

Ruth and Naomi

Map mat - made from a large rectangle of green, brown, cream or grey fabric, two different scrunchy brown or grey fabrics for mountains, blue fabric for the Jordan River and Dead Sea, flowery or green fabric for the costal plain and more blue fabric for the sea. It is easy to cut the map shapes from felt



and just lay them out but using different textures of fabrics and sewing them onto the rectangular background gives a better effect (see photo or look at a Biblical map of the Jordan and Dead Sea area).

Naomi, Orpah and Ruth – use

dolls house dolls

donkey and animals - from a farm set

houses - you could use houses or buildings from a play train set or some toy bricks

a tent – this can be made by folding a piece of A6 in half to form a tent shape

a Star of David – cut a 6 pointed star out of silver or gold card (use the internet to find templates)

sand in a small bowl – use sand from a sand pit or yellow craft sand

small figures to represent people – you could cut these out of skin-tone coloured card remembering to reflect ethnic diversity or you can buy wooden template figures

barley – cut barley stalk shapes out of yellow card

Boaz – a dolls house doll

food – use a plastic bread roll from a play set, a real bread roll or a picture of a loaf of bread cut out from card

a blanket - use a small piece of fabric or dolls house blanket

two pairs of shoes – use dolls shoes

a baby – use a dolls house baby or make one out of modelling clay with a square of cloth wrapped around as a blanket – secure with thread.



Playful Story Script

Imagine a land, a rugged, mountainous land... This is the land of Judah. *Lay out large green cloth and add mountains (near right)*

To one side is the coastal plain leading down to a great sea. *Add sea (right)*

On the other side is a steep and very deep valley, at the bottom of which is the River Jordan and a lake filled with so much salty water that the water cannot be drunk and nothing can live – it is called the “Dead Sea”. *Add river and lake*

On the other side of the Dead Sea are yet more mountains... This is the land of Moab. *Add mountains (left)*

Well, this story begins a very long time ago in the days when the Judges ruled, and a great famine had swept across the land of Judah. *Place netting over Judah*

This is Naomi. *Add Naomi to right*

Now I ought to tell you that Naomi and her husband had been refugees, fleeing from the famine in the land of Judah and had made a new life for themselves in Moab. Naomi’s husband had died and left with their two sons who grew-up and married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. *Add houses and animals*

And these are Orpah and Ruth. *Add Orpah and Ruth*

After 10 years, Naomi’s two sons also died and left her, Orpah and Ruth as widows. They felt very sad. Now life was very difficult for women whose husbands had died as women were not allowed to own land, or to make a living for themselves. *Take away animals and some houses*

So Naomi decided to pack up and begin the journey to Judah as the famine had passed and she wanted to return to her homeland. She called Orpah and Ruth to her and told them to return to their Moabite families. *Take house away and replace with donkey*

Orpah was very sad to say goodbye but she kissed Naomi and did as Naomi had said and returned to her family. *Place Orpah with another cluster of houses and wooden people*

But Ruth wept aloud and clung to Naomi and refused to be separated from her.

She looked out the journey ahead of them, across the mountains of Moab, down to the deep valley of the Dead Sea and across the rugged unknown hills of Judah and thought of making a new start in a foreign land.

Place Ruth looking across to Judah

Ruth turned to Naomi and made her a promise:

Where you go, I will go.

Add pair of shoes

Where you live, I will live.

Add tent by Jordan

Your people shall be my people.

Add wooden people in Judah

And your God shall be my God.

Add Star of David in Judah

Where you die, I shall die

Add bowl of sand

And there shall I be buried.

Sprinkle sand with finger-tips over Judah

As God is my witness, I shall stay with you even if death parts me from you.

Naomi saw it was useless trying to argue with Ruth and so the two of them set out to journey to Judah together.

Place Naomi, Ruth and donkey on way to Judah

Naomi and Ruth travel 50 miles and arrive in the hills of Judah near the town of Bethlehem.

Add houses of Bethlehem

When Ruth and Naomi arrived it was harvest time so Ruth went out into the fields to gather the left over barley which is then ground to make flour for bread.

*Add Ruth and Naomi
Add stalks of barley*

Boaz, a cousin of Naomi's, who owned the fields, noticed Ruth and asked who she was.

Add Boaz

When he heard about Ruth's promise to Naomi and saw how she took care of her, he was touched by Ruth's kindness and asked her to join him and his people for a meal.

Add wooden figures and bread roll

That evening, when Naomi saw how much barley Ruth had collected had heard of Boaz's kindness to Ruth, she told Ruth to return to Boaz.

Move Ruth and barley to Naomi

"Wait until he has fallen asleep" Naomi said, and then go and lie down quietly next to him".

Ruth did as Naomi had suggested and lay down at Boaz's feet. He woke up with a fright in the night and asked "Who's there?"

"I am Ruth", she said, "and I've come to ask for your protection". Boaz covered her with his blanket and promised to look after her.

Cover both Ruth and Boaz with a blanket

As Naomi had hoped, Boaz married Ruth – they exchanged their shoes as a sign of the promises they made to each other. And a while later Ruth and Boaz gave birth to a baby boy. *[for the Biblical scholars among you this is not entirely accurate but reflects the exchange Boaz makes with the kinsman and is used here as a narrative device]*

*Add two shoes and exchange one of each pair
Add baby*

And there we leave our story. Ruth made promises to Naomi to live with her people and worship her God. In turn God's people welcome Ruth and enable her to make a new start in a new land.

Round the session off with some open-ended questions leading into a wider discussion such as:

- I wonder how Naomi feels when Ruth makes her promise to go with her?
- I wonder how it would feel to be Ruth moving to a new land?
- I wonder what part of the story you liked best?

