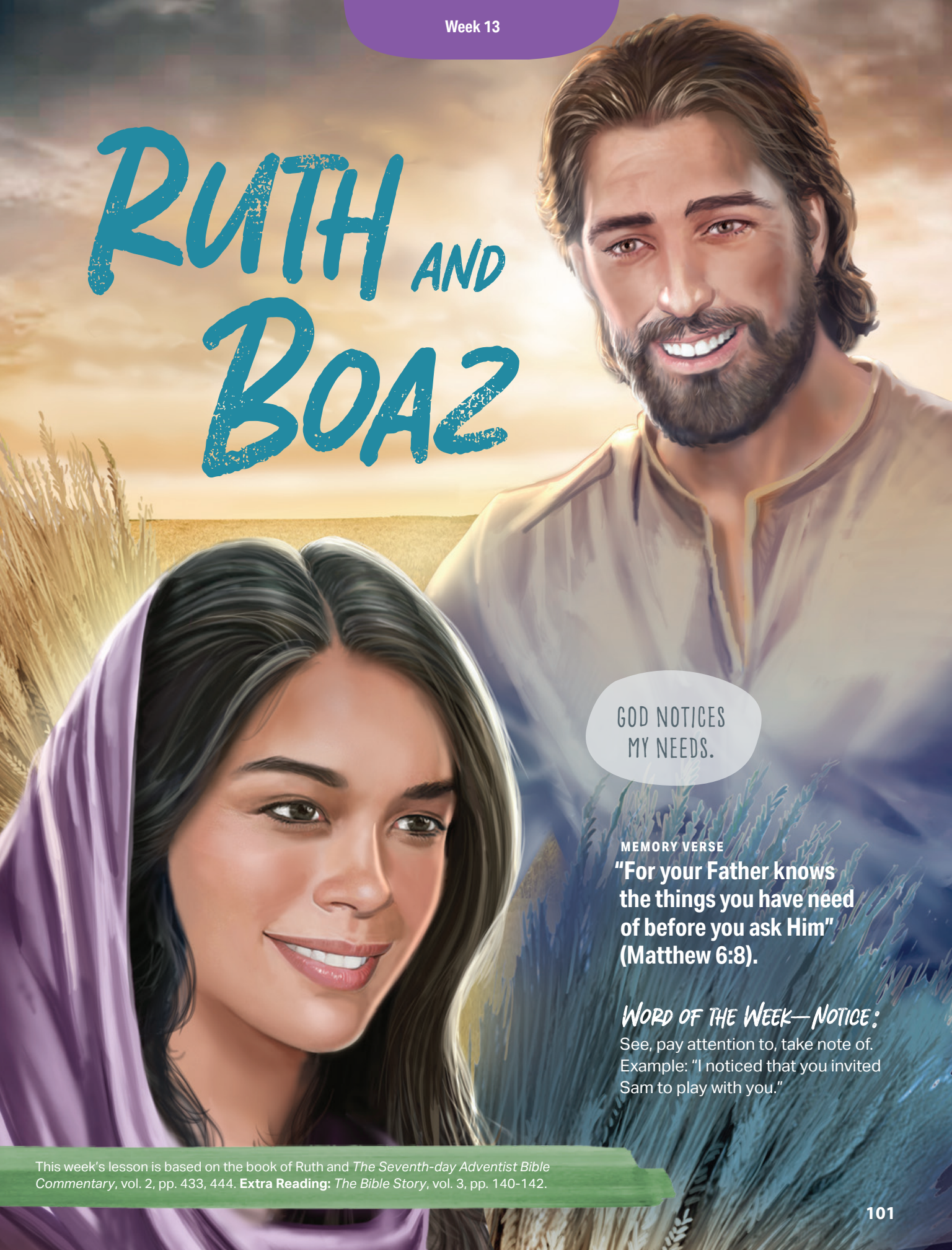
Ruth and Boaz



MEMORY VERSE

"For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).

Word of the Week—Notice:

See, pay attention to, take note of. Example: "I noticed that you invited Sam to play with you."

This week's lesson is based on the book of Ruth and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 433, 444. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 3, pp. 140-142.



☐ SUNDAY

Food from the Fields

Ruth sat thinking. What could she do to provide food for herself and her mother-in-law? She had made a commitment to make a home and life here in Bethlehem with Naomi, promising to adopt Naomi's God and her people as her own. She was determined to do her best to honor her commitment. But first, how could she help meet their most basic need—food?

The answer came as she watched the fields of Boaz, "a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech" (Ruth 2:1). Ruth and Naomi had returned at the beginning of the barley harvest, and Ruth's keen eyes noticed all the action happening in the beautiful fields of ripe barley and wheat, grains used to make bread. Men were reaping; they were cutting the tall stalks and tying them into bundles. Ruth also noticed women gleaning: they followed behind the reapers, searching for grain that was left behind.

With a bright idea in mind, Ruth rushed to Naomi. She asked, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor" (Ruth 2:2). What was Naomi's reply? *Read Ruth 2:2.*

Naomi knew this was God's way of providing for them, because He had given the children of Israel a law long ago, so they would always look after the needs of the poor. It said, "Do not harvest all the way to the corners of your fields. If grain falls onto the ground, don't gather it up" (Leviticus 19:9, ICB).

Our caring God notices people's needs and provides for them in different ways. Sometimes He prompts kind friends or strangers to notice and help, and sometimes He shows us ways we can help ourselves.

DO: Challenge yourself to share your memory verse with three people this week.

PRAY: Thank God for noticing your needs before you even ask Him for help.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *Different people have different needs: friendship, a smile, help with a difficult job, food, a ride somewhere, etc. How good are you at noticing the needs of others?*

MONDAY

Kindness in the Gleaning Fields

In the early-morning light Ruth found a field and began gleaning behind the reapers. She bent low, searching and gathering. During the morning Boaz, the landowner, arrived at the field and greeted his workers, "The Lord be with you" (Ruth 2:4). As he looked out over his bundles of barley, he noticed Ruth and asked who the new gleaner was.

Boaz walked over and spoke kindly to Ruth. What did he say? *Read Ruth 2:8, 9.*

Ruth bowed low and humbly asked, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" (Ruth 2:10).

Boaz had heard how Ruth had cared for Naomi. He noticed how much Ruth, a foreigner, loved and trusted God. With a kind voice he told her that God would reward her, "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge" (Ruth 2:12).

He was saying Ruth was like a little chick who had run under its mother's wings to be protected from danger. We can do the same and say to God, "You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God, and I trust you" (Psalm 91:2, ICB).

Boaz acted as a protector and place of refuge for Ruth too. He told her to glean only in his fields so she would be safe. He gave her lunch and a cool drink. He told his men to purposely leave grain for her and make sure she was safe. He was a provider and protector, just like God.

Our caring God wants us to come to Him and trust Him to provide for our needs, just like a trusting little chick. God is also happy when we notice the needs of others and do what we can to provide for them.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *How does God provide for your needs?*
- *How does your community provide for the needs of people who don't have enough to eat?*

Do: Read **Psalm 91:4**. How does this help you understand what Boaz said? You might like to draw a chick under its mother's wing and write your name on it.

For You, Parents: As a busy parent be encouraged, for God notices and provides for your needs too. "Jesus pointed His hearers to the birds as they warbled their carols of praise, unencumbered with thoughts of care, for 'they sow not, neither do they reap;' and yet the Father provides for their needs. And He asks, 'Are not ye of much more value than they?' (Matthew 6:25, RV)" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 95).

Pray: Thank God for being your place of safety and protection.



Fast Fact: When a mother hen senses danger, she quickly makes a special "danger" clucking sound to call her chicks to her. She scoops them in under her wings and huddles on the ground so they cannot be seen.

TUESDAY

A Big Basket of Grain

Whack, whack, whack. Ruth used a big stick to beat the seeds of grain from the barley stalks she had gathered throughout the day. Then she put the grain in a basket and weighed it. Almost 30 pounds (14 kilograms)! That was a lot to glean in one day. She lifted the heavy basket to her shoulders and hurried home.

Naomi's mouth dropped in surprise when she saw that bulging basket of grain. She knew instantly that such a big basket was the product of kindness. She asked, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you" (Ruth 2:19).

The name of Boaz quickly tumbled from Ruth's mouth. How did Naomi respond, and what did she reveal about Boaz? **Read Ruth 2:20.**

Gladly Ruth told her mother-in-law all about his kindness and how Boaz had told her to glean only in his fields for the rest of the harvest season.

That night Naomi and Ruth would have praised God again as they feasted on fresh roasted grain together and planned to grind the grain to make bread. God had blessed them through Boaz's kindness. Their God had lovingly kept His promise to care for them. The Bible says, "The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord" (Psalm 22:26).

God loves it when we praise Him for providing for our needs in amazing ways. God can use us to provide for the needs of others, just as He used Boaz. Then those we have helped can praise Him too.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *How would you have felt if you had been Ruth at the end of that first day of gleaning?*
- *What might you have said in prayer that night?*

Do: As a family, challenge yourselves to notice the needs of a person or family in your community. Make a plan to reach out and kindly help them.

Mission Challenge: Find out what would help the friend whom you invited to Sabbath School learn more about Jesus. Do they need a ride to church with your family, or might they like to come to your home to hear some Bible stories?

Pray: Naomi praised God. Pray a prayer of praise, thanking God for something that begins with each letter of the word "praise": P R A I S E.





WEDNESDAY

A Surprising Custom

While Ruth gleaned in the fields under the hot sun, Naomi's thoughts often wandered. She wished that Ruth could have a husband. She was such a good, kind, and loving woman.

Then Naomi remembered a law in Israel. It said that if a woman's husband died before they had a son, she could ask her husband's closest relative to buy the land that had belonged to her husband. Women could not own land. If the relative chose to buy the land, he would also marry her. This way, the land would go to their firstborn son when he grew up and stay in the family.

Naomi's eyes twinkled, for Boaz was Elimelech's closest relative! And it was clear that Ruth had a special place in his heart. So Naomi told Ruth about this law, and about the unusual custom she would need to follow to see if Boaz was interested in becoming her husband. What did Naomi tell Ruth to do? Read Ruth 3:3, 4.

Ruth trusted her mother-in-law and replied, "All that you say to me I will do" (Ruth 3:5). And so she did. That night she timidly crept to where Boaz lay sleeping on a bed of straw and lay still at his feet. As Boaz slept, Ruth waited and wondered. *What would happen? Would Boaz accept her?* She surely hoped so.

God noticed Ruth's need for love and protection. And He helped Naomi remember the law and custom that could allow her to marry Boaz. Our loving God notices what you need too, even when you don't. He knows what you need now and in the future.

DO: Put your finger on the words below that could describe Ruth in today's story.

brave sneaky scared
trusting hopeful annoyed
respectful hard-working

PRAY: Thank God for knowing your needs, even when you don't.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *What did God notice Ruth needed?*
- *Read* ***Matthew 6:8*** *(your memory verse). Reflect on how it applied to Ruth and how it might apply to you. Practice learning it by memory.*
- *Think about the difference between your needs and your wants. Why is it important to know the difference?*

Parent Faith Talk:
Share a time God knew of your needs before you did and provided for you ahead of time.

THURSDAY

Wedding Celebrations

As Boaz turned in his sleep, his foot suddenly touched something. Startled, he jerked upward and noticed the shape of a woman lying in the darkness at his feet. "Who are you?" he questioned (Ruth 3:9).

Ruth answered softly, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take me under your wing, for you are a close relative" (Ruth 3:9). How did Boaz reply? **Read Ruth 3:10-14.**

Ruth lay at his feet until morning, just as Boaz had said. Then before daylight she quietly crept home with presents of barley from Boaz for Naomi.

It must have been an anxious morning for Ruth. Would kind Boaz marry her, or would she be bound to another? After hearing what had happened, Naomi told her, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day" (Ruth 3:18).

Sure enough, before the day was done Ruth had her answer. Boaz beamed as he shared the news that the other relative had decided not to buy the land and marry her. Kind and protective Boaz was free to marry loving and gentle Ruth!

Boaz had noticed and cared for Ruth in her sad time of need; now he would always be with her to love and protect her. Just like our faithful God.

In time God gave them a baby boy whom they named Obed. When Obed was grown he became the father of Jesse, and Jesse became the father of King David. Ruth, the Moabite who chose Naomi's God, became the mother of kings. And best of all, God chose Ruth to be included in the family line of His own dear Son, Jesus.

DO: Ruth trusted the true God who noticed her. To remind you to trust Him too, turn all or part of Isaiah 41:10 into a poster.

PRAY: Thank God for those who love and care for you.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *How did God generously provide for Ruth in this story?*
- *Whom do you think Ruth might have noticed and helped once she was the wife of a wealthy farmer?*

God noticed Boaz and Ruth's needs and knew they would be very happy together. God knows your need for love and affection too.



FRIDAY

My God Is Always With Me

God says, "So don't worry, because I am with you. . . . I will make you strong and will help you" (Isaiah 41:10, ICB).

Joseph and Ruth, two of the main characters in our lessons this quarter, had learned and loved the truth of these beautiful words. One was a favorite son, the other a woman from a foreign land. Their lives had such different starting points, yet they both came to believe and live by the same truth: *My God is always with me.*

For Joseph this meant trusting God when he was in a pit, sold as a slave and taken to a strange land, made a servant, wrongly accused, and forgotten in prison. For Ruth this meant trusting God as a heartbroken widow, as a lonely female traveler leaving her land and people behind, as a foreigner in a new place, and as a poor gleaner trying to find food to survive.

Neither Joseph nor Ruth could see the happy ending to their story; only God could, for He sees the end from the beginning and notices everything. God was right there with them, no matter what was going on in their lives.

When you live knowing God is always with you, you can trade worry for peace, no matter what's happening around you. *Read Philippians 4:7.*

Jesus invites you to trust Him and enjoy this great peace too. He loves you. He notices you. He knows your needs. He gives you peace. He is always with you. Always.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *What experiences in your life have reminded you that God is always with you?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Have family members secretly draw something from Ruth or Naomi's life. Display them and discuss what we can learn from each picture. Put them in order, point to each picture, and say together, "Our God is always with us!"
- Brainstorm all the ways God noticed and provided for Ruth's needs.
- Sing "My God Loves Me" or "Jesus Loves Me." Think about how He is always with you, loving you.

Family Journal

- What have you learned from both Ruth and Boaz in this week's story?
- Write a prayer to God in response to this week's lesson.

Pray

Hold hands and each thank God for a need He has noticed and provided for in your life.



SABBATH SPECIAL

Acts of Kindness

I watched mom pull out of the driveway to go run an errand. She would be gone for quite a while. I turned to my brother Phillip. "What do you want to do? We have the house all to ourselves."

Phillip shrugged. "I don't know. What do you want to do?"

We gave the matter some careful thought. After all, it wasn't every day we had the house to ourselves. Watching TV didn't sound very interesting. Neither did playing with the model train. Suddenly we were struck with an exciting idea.

My brother and I vacuumed every carpet. We made every bed. We washed every dish. We dusted. We even cleaned the bathrooms. And we worked *fast*, because we weren't sure when Mom was going to come home, and we wanted to be completely finished when she walked through the door.

We did finish before Mom got home. That day stands out because Mom was so happy to see all the housework done and because we showed her how much we loved her. Out of all the things my brother and I could have done that day, I'm glad we chose to make Mom happy.

This happened many years ago. I can't remember the other times my brother and I stayed home by ourselves. They might have been important to me at the time, but now they have no meaning. I do remember that day, however, because of the kindness we showed our mother. I doubt I would still remember that day if we had just watched television.

Challenge: Look for a time this week to surprise your mom by kindly doing something you notice needs doing.

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