



theme: Sexuality #3 – The Missionary Position
materials: Bibles

welcome

What is your favourite love story? Share with the cell your favourite movie, novel, play, poem or song about love.

interact

Read out the entire book of Ruth. Take turns reading, and when it's your turn to listen, try and put yourself into the story. Who do you identify with? What do you want to happen? Where is God in the story? What message is He wanting to tell you through this story?

Thank God at the end for what He did in Ruth's life, and through Ruth's story (and her children!) what God has done for the world.

read

Who did you identify with most strongly in the story of Ruth? Why?
Did the story go as you wanted it to go? Were there any surprises?
What does the story teach us about family responsibility? About marriage? About love?
Have you seen any examples of the kind of loyalty Ruth showed in people today?
How is the modern concept of love and marriage different from what you see in the story of Ruth? Are there any similarities?
What positive qualities of both Ruth and Boaz would you like to imitate in your life?
Why was it such a big deal that Boaz married Ruth? What did he do for her?
Why do you think this story is in the Bible at all?
Where do you see the actions of God in this story?

think

The story of Ruth is a romantic story, but it is also a story of a person without hope who is treated honourably and with great mercy and love by another person. Do you know anyone in your life who is desperate, who is living without hope? What is your attitude towards them? Will you give of yourself (not necessarily in marriage) to help that person?

live & pray

1. Examine the relationships you have, be they friendships, family, or romantic. Are they characterized by selfishness, or by selflessness? How can you be more like Ruth or Boaz in the relationships you have?
2. Write a love letter to someone. Not necessarily a romantic one, just one expressing your love and appreciation for someone else.



useful resources

- Book: *Crime and Punishment*, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. A brilliant novel in which a desperate man is ultimately redeemed by the love and grace of a woman.
- Movie: *Schindler's List* – Oscar Schindler acts as a kind of “kinsman redeemer” for the Jews in his care.

leader's guide

The system set up for family responsibility at the time of Ruth was a little different than the one we have today. A widow at that time was in a very desperate circumstance, and was supposed to be cared for by someone from her husband's family. But Ruth was a Moabite, a foreigner, and it is clear that relatives of her late husband were not rushing out to help her. Israelites were not even supposed to intermarry with Moabites. So Boaz's actions towards her, as well as Ruth's faithfulness to her mother-in-law Naomi, are beautiful portrayals of grace and honour and love.

Boaz did not just marry Ruth. He “redeemed” her (as kinsman redeemer), meaning that he rescued her from a hopeless situation. He took on responsibility for her care and protection, and for the survival of her late husband's name (their children together would bear her husband's name). He did not have to do it, but he recognized it both as his responsibility and as his joy to do so.

The story is interesting, because it is a very personal and “small” story in the midst of the big events of Judges, Samuel, and Kings. It is a story of grace and love nestled in between stories of un-grace and hate. It is a story that in some way “reads against” other parts of Scripture that say not to marry foreigners. And it is also hugely significant that this Moabite widow – the most vulnerable and weak position imaginable – is revealed in the last verses to be the ancestor of King David, and thus ultimately of Christ Himself.