



KIDS LESSON

Like the Adult and Student lessons, this Kids lesson focuses on the account of how God provided for Ruth through Boaz. In the time and culture in which the events of the Book of Ruth occurred, Ruth was a highly vulnerable person — a widow, a stranger in a new land, a despised race, and with only her elderly and vulnerable mother-in-law as family. But God's care for Ruth was evident in how He provided for her every need through Boaz, a man of faith in God.

Connect

Students will discover what it means to glean.

Supplies Needed: Several large bags of cotton balls, Q-tips, or even rolled up paper balls — anything that you can get a lot of easily and cheaply. Prepare an open area of the room in which students can harvest and glean the "crop."

Divide the class into two groups: 2-3 students as gleaners and the rest as harvesters. Then, spread the "crops" across the open area. Instruct the harvesters to walk through the "field" side-by-side and gather as many items as they can fit into one hand. Explain that if some fall on the floor or some are missed, the harvesters are to leave them for the gleaners. Even encourage some harvesters to purposefully leave some of the crops for the gleaners. Then, instruct the gleaners to walk behind the harvesters and gather as many of the remaining items as they can — stuffing them in pockets, holding them, however they can gather them. After all of the instructions have been given, set up the harvesters and gleaners and tell them to walk through the field, doing their tasks.

After they are finished, explain that this is what happened during the times of the Bible when people were harvesting their crops.

Ask: *Why do you think someone would be a gleaner instead of a harvester? As students share their answers, explain that God made laws that allowed for people who are poor and in need to gather food, or glean, behind harvesters so that they could have something to eat. Say: God wanted the people's needs to be met and made a way to take care of those who were hungry.*

Inform students that today they will explore the story of Ruth and how gleaning helped provide for her needs.

Study

Students will explore how the story of Ruth informs our understanding of caring for vulnerable people.

Supplies needed: *Paper and pen, or whiteboard and markers*

1. Because sin messed up God's perfect world, some people live without having their needs met.

Remind students that when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, all of their needs were met. But, when they sinned, sin messed up everything. Say: When sin entered the world, Adam, Eve, and everyone after them had to struggle to meet their needs, and some people live without having all of their needs met.

Encourage students to name needs that they have. Answers may include food, clothing, or a place to live. Explain that we also need to be safe and to have relationships with other people, like our parents, family, and trusted friends.

Ask: Can you imagine what would happen if we couldn't get food, clothes, safety, or a loving family? How would you feel? Point out that when people don't have these needs met or are at risk of not having them met, we can describe those people as being vulnerable. Say: You'll hear the word "vulnerable" a lot during this lesson, and that's what we mean.

Invite any students who may know about the story of Ruth to share what they remember. Summarize Ruth 1 for students. You may also use page 148 in *Image Bearers* to read more about the context of Ruth: Ruth was a woman who lived in Moab. During a big famine (when there is little food available) in Israel, a Jewish family made of Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons tried to fix the food problem themselves and ran to the land of Moab, which was an enemy land of Israel. While there, the two sons disobeyed God's plan and married women from Moab — women who were of different faith than the Israelites. Soon, all of the men died, and Naomi made the decision to go back to Israel. Ruth committed to go back with Naomi. But, in that time, these two women had no one to keep them safe or to provide for them. They were very vulnerable, meaning their health, safety, and lives were at risk.

Ask: How do you think God took care of them? After students have shared, say: God had a plan to take care of vulnerable people.

2. God cares for vulnerable people by making provisions for their care.

Ask: Who remembers what the word "gleaning" means? Remind them that when God gave His law to the Israelites, He told them to allow gleaning so that vulnerable people could have food, health, and safety while they were collecting food.

Read Ruth 2:2-9, or invite two volunteers to read it, with one reading odd verses and one reading even verses. Ask: How did Boaz obey God's command to let others glean? After students share answers,

Ask: What was Boaz's attitude toward Ruth? Emphasize that Boaz noticed Ruth, saw her need, and made special provisions for her to glean in his field. He made sure she was allowed to collect food; provided something to drink; and he made sure she was safe. Because of God's provision in the law and in giving Boaz a plentiful harvest, Ruth was cared for.

Ask: God gave His law, but what role did Boaz play in caring for vulnerable people, as God commanded? Point out that God met Ruth's needs through Boaz.

3. God meets the needs of the vulnerable through His people.

Say: God calls His people to care for the vulnerable because He cares for the vulnerable.

Ask: Did Boaz tell someone else to help Ruth, or did he do it himself? Note that Boaz personally got involved in Ruth's life. He didn't send someone else or find another field for her. Boaz used his resources, his time, and his influence to help her.

Read Ruth 2:13-18. Instruct students to describe how Boaz treated Ruth.

On a piece of paper (or a whiteboard) draw two columns. On the top of the first, write "Valuable." On top of the second column, write "Not valuable." Encourage students to brainstorm ways that we show others they are valuable. Write their answers in the column. Answers may include the following: treat them with kindness; share with them; encourage them; give them our best; respect them; stand up for them, etc. Now, encourage students to brainstorm ways that we may show others they aren't valuable. Answers may include the following: being mean to them; not giving them our best; bullying them; ignoring them; not listening to them; not sharing with them.

Ask: Looking at these lists, did Boaz treat Ruth as someone valuable or without value? Point out that Boaz treated Ruth with great respect and kindness. Say: We even read later on in the story of Ruth that Boaz married her and gave her a whole family again. Wow. God used Boaz to not only take care of Ruth's physical needs but also to change her vulnerable situation into one of stability, safety, care, and love.

Explain that like God used Boaz to care for Ruth in her vulnerability, He also wants to use us to care for others who are vulnerable.

Apply

Students will begin to learn that they can be involved in caring for people in vulnerable positions.

Say: When we look at how Boaz cared for Ruth in her vulnerability, we can summarize it in these six ways (You may wish to write these on a whiteboard or poster for students to see more easily):

- Boaz noticed Ruth's needs.
- Boaz made a plan to continue to meet Ruth's needs.
- Boaz treated Ruth with kindness and respect.
- Boaz protected Ruth.
- Boaz personally took care of Ruth and her needs.
- Boaz invited Ruth into his family.

Invite students to think of ways they can care for vulnerable people in the same kind of ways. Admit that they may not be able to do all of those things right now (like inviting someone to become a member of their family or providing protection), but there are ways they can do things now.

Brainstorm with students about ways they can help care for vulnerable people, especially orphans, right now. Use the following suggestions to lead students in seeing opportunities before them:

- They can pay attention and not ignore the needs of others when they hear about them in church or other places. Opportunities like Mission Kid is a great way to learn about others and the needs they have. They can ask their parents to help them participate and get information at lifelinechild.org/missionkid/
- They can talk to their parents about ways to raise money for caring for others. One example is Stand for Orphans that is made especially for kids. They can ask their parents to visit standfororphans.org and get started.
- They can treat ALL people with kindness, including those who look like us, those who look differently than us, those who like the same things we like, those who like different things than we like, and those who are in different life situations than we are.
- They can get involved personally by raising money, praying, educating others, and advocating for the needs of other people.

Pray

Students will ask God to give them a heart to care for vulnerable people.

Close time out together by praying. Inform students that you are going to say three prayer sentences out loud and then give them a moment after each one to pray it in their hearts.

- Lord, thank You for the way You care for us in every way.
- Thank You for letting us be a part of caring for vulnerable people, who are all important to You.
- Please draw our hearts to care for vulnerable people like You do.

Then, close out the prayer time by asking God to make us more like Him every day as we look for opportunities to care for vulnerable people around us and around the world.