

## English

### Exploring a story: Ruth

**Note:** any activities involving photographing pupils must have parental permission.

#### Introduction

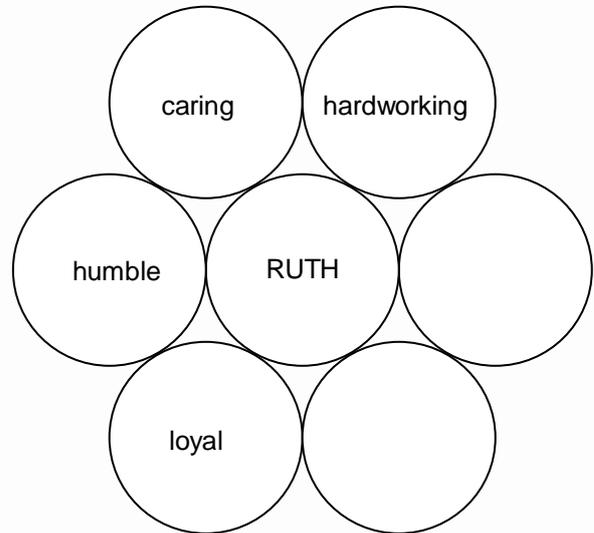
Talk about friends and what binds them together.  
How do we express friendship?



#### Core material

1. Explore the story of Ruth using the presentation *The story of Ruth* or use the download *The story of Ruth*

- Meaning  
If someone asked you what this story is about, what would you say?
- Characters  
Create a petal diagram for the three main characters and fill the circles with words to describe their characters. Do any of the characters change? If so, why?



- Retelling  
Retell the story using sounds, images and gestures as well as words. These should be used to bring out the meaning.
2. Focus on Ruth's promise to Naomi using the presentation *Oaths of friendship*
    - A modern version of Ruth's promise is found in *The story of Ruth*.
    - Explain that Ruth expresses her commitment to Naomi in some of the most beautiful language of the Bible. The version of this promise in the King James Bible is often chosen for weddings. The passage is poetry but it is not laid out as poetry. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme but is full of imagery and rhythm.

And Ruth said, 'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me'. Ruth 1:16-17

**Note:** the phrase 'the LORD do so to me, and more also' is an ancient vow. It would probably been accompanied by a gesture such as a finger drawn across the throat.

Explore any old or difficult words and their meanings. Can their meanings be deduced from the context?

- **Construct sentences:**  
Ask pupils to construct their own sentences using these older forms of English. E.g., 'Whither goest thou?' rather than 'Where are you going?' Put some everyday classroom language into the older form of English.
- **Patterns in language:**  
Look at the pattern in the poem. Lay the promise out as a poem. Pupils can do this individually or in groups. Display some of the results on the white board. The presentation shows one possibility.

- **Discussion:**  
What is Ruth promising? What will this mean for Ruth's life?  
Why do you think this is often chosen for weddings?
- **Compare with another culture**  
Compare Ruth's oath with this oath of friendship from China (Anonymous). What is the difference? (Ruth's is underpinned by her religious faith.)

Shang ya!

I want to be your friend

For ever and ever without break or decay.

When the hills are all flat

And the rivers are all dry,

When it lightens and thunders in winter,

When it rains and snows in summer,

When Heaven and Earth mingle –

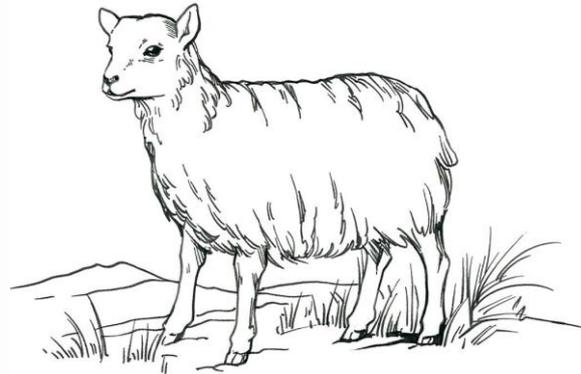
Not till then will I part from you.

From *170 Chinese Poems* published by Constable Ltd, translated by Arthur Waley, © copyright by permission of the Arthur Waley Estate.



## Reflection

Read some of the pupils' oaths of friendship. Ask pupils to listen carefully and think about when it is right to stand by a friend. Alternatively, make a paper friendship bracelet. Pupils can add an appropriate line from their own poem or one of the two poems in this section.



## Psalm 23

### Introduction

If possible, play Psalm 23 by The Choirboys (the opening theme music for 'The Vicar of Dibley'). The music is a sung version of this psalm. Can pupils work out the words?

### Core material

Explain pupils are going to look at a poem that is about 3,000 years old and was originally written in Hebrew. It was translated into English in the form they see in the presentation, 400 years ago. Biblical poetry does not rhyme but does have pattern, rhythm and imagery.

### Select from the following activities:

1. Explore the words of the psalm using the presentation *Psalm 23*

**Note:** Explore what a shepherd does by doing some role-play

The English of the King James Bible sounds a little strange to us as it is the way English was

spoken over 400 years ago. Explore what the words mean using the presentation.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psalm 23: 1 – 4

- What do pupils notice about this psalm?
- What questions would they want to ask?
- What is different to the English they use?
- Using an IWB ask pupils to locate words that sound different or unusual.
- Roll over words to see explanations.
- Annotate with the modern equivalents.
- Explain what a shepherd is and any unusual words:

*I shall not want* – I will not want for anything because I will be looked after  
*Maketh* – makes  
*Leadeth* – lead  
*Pasture* – the old word for green fields  
*Restoreth my soul* – fixing things deep down in a person's character  
*Righteousness* – right behaviour and right relationship, justice  
*Valley of the shadow of death* – sad or difficult times  
*Yea* – yes  
*Thou* – you  
*Art* – are  
*Thy* – your  
*Rod and staff* – symbols of protection, carried by shepherds

The words of Psalm 23 and other parts of the Bible are very important to Christians because these words tell them something about God and their relationship with God. A Christian might say these words to themselves or together as a group to remind them of what God is like: he is like a shepherd who cares for his sheep and he walks with them in the saddest of times.

**Annotate**

Pupils can annotate the psalm using **Psalm 23**

**In your own words**

The psalm can be written in the pupils' own words to bring out the meaning.

**Sheep**

Pupils can use the download **sheep**. Lines

from the psalm can be written on strips of paper. On the reverse of the strips pupils write what those words mean. The strips are curled and added to the sheep.

**2. Exploring the images in the psalm**

Explore the following images and what they convey:

- God as Shepherd: the psalm likens God to a gentle shepherd who looks after his sheep. He leads them; he does not drive them with dogs. He takes them to green grass so that they can eat and lie down. He leads them to water that is quiet and still so that they can drink. (Fast flowing rivers were dangerous for sheep.)
- The valley of the shadow of death. This stands for all the sad and frightening times people face. The psalm says that God walks beside people through those experiences and never leaves them. Some extra pictures of valleys are included on the PowerPoint in order to explore this image.

**3. Banners**

Pupils can create banners of these verses that include images and text in imaginative ways.

[www.thelordismyshepherd.co.uk/](http://www.thelordismyshepherd.co.uk/) Information about Psalm 23 and some other biblical passages

## Reflection

Psalm 23 is something many Christians learn. They remember the words during the day. They may repeat the words 'The Lord is my shepherd' in their heads. Do you have words to say to yourself that help you through the day?

## *A time for everything*

### Introduction

Various sayings have come into English from the Bible. Pupils can create dramas around the following saying:

'There is a time and a place for everything.'

The saying must be included somewhere in the drama. For example: a person suddenly getting up and dancing in the middle in of a talk in assembly and a teacher explaining that there 'Is a time and a place for everything.'

### Core material

#### Select from the following activities:

##### 1. Explore Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4, 6, 7

Use the presentation *A time for everything*. This saying comes from the Bible and is based on the following verses and can be projected or *A time for everything* can be used.

To every thing there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under the  
heaven:

. . . A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a  
time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to  
keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend (tear), and a time to sew; a  
time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

In Modern English:

There is a time for everything;  
a time to cry and a time to laugh; a time to  
be sad and a time to dance;  
a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to  
keep and a time to throw away;  
a time to tear and a time to mend; a time to  
keep silent and a time to speak;

This passage could be saying there is an appropriate time for all these things, or it could be saying: 'Life is varied, it's made up of many different experiences'.

##### 2. Non-literal language

Explore the figurative language in this poem. Many of the phrases are metaphorical, so it is not literally talking about tearing things and mending things. For example, this metaphor might be referring figuratively to tearing and mending friendships. There are times when it is not right to mend a friendship; we have to wait for the right time. A person might have to change or say sorry before the friendship can be mended.

### 3. Patterns in language

Look at the pattern in the poem: it's a pattern of opposites. Together write more lines using a similar pattern. Think carefully: its not just any opposites, it's about opposite behaviours that have their place in life. 'A time to help and a time to stand back.' (Sometimes we need to let people do things themselves, even if they are struggling.)

### 4. Imaging the text

Look at the example of this text in art at [http://ratnrmuseum.com/israelbiblemuseum/virtual/ecclesiastes/ecclesiastes\\_n.htm](http://ratnrmuseum.com/israelbiblemuseum/virtual/ecclesiastes/ecclesiastes_n.htm)

Pupils can take a line and create their own image that reflects a pair of opposites from the text. This can be a photograph of a tableau or a drawing.

### 5. Sayings and sentences

Give pupils one or two other phrases that have come into English from the Bible. Demonstrate their meaning by using them in sentences or role-play. Use **Biblical sayings** for sayings.

[www.crossrefit.info/repository/sayings/?q=&submit=Go](http://www.crossrefit.info/repository/sayings/?q=&submit=Go)

This site will also give you hundreds of sayings

### 6. Drama/dance

Pupils can interpret the text in drama or dance.



### 7. PSHE follow-up

This can be followed up in PSHE. Explore some of the different times mentioned in the passage with pupils as appropriate. Ask pupils to think examples of these 'times'. They do not have to share openly.

#### Reflection

Listen to the words again, learn to sign them and think about what they say.

[www.britishsignlanguage.com](http://www.britishsignlanguage.com) Moving pictures for basic signs