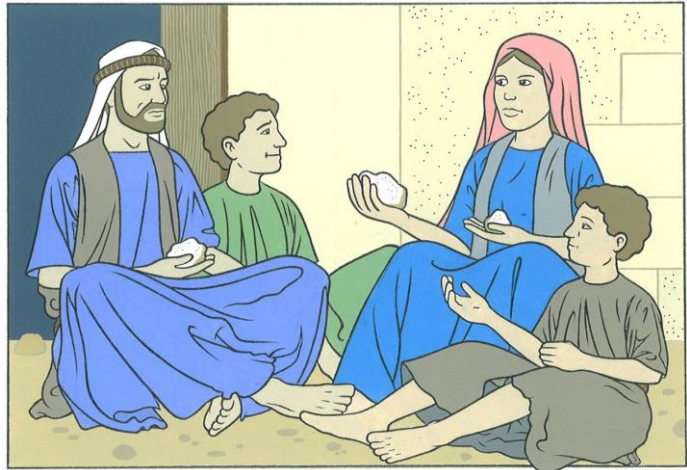


The story of Ruth

A long time ago, in a land where no king ruled, a small family lived in the town of Bethlehem. They were Naomi, her husband and their two boys. Life was hard for the family, for there was very little food to eat. Night after night, Naomi and her family went to bed hungry. Something had to be done.



Naomi and her family decided to leave Bethlehem and look for food in another country. As they left the town they looked back at the home they were leaving. Would they ever see Bethlehem again?

The family walked in the hot sun. They were tired and they were thirsty but they knew that they had to keep going. In time they came to a country called Moab. There was food in Moab and there was water. They decided to stay.

There were sad and happy times for the family. The boys grew up and married girls from Moab. One was called Ruth, the other



was called Orpah. There was great sadness when Naomi's husband and the boys died. The three women were left all alone.



Naomi decided to return home. There was food in Bethlehem now, so Naomi packed her bags. She looked at Ruth and Orpah. She could not ask them to come with her. Life would be hard work in Bethlehem and it would be a strange land for them.



Naomi told Ruth and Orpah to go back to their families. Orpah did not want to leave but Naomi begged and begged her to go until Orpah finally left. Ruth refused.

'No!' said Ruth. 'Don't make me go:

Where you go, I will go.

Your people will be my people.

Before God I say to you that nothing shall separate us two as long as we live.'

Naomi stopped trying to send Ruth back and the two walked on together. Many miles later they came to Bethlehem and people gathered around them.



Naomi told her friends all that had happened and that Ruth had come with her to look after her.

Naomi and Ruth settled down to their new lives. Naomi was



old but Ruth was young and strong and she worked in the fields, walking behind the people who cut the grain. Ruth picked up the bits they

dropped. That way, she and Naomi had enough to eat.

One day Boaz, the owner of the field, saw Ruth and noticed how hard she worked and her kindness towards Naomi. He told the other workers to drop some extra grain so that Ruth and Naomi would have plenty to eat.



Boaz looked after Ruth and their friendship grew. Eventually they married and had a little boy called Obed.

Naomi held Obed in her arms and remembered her own boys. There was still sadness there, but also joy, now that she had a grandchild to love.

