

FAITH AT HOME: October 24, 2021

This resource is intended to be used in your household: around the dinner table, at bedtime, or any other time you can gather together to share and reflect.



I've been meaning to ask...where do we go from here?

While stepping into the next chapter, our hope is that we keep cultivating curiosity, asking questions, having conversations, and seeking connection in order to humanize and care for each other. Ultimately, this final question invites us to foster hope and imagination. After the loss of loved ones disrupts their lives, Ruth and Naomi create a new covenant with each other, choosing to be in a relationship across their religious, cultural, and generational divides.

SHARE

Share highs and lows from the week or use one of the questions below to spark conversation with your household.

READ: Ruth 1:1-22

Read the passage aloud or silently and share a word or phrase that sticks out to you. Alternatively, this story is found in the Spark Story Bible, "Naomi and Ruth" on page 110.

1 In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. 2The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. 3But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, 5both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. 6Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. 7So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. 8But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. 10They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? 12Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, 13would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." 14Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17Where you die, I will die — there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!" 18When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her. 19So the two of them went

on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" 20She said to them, "Call me no longer Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. 21I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty; why call me Naomi when the LORD has dealt harshly with me, and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" 22So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

TALK

This time is for reflecting on the Scripture and theme in light of our own experiences. Use the following questions/activities as a starting point.

1. Questions that connect to Scripture:
 - a. Ruth remains steadfast and tenacious in her commitment to Naomi. Why do you think Ruth makes this choice?
 - b. When Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem, the town rejoices, and they arrive at the beginning of the barley harvest. Even as they step into a new beginning together, Naomi insists she be called "Mara," for her grief has changed her. When have you experienced the collision of life-altering grief and abundant joy?
 - c. Think of someone in your life you struggle to connect with or understand. Now, read aloud this blessing as a prayer for that person:
By the mercy of God and because of God's grace, we are bound to one another. Your pain is not your own but is now my pain. The plight of your people is held in my hands and my heart as if they were my own. Where you journey and work, I too, will journey and work alongside you, with God's help. Where your bones are buried, may I too, find a resting place and declare every earthly resting place sacred in the eyes of God.
2. Questions that connect to the theme ("Where do we go from here?")
 - a. What energizes or excites you?
 - b. What is something you deeply long for?
 - c. Share about a time when you found empathy for someone and it surprised you.
 - d. What's something in your life, in the Church, or in the world that desperately needs to change? How do you want to be part of that change?
 - e. Share about a time you found common ground with someone who is different than you.
 - f. Share about a time you felt truly free.

PRAY

Dear God, we don't always know what's next, but we know you are with us. Thank you for the new people we will meet along the way. Help us to always keep an open mind. Amen.

BLESS

Mark the cross of Christ on the hand or forehead of one another and say the words: "Name, God made you and God loves you!" Make sure everyone in the household is included – both giving and receiving this blessing!