

HARVEST PRIMARY CLASS SERVICE



AIM

- To explore the Bible story of Ruth and Boaz and to find out how those going through tough times were provided for.
- To teach that harvest is a time to give thanks to God for all that he gives us and to work towards ensuring everyone has food to eat.
- To encourage children to take positive action to act compassionately and justly through raising awareness of poverty and what food banks provide.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Wheat-shaped outlines for children to write their own prayers to thank God for farmers, fruit, vegetables, favourite food, kindness and compassion
- Pencils, colouring pens and scissors
- The children can act out the story, read the parts which can be allocated before or on the day
- Box for children to place food tins and packets in

PREPARATION

- Read the guidelines for food collections
- Ask for donations as appropriate through school newsletters or other communication channels
- Make copies of the story for children to read their parts
- Photocopy enough wheat-shaped outlines
- Prepare somewhere to display the children's prayers, e.g. a twig in a pot, a board in the classroom

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our harvest time together.

Today we are going to say thank you for all our food and we are going to find out how in biblical times the law made sure people who were going through tough times had enough food to eat.

Let's hear the story from the Bible of Ruth and Boaz.

Read the story Sealed with a Sandal.

Act or read the story See ideas on how to present the story.

Everyone can have enough to eat.

BOAZ'S MONOLOGUE

Boaz is the same actor from the Open the Book story done earlier in the service, still in costume.

Hello, everyone. _____ (name of whomever is leading the service – teacher, clergy, etc) asked me to tell you a little more about part of today's story when I met Ruth. Do you remember the part where Ruth was gathering up bits of barley in my field?

(chuckles)

Well, she was not stealing. She was 'gleaning', which basically means picking up the bits left behind after we have harvested. In my country, it is everyone's responsibility to take care of those who don't have enough food to eat. Our gleaning law says that those of us who have land that is farmed should leave the four corners of our fields unharvested, and we should not pick up what gets dropped as we harvest. This law also states that we shouldn't go back and harvest any bits that we missed or might have forgotten. This applies to all of our crops – grains in the fields, grapes in the vineyards, and even olives on the trees.

Why do we do this? Well, one answer is we do it because God wants us to, and it is written into our law. I don't claim to be a scholarly, theological man, but I do know that when I live my life as God asks, then life is better for me,

(puts hands over heart) ... in my heart.

Another answer is that I love God very much and I want to honour him, and one way I do that is by following his rules for life. You know, like you have rules for driving on the road. By following those rules you are safer and so is everyone around you – on the road, on the pavement and in the car or on the bus. By following God's rules, life is better for us too – not just when we are driving but in every part of our lives.

You might be wondering why God put this gleaning law into his rules for us. Well, again, I am not a biblical scholar, but I think it is because God cares for everyone. God says that this gleaning law is there for the strangers (I think you might call them foreigners these days), and people without income, and children without parents. Possibly for people who are like us ... and possibly for people who are very different from us. Those bits of food that are left behind in my fields are for those people who don't have enough to eat, and they can come and gather what has been left for them and be fed. God provides for them through us. God made us His hands and feet, so all could have enough to eat.

(repeats)

Ha! Did you hear that? It rhymes! Say it with me: 'God made us His hands and feet, so all could have enough to eat.'

I love a good rhyme. It helps me remember.

Anyway, I followed the gleaning law for my crops. I always left the corners of the fields and didn't go back over the fields after the main harvest. If my workers forgot a field or a section, we left that too, just as the law says we should. And those who had need, we welcomed with open arms to come and take what was left in the fields-the gleanings. I often came to the fields after they were harvested to meet with my managers and see how much we had gathered from each field. One time when I was doing this, I received my greatest blessing from God, as that is where I met Ruth. I noticed her gleaning the north corner of my barley field and gave her more than what she had gathered ...

(Strikes his temple with his index finger as if suddenly remembering)

Oh, sorry. I forgot – you already heard about our story. Ahhh – what a blessing from God is my Ruth! She is a wonderful wife and we are so very, very happy together. We have a gorgeous little boy we named Obed. I wish I had one of those smartphone things all of you seem to have so I could show you pictures of him.

(Pauses thoughtfully and looks up.)

I think God has great things in store for him. Oh, and my mother-in-law, Naomi, she is a treasure and such a wonderful help with the baby.

So, I wonder how you do gleaning in your country, as it is so much larger than mine? Your country has such great abundance and education and power and has so many resources! I'm sure everyone in your country has enough to eat?

(Looks questioningly to the audience)

No? Really? How can this be? God must still care for everyone! God must still want those who are hungry to have food! Of course he does.

(Paces back and forth a bit and scratches his head, thinking.)

Maybe ... just maybe, like in my time, when God provided through me leaving the gleanings, God needs YOU to help care for others too.

(Someone comes onto the stage and hands Boaz a note that has the information about the particular food drive in this place.)

(Boaz reads the notice.) 'Please bring canned and dry ... etc.'

Well, I am very pleased to see this. Isn't it fun to gather in and share with others! But wait, it looks like this is something you do just for harvest? What do you do for the rest of the year? Maybe you pick up some food each week and put it in the food bank collection point at the supermarket? Or maybe you volunteer to help out in some other way? Or maybe there are ways of making sure that everyone has enough money to buy the food they need?

(Hands over heart.)

I don't know how it works here in your time

(hands out to the audience) but you do.

I know you want to help God care for everyone. Listen, I have to get back home as Ruth and I are taking Obed over to visit his Granny Naomi – but, before I go, might I suggest that you ask God to show you how you can help him care for people who don't have enough to eat. 'God made us His hands and feet, so all could have enough to eat.'

(Boaz exits and person leading service steps in and prays.)

LET'S TALK ...

In our story today Ruth and Naomi were going through a difficult time. They had arrived with no home, no food and no money. I'm so glad that Boaz was there to help them, and that there was a law in those times that ensured that when the fields were harvested there was an area left for people struggling to get some food. What do you remember about the story?

Did Boaz just stick to the law?

Answer: No, he asked the workers to leave some of the harvest as well as the edges of the field

What values was Boaz living out?

Answer: Kindness – –by helping people who were in difficulty, partly through what the law provided but also by asking the workers to leave some more of the harvest too. Compassion – Boaz felt the pain that Naomi and Ruth were suffering: they had lost their husbands, they had no money and Ruth had left her family and homeland to look after Naomi.

HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES AT THE MOMENT ARE HELPED?

Answer: Those who are working pay taxes, some of which provide some help for those who have lost their jobs, are unable to work because they are ill or are going through difficult times. There are also charities like food banks who provide some immediate help.

How people help those going through tough times now

Let's hear from XXXX about what food banks do and how they support those going through difficult times.

This could be an interview with someone with questions or a short film/explanation, including that people are going through tough times all the time not just at harvest, mention of boxes in supermarkets etc.

QUESTIONS:

What do food banks do?

Food banks in the Trussell Trust network provide three-day emergency food parcels to people in crisis. There are over 1,200 food banks in the network and the services they provide vary from area to area as they react to the needs of their community. Some provide emergency food alongside additional support services, like a connection with a debt advisor.

How do people get their food?

Care professionals like health visitors, schools, and social workers identify people in crisis and issue them with a food bank voucher. The person can then bring this voucher to their food bank to collect three days' nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food from their local food bank. In recent months, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many food banks now also offer home delivery services and use e-referral systems.

What happens to the food donations they receive?

Non-perishable, in-date food is donated by the public at a range of places, like schools, churches, and businesses, as well as supermarket collection points. Food bank volunteers and staff then sort this food into emergency food parcels to be given to people in crisis.

How can we help?

You can help by supporting your local food bank! You can donate food to support their work in your community, join Team Trussell and do some fundraising of your own, or get involved through your church or school. Every donation makes a real difference and your support is vital.

Some of you have been able to bring tins and packets of food, so let's say a prayer to say thank you.

PRAYER IDEAS

Dear God,

Thank you for the sun and rain and for the farmers who grow our food. Thank you for kind people. Help us to be kind and generous with what we have, helping others when times are tough. We ask that you would bless the food brought in today and given to food banks in the future. We pray for fair and just laws that ensure that those who are struggling have enough food to eat.

Amen

Grains of wheat – thanks

Each child adds their prayers of thanks and colours in the grains of wheat.

Each child adds how they can be kind and help others.

The grains of wheat can be cut out and made into a display or taken home.

Taste the goodness

Children could have a piece of fruit or vegetable.

As they eat the fruit/vegetable they can say thank you for all the things that have helped the plants grow.

MUSIC

Suggestions from Out of the Ark Music

Out of the Ark Music link to samples <https://www.outoftheark.co.uk/a-combined-harvest.html>

Sing a Song of Harvest

Harvest Samba

Beautiful World

Harvest Hymn

We Thank You

Autumn from Vivaldi's Four seasons

