



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

Year 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 4: God Leads His People

Lesson 2: Israel and Foreigners—Ruth 1-4

ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Ruth 1 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

How is this God's story?

How is this others' story?

How is this my story?

How is this the world's story?

ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the biblical reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialogue about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

GOD'S STORY

When have you been tempted to let a tough circumstance define you instead of refine you?

- Circumstances don't have the final word in the life of a Christian, but we often live as if they do.
- Faith makes it possible for there to be another ending when one can't be seen.

How do you feel about the custom of family members being responsible for widows?

- The Hebrew scriptures stated that if a man died his brother was to marry the widow to take care of her and continue the family name (Deuteronomy 25:5-10).
- Our traditions may differ from the commands of the Old Testament, but even in the New Testament we're reminded that "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

OUR STORY

What do you think it was about Naomi that caused Ruth to want to cling to her?

- People who genuinely turn to God even when frustrated with their lives can, through their honesty and humility, help others discover Him, too.
- When someone looks at your life and says, “I want your God to be my God,” it’s not by your might or power that it’s happened but by the Spirit of the Lord.

Do you think people who follow Jesus are ever surprised when they experience trials? If so, why?

- Some Christians are tested by hardship while others are tested by freedom; the former fight oppression, the latter fight laziness.
- We may believe that God owes us something when we try to be “good” for him.

OTHERS’ STORY

Is there anyone in your family that speaks for your household?

- The kinsman-redeemer has specific responsibilities that included buying a fellow Israelite out of slavery (Leviticus 25:48), making sure the murderer of a family member answered for the crime (Numbers 35:19), purchasing back family land that had been forfeited (Leviticus 25:25) and carrying on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10).
- Ruth became the great-grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:17).

How would you describe Ruth and Boaz?

- Ruth worked out in the hot sun on a daily basis and likely would have had sun-roughened skin.
- Even when there was no indication of a romantic or physical attraction between Boaz and Ruth, he looked after her without seeing a potential pay-off of romance.

Who is someone whose life or specific actions raised you up into a blessing or opportunity you wouldn’t have otherwise been blessed with?

- Every “outsider” remains on the outside until “insiders” feel something inside to reach out and bring them in.
- It’s possible for your life to be amazing when it feels terrible if you are linked into a relationship that is greater than the challenge. God offers this type of an amazing anchor, not just to get you through the problem but to get you into His embrace.

THE WORLD’S STORY

When life gets difficult, how are you tempted to solve the problem in your own strength without relying on God?

- Sometimes we justify wrong choices because of difficult circumstances. Trusting God means we know He will strengthen us and guide us toward the right choice, even in difficult circumstances.

What are some outstanding efforts you see in the world to solve major problems?

- There are several secular and Christian campaigns to address the issue of poverty and sickness around the world. Consider looking up some of the more popular ones.
- God is able to make something out of nothing and somebody out of nobody.

PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

*Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds;
rejoice before him—his name is the Lord.
A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.
God sets the lonely in families,
he leads out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.*
(Psalm 68:4-6)

WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

Determine how and when you can make sure another person has the “food” he or she needs to survive, both metaphorically and literally. For example, speak to the intangible needs a person has by writing a letter to a friend, calling up someone who is always kind to you (teacher, coach, and so on), or simply sharing positive feelings you have for another person. When it comes to physical needs, bring lunch into work, pass out sandwiches to the homeless or bring cans of food to a local food pantry.

BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God’s Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

Leviticus 19

Galatians 3

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above scriptures. In the context of Ruth 1-4, consider the following questions:

How is your relationship with God affecting your relationship with others?

How is your relationship with others affecting your relationship with God?

Consider other passages you might know related to Ruth 1-4 and read them this week, journaling as you go.