**Ruth 4**

**“REAL Happily Ever After”**

**Scripture:** Ruth 4:1-17

**Memory Verse:** John 16:33 *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

**Lesson Focus:** This is the final chapter of Ruth and we will emphasize

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of “happily ever after”, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Make It Real Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: Jesus Overcomes

**Starter Activity:** True/False Ruth Review Quiz. Make this interactive having all of the kids raise their hands choosing either true or false.

1. God was OK with Israel when they all did “what was right in their own eyes.” (FALSE)
* Rather, God punished them and many believe the famine that caused Naomi and her family to flee to Moab was as a result of God’s judgment (Ruth 1:1-2)
1. Ruth chose to believe and trust in God when she left Moab behind and followed Naomi into Israel (TRUE)
* Yes, in Ruth 1:16, Ruth made Naomi’s God her God and left behind the false gods of Moab
1. Ruth felt sorry for herself and complained about how hard her life was (FALSE)
* Rather, Ruth not only trusted in the Lord, but worked hard to glean food for herself and Naomi (Ruth 2:2)
1. Ruth approached Boaz that he would fulfill his family duty to rescue her and Naomi, but he was a bozo and said he was too busy playing video games (FALSE)
* Rather, Boaz was willing to rescue her and gave her assurance (Ruth 3:11)

We have discussed many times how Ruth is the truly original princess story.

Q: How does just about every Disney princess fairy tale end?

A: “And they all lived happily ever after”

While these stories are fun, they can give us the wrong idea that “happily ever after” is only make believe. God will show us in this final chapter of Ruth how He will bring about His REAL happily ever after not only for Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz, but also for us.

**Bible Study**

**Context: 3:18**

Start by reading in v. 18 of chapter 3 as this sets the stage for the great climax of the story. Ruth is instructed to rest until Boaz finished what he promised he would do.

Q: What do most Disney princess stories contain before they reach their “happily ever after”?

A: Conflict/Struggle! “Prince charming” typically has to overcome some challenge from a rival before he can rescue the princess.

Q: Can you think of any examples?

* Beauty and the Beast: The beast has to overcome Gaston before he rescues Bel
* Sleeping Beauty: The prince has to overcome the witch before he rescues the princess
* Little Mermaid: The prince has to overcome Ursula before he rescues Ariel

If you recall from last week, Boaz, our “prince charming”, said that there is someone else ahead of him in line who has the family duty to rescue Ruth (Ruth 3:12-13). Boaz must confront this guy, his “rival”, before things can be settled with Ruth.

**Teachers**: I’m purposefully adding drama to this story to better engage the kids and draw them in.

**Boaz vs. Bozo Intro: 4:1**

Boaz seeks out his rival and notice in your translation it probably refers to him as “friend”. The original language (Hebrew) actually uses a phrase that means “so and so”. Most Bible experts believe that he is deliberately not named because he turns out to be a “bozo” in not honoring his familial duty. So I will refer to him as “Bozo” from here on out.

**Boaz vs. Bozo Round 1: 4:2-4**

Notice in v. 2 that Boaz brings elders of the city to witness their conversation. This shows the wisdom of our “prince charming” to ensure this matter with Ruth is settled not in secret, but publicly and properly.

Q: Why do we sometimes do things in secret?

A: Because we are doing something that we know we would get into trouble if anyone knows about it (bad idea!).

In this situation, Boaz is making sure that no one “gets in trouble” and everyone is aware of what happens concerning Ruth and Naomi.

In “Round 1”, the matter of the family property/land is being discussed (v. 4). Bozo is drawn in by the potential profit of getting this land that belonged to Naomi’s family and initially accepts the offer.

**Boaz vs. Bozo Round 2: 4:5-6**

In “Round 2”, Boaz reminds Bozo that in acquiring the land, he is also required to take care of Ruth, which in those times entailed marrying her. Once Bozo realizes that he will be burdened with having to care for a poor, foreign woman, he changes his mind.

**Boaz vs. Bozo Final Round: 4:7-10**

Boaz wins! Bozo surrenders his right to Boaz for all to see by this ancient “handshake” using sandals.

Quick Activity: Turn to your neighbor and give them a good handshake.

* This is our way in American culture to make an agreement or a deal with someone else. In ancient Hebrew culture, this giving over of the sandal signified Bozo’s surrendering to Boaz his right to the land.

**Prophetic Prayer of the People: 4:11-12**

Notice in v. 11 that the people pray that the Lord will make Boaz and Ruth famous. No one knew at this time just how famous they would become!

**REAL Happily Ever After for Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi: 4:13-16**

Just as most Disney princess stories have a “happily ever after” with the prince and princess getting married, so we have Boaz and Ruth getting married and having a son.

Q: Who remembers how bad it looked for Naomi at the beginning of this story? (Ruth 1:5)

A: Naomi lost her husband and her sons and was all alone in enemy territory (Moab). “**But God**” was our theme as we saw how God had good plans for Naomi sovereignly bringing Ruth in as her faithful companion. Now we see how, through Ruth, God has given Naomi a home and a family.

* Notice in v. 14 where God is given the credit for taking care of Naomi
* We also are to trust that “**But God**” is working out His good plans even in our difficult surroundings.
* Q: Do any of you have any idea how much joy you bring to your grandparents? Think about how much joy Naomi must have had holding her little grandson in her lap!

Q: Who remembers how hard of a choice Ruth had to make at the beginning of the story? (Ruth 1:16)

A: Ruth could have taken the easy road and chosen to stay in Moab. “**But as for me**” was our theme as we saw her choose the hard path of following God with Naomi into the unknown.

* Notice in v. 15 Ruth is described as better than seven sons for her faithful devotion both to Naomi and to the Lord.
* We also have a choice to make in life. Will we choose to say “**But as for me**” and follow Jesus or follow the crowd down the easy road?

**REAL Happily Ever After for Us: 4:17**

**Teachers**: Feel free to finish reading the whole chapter, but I would end here just to better emphasize this final point about Ruth being the ancestor of Jesus, our Rescuer.

While we have gotten to the end of the story of Ruth and seen how God has rescued her and Naomi into their “happily ever after”, this is just one chapter in God’s great rescue plan for us.

Ruth and Boaz become the great grandparents of David who became the greatest king in Israel (this is the David who defeated Goliath). This is another chapter in God’s great rescue plan for us.

**Read Luke 2:10-11**. This is the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ, Our Savior, who was of the line of David and the distant descendant of Ruth and Boaz.

Q: Who did the angel say this good news was for? All people! That includes **YOU**!

This is Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, our Rescuer, which is another chapter in God’s great rescue plan.

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4**. This is why Jesus came. He died for our sins to rescue us and rose again to prove His victory for us.

This is Good Friday and Easter, which is another chapter in God’s great rescue plan.

**Read Revelation 21:3-5**. This is heaven, the FINAL chapter of God’s great rescue plan. This is where we will be with Jesus forever in our never-ending happily ever after, if we trust in Him.

Q: Do you see how the book of Ruth fits into God’s grand rescue plan for us?

God invites ALL OF US to enter into the **ONLY** **REAL** happily ever after by trusting and believing in Him. You will not find a real happily ever after anywhere else!

**Lesson Theme: “REAL Happily Ever After”**

**Memory Verse:** *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)*

**Teachers/Parents: In our lesson we looked at how fairy tales usually end with “and they all lived happily ever after”. We associate this phrase so much with fairy tales that we can think there is no such thing in reality. But God’s word says He offers the ONLY REAL “happily ever after” through His Son. There is a popular bumper sticker that says, “Know Jesus, Know Peace” and “No Jesus, No Peace”. Consider sharing with your kiddos a story in your life where you experienced this reality.**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. We saw how Boaz had to first overcome a minor struggle with the nearest relative (Ruth 4:1-10) to Naomi before he could fully rescue Ruth. What did Jesus have to overcome before He could fully rescue us?

A: In our memory verse, Jesus Himself says He overcame the world which would include sin, evil, death. **Read Hebrews 12:2 and 1 Peter 2:24** as well to get a picture of how much it cost Jesus to rescue us.

1. **Read Ruth 4:14**. Who is credited with taking care of Naomi? Do we remember to give God credit and thanks for His gifts and blessings or do we take such good things for granted? What are some simple ways in which you can give God credit for these good things?
2. **Read Ruth 4:15**. Can you give seven reasons why Ruth was “better than seven sons” to Naomi in this story? (i.e. her faith in God, loyalty, discipline, obedience, humility, courage, patience, etc.)
3. **Read Psalm 30:4-5**. How do these two verses summarize the whole book of Ruth?
4. We looked at how the book of Ruth is just one chapter in God’s overall rescue plan for us all in the Bible. Other chapters include David (2 Samuel 7), Jesus’s (descendant of Ruth and David) birth (Luke 2:10-11), Jesus’s death/resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4) and the end times when Jesus will make all things new (Revelation 21:3-5). Do you see how the book of Ruth fits into God’s overall rescue plan for us? Do you see how the Bible progressively moves God’s rescue plan forward from Genesis to Revelation?