

Ruth: the loyal one
(*Ruth means 'friend'*)

Theme: Your loyalty will be rewarded.

Opening Prayer: *Dear God, Teach us what is good and right to do. Help us to obey you and serve you faithfully. Amen. (taken from 1Samuel 12 v 23-24)*

Games:

Letter Pairs: Get the children into pairs. A leader, the 'caller', stands at one end of the room and calls out a letter of the alphabet. Any player who has that letter in their name can take one step forward. The catch is that BOTH players in each pair must have that letter in their name. The first pair to reach the caller is the winner.

Difficulties: You will need three ping-pong balls and one plate per team. Line the teams up, the first player in each team is given a plate with three balls on it. In turns, each player must run up to and round a chair and back to their team while balancing the plate on their hand like a waiter. Any balls dropped must be picked up by the player and replaced on the plate before continuing.

Memory verse: *"Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live."* Ruth 1 v 16
Try playing 'Chinese Whispers' with this verse; see if the children can pass the complete memory verse correctly round the circle.

Introduction: A Test of Loyalty: Don't tell the children this is a test of loyalty! Stand two leaders up at the front and ask the children to choose a leader to stand with. Check they are happy with their choices, don't want to move or change their choice etc. Then give one of the leaders a bag of sweets; tell the children they are free to stay as they are or change their choice. Give the other leader some bars of chocolate or doughnuts. Let the children choose again. At the end, you might like to share some of the sweets with the group. (*check for allergies; HARIBO is often safest*)

Story: Ruth Ch. 1-4. There is a story in the resources. Encourage the children to role play the story as you read it.

Application: Refer to the 'Test of Loyalty' in the introduction. Did anyone stay loyal to the first choice of leader or were they swayed by the treats on offer? It's not always easy to remain loyal to someone when there might be something better elsewhere or when that person is going through a hard time, like Naomi was. But that is the time when people need the loyalty of good friends the most. Ruth was willing to leave her home and sacrifice her own needs to help and support Naomi. By doing this she showed a true servant heart and honoured God. Think of a friend; how loyal would you be if that friend was having a very bad time at school or at home?

Prayer: Demonstrate loyalty as a group by holding hands when you pray today.

Resources: Funsheet, story

Song: 'Okey Dokey' – Doug Horley, 'Okey Dokey' CD

For many years the widow Naomi had made her home in Moab. Her husband had died there and so had her two sons. Their wives, Orpah and Ruth, still lived with her.

Then the day came when Naomi wanted to go back to her own country and the town of Bethlehem.

“We will come with you,” said her daughters-in-law.

“No,” said Naomi. “Your place is not with me, I am an old woman. You must stay in Moab where you belong.”

Orpah was happy to stay, but Ruth loved Naomi and would not leave her. She said, “Where you go, there I shall follow. Your home shall be my home; your people, my people; your God, my God.” And so Ruth and Naomi went together to Bethlehem.

They arrived at harvest time and Ruth went into the fields to gather any leftover crops. The man who owned the fields was Boaz, Naomi’s cousin, and he asked who the young woman was that he saw gathering in crops.

He was impressed by how kind Ruth had been to Naomi and he invited her to eat with the other workers in the field.

That evening Naomi told Ruth to go back to Boaz. “Wait until he is asleep, then quietly lay down at his feet.”

So Ruth did this and when Boaz woke up he asked who she was.

“I am Ruth and I have come to ask for your protection”, she said.

Eventually, Ruth and Boaz were married and this made Naomi very happy.