

Boaz Brings Blessings

GRADE 6, LESSON 6

THEME:

Romance! It's in the air. (Literally, have you seen what's on TV nowadays?) But let's think about real life: what about "duty", "respect", and "kindness", how does that fit into "Romance"? Sometimes, these ideas all fall into second place in our world today, especially next to the glitzy love stuff. But not to Boaz and Ruth... they are the perfect example of the types of blessings God gives if you value duty, respect, and kindness over everything.

Ruth 3:1-15

¹Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. ²Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." ⁵She said to her, "All that you tell me I will do."

⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. ⁷When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came stealthily and uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and there, lying at his feet, was a woman! ⁹He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are next-of-kin."¹⁰He said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter; this last instance of your loyalty is better than the

first; you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹And now, my daughter, do not be afraid, I will do for you all that you ask, for all the assembly of my people know that you are a worthy woman. ¹²But now, though it is true that I am a near kinsman, there is another kinsman more closely related than I. ¹³Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will act as next-of-kin for you, good; let him do it. If he is not willing to act as next-of-kin for you, then, as the LORD lives, I will act as next-of-kin for you. Lie down until the morning."

¹⁴So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before one person could recognize another; for he said, "It must not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵Then he said, "Bring the cloak you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and put it on her back; then he went into the city.

MEMORY VERSE:

Ruth 1:16

But Ruth said, Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

Student Introduction

Ruth's story in the Bible is so critical that she gets an entire book named after her! Ruth's journey with her mother-in-law, Naomi, takes them to distant lands and introduces them to interesting strangers. It looks like the setup for a perfect love story for Ruth!

But what about Boaz, the other main character in the book? He is a successful man, with no time to spare for Ruth... or does he?

What is our job when it comes to helping others who are less fortunate than us? Can we change our life plans at a moment's notice to help others?

Bible Exploration

In Israel, the barley harvest began in the spring. The community observed God's law concerning harvesting: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest.... Leave them for the poor and the alien" (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Activity: As your teacher goes through the lesson, decide whether each action is an act of "DUTY", "KINDNESS", or "RESPECT"

Ruth was married to Naomi's son. When he passed away, Naomi gave Ruth her blessing to return to her homeland. (Ruth 1:8)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Ruth chose to remain with her mother-in-law, Naomi, rather than go back to her house. (Ruth 1:16-17)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Boaz's workers noticed that she worked tirelessly to gather grain, without a single complaint. (Ruth 2:7)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Boaz personally invites Ruth to always glean from his own field, for her safety. (Ruth 2:8)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Vocabulary

Reap: To cut grain for the harvest

Alien: A person from another family, culture, or place

Glean: To gather grain left behind by reapers

Kinsman-redeemer: a relative who helped a poor person to get back on their feet

Reputation: The opinion that people have about someone

A kinsman-redeemer was a relative who helped a poor person to get back on their feet (Leviticus 25:25). In certain circumstances, where there was no children, a near relative could act as kinsman-redeemer by marrying the relative's widow, too. BUT: A relative did not have to act as kinsman-redeemer. If no relative chose to help, the widow would probably live in poverty!!

Now, Naomi said to Ruth, "I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you." (Ruth 3:1)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

When Ruth uncovered Boaz's feet, she did it as a sign of humility and respect. (Ruth 3:6)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Ruth identified herself, and then took a huge leap of faith, by asking Boaz to spread his cloak over her, and in doing so, accept his role as a kinsman-redeemer, and also guaranteeing that both she and her mother-in-law would be cared for. (Ruth 3:9)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Boaz felt honored by Ruth's request because of this outstanding display of loyalty she had for Naomi. (Ruth 3:10)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Boaz agrees to fulfil his role as Kinsman-Redeemer, as long as the closer relative was not interested in the role and the land. (Ruth 3:12)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Boaz gave Ruth a huge gift of barley before she left, so as to not return home empty-handed. (Ruth 3:15, 17)

KINDNESS / DUTY / RESPECT

Naomi and Ruth's part of the story is done... **it's now completely up to Boaz!**

Boaz headed to the main gate of the town, met the closer relative of Ruth, and explained that the relative had the first right to redeem Elimelech's land (Naomi's husband's property). The relative agreed to do so, but when Boaz told him that buying the land required him to marry Ruth, he promptly backed down — as Boaz had hoped he would. (Sneaky, sneaky!) The right to marry Ruth now passed to Boaz!

Boaz did not marry Ruth for her land, but out of a sense of duty, kindness and respect. In marrying Ruth, Boaz was honoring the Kinsman-Redeemer role of protecting his family [duty], would be able to help take care of two widows [kindness], and also showed respect to everyone that he worked with: he was extremely courteous to Ruth from day 1, sent extra food home for Naomi, gave the first chance of marriage to the closer relative, and settled the marriage contract before the elders of the community. (Bonus kindness example: see Ruth 2:4!)

Boaz and Ruth's son was named Obed. Obed later became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David (Ruth 4:17). Through David, Ruth and Boaz became ancestors of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5, 16).

Because Boaz and Ruth placed kindness, duty and respect above all else, God rewarded them greatly. Sure, they both totally changed their life plans for each other, but in doing so, not only were they able to find romance, but to be great-grandparents of King David? And the eventual ancestors of Jesus? Now, that's something to be proud of!

Let's Review!

Fill Ins

1. A _____ was a relative who could redeem a poor person's inheritance.
2. Naomi's hopes for _____ now centered upon _____.
3. Now _____ and _____ yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the _____ floor.

Short Answers

1. Do you believe that Ruth and Naomi had a tender loving relationship with each other? Why or why not? Explain.
2. In the story of Boaz and Ruth, explain how Boaz turned out to be a Kinsman-redeemer, man of his own word?



FUN FACT! Bethlehem is a happening place! Not only is it the setting of this entire story, but it's also the birthplace of Jesus Christ our Savior! (It also happens to be the place where King David grew up. Big things are happening in O Little Town of Bethlehem!")

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you for teaching us the basic attitude that we should try to have through the story for Boaz and Ruth. Help us to look for people who are in need of duty, kindness and respect and give us a selfless heart to help our fellow brothers. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.

Values for My Life

Like Boaz and Ruth- when we show the acts of duty, kindness and respect to others, we are teaching our society how we can make a change in other's lives! These three items help grow the "fruit of the spirit" within us. (Hint- check out Galatians 5:22-23!) Like Boaz and Ruth's story, the effects of our duty, kindness and respect will reach out far beyond our own lives. If we are in a position of giving (like Boaz), we can be assured that our bountiful talents will be greatly used by God in ways we can't even begin to imagine!

Faith in Action

I will choose to help people who are in need, using the gifts of kindness, respect and duty to shape my interactions with others.

Teacher Guide for Lesson 6

Boaz Brings Blessings

Aim: Students will understand that acts of duty, kindness and respect are measured by God and rewarded with His blessings.

Bible Passage: Ruth 3:1-15 (NSRV)

Teacher Preparation: Coming into the class, students probably already have an idea about the story of Ruth, but might not be as clear about the particular Bible portion that was given here.

They might be confused by some of the actions taken by Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi. Make sure to constantly keep them informed of the culture at that time, and what was socially normal. Encourage them to make connections to other practices we have today that might have been considered crazy back then.

Try to keep the conversation focused around Boaz, and his willingness to accept his responsibility of caring for family.

Bible Exploration (Teacher version); bold text = Student Guide

In Israel, the barley harvest began in the spring.... (See student guide)

This verse discusses the 'poor and aliens', (not 'spaceship' aliens, but people who are not from a particular homeland.) How does this tie in with Ruth and Boaz's story?

Let's start at the beginning, and see. As we go through the story, select which word best describes what is happening. You'll have a choice of Duty, Kindness, or Respect.

Ruth was married to Naomi's son. When he passed away, Naomi gave Ruth her blessing to return to her homeland. (Ruth 1:8) [EXAMPLE OF KINDNESS]. Ruth chose to remain with her mother-in-law, Naomi, rather than go back to her house. (Ruth 1:16-17) [EXAMPLE OF DUTY/RESPECT]

During this time period, males were the ones who worked. No husband, father, or brother = no money, and no food! This is where that verse from Leviticus comes into play. By leaving the gleanings of harvest behind, wealthy individuals were giving poor individuals and foreigners a chance to get food.

As it turned out, Ruth found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was a family member of her former husband. **Boaz's workers noticed that she worked tirelessly to gather grain, without a single complaint.** (Ruth 2:7) [DUTY]

Boaz notices Ruth, and asks his head worker who she is. **Boaz personally invites Ruth to always glean from his own field, for her safety.** (Ruth 2:8) [KINDNESS]

Boaz could have chased her off, or requested that she not come back, but instead, he had his own workers pull out extra grains for her, which certainly cut into his own profits!

Ruth continued to glean in Boaz's field until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. **Now, Naomi said to Ruth, "I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you."** (Ruth 3:1) [KINDNESS]

What does "well with you" mean? (Let students discuss).

Naomi's hopes for Ruth now centered upon Boaz, who might act as a "kinsman-redeemer".

A kinsman-redeemer was a relative... (See Student guide)

Naomi therefore suggested to her daughter-in-law a plan of action: "Wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down... go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." (Ruth 3:3-4).

Whoa, what is this about! Uncovering someone's feet? Sneaking around at night? Sounds quite mischievous... but Naomi's advice is a lot more serious than we realize!

When Ruth uncovered Boaz's feet, she did it as a sign of humility and respect. [RESPECT] (Ruth 3:6)

Something startled Boaz in the middle of the night, and he awoke to discover Ruth at his feet! **Ruth identified herself, and then took a huge leap of faith, by asking Boaz to spread his cloak over her, and in doing so, accept his role as a kinsman-redeemer, and also guaranteeing that both she and her mother-in-law would be cared for.** (Ruth 3:9) [DUTY]

Boaz felt honored by Ruth's request because of this outstanding display of loyalty she had for Naomi. (Ruth 3:10) [RESPECT] Boaz informed her, however, that Naomi had a closer relative. This man had the first option to marry Ruth and redeem Naomi's inheritance. **Boaz agrees to fulfil his role as Kinsman-Redeemer, as long as the closer relative was not interested in the role and the land.** (Ruth 3:12) [DUTY]

Boaz gave Ruth a huge gift of barley before she left, so as to not return home empty-handed. (Ruth 3:15, 17) [KINDNESS]

Naomi and Ruth's part of the story is done... it's now completely up to Boaz!

Boaz heads to the main gate of the town..... (See Student book)

Note for Teachers— if students question the motive of meeting at night, alone— make sure to stress the fact that Ruth was not using her body to tempt or seduce Boaz. Rather, in putting herself in such a vulnerable position, she was acknowledging the power Boaz had in potentially saving the life of both Naomi and herself.

Although Ruth took a leap of faith, it was not totally blind; Boaz demonstrated his kindness from day 1 to her (Ruth 2:20). Also, Boaz— as a Kinsman-Redeemer, verbally acknowledged the loyalty that Ruth demonstrated— two times! (Ruth 2:11, 3:10) He also placed value on the fact that Ruth did not go for an attractive man, but followed the customs of Israel by accepting the idea of marrying a Kinsman-Redeemer (Ruth 3:10). Ruth, being originally a Moabite, probably would have found the idea of marrying a Kinsman-Redeemer a foreign concept. However, in approaching Boaz, she was acknowledging the beliefs and culture of the Hebrews, and by extension, trusting wholeheartedly in the God of Israel.

Extension discussion:

In Ruth 2:11, Boaz mentions that Ruth's reputation preceded her; he already knew about her, and what she had sacrificed for the sake of her Mother-in-law. Also, the entire town was aware of her actions (Ruth 3:11), marking her as someone worthy to marry. This most definitely helped her in winning the attention (and heart) of Boaz.

Discuss 'reputation' with the students— what their reputations are, and what we as Christians should be reputable for!

Note to 6th Grade Teachers:

As you teach the 5 trial lessons, please be aware that they have been designed with the intention of seeing which curriculum style works best for your Sunday School classroom.

<i>Lesson 1 (Abraham)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity is separate from content</i>
<i>Lesson 3 (Micah)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity supplements content</i>
<i>Lesson 5 (Elijah)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity supplements content</i>
<i>Lesson 6 (Boaz)</i>	<i><u>Teacher and Student Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, but there are built in elements of student independence</i>	<i>Activity is built into the content</i>
<i>Lesson 7 (Joseph)</i>	<i><u>Student Centered</u></i>	<i>The students lead, the teacher facilitates</i>	<i>Activities are built into the content</i>

At any point during the trial 5 lessons, please e-mail AnissaKurian@gmail.com with your feedback, including:

How is the length of the Bible portion?

How appropriate are the Bible lessons and Memory Verse?

What lessons worked best for your class? What lessons were easiest to teach? (And vice versa)

Based off of question 4- do you prefer a Teacher centered or a Student Centered curriculum?

Do you prefer a paper-based activity, or an 'out of the box' activity (like Lesson 1)?

STUDENT FEEDBACK- what did your students like or dislike about the new lesson format?

Ultimately, it is your talent and your willingness to donate your time, energy, and love that will impact the 6th grade students the most. This curriculum is simply a tool to aid you in your vital ministry. Any and all feedback (good and bad) will help us to make the curriculum as beneficial as possible to our Mar Thoma children.

Thank you, and God Bless!

Anissa Kurian and George P. Babu

6th Grade Curriculum Editors

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