

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

PART 2: A PEOPLE RISE. A PEOPLE FALL.

LESSON 2 || RUTH AND REDEMPTION

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Ruth 1:1-18; 2:1-13; 3:1-14; Ruth 4

GOSPEL FOCUS: Revelation 5:9-10

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

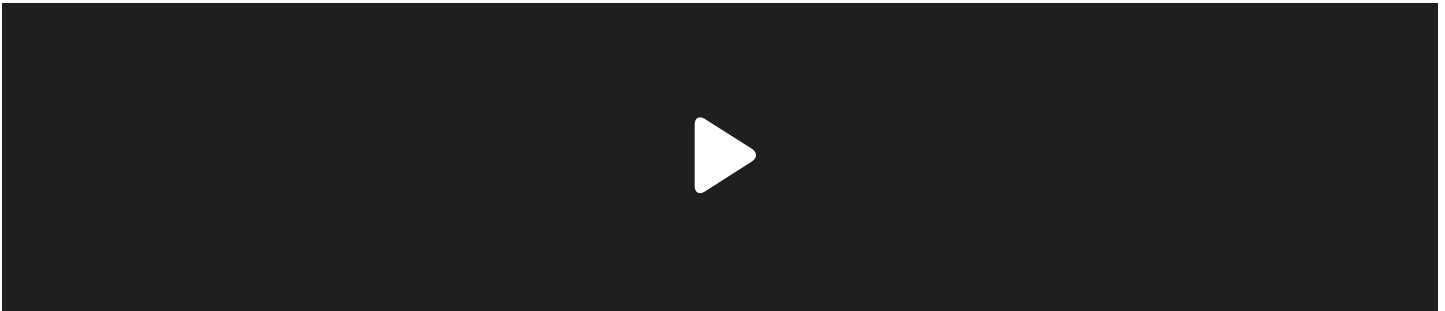
- Realize that God works to rescue and redeem His children in unique ways.
- Understand that Jesus rescued them from death, ransoming their lives through His sacrifice on the cross.
- Consider their favorite parts of their lives, and thank God for giving them a life to enjoy.

OVERVIEW:

Ruth gives us a fascinating story in Scripture. Ruth isn't a queen. She isn't a noblewoman. Her story is so remarkably personal, intimate, and, well...normal. Maybe that's one of the major appeals of Ruth's story – that it feels like it could happen to anyone. But while Ruth may not be a queen, she was royal in one way: simple, devoted, ordinary, everyday Ruth found herself in the direct lineage of king David and Jesus, Himself. How she happened to find herself there is a beautiful picture of God's grace and redemption.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

RUTH

- *Author:* No author is named in the book of Ruth, and church history has never really put forth any strong candidates.
- *Time frame:* The time frame has to be after David has become king since his genealogy and rise to power are mentioned. The book's events are often talked about in past tense, so it could have been written anytime after 1010 BC or so.
- *Purpose:* From the ESV Study Bible (Crossway): "Given the book of Ruth's interest in all Israel (4:7, 11), it may have been written in hopes that the 12 tribes, which divided into two nations c. 930 BC (see 1 Kings 12:1–20), would reunite."

REVELATION

- *Author:* The writer of Revelation identifies himself as John four times. Scholars agree that it is most likely John the Apostle, son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' most beloved disciples.
- *Time frame:* Revelation was written toward the end of John's life somewhere between 90 and 95 AD.
- *Purpose:* The purpose of Revelation was to reveal the fullness of Christ's identity and to provide hope for suffering believers who were encountering grave persecution and suffering at the time. Today, it provides us hope for what is to come, as well as a stark warning of the battle that rages until Christ returns.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**— An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**— A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**— A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**— An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To get students thinking about what it means to rescue someone and the cost and risk involved in executing a dangerous rescue mission.
- *Set-Up:* You’ll need to be prepared to display the “Rescue” image to your group. We’ve included it as a PDF and as a JPG. The PDF is probably your best bet if you’re printing the picture. If you’re dropping it into presentation software to display to your students, the JPG works best.

FIRST, explain that you’re going to show a photo of some brave people doing something great for someone else. Then, show the group the photo. **Ask:**

- **Tell me what’s going on here, as best you can tell.**
 - *Answers will vary.* Just let the group describe what they see.
- **What do you think would have happened to the person being rescued if this team of rescuers had not shown up?**
 - *Answer:* They might have died.

THEN, start a conversation that will get students thinking about the cost of rescuing someone. **Ask:**

- **While we don’t know the entire story behind this image, what may the rescuers have risked by being part of this effort?**
 - **Answers will vary,** but they could have risked injury or even death.
- **What else are they giving up by being a part of the rescue team?**
 - *Answers will vary* but may include: Time with family, free time, and perhaps a less stressful job that pays more money.
- **We’ve talked about the personal costs of the rescuers in terms of what they are giving up to be a part of the team. Are there any other costs that might have been associated with this rescue?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Potentially helicopters or fire trucks, equipment, and paying the salary of the team members all cost money.

NEXT, help your group explore why someone would invest and risk so much to rescue just one person.

- **That’s potentially a lot of resources to rescue this one person. Why do you think they do it?**
 - *Answers will vary,* but try to stress that the team probably thinks the person being rescued is worth it in some way.

FINALLY, tell your group there’s a connection between the rescue in the photo and the story they’re about to experience. **Say something like:**

- **Today we’re going to be continuing our look at the big-picture story of the Bible. This week, we’re going to look in the Old Testament at a story of a man who rescued someone, but in a different way than what you might be thinking. Let’s take a closer look.**

TRANSITION TO THE STORY.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* For students to realize that God works to rescue and redeem His children in unique ways.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app, and you'll need a whiteboard, flip chart, or some other way to write some notes down (and maybe draw some pictures, if you're feeling creative) so that everyone in the group can see them.

FIRST, let your group know that you will be studying an entire book of the Bible over the next few minutes, reading most of it out loud. Explain that it occurs during the time of the judges. (You may want to remind students that you studied the judges last week.) Tell them that it's an incredible story from start to finish and that it's difficult to grasp all that God is up to in the story without understanding the whole plot. Tell your group that to help you keep track of the story, you'll be writing (and maybe drawing) some notes on the board as you go along.

THEN, read or have a student read Ruth 1:1-18. Then, lead students in a brief discussion. (Note: As you work through this story, you will write or draw details about the story on the whiteboard. You'll need four different areas, one for each chapter in Ruth. Feel free to divide a whiteboard into four quadrants or just have enough pieces of flip chart paper.) **Ask:**

- **Who are the characters in this story so far?**
 - *Answer:* Naomi and her husband Elimelech, their sons Mahlon and Chilion, Mahlon's wife, Ruth, and Chilion's wife, Orpah. Write or draw those characters under the heading "Chapter One."
- **A lot of difficult things happen to Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah in chapter one. What are those things?**
 - *Answer:* Their husbands all die. (On your board, cross out Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion.) If students give other details, write them on the board.
- **One thing you should know about this: in Moab, not having a husband, father, or a grown son was very dangerous for a woman because they didn't think very highly of women. So Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah might be exploited or taken advantage of. What is Naomi's solution to that problem?**
 - *Answer:* Naomi decided to go back to her relatives in Israel, where she knew she would be cared for. She told Ruth and Naomi to find new husbands since they were still young.
- **And what do Ruth and Orpah decide to do?**
 - *Answer:* Orpah decides to take Naomi's advice, but Ruth refuses to leave Naomi and accompanies her back to Israel.

NEXT, read or have a student read 2:1-13. Then ask the following:

- **Even though Ruth and Naomi are in a safer place among the Israelites, they were still in a very difficult situation. They needed to figure out how to make ends meet and provide for themselves, and the best they could hope for was a life of poverty, barely having enough to survive. Israelite law provided for people who had very little—like widows such as Ruth and Naomi—by allowing them to pick the leftovers of crops. Whose field does Ruth happen to gather food in?**
 - *Answer:* Boaz. (Write him on the board under "Chapter Two.")
- **Why does Boaz go out of his way to help Ruth?**
 - *Answers* will vary but might include: Ruth's husband was a relative of Boaz, Ruth had gone out of her way to be kind to Naomi, and perhaps Boaz was attracted to Ruth. (As students answer, write notes on the board.)

THEN, read or have a student read 3:1-14. **Ask:**

- **In the first paragraph (verses 1-5), what does Naomi tell Ruth to do? And why is Naomi coming up with this plan?**
 - *Answer:* When Naomi says to Ruth: "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for," Naomi hopes that Ruth will marry Boaz. (Write or draw the answers on the board under "Chap-

ter Three.”)

- **Do you find this plan odd?**
 - Allow students to feel the strangeness of Naomi’s plan and its moral muddiness. Explain that while it’s clear what Naomi hopes to accomplish, some people might disagree on how she’s going about it. Is she hoping that Boaz will sleep with Ruth while he’s drunk and, according to Israelite law, be forced to marry Ruth? Or is she so sure of Boaz and Ruth’s integrity that she knew things would happen just as they did? Ask your group to chime in with their opinions.
- **Through this weird exchange, Boaz pledges to marry Ruth. But there’s a catch in 3:12. What’s the catch?**
 - *Answer:* There is a closer relative who can be the kinsman-redeemer (some translations say guardian-redeemer or simply redeemer). Make sure you write the details of Boaz’s pledge to marry Ruth on the board.
- **We keep seeing the term “redeemer.” Based on the story so far, what do you think it is?**
 - *Let students try to find the answer,* but help them land on this definition: if a woman finds herself in a situation like Ruth’s—widowed and without kids—the closest male relative of the late husband was supposed to take the widow as his wife in order to make sure she was cared for. Often, the children from that marriage would inherit the late husband’s estate.

NEXT, read or have a student read chapter 4. Then say:

- **Let’s keep track of how this story wraps up. Tell me, what exactly happens between Boaz and the guy who’s the closer relative?**
 - *Answer:* The closer relative was happy to acquire the land that had belonged to Elimelech, Naomi’s late husband, until he found out he would need to marry Ruth, which could negatively impact his own children’s inheritance. (Write down that plot point under “Chapter Four” on the board.)
- **So Boaz steps up, and all is well, right? But a significant detail is buried at the end of the story in verse 17. What’s that detail?**
 - *Answer:* Boaz and Ruth end up being the great-grandparents of King David.
- **Ruth being an ancestor to King David is really cool, but looking ahead to the New Testament, does anyone know who has David as a great-great-great-great- (lots more “greats”) -grandfather?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus! Whether you look at Jesus’ genealogy through Mary or his earthly father, Joseph, the line goes through David. In fact, Matthew—who wrote one of the gospels—goes out of his way to remind people that Ruth is an earthly ancestor of Jesus.

WRAP UP your discussion of the book of Ruth by explaining that this is a great love story, but it’s so much more. Say something like:

- The themes of redemption and faith are powerful elements of the story. Boaz rescued Ruth (and Naomi), and as we look for the Gospel throughout the Bible, the theme of rescue should jump off the page at us.

IF STUDENTS DON’T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD AND LOOK TO SEE WHERE WE FIND THE CONNECTION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE BIG-PICTURE NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

THE THREAD

FIRST, have your group turn to Revelation 5. While they find it, briefly give your group some background of what they're about to read. Say:

- John was given a glimpse into heaven and eternity and recorded his experience in Revelation. A major theme in Revelation is that Jesus is the King of heaven, and much of Revelation points to the fact that his Kingship was confirmed through His sacrifice for us on the cross.

THEN, read or have a student read Revelation 5:9-10. When finished, say something like:

- There's another piece of information that we're missing in this short passage that will help us see how it connects with Ruth. In Ruth's time, when an Israelite fell on hard times, they might mortgage their land for extra money—something Naomi's husband probably had to do. To get the land back, that person (or a descendant) would need to repay the loan. Since neither Elimelech nor his sons were around to repay the debt, only a redeemer could open the deed once he followed through on his responsibility to marry the owner's widow and purchase the land, repaying the debt. When Boaz did this by marrying Ruth and buying back Elimelech's land, what did he do for Ruth and Naomi?
 - *Answer:* He saved them from poverty and a fairly hopeless situation.
- So what does it mean that Jesus was the only one who was worthy to open the scroll in Revelation 5?
 - Allow your group to wrestle through this concept, but make sure they arrive at this point: Jesus was the only one who could redeem us from the bondage and penalty of sin.
- Boaz had to purchase the land or pay off the debt as part of being the redeemer for Ruth. Looking at Revelation 5:9-10, how did Jesus pay our debt of sin?
 - *Answer:* He was slain and bought our freedom with His own blood.

FINALLY, help your students clearly see the connection between Ruth's story and what Jesus did for us.

- Think about Ruth's life shortly after her husband died and how she was left with little hope. How did Boaz change her life by marrying her?
 - *Answers will vary.* Write them under the "Chapter Four" section on the whiteboard. When they are done giving answers, write "New Life" in the same section and say...
- In essence, Boaz gave Ruth a new life. In the same way, Jesus gave us new life when He redeemed us by dying on the cross. When we come to faith in Christ, we are saved from the death our sin has earned us.

IF YOUR STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE "WRAPPING UP" SECTION.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* Students will consider their favorite parts of their lives and thank God for giving them a life to enjoy.
- *Set-Up:* You'll need the picture you used in Getting Started and the whiteboard with the notes you wrote during the study.

FIRST, remind your group of the photo of the rescue from Getting Started by showing it to them again. Say something like:

- Remember this photo? As we wrap up, let's look at it from the point of view of the person being rescued. What do you suppose this person felt before realizing that help had arrived and they would be okay?
 - *Answers will vary* but might include: Scared, sad about possibly not seeing loved ones again, or perhaps angry.
- And once they were rescued, how do you think those feelings changed?
 - *Answers will vary* but might include: Relieved, grateful, or happy.

NEXT, help students think about how we should respond to God rescuing us. **Ask:**

- **Do you think that the experience of being in a life-threatening situation changed how this person lived their life? How so?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **So, if God rescued us from an even bigger danger, why do we not always respond with the same gratefulness we imagine the person in the photo may have?**
 - *Answers will vary*, but make sure you allow your group to wrestle through this question.

THEN, help your students come up with practical ways to show God we're thankful for His rescue. **Say something like:**

- **The reality is that it's easy not to really think much about what God did for us because it's not in front of us every single day. It may be that, over time, this rescued person in the photo returned to the same routine as before the rescue. But God rescued us from death, and because of that, it should change how we look at and enjoy our lives. So to finish up, we're going to practice being grateful to God for our rescue by answering this question: what are some things in your lives that you really cherish?**
 - As students answer, write their responses where there is still space on the whiteboard. Some answers will be surface-level, and some will be more personal. That's okay; just let students answer as they will.

FINALLY, challenge students to regularly be grateful for God's rescue by being thankful for the life we get to live. **Say something like:**

- **Being grateful to God for sending Jesus to rescue us sometimes means simply enjoying the life and freedom God has given us. This week, every time you get to enjoy one of these things, try to say a quick prayer: "Thanks, God!" It may seem silly at first, but by the end of the week, I bet it helps all of us be a little more grateful for God's rescue.**

If your students don't have any more questions, close your time in prayer.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 15 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.