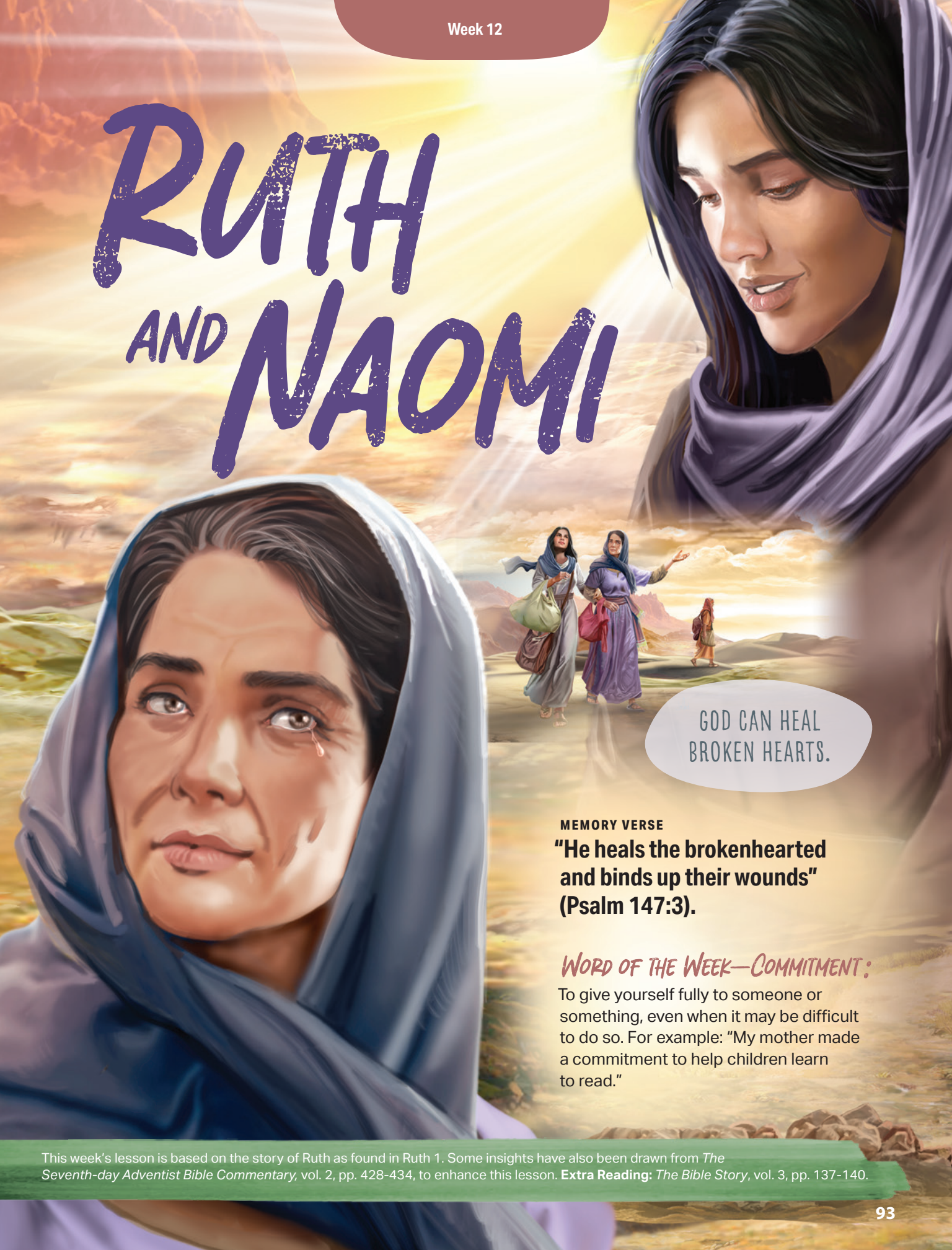
Ruth and Naomi



GOD CAN HEAL BROKEN HEARTS.

MEMORY VERSE

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Word of the Week—Commitment:

To give yourself fully to someone or something, even when it may be difficult to do so. For example: "My mother made a commitment to help children learn to read."

This week's lesson is based on the story of Ruth as found in Ruth 1. Some insights have also been drawn from *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 2, pp. 428-434, to enhance this lesson. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 3, pp. 137-140.

SUNDAY

God's Forever Promise

The story of God's promise to Abraham still echoed around the campfire at night. When the stars came out the promise seemed even brighter. God had indeed blessed the children of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, making them into a large people group: the children of Israel.

Now generations after Moses had led the people through the wilderness and back into the land God had promised them, the faithful ones continued to tell of God's deliverance. The stories needed to be heard, for many in Israel had turned to idols instead of worshipping God.

Elimelech, a man from the tribe of Judah, knew the stories of God's care. He also knew the Israelites were now facing disaster. What was threatening their lives? Read the first sentence of **Ruth 1:1.**

Elimelech saw that the fields of grain in his home of Bethlehem were withered, the ground was cracked and dry, and the animals were dying from hunger. His wife, Naomi, had little to feed their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. What would he do?

Just as Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph's family moved to foreign lands when they were hungry, Elimelech decided to move to the land of Moab until the famine in Canaan was over. There was plenty of fresh water there and rich soil for growing all the food his little family would need. They would miss their home in Canaan terribly, but they knew that God would be with them in a strange and foreign land, for He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Sometimes parents have to make difficult decisions because they are committed to doing the best they can to care for their families. God kept His promise to Abraham, and He will continue to keep His promises. God is with you and your family to help and guide you, whatever changes come your way.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *When have those who care for you had to make a difficult decision that was for the best?*

Pray: Thank God for always keeping His promises.

Do: Do you know anyone who has moved to a new country because life was difficult back home? What could your family do to help them settle into their lives in a different and strange place? Commit to helping in some way.

Mission Challenge: Invite your friend who came to Sabbath School to come with you again, or to share family worship with you.

MONDAY

Heartbreak in a Strange Land

Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, and Chilion loaded up their belongings and traveled down the dusty roads of Canaan, across the Jordan River, and up to the highlands of Moab, where the grass was green and lush. Here the family lived and had plenty to eat. All around them the Moabites worshipped idols, but the little family from Bethlehem continued to worship the one and only true God, who loved and cared for them.

Then came the very saddest of days. Elimelech died. Heartbroken, Naomi bravely did her best to care for Mahlon and Chilion on her own. What gave Naomi the strength and courage to carry on after Elimelech died? **Read Psalm 34:18.**

Life was hard, but she knew that "God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1, ICB). Just as God had comforted Jacob when he lost Rachel, He was close to Naomi in her grief.

Life became a little easier after her sons were married. They brought their wives, Ruth and Orpah, to their family home, as the custom was in those days. Naomi grew to love them, and they her, for she was a loving and unselfish mother-in-law. As Ruth and Orpah lived with God's family, they came to learn that the God of heaven is a God of love, so very different from the idol gods their families worshipped. And they were truly happy.

Our loving God can see your heart, and He knows when it is hurting. He can help you get through heartbreak too. God understands the sadness you feel if your pet dies, or you lose a grandparent, or your best friend moves away. His promises are for you to claim too.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *What would you have done to comfort Naomi if you had been there?*
- *Is there something in your life that has made you sad or heartbroken? God wants to heal your heart and make you happy again.*

Do: Draw a heart and color it red. Now, place a Band-Aid/plaster/bandage over the heart and write on it with a marker: Psalm 147:3. Can you recite your memory verse? Consider sharing it with someone you know.

Pray: Place your hands over your heart and thank God for His promise to be with you when you are heartbroken.

Parent Faith Talk: Share a heartbreak you have experienced and how God got you through it. What Bible verse helped you to be strong?





DO: Hugs can be a blessing to sad or heartbroken people. Think about people in your life who may appreciate a hug: parents, grandparents, cousins, siblings. If appropriate, give them one.

☐ **TUESDAY**

God Understands

Happy years slipped by, and then heartbreak came again to Naomi's family. Mahlon and Chilion died, leaving both Ruth and Orpah without their husbands and Naomi without her precious sons.

Grief filled their hearts and their little home in Moab. Gone was the joy of working and sharing meals together. Gone was the possibility of children and grandchildren to bring laughter to busy days. And gone was any hope of carrying on the family name of Elimelech. This was truly heartbreaking, as this name linked them with God's chosen people: with Abraham in their past, and God's promised rescuer in their future.

FAST FACT: Research tells us we need four hugs a day for survival, and eight to remain emotionally healthy.

The three widows cried together. They understood each other's sorrow and supported each other. Through it all they clung to the knowledge that God was with them, even though it might not always have felt like it. Underneath all their grief they knew that "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). God was committed to Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah, loving them and slowly healing them. What a wonderful, wonderful God!

When our hearts are broken we sometimes feel all alone, as if no one understands what we're going through. But others have experienced heartbreak too. They can support us when our hearts are broken, and we can support them through their heartbreak. The Bible also reminds us that no matter how broken we may feel, God understands. All He really needs is for us to bring our load of grief to Him. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *Read **John 11:35**. How much does this verse help you to know that God understands His heartbroken children?*
- *What do you think might happen next in the story?*

PRAY: Hug your parents as you pray together for anyone you know who is grieving, and for all the heartbroken people in the world.

WEDNESDAY

God's Truth about Death

Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion lay buried. Their lives on this earth had come to an end, but was that the end of their story? Have you ever wondered what happens to people when they die? The Bible has the answers. Let's take a look.

1. Death is called a "sleep." John 11:11-13 tells us, "After Jesus said this, he added, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. But I am going there to wake him.' . . . Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead" (ICB). Jesus woke Lazarus up and raised him from the dead after he had been buried in a tomb for four days. David and Daniel also called death a sleep (Psalm 13:3; Daniel 12:2). (Note: Although the Bible likens death to a sleep because Jesus can wake up those who have died, death and sleep are not the same thing. A dead person has stopped breathing, but when we sleep at night we continue to breathe. Make sure your child understands this without worrying about going to sleep at night.)
2. Dead people don't know anything (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). If they don't know anything, what can't they do? *Read Psalm 6:5 and 115:17.*
3. Some people, even some Christians, believe that people go to heaven when they die and that they can look down on their friends and family on the earth and come to visit them. But that is not true, for Job 7:9, 10 says, "So he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, Nor shall his place know him anymore."
4. When Jesus comes what happens to those who have died? Read *John 5:28, 29 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.* Won't that be a wonderful day for those who love God and are sleeping in their graves!
5. There will be no death in heaven or the new earth, for Revelation 21:4 says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."

DO: If possible go to a cemetery with your family, or if that's not appropriate in your culture, ask an adult to describe what it's like. Imagine being there when Jesus returns to call people from their graves. Pray that God will comfort the families of the people buried there.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *What do you think Naomi would have looked forward to most about heaven?*
- *Whom could you comfort with God's truth about death?*

It is comforting to know that death is not the end of the story for people who love God. We can look forward to spending time with them in heaven, after Jesus has woken them up from their sleep.

PRAY: Thank God that you have been able to learn the truth about death.



THURSDAY

Heading Home

Naomi had heard the most exciting news: the famine in Canaan was over! This was great news to Naomi, for she had missed her homeland and her relatives there. At last, after 10 years in Moab, she would return to the Promised Land. God had made a way!

Ruth and Orpah began the trek toward Bethlehem with Naomi, for they loved their mother-in-law and were committed to caring for her. Along the way, Naomi thought about how things might be for the two young widows in a strange land so different from Moab. She sadly but kindly told them to go home to their own mothers. What good things did she wish for them? **Read Ruth 1:9.**

The young women burst into tears and said no, but Naomi insisted. Finally Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth clung to her mother-in-law. Naomi tried to persuade her to return with Orpah, but Ruth had made up her mind. In words never to be forgotten she promised Naomi, "Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16).

What a beautiful commitment to come from a young woman who was willing to give up relatives, friends, and everything familiar. Ruth loved not only her mother-in-law but also the God of heaven.

With happy hearts, the two women continued their journey together. Their loving commitment to each other was deep and true.

Ruth's only knowledge of our wonderful God was what she saw in Naomi, and this led her to commit to Him. The loveliness of the way you live your life can win others to Jesus too.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *Read **Psalm 46:7**. How well do you think Naomi and Ruth knew this truth? How well do you know it?*
- *Why do you think Ruth went with Naomi? How many possible reasons can you think of?*

Do: If there are new Christians in your church, plan two or three questions to ask them about how they came to make their commitment to Jesus.

Pray: Thank God for helping you live your life in ways that draw others to Him.



For You, Parents:
"The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian" (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing,* p. 470). Be encouraged; God is working in your life to grow "a loving and lovable Christian."



FRIDAY

Naomi's Home!

The whole of Bethlehem was abuzz! Naomi was home! In the midst of the excitement some of the women said, *"Is this Naomi?"* (Ruth 1:19).

Yes, it was Naomi, but not the same Naomi who had left home with Elimelech and her sons. The years away had been hard ones. Naomi said to the women, "I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty" (Ruth 1:21). Naomi was being honest about how she felt. Sometimes her life still seemed empty without her husband and sons, for God heals broken hearts over time.

Bethlehem reminded Naomi of good times with Elimelech and their little boys and what she'd lost. It was tough, but she faced it with Ruth. Ruth had brought gladness to Naomi's broken heart. Together with God, they would start a new life in Bethlehem. The Lord had brought them home.

As God heals broken hearts over time, painful memories and reminders of loved ones pop up. These are called triggers. They may be as small as seeing a loved one's favorite flower or as big as going into their room. We can be patient and kind when triggers bring pain to others or to ourselves. We can also pray to God as David did: "Turn to me and be kind to me. I am lonely and hurting" (Psalm 25:16, ICB). Our loving God truly understands, and He is committed to healing broken hearts.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *Sometimes special days, such as birthdays or Mother's/Father's Days, are difficult for people who have lost someone close. What could you do to bring them comfort and friendship on these days?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Search online for the narrative song "The God Who Sees," by Nicole C. Mullen and Kathie Lee Gifford, which includes Ruth's story. Watch it together.
- Read Galatians 6:10. Discuss what this verse might look like in your family.
- Give each family member a small card or piece of paper as a "Commitment Card."
- Each choose a different family member and write on the card something good you will do for them during the next week.

Family Journal

- One thing I've learned about God in this story is that . . .
- When one of my friends or family members is heartbroken, I will . . .

Pray

As a family, pray a popcorn prayer. Praise God in short sentences, thanking Him for what you have learned about Him in this lesson.



WATCH: With your family, search for "Alaskan Wood Frog" online to see this incredible transformation.

SABBATH SPECIAL

Deep-Frozen Frogs

While death seems so final to us, that's not how God sees it. When Jesus was here on earth, He told us that people who have died are just sleeping, even though their hearts have stopped beating. He said this because He can, and *will*, wake them up! God has given us a powerful lesson in nature that shows us His power over life and death.

Did you know that you can deep-freeze a frog—not all frogs, but Alaskan wood frogs?

Most of the animals in Alaska head south for the winter to escape the freezing temperatures but not the frogs. Just before winter the wood frogs do a very strange thing: they freeze!

Once the first snowflakes reach the wood frogs, their skin freezes and their bodies become stiff and crunchy. They don't freeze totally solid, but almost. If you picked them up they wouldn't move, and if you bent one of their legs it would snap off. They have basically become a "frogsicle," because most of the water in their body has turned to ice.

Inside the frog amazing things are happening—things that defy science. When a wood frog is frozen, its heart stops beating, its blood stops flowing around its body, and it stops breathing. Scientists who study these frogs say that in this frozen state they could classify the frog as dead. But it isn't dead—it is just "sleeping."

The most mind-blowing thing of all is that the frogs can stay in this frozen state for up to seven months, in temperatures as low as 1.4°F (–17°C). Then when summer arrives and the sun shines on them, they thaw out and hop away! The warming sun causes their hearts to start beating again, and they rise from their sleepy, frozen state back to life.

His warm, loving presence will recreate and bring to life those who have died, just as if waking them from sleep. He will make their new hearts beat again and they will rise, alive in Him.

Remember this: God has the power to restart hearts. He can, and will, make the dead live again!