

Friends

by Beth Beall



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Friends are one of the best parts of life. But friendship isn't always easy. We may lose a friend, and sometimes friendships change. Let's read a Bible story about two friends, and think about the friendships in our own lives.

For
Just for Kids

Season

Fall

Needed

Bible story, on page 3

Optional: Access to YouTube, a piece of paper, pen/pencil/markers,

Activity Plan

1. Begin by thinking about someone who is your friend. When you are ready, pray this prayer silently or out loud:

Loving God, thank you for friends. Today I especially thank you for my friend (name the friend you are thinking about). Help me to be a good friend to others. And I am grateful, God, that you are my friend, too. Amen.

2. Read the Bible story about two friends named Ruth and Naomi. You will find the story on page 3, below.
3. After you finish the Bible story, pick one or more of these questions to think about, or to talk about with someone else:
 - Orpah decided to stay in Moab instead of moving to Judah with Ruth and Naomi. I wonder how Orpah felt as she said goodbye to the other women? I wonder if you've ever had to say goodbye to a friend?
 - Ruth and Naomi supported one another during a very difficult time. Have you ever supported a friend who was going through a hard time? Or, can you think of a friend who supported you during a difficult time?
 - Sometimes friendships change. I wonder if Ruth and Naomi's friendship changed when Ruth married Boaz?

Optional activities:

- VIDEO: Naomi was an older woman from Judah, and Ruth was a younger woman from Moab. They must have looked like an “odd couple” to some people. Maybe you and one of your friends look “odd” to others. Take a moment to enjoy this YouTube video about an odd-looking set of friends: [The Odd Couple](#).
- FRIENDSHIP COLUMNS: This is an activity for you to do on your own or with a friend. On a piece of paper, draw three columns. At the top of the first column, write “**Friends like to.**” At the top of the second column, write, “**Friends are.**” At the top of the third column, write, “**Friends can.**” Think about the friends in your life, and think about how you are a friend to others. Then, begin to fill in the three columns.

You don't have to complete this activity in one sitting. Maybe you'd like to keep working on it over a couple weeks. See how long each you can make each of your lists! Have fun and be honest.



A Story of Friendship

adapted from the book of Ruth in the Bible

Pronunciation Guide: Elimelech (ah-LIMB-ah-lek), Naomi (nay-OH-mee), Mahlon (MAY-lawn), Chilion (KILL-ee-on)

A long time ago, God's people lived in the land of Judah. This was the land God had promised to their ancestor Abraham. In the town of Bethlehem, which was in the land of Judah, there lived a man named Elimelech. Elimelech was married to Naomi. Elimelech and Naomi had two sons, named Mahlon and Chilion.

One year, there was a famine in Judah. The people grew hungry. Elimelech and Naomi decided to move their family to the land of Moab, where there was plenty of food. And there in the land of Moab, Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion settled down. Mahlon and Chilion grew up in Moab, and married women from that land. Mahlon married a Moabite woman named Ruth, and Chilion married a Moabite woman named Orpah.

But then more hard times came. Elimelech died. Mahlon and Chilion died too. Naomi and Ruth and Orpah were deeply sad. When Naomi heard that there was food again in the land of Judah, she said to Ruth and Orpah, "Do not come with me to Judah. You stay here in Moab. This is your land. Find other men to marry." Ruth and Orpah cried loudly. They loved Naomi very much, and they did not want to leave her. But Naomi insisted, "You must stay here. Your parents and other relatives are here. Remain with them in Moab."

Finally Orpah agreed. She hugged Naomi one last time and went to find her other relatives. Ruth, however, refused to leave Naomi. Ruth said to Naomi, "Wherever you go, I go. Wherever you will live, I will live there too. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. Not even death will separate us!"

And so the two women traveled together to the land of Judah. One day Naomi said to Ruth, "Here in Judah we have a law from God that reminds us to take care of the poor. When workers go into the fields to harvest grain, they are to leave part of the grain behind for the poor to collect. You and I are now poor women with nothing to eat. So you must go into the fields and collect the leftover grain each morning along with our other poor neighbors."

Ruth did as Naomi told her. Every morning, Ruth got up and went outside to work in the fields, collecting the leftover grain. Then she would bring the grain home and Naomi would make bread for them to eat. In this way the women took care of each other and supported one another through difficult days.

The fields where Ruth worked belonged to a man named Boaz. Boaz saw how Ruth worked hard every day, and he saw that she and Naomi took good care of one another. As time went by, Boaz fell in love with Ruth, and Ruth fell in love with Boaz. They were married, and they later had a son named Obed. Now Naomi, Ruth, Boaz and Obed all lived together. When Obed grew up, perhaps he told his own children and grandchildren the story of his mother Ruth, and his grandmother Naomi, and their devoted friendship.

