

Do you believe that God provides leaders at given times to guide the congregation? Interview one of the leaders in your congregation.

What women have given you wise counsel? Was Deborah the only female who filled this high calling of a judge. How do you affirm and use the gifts of women in your congregation?

## RESPONDING TO GOD

*Song of response:* SS 31 *Jesus, be the center*

*Prayers of the people* (Include prayers for congregational, local, and national leaders.)

## SENDING

*Song:* HWB 418 *Move in our midst*

*Benediction:* *Words for Worship 2*, 165

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Session Three

# Ruth and Naomi



*Text:* Ruth

*Focus statement:* Outsiders can teach us about God's love.

*Visuals:* Stalks of grain, basket, passport, knapsack, items we use from various cultures

## GATHERING

*Welcome*

*Call to worship:* SS 190 or litany "God's Love" in *Together* p. 6.

*Prayer:* SJ 139

## PRAISING

*Song suggestions:*

SJ 3 *Jesus calls us here to meet him*

SJ 44 *The Love of God*

HWB 306 *In Christ there is no East or West*

HWB 362 *Help us to help each other*

## OFFERING

## LISTENING TO GOD

**Time of confession:** *Words for Worship 2*, 58 or:

Eternal God, God of all people and places, we confess that our ears are closed to voices of pain and wisdom when they speak in accents other than our own. Our sensibilities are jarred by the way those we call “foreign” express their faith in Christ. We cling to the pride of nation and denomination as if we have a special claim on truth and your love.

Gracious God, forgive us and renew a right spirit within us, a spirit of compassion, understanding, and humility. Enable us to incarnate God’s love and to see God’s love in new ways.

**Children’s time:**

There are many children’s books that feature this theme of who’s in and who is out. Examples: *One Green Apple* by Eve Bunting (Clarion Books) about a young immigrant who gains self-confidence when the green apple she picks perfectly complements the other students red apples; *You are Special* by Max Lucado (Crossway Books) is a touching story about God’s love for us regardless of our abilities or looks. Remind the children that God loves everyone the same, and we can experience God’s love from people who are the same and different from us.

**Song:** SS 117 *How can I say*

**Scripture reading:** Ruth 1:22-2:13 or “Fun Bible Skits 2,” Ruth.

**Sermon seeds:** (See *Connect* and *Youth* for additional inspiration.)

Ruth was a foreigner and a widow. We are challenged in the scriptures to give special attention to persons in those categories. Instead, we more readily feel superior, looking down on those who wear dirty clothes, speak differently than us, or don’t fit in socially. Who are the outsiders in your community, your congregation? How do we respond to immigrants? Consider the hospitality level of your congregation. Do we, like Boaz, give more than what is required, particularly to those we consider different? God uses unexpected people to fulfill God’s purposes. Conclude with HWB 683.

## RESPONDING TO GOD

**Song of response:** SS 52 *Whatever you do*

**Prayers of the people**

## SENDING

**Song:** HWB 322 *For we are strangers no more*

**Benediction:** *Words for Worship 2*, 156, or Colossians 3:12-17

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