

# God is Love

(5 weeks)



## Outcomes:

At the completion of this module students will understand:

- The value of family life
- That God created families so that children can be loved and cared for by parents
- That we join a family through birth, adoption and marriage
- The moral value of loyalty to one's family

## Related topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

The family: marriage, extended families, different kinds of families, adoption, heredity, loyalty, respect and other values for family life.

Animal families: principles we can learn from the way that animals care for their young

## Link between "God is Love" and the topics:

God places us in families for love, protection and provision.

## Values

Compassion; Cultural understanding, love for family and community; kindness, forgiveness

# God is Love

## Week 1

### God places us in families to keep us safe.

#### **Bible References**

Luke 2:41-52 Jesus lived in a family. He helped Joseph in the carpenter's shop.

Isaiah 26:3 God will keep us in perfect peace.

#### **Activity**

Ask the student to draw their family table. They are to draw each member of the family sitting around the table.

Use the drawings to stimulate discussion. Ask the student to explain their drawing, giving details about each family member.

#### **Discussion**

God made us to live in families so that we would be safe. Our Mums and Dads are always protecting us from danger. Can you think of some of the dangers they protect us from?

When we are in a big crowd of people, we like to stay close to Mum or Dad so that we don't get lost. We feel safe when we are with them.

Sometimes we wake up in the night and feel afraid. We want to be with Mum or Dad in order to feel safe.

We can also feel safe knowing that Jesus is with us. He's always there looking after us.

Sometimes families go through difficult times. God wants us to trust Him to look after our families. When we trust God we have peace inside. God doesn't want us to worry, but to trust Him.

#### **Bible Lesson: Jesus lived in a family.**

Jesus, when He lived in the town of Nazareth, had a Mum and Dad and brothers and sisters. He lived in a family too. We know that His Mum and Dad were called Mary and Joseph. We know that one of His brothers was called James.

Jesus loved His family and would often help Joseph in the carpenter's shop. What do you think Joseph used to make? How do you think Jesus would help him? How do you think Jesus helped His Mum?

Jesus lived in a house with a flat roof. It had steps going up to the roof. In the cool of the evening, Jesus may have sat with his family on the roof. Perhaps Joseph would tell a story or read from the Scripture. The house was very small. It had no bedrooms with beds. Instead,

the family slept on mats, which were rolled up and placed out of the way during the day. This area then became the living room.

There were no taps in the houses of Nazareth. Instead, everyone would get their water from the village well. Jesus would go with Mary to the well each day, carrying their water pots. They would fill their water pots and carry them back home again. There were no supermarkets in Nazareth either. Mary would take Jesus to the local out-door market where they would buy the things they needed. Back home, Jesus would help Mary bake bread in a special oven over an open fire.

On the Sabbath day Jesus went with his family to the church. It was called a synagogue. Jesus listened hard, for He wanted to learn as much as He could about His Heavenly Father. There were no books in the synagogue. The Scripture was read from a scroll.

Jesus loved His family very much. He felt safe and secure in their care. Joseph and Mary were not rich. They could not buy lots of toys or fine clothes, but Jesus didn't mind. He knew that they loved Him very much, and that was most important. Jesus thanked God for His family.

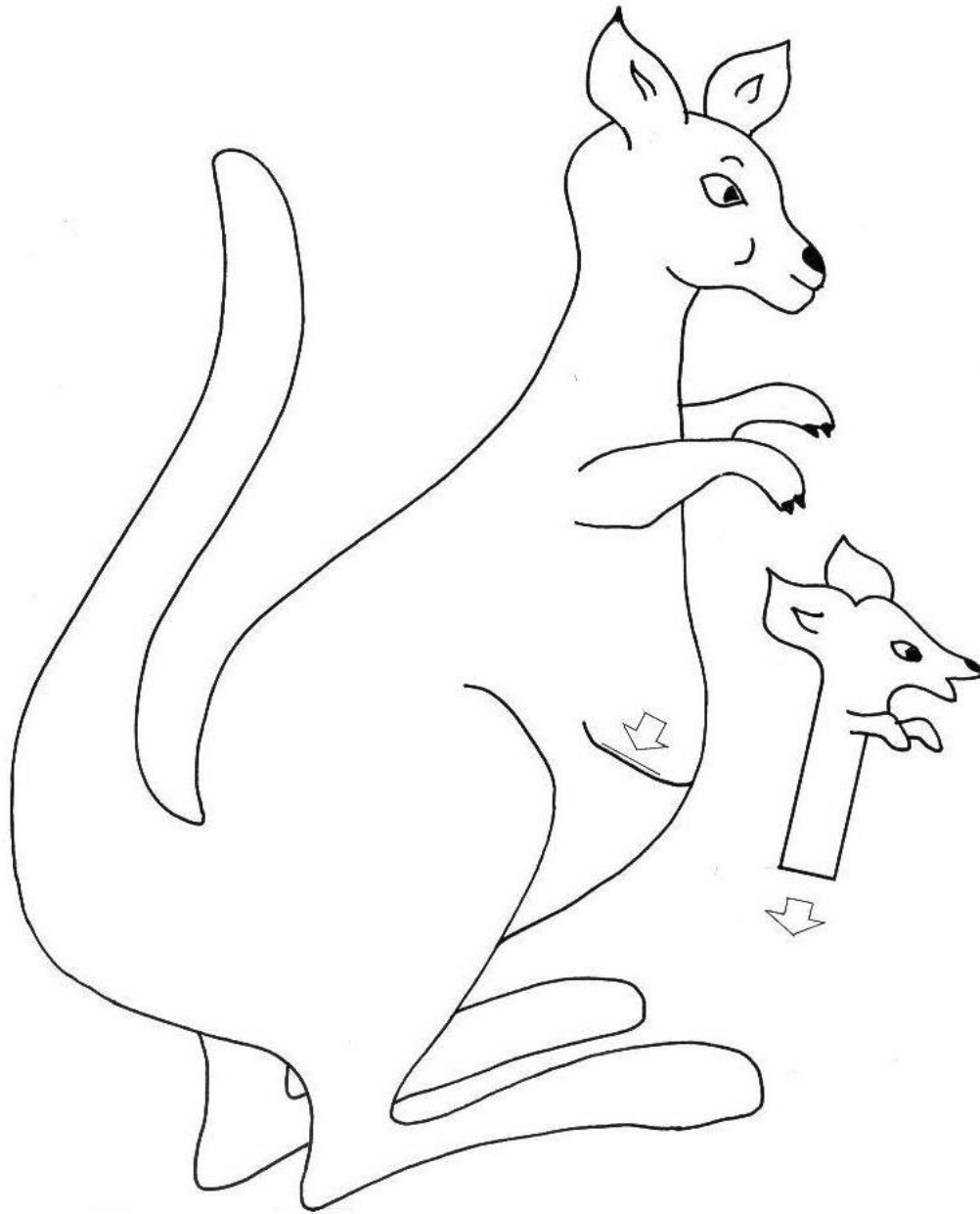
### **Activities**

#### 1. Kangaroo cut-out

Use the activity sheet to make a kangaroo with baby in the pouch. The baby kangaroo feels safe and secure because its mother is looking after it.

#### 2. Draw a picture of your family.





# God is Love

## Week 2

### Families are God's idea.

#### **Bible references:**

Genesis 2:7-25 God created a helper for the man

Mark 6:10 Jesus said, "God made them male and female from the beginning of creation."

#### **Bible lesson: God created families**

##### **How God made the first man and the first woman**

God took some clay from the ground and made the shape of a man. Then He breathed gently into the shape. The man's eye's opened and he began to live. God called him Adam.

The Lord made a beautiful garden for him to live in. The garden, called Eden, was full of many wonderful things. Beautiful flowers grew everywhere. Birds sang in the trees, streams flowed through the valley and animals roamed across the fields.

God had made the man in His image to keep Him company and look after the world.

God brought all the animals to Adam one at a time to be given their names. "Elephant", he would say, or "Tiger", or "Mongoose".

But God felt sorry for Adam. "None of these animals is really like him," thought God, "he needs someone to share his life... someone who cares for him and who he can care for."

That night, God took a rib from Adam's side and made a woman. When Adam awoke the following morning, he found a wife, Eve, lying asleep beside him. Adam was so happy. He took her hand and she woke up. She looked up at him and smiled.

God told the man and woman that it was their job to take care of their new home. God blessed them, saying, "All this is for you. Help yourself to anything you like. But never touch the tree in the middle of the Garden. That tree gives knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat its fruit, you will die."

God did not mean that Adam and Eve would drop down dead the moment they ate the fruit from the tree. He meant that if they ate the fruit they would not be able to live forever with God in heaven.

One day, Adam and Eve were gathering berries for dinner when she heard a silky voice behind her.

"Has God told you that you can eat the fruit from all the trees?" the voice asked softly. Eve turned around to see a snake talking to her.

"God has told us we can eat all the fruit except for what grows on The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," Eve told the snake.

"Oh come now, that's silly! I hardly think such a lovely fruit would do you any harm," the snake lied. "God knows that if you eat from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you'll become just like God, and will be able to decide for yourself what is right and what is wrong."

The woman looked at the fruit and thought how tasty it looked. She thought how wonderful it would be to be as wise and powerful as God. She believed the snake's lie and ate the fruit and also gave some to Adam, who was with her, and he took a bite as well.

She felt an awful strange feeling and wondered what was wrong with her. Suddenly she realized that she was feeling guilty. She had disobeyed God and knew she'd done something wrong.

As soon as they ate the fruit a change came over Adam and Eve. They became unhappy and fearful of God.

Adam and Eve heard God calling them. They hid into the bushes, but God knew where they were. When God asked them if they had eaten from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that He had told them not to, they blamed each other for their sins.

God was sad that Adam and Eve had disobeyed them. He told them that they had to leave the Garden of Eden, "From now on you will have to work hard to grow food. It will not be easy because there will be weeds, some weeds with thorns. You will have to make clothes. There will be pain and sickness in the world. And one day, you will die."

### **The first family**

So Adam and his wife went out into the world to live and to work. For a time they were all alone, but after a while God gave them a little child of their own, the first baby that ever came into the world. Eve named him Cain. Now Adam, Eve and Cain made the first family on earth, and after a time another baby came. Eve named him Abel.

When the two boys grew up, they worked, as their father worked before them. Cain, the older brother, chose to work in the fields, and to raise grain and fruits. Abel, the younger brother, had a flock of sheep and became a shepherd. But this story is a sad story. Because sin had entered the world Cain and Abel had an argument, and Cain killed Abel.

### **One family who loved and served God**

More children were born into the world, so the number of people in the world grew. But the sin of the world was so great that God decided to destroy the world with a flood. God had to look around for a family who loved and served him. This family would save the animals from the flood. God could only find one family. It was Noah and his wife and their three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth. Their sons each married a wife. How many people were in this family now?

Yes there were eight people who loved and served God. Noah built the ark just as God told him to and the family, along with the animals, was saved from drowning.

When the flood was over, the family got out of the ark on to dry land. They made homes for themselves. Noah's sons and their wives had children, who grew up to love and serve God.

### **Questions**

How did God make the first man?

Why did God decide to make a woman?

How did God make the first woman?

Who were the first children?

Why was this family often unhappy?

Why was God sad about the people He had made?

Just before God sent the great Flood, how many good people were living on the earth?

Who were the members of this family?

What important job did they do for God?

Why do you think God created families?

### **Activity**

Compare Adam's family with Noah's family. What was the same? What were the differences?

Draw up a comparison chart and write points for each family.

# God is Love

## Week 3

### Marriage is God's idea.

#### **Bible reference:**

Exodus 20 The Ten Commandments

Genesis 2:18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 24 A wife for Isaac

#### **Introduction**

Ask the children if they have ever been to a wedding.

Show pictures of weddings. Point out the various people in the bridal party: bride, groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, parents, important guests, priest, minister or pundit.

Revision: What did God say after he had made the first man (Adam)? Read Genesis 2:18

Ask the children whether they think a wedding is a happy or sad time. (It may be sad for the parents of the bride and groom because their children are leaving them but it is really a happy time because a new family is being started by two people who love each other very much.)

#### **Discussion**

Ask the children what a wedding means.

Have prepared the following, written in large print on a large sheet of paper. Read it together.

A wedding means:

- A man and a woman are come together to make a new family.
- They make promises to God to look after each other and love each other for the rest of their lives.
- They promise to provide a safe and happy home for children.
- Through marriage and having children the people are added to the world.

#### **Bible Lesson 1: God gives rules for families**

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, the children born to them also disobeyed God. Their children disobeyed God and the world gradually grew worse. God wanted to find a family who loved and obeyed him, who would carry out a special job. That family was the family of Noah. They were the only ones in the whole world at the time that loved and obeyed God. God chose them to save the animals from the Great Flood which covered the whole earth. When the flood was over they were the only people left in the world. They stayed on the ark for a year until the flood waters went down. Then they moved the animals out on to dry land. They built new homes for themselves.



Noah's sons and their wives had children. The names of Noah's sons were Shem, Ham and Japheth. From Shem's family, many years later, Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of a special group of people, the people of Israel. The people of Israel have a very special place in history because Jesus was born in their country, to Mary. God wanted the people of Israel to love and honour him, and not worship idols like the people in nearby countries.

God called a man named Moses to lead God's people to a special land he had for them. God called Moses on to a mountain where he gave a special list of rules for the people of Israel. These rules would help them to obey God and stay close to him. These rules are called the Ten Commandments. God still wants us to follow these rules today.

Can you find any rules for families in these commandments?

### **The Ten Commandments**

1. No other gods
2. No idols
3. No swearing
4. Keep one day especially for God.
5. Honour your mother and father.
6. Do not kill.
7. Love the person you marry and do not take someone else's wife.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Do not be jealous of things other people have. Do not want their things for yourself, and if you are married, do not want someone else's husband or wife.

God wanted the people of Israel to obey these laws. God wanted every man and woman who married, to honour each other for the rest of their lives.

### **Activity**

1. Write down the two rules for husbands and wives.
2. Write down the rule that God gives to children.

### **Bible Lesson 2: A wife for Isaac**

Abraham had a son called Isaac. When Isaac was old enough to be married, and Abraham wanted to find a wife for Isaac, a wife who loved God. How could Abraham find the right wife for Isaac? Let's find out from this story from the Bible.

One day Abraham called his servant and said, "It is time to find a wife for my son." Abraham was now living in the land of Canaan. He wanted Isaac to find a wife in Mesopotamia, the country of his own family, the country where he used to live. So he asked the servant if he would go there.

"That is a long way off," said the servant. "Perhaps the girl would not be willing to come so far with me back to Canaan. Couldn't Isaac go to Mesopotamia, choose a wife and live there?"

“Never!” Abraham insisted. “God has brought me here and promised to give this land to my children and my children’s children. Isaac must live here in this country.”

So the servant set out with ten camels on the long journey back to Mesopotamia, the country Abraham came from many years ago. It was late one afternoon when he arrived at the well outside the city where Abraham’s family lived. He ordered the camels to kneel down, close by the well. Then he began to pray:

“God, please help me to choose the right wife for Isaac. The women will soon be coming to fetch water and I shall ask one of them for a drink. Please let the girl who gets me a drink and gets water for my camels, be the bride that you have chosen.”

As Abraham’s servant finished praying he heard footsteps coming towards the well. He looked up to see a beautiful lady walk towards the well with her empty water-pot on her shoulder. As she filled the water-pot the servant hurried forward.

“Please may I have a drink?” he asked.

The lady gave the servant a drink of water. Then she noticed the camels.

“Shall I get your camels a drink too?” she offered and she began to fill the drinking trough for the camels.

The servant was so happy. His prayer had been answered.

“What is your name?” he asked.

“Rebekah,” she said. “I am the granddaughter of Nahor.”

The servant went to his bag and brought out expensive jewelry. He put the jewelry on Rebekah.

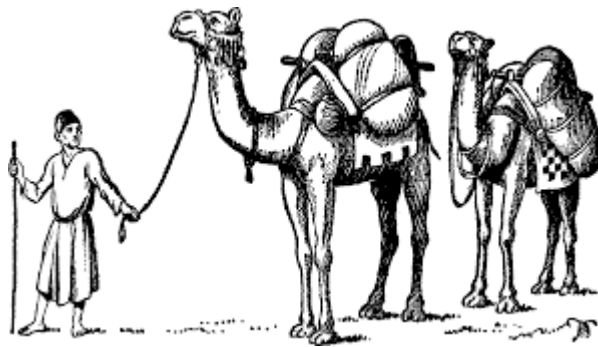
Rebekah took the servant home to her parents and the servant told them how Abraham had sent him to find a wife for Isaac. They knew Abraham and knew that he was a good man. Rebekah’s father gave permission for Rebekah to go to Canaan with the servant to marry Isaac. With many tears and kisses they said goodbye to Rebekah. A family friend, someone who had looked after Rebekah since she was a little girl, went with her on the long journey to meet her husband.

At last they arrived at the place where Isaac lived. From her camel she could see someone walking in the fields. The servant told Rebekah that it was Isaac.

Isaac looked up and saw the camels. The moment Isaac met Rebekah he loved her, and he gladly made her his wife.

## Discussion

- How do you think Rebekah would have felt coming into a strange country?
- What could Isaac's family do to make her feel at home? (Being kind and thoughtful, listening if she feels 'homesick' and wants to talk about her family; helping her to learn their language.)
- Although Rebekah was a long way from her family, she was not lonely because she now had Isaac as her husband and best friend. Let's read what the Bible says about this in Genesis 2:18.
- Abraham believed that God had a special woman for Isaac back in his old country. Christians believe that God has a special partner for each one of us, and when we walk in obedience to God we will find that special person.



## Activity

Draw the road from Canaan to Mesopotamia. Draw what happened at the beginning of the journey, along the way, and at the end of the journey.

# God is Love

## Week 4

### Joining a family through adoption

#### Bible references

2 Samuel 9 King David adopted Mephibosheth

Exodus 2:1-16 Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter

Psalms 68:5 God is a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows

Joshua 1:5 I will never leave you or forsake you.

Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5 When we accept Christ we are adopted into God's family

#### Introduction

We have been learning about God's plan for families. God wants everyone to be part of a family so that they can be loved, cared for and protected.

But sometimes sad things happen in families. It is very sad when a member of the family dies or goes away.

There are places in the world, in Africa for example, where there has been drought, famine, disease or war. Some children are left without parents, and some parents are left without children.

#### The story of Lydia and the Waitoto children (modern day story)

This is a true story about a girl called Lydia. Lydia lived with her family in an African country called Uganda. In this country there had been war for a long time. In 2004 something terrible happened in Lydia's family. Violent men entered her village of Palabek, close to the border with South Sudan. They killed Lydia's father and mother and her uncles and aunts.

Lydia and her six brothers and sisters managed to save themselves by running away into the bush. They hid there until it was safe to come out. They went back to the village and found their grandmother. She was one of the few adults who had survived.

The grandmother was too old to look after the seven children by herself so asked an aunt in the city of Kampala to take the children. So the seven children traveled eight hours to the big city of Kampala to live with their aunt. The aunt worked as a housemaid. She did not earn a lot of money but managed to buy enough food for the children. But then the aunt lost her job, and she could no longer afford to look after the children.

The aunt had heard of a group of Christians who looked after orphans. The group was called 'Watoto' which means 'children' in one of the African languages. 'Watoto' sets up villages where Christian mothers and fathers take in children who have no mother or father of their own.

Lydia's house mother was Mamma Santa. Lydia lived with Mama Santa and six other children in a simple, well-kept house. The house was built around a garden which everyone

in the village shared. Lydia felt loved and cared for in the 'Watoto' house. Although she was sad that her mother and father had died, she was very happy in her new way of life. She went to school and did very well at school. Her school was only a few steps away in the centre of the village. She loved playing with her friends, but she also had jobs to do, like sweeping the veranda, doing the dishes and keeping her bedroom tidy.

Lydia is just one of thousands of orphan children who live in 'Watoto' villages. Each 'Watoto' village has a school and a medical clinic. After school the children play together, but also go to choir practice. The children learn songs and dances, and get the opportunity to join the 'Watoto Children's Choir'. The children in this choir get to go on trips to different places where they put on concerts, singing Christian songs and telling their stories. They always tell people how thankful they are to God for giving them a new family and new opportunities.

Although the war in Uganda is now over, there are still many people dying of disease, and there are still many orphans that the 'Watoto' villages continue to care for.

### **Discussion**

- How did Lydia feel when her mother and father died?
- Why do you think she felt happy in the 'Watoto' village?
- (Points to consider: she had a new mother and father who loved her; she had the opportunity to learn about God)
- Read Psalm 68:5
- Sometimes children lose their mother or father, but the Christian church is like a big family, where there are mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters to love and care for those who have lost a member of their family.
- The Bible also tells us that God is a father and we are his children. God is the best father in the whole world. How does God show us that he is our father?

### **What is adoption?**

As we have just read in the true story of Lydia, children sometimes lose their parents. When children go to live with new parents, we say that they are 'adopted' into a new family.

To be adopted means to become a part of a new family.

Children are sometimes adopted by members of the family, such as grandparents or aunts and uncles. Sometimes children are adopted by another family if their own parents die, or if their own family cannot look after them, as we heard in the story of Lydia.

Here are two Bible stories that tell us about children who went to live with another family.

### **Bible Lesson 1: Mephibosheth**

In the Old Testament we can read about a king called Saul. He was chosen by God to be king over God's people, the Israelites. King Saul had a grandson called Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was a little lame prince. He could not walk because he had been injured as a baby. His carer had accidentally dropped him while carrying him.

When King Saul became too old to be king, David became king of Israel. David had been a good friend of King Saul's son, Jonathan. Jonathan had a little boy called Mephibosheth. But Jonathan died in battle, leaving Mephibosheth without a father. King David felt sad for Mephibosheth. He wanted to help him. He asked for Mephibosheth to be brought to the palace.

"Don't be afraid," King David said to him. "I will be kind to you seeing that I was such a good friend of your father. You shall live in my palace and eat at my table every day, just as if you were my own son. When you grow up I will give to you the land that belonged to your grandfather, King Saul."

Mephibosheth lived very happily in the king's palace. Even though he could not walk, he was happy because of King David's love and kindness.

### **Questions**

Who was Mephibosheth?

What happened to his father?

What did King David do for Mephibosheth?

### **Bible Lesson 2: Baby Moses**

"Miriam, we will have to hide our baby."

"Why, Mummy?" Miriam asked.

"King Pharaoh says he will kill every baby boy who is an Israelite," the mother answered.

"We live in Egypt but our fathers and grandfather came from Israel many years ago."

"Come now and help me hide our lovely baby. We must save him from the angry king. God said I must hide him."

They gathered reeds that grew beside the river and wove a strong basket. They floated it on the river among the reeds. It was so thick that the water could not get in the basket. The mother put the baby in the basket and hid it among the reeds.

"Miriam, please stay here and watch over our baby," she said.

Miriam stayed nearby and looked after her baby brother.

One day the daughter of the king, the princess, came to swim in the river. She found the basket with the baby in it.

"Come and see!" she called to her maids. "There's a little baby in the basket. I want to take him home and have him for my own. I'll call him Moses."

Miriam came out from the reeds and spoke to the princess.

"Would you like me to get a nurse for him?" she asked.

She ran home to get her mother. The princess was glad to have a nurse for Moses and she went to the palace to care for her baby.

God was pleased. He wanted Moses to live because He had a special plan for his life.

**Questions**

In which country was Miriam and her family living?

Where did the family used to live?

Why was it dangerous for baby Moses to be living in Egypt?

How did the mother and Miriam try to protect baby Moses?

Who saw Moses on the river?

Why did she want to adopt the baby?

How did Miriam help?

**Adoption into God's family**

When we ask Jesus to come into our lives, we have a new family. All those who have given their lives to Jesus are part of that family. It's like being adopted into God's family. We become children of God.

# God is Love

## Week 5

### Loyalty in a family

#### Bible references:

Ruth 1:6 – 4:22

#### Bible Lesson: Ruth and Naomi

In the Old Testament there is a story about a family that experienced sadness. The family lived in Bethlehem. The father was Elimelech and his wife was Naomi. They had two sons. One year the harvest was so poor that Elimelech could not get enough food for his family. So they decided to leave Israel until the rain came again and in the mean time they would go and live in the country of Moab. Their sons grew healthy and strong and there was always enough to eat. When the sons were old enough they got married to young ladies from the country of Moab.

But then came sad times. A sickness came to the village, and Elimelech and his two sons died. Now Naomi was in a foreign land with no husband. Her own family was back in Israel. Naomi heard that there was plenty of food in Israel once again, and she now wanted to go back to Bethlehem to be with her own family.

Naomi's daughters-in-law were called Orpah and Ruth.

Naomi explained to them, "I must go to my own land where I can get food. You have been very kind to me, but now it is time for you both to go and live with your own families here in this land."

"I will come with you," said Ruth. "I want to stay with you wherever you go. I will make your people my own, and take your God as my own God."

"No. You must stay here with your people," said Naomi.

"No," said Ruth. "I want to come with you."

Ruth went with Naomi to Naomi's land. Ruth had to work hard to get food. Ruth picked up grains of wheat all day long. Naomi was too old to work, so Ruth gave food to Naomi.

"God will look after us," said Ruth.

Then one day, a kind man called Boaz said to Ruth, "You may work in my field. You may have all the grain you want."

"Thank you," said Ruth. "You are very kind."

Boaz fell in love with Ruth. They were married. They had a little baby boy called Obed.





### **Questions**

Why was Naomi's family living in Moab?

Where did they come from?

What sad thing happened in Moab?

What is a daughter-in-law?

What were the names of Naomi's daughters-in-law?

Which daughter-in-law wanted to go with Naomi back to Israel?

Why did Naomi say to Ruth, "Go back to your mother and father?"

Why would Israel be very different for Ruth?

Naomi was quite old when they went back to Israel. How did Ruth help Naomi?

### **Discussion**

When Ruth decided to go with Naomi, she was being loyal to her family.

What is loyalty?

- Loyalty is staying true to someone
- Loyalty is standing up for something or someone you believe in.

God rewarded Ruth for her loyalty. How?

God wants us to be loyal to our family and friends, through good and bad times. People who are loyal to each other stay friends forever.

How do show our friends that we are loyal?

Would we tell our friend that we no longer want to play with them because we have made a new friend?

### **Activity**

Draw two friends.

Write underneath the picture,

"I am being loyal to my friend when...."