run, but trace around hands and feet as quickly as possible. Before the relay, demonstrate how to trace around the hand of a group member, then the foot. Make sure that kids trace all the way around, without breaking the line. To run the relay, divide the group into two teams, and have each line up behind the starting line, facing the wall. Place two piles of construction paper and markers by the wall. When you give the signal, the first two kids in line will run to the wall and touch it. Then, one will place his hand on the paper, and the other will trace all the way around the hand with the marker. The children switch roles—the one who traced before will place his foot on the paper to be traced, and the other child will trace around it. They will then place their paper on the bottom of the stack, run back, and tag the next two runners. The first team to finish wins. Congratulate kids on their willingness to be quick about God's work.)

Take-Home Challenge

Materials: Lesson 2 Ages 8-10 Take-Home Challenge from *Take-Home Challenges* CD-ROM.

Hand out this week's Take-Home Challenge and encourage kids to complete the activities with their families. Remind kids that you'll ask them for responses during next week's K.I.D.S. Church service.

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Small Group Lesson



Ages
11-12

Power Point

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Overview

Ruth married an Israelite, but her husband later died. Her mother-in-law Naomi told her to go back to her people. Ruth chose to stay with Naomi, taking care of her and serving her God. While gathering grain for herself and Naomi, Ruth met her future husband, Boaz. God rewarded Ruth's faithfulness with a new family in her new homeland. Children are encouraged to follow Ruth's example by leaving their comfort zone to meet others' needs.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Naomi told Ruth and Orpah to go on without her? (*Naomi was sad, and maybe she thought the two younger women wouldn't want to be around her. Naomi wanted her daughters-in-law to find new husbands and have children.*)
2. Why do you think Ruth refused to leave Naomi? (*Ruth loved Naomi and wanted to care for her in her old age. Ruth wanted to serve the one true God, whom Naomi had told her about.*)
3. Do you think Naomi was a fun person to hang with? Why or why not? (*Answers will vary. Point out that Naomi was very bitter about the death of her husband and sons, and that unhappy people are usually no fun to be around. Remind kids of the example Ruth set for us—loving the unlovable because God did first.*)
4. What does this story teach you about how to care for others? (*Stick with someone who needs help, even if they try to discourage you. Everyone needs someone they can count on.*)
5. Does God use people to tell us, "I love you?" What do you think? (*Answers will vary. Explain to boys and girls that while there are many ways to experience God's love for us, we often experience it through the kindness of others. Encourage kids to care for others because Jesus gave us this example.*)

God Encounter

Materials: None.

Preparation: Before class, privately recruit one child to volunteer as your "friend" at the appropriate time during the lesson.

Kids, I have a friend here. His name is Fred. (*Hold your arm out as though side-hugging an imaginary person*) Say "Hi," Fred. Hey, kids, what's so funny? (*Look sad*). Don't you see my friend? Why don't you believe I have a friend? Is it that you don't see him, or that I still look lonely?

Maybe I need to get a new friend. (*Make eye contact with the "friend" you recruited earlier, and motion for him to come up. Put your arm around him as you continue to talk.*)

You may have laughed at my imaginary friend, and many people do. But how many of you really do have a friend you can't see? That's right, we all have that Friend, and His name is Jesus. (*Reach over to your volunteer*)

friend and gently pinch his arm). It's wonderful to have a friend in Jesus, but sometimes, we all need a friend with SKIN on.

God is so powerful, if He wanted to, He could take away all our feelings of loneliness, just like that. But He didn't. In addition to walking and talking with Him, He designed us to be in relationship with others. We call these people, "friends with skin on." We see them. We can hug them or hold their hand when they cry. You might think that people would have a deeper faith in God if God were their only friend, if they had no "friends with skin on." But in reality, being and having "friends with skin on" builds up our faith in God, because God shows His love through these caring people.

In today's lesson, Ruth was a "friend with skin on" to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Is there someone in your life who feels alone, who needs encouragement? Ask God if you could be "Jesus with skin on" and show His love to that person.

Lead kids in a time of prayer and thanks for caring friends. Ask God to pour His love through each child so that others can experience His love.



The Jesus Factor

If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honor you.

—John 12:26

Materials: "Caring Hands, Caring Feet" handout from *Take-Home Challenges* CD-ROM, pencils, Bible.

Preparation: Print one copy of the "Caring Hands, Caring Feet" handout for each child.

(Have a child look up the Jesus Factor verse and read it aloud.) Ruth could have had an easier life by choosing to leave her mother-in-law Naomi. But she chose to stay. If we choose to reach out to others, we are showing the world that we're with Jesus, because we're doing what He's doing. And when we do what Jesus does, He and the Father are proud of us. There are as many different ways to show God's love as there are people. Let's be creative and think of a few. Then, we'll do a little role-playing.

(Give each child a "Caring Hands, Caring Feet" handout and a pencil. Then have them form groups of two or three. Direct them to brainstorm ways to care for others with their feet and their hands, and write them on the appropriate places on their handout. Then each group will role-play the different ways they can care for others. Circulate among the groups and praise their efforts.)

Small Group Activity

Do It With Love

Materials: Bible, "Do It Cards" and "Do It Scenarios" from *Take-Home Challenges* CD-ROM, scissors.

Preparation: Before class, print out two copies of the "Do It Cards" and cut apart on the dotted lines. Print out one copy of the "Do It Scenarios," which the leader will read from.

(Have a child find 1 Corinthians 16:14, the memory verse, and read it aloud.) Ruth lived out this verse by treating her mother-in-law with kindness. *(Hold up a Do It card and a Do It With Love card.)* Today, each of you will act out an "answer" to each scenario. I will read each scenario out loud. If you draw a Do It card, you will show us how to act selfishly. If you draw a Do it With Love card, you will act in a loving way. But you won't show the card to your classmates—instead, they must guess. The others will say "Do It" or "Do It With Love" based on your actions. *(Shuffle the cards and place face down. Have kids separate into teams of two or three. A group comes forward and draws a card without showing the others. Read the scenario, and have kids spontaneously act out a response. Discuss each response with the group, and praise their efforts.)*

Take-Home Challenge

Materials: Lesson 2 Ages 11-12 Take-Home Challenge from *Take-Home Challenges* CD-ROM.

Hand out this week's Take-Home Challenge and encourage kids to complete the activities with their families. Remind kids that you'll ask them for responses during next week's K.I.D.S. Church service.