

## Ruth and Naomi

In a place called Moab there lived a nice family. Elimelech, his wife Naomi and their two sons moved there because there was more food there than where they used to live. After a while Elimelech died but Naomi wasn't alone she still had two sons.

Her sons got married but after about ten years they died too. At least Naomi still had her sons wives to keep her company, their names were Orpah and Ruth.

Naomi called her sons wives and told them, "I am going to go back to where I used to live and I would like you also to go back to your family where you used to live. May God show you kindness as you have showed me." All the women cried and hugged each other because they were such good friends.

Orpah didn't want to leave Naomi but Naomi told her not to worry, she would be fine. So Orpah left to go back to her family. But no matter what Naomi said to Ruth, Ruth would not leave. "Don't ask me to leave. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your friends will be my friends and your God will be my God."

So Ruth and Naomi returned to Bethlehem together. It was a good thing Ruth went with Naomi because Bethlehem was very far away and Naomi couldn't have traveled all that way by herself. Notice that Ruth never complains but is a good friend to Naomi. She wasn't expecting anything in return, she just wanted to help.

When they got there Ruth decided that she should do some kind of work. It was harvest time, so she worked in the fields following behind the harvesters and picked up any barley that they had dropped.

The owner of the field came by to greet the harvesters and noticed Ruth in the field. He asked one of the harvesters who she was. "She came back from Moab with Naomi, that's all I know." Lucky for Ruth the owner of the field was Boaz, he was a kind man who believed in God. He had also been related to Elimelech (Naomi's husband that died).

Boaz went to go talk to Ruth, he said to her, "Don't go work in any other field but stay here with the other servant girls. I will make sure you are safe and whenever you are thirsty go and get a drink from the water jars." When Ruth heard this she bowed down to Boaz and asked, "Why are you being so nice to me, I'm not even from here."

Boaz replied, "I know what you've done for Naomi, you left your family and moved to a place you've never been. May the Lord reward you for your kindness."

Ruth thanked Boaz and continued with her work in the hot sun. Boaz even ordered his workers to drop extra barley so Ruth could have more for herself.

Ruth took all the barley home and shared what she had with Naomi. And eventually Ruth married Boaz and everyone was very happy!

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Being a good friend takes a long time to learn. A good friend is loyal, which means you keep your promises and sometimes when you don't feel like being a friend you are anyway. Sometimes our friends aren't perfect and they make mistakes but we make mistakes too, and we don't want our friends to leave us when that happens.

God gives us friends when we need them, and we should treat them like a gift from God. Just like in the story, Naomi could've insisted the women come with her, but she was unselfish and wanted them to be free to go home to be with their families. And Ruth had such a good attitude and wanted to help, she moved away from everyone she knew and went to work to help Naomi. She didn't tell everyone what a good friend she was, she knew that she should be a friend like God wanted her to be.