

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Proper 27
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Background

It's mind boggling to think about how a mosaic is made. The artist has to take pain-staking care to ensure that each colored piece of glass is placed in just the right location so that at the end of the process an image appears. You could watch a mosaic artist working on a project for hours and never guess what the final product could become because, to the untrained eye, it looks like just a bunch of colored shapes. Lucky for us, the artist for our mosaic of life is the God who created this world, came to walk among us, and continues to give us words to speak when our own feeble minds fail. Sometimes we might not be sure of what the end goal should be, but we can trust that with God it will be beautiful!

A Notation for This Week's Scripture Lesson

This week we continue the journey with Naomi and Ruth. The two women have arrived back in Naomi's homeland; but the future for these two poor widows is still uncertain. Ruth's heritage as a Moabite woman works against her, but Naomi's claim of Ruth as her "daughter" acts as a talisman against the public perception. The passage for today is all about claiming our familial identity. Today's passage is a story in two parts: In the first part, Naomi worries that they need help to provide for Ruth's needs in the patriarchal society in Bethlehem. Naomi devises a plan to secure a husband for Ruth. In the second part, which takes place after we learn of all of the ways that Boaz was a kind and generous man, the reader discovers that Ruth married the exact right person for the continuation of the chosen line from Abraham. Ruth and Boaz's son, Obed, became the father of Jesse – whose youngest son David was anointed by Samuel and became the greatest King of Israel. David is important in Christian lineage because the Messiah is prophesized to come from the line of David. Thus, Ruth, the Moabite woman who refused to leave the side of her mother-in-law, is named in Jesus' genealogy at the beginning of the Gospels.

*A note about this week's scripture: The lesson from Ruth assigned for today includes a possible sexual innuendo. Sometimes when an Old Testament passage refers to "uncovering (someone's) feet" it is a reference to male genitalia. In this instance, there is not consensus in the scholarly community. Ruth may have been sent to have intercourse with Boaz. Ruth may also have been sent to uncover Boaz's literal feet and to lie at his feet – in a place of submission. Regardless of meaning, the intent of the encounter is clear: Naomi desired for Boaz to accept the familial duty to care for his relative's widow. The passage includes continuations of the important themes from Ruth of hospitality, family, fidelity, and hope. Some teachers may desire to cut the lesson to exclude this reference; we would encourage you to persevere. If one of your students has questions about the encounter, a wonderful way to approach it is to turn the question back around saying, "That's a wonderful question, what do you think it means?"

Theme: We Are Family

Before Class:

- You will need copies of the scripture, or a bible, for each child.
- Cut felt many colors of fabric into small, random shapes and mix all of the shapes together in a bowl. You will also need fabric glue and rectangular sheets of neutral-colored felt, one for each child. *Hint: You could also use construction paper for this activity!
- Print out some pictures of mosaics off of the internet to bring to class.

Beginning: How many of the children know what a family tree is? When the children arrive have them sit facing the classroom white/chalk board. Ask if any of them know what a family tree is – if they do not, explain by drawing a simple example family tree on the board. Explain that we all have a family tree and it shows us how we are connected to people. Then, remind the children who Ruth and Naomi are – if they were there the week prior you can ask them to tell you about the women, if not, briefly bring them up to speed about Ruth and Naomi’s special bond.

Opening Prayer: Creative and colorful God, Thank you for sending people into my life who make it brighter and more beautiful. Amen.

The Story: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17**Reflection Questions:**

- Who are the people in this story?
- How do you think Naomi feels about Ruth?
- Why does Ruth say she will do whatever Naomi asks her to do?
- I wonder why the names of Ruth’s son and other relatives are important.
- Why do the women sing their song of praise at the end of the passage?

Activity: Today we will focus our activity on seeing the beauty in the big picture of our lives by making **Felt Mosaics**. Each child will need one rectangular piece of neutral colored felt and some fabric glue. Show the children the pictures of mosaics you brought with you. Have them look at the mosaics and see how they are made. Then, dump the bowl of felt shapes onto the middle of the table. Using the shapes provided, the children should make a felt mosaic picture of their family.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their mosaic with the class and to introduce the family members pictured to the class.

Closing Prayer: God of love and of family, Thank you for sending me my family. Help us all to be the most loving family members we can be. Amen.

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