



## Key Bible passage: Ruth

Aim: to explore the value and sacrifice of friendship

**1** Ask for two volunteers who are friends. Have a plate of chocolate on one side of your stage. Send George over to it and invite him to eat a piece of chocolate. Ask Fred if he'd like to join George and send him over too to eat chocolate.

Now give George a really horrible job to do: give him a toilet brush and say that the boys' toilets need cleaning. Ask the children if they think Fred will be happy to join him on this task too. Ask Fred too. Thank the friends and ask them to sit down.

**2** Say that sometimes we go through nice times in real life, like the plate of chocolate: there are birthday parties and holidays and treats to share with our friends. But there are also toilet brush times: really sad times or really difficult times that we don't want to go through, but we have to. One way that God helps us through these bad times is by giving us friends to stick with us, even at the worst of times. Just like Naomi and Ruth. I wonder if we have two girls who can come and play the parts of Naomi and Ruth as I tell the story?

**3** Naomi's husband had died, a long time ago. Naomi was delighted when her son married a girl from another country called Ruth. The two women were great friends and loved sharing a house together. But then a very sad thing happened: Ruth's husband - Naomi's son - died. And Ruth and Naomi were all on their own.

They were both very sad, but they looked after each other.

Naomi had come from Bethlehem years before, so all her family were in Bethlehem, many miles away. She pointed towards Bethlehem and told Ruth that now her son was dead, she was going back home.

Now Ruth could have stayed with her old family in that country where they were, but she and Naomi were great friends by now, and she couldn't bear to think of old Naomi making the long journey to Bethlehem all on her own.

'I'll come with you!' she said.

'No, no, you stay here with your own people. You'll be a foreigner in Bethlehem,' said old Naomi. But

Ruth wouldn't listen. She knew what a friend had to do. She packed her things, said goodbye to her family and set off on the long journey with Naomi.

And do you know? While they were in Bethlehem, Ruth fell in love with a handsome rich man called Boaz, and they got married. Naomi was delighted all over again, that her dear friend Ruth had another chance to have a family. And indeed Ruth and Boaz did have a baby! And if you look at Ruth's family tree, you'll see that the baby grew up and got married and had a baby, and that baby



grew up and got married and had a baby... and so on until in the end, another baby was born in Bethlehem... to another girl who was a long way from home... in a stable... I wonder who that baby was?

**4** So our friends are people who stick with us in good times and in bad times, and we should never take them for granted. In a minute I'm going to ask you to stand up, and I don't want you to move from where you're standing, but just where you are, see if there are any of your friends nearby. If there are, can you shake their hand and say, 'Thank you for being my friend!' When I put my hand up, can you sit down quietly again.

**5** Now let's finish with a prayer to a friend who is always with us, even in the toilet brush times of life.

Dear Jesus, thank you for being my friend. Thank you that you laugh with us when we're happy and that you cry with us when we're sad. Please help us to be true friends to other people even if it means giving up our own comfort, just like Ruth did for Naomi. Amen.