



FAITH THAT
PLEASES
GOD

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THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

SAMPLE

The Faith of Ruth

Lesson Scripture: Ruth 1; 4:13-22

Focus Scripture: Ruth 1:6-18, 22

KEY VERSE: Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”
Ruth 1:16

WORDS TO KNOW

KINDLY – *considerately, caringly, attentively*

SECURITY – *the state of being free from danger or threat*

REFRAIN – *to withhold; keep back*

BARLEY – *a cereal grain (of Palestine) that is made into bread*

MOAB – *pronounced: MO – ab*

ORPAH – *pronounced: OR – puh*

ELIMELECH – *pronounced: ee – LIHM – eh – lehk*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: RUTH 1:6-18, 22

- 6 Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food.
- 7 So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah.
- 8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.
- 9 The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud.
- 10 They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."
- 11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?
- 12 Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons,
- 13 would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me."
- 14 Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.
- 15 So she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."
- 16 But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.
- 17 Where you die, I will die – there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!"
- 18 When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.
-
- 22 So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

INTRODUCTION

In the winter quarter, we are exploring a faith that pleases God. Any person seeking God must believe God exists and must know God rewards those who are seeking God. In this quarter, we will learn additional information about faith that pleases God as we review the description of faith and observe faith in action. It is important to have faith that pleases God in our lifestyle of faith today. Unit 1, "Profiles in Faith," has five lessons from the books of Ruth, 1 Samuel, and Matthew. These profiles in faith will enable us to see faith in action.

In life, we will encounter times of loss. The loss may be the death of a beloved pet or family member. Other forms of loss can be moving out of your house; a favorite teacher leaving; having to put a video game console in the trash; a close friend moving to another state; going to college; enrolling in the military; etc. When we experience a loss of any type, it can cause us to feel sad and angry. These are natural emotions or responses to loss. When we encounter difficulties in life, it is always good to have genuine relationships with others who can support us.

In today's lesson, we discover Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth, who are supporting one another as they grieve the loss of their husbands.

Who do you turn to for support when facing life's difficulties? How can you support others?

BIBLE STORY

The book of Ruth reveals to us how people stayed strong in character and true to God during life's struggles. The time frame of its writing was sometime during the period of the judges (1375 – 1050 B.C.). Just like today's society, almost everybody in Israel lived to please themselves, not God (Judges 17:6, 21 - 25). But this does not mean there was not a small fragment of people who honored God and lived by faith. Ruth and Naomi are profiles of faith in action.

There had been a famine in the land. Naomi and her husband, Elimelech, along with their two sons had to move from Bethlehem to Moab, which was located east of the Dead Sea. The famine had to

be severe for the family to move to a pagan nation like Moab. The Moabites were considered the enemies of Israel for failing to allow them passage through their land during the exodus from Egypt (Deut. 23:3 - 4). They could not worship at the tabernacle as punishment for their actions.

Elimelech died, then ten years later Naomi's two sons died as well (v.3). Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were widows. Widows had little resources to care for themselves. They depended on others to be compassionate towards them. The husband's nearest relative was required to care for the widows (Deut. 25:5 - 10). Naomi had no relatives in Moab. But she had heard about the goodness of God, who provided food for God's people in Judah (vs.6 - 7, Exo. 4:31).

Naomi decided to go back to Israel where she had family and the greatest probability for provisions. This was an act of faith. But Naomi urged her daughters-in-law to return to their mothers in Moab and remarry (vs.8 - 9). She had no other sons for them to marry. This action demonstrated Naomi's love for God and her daughters-in-law. Orpah went back to her family in Moab, but Ruth clung to her mother-in-law (v.14).

Ruth decided to go with Naomi to Bethlehem (vs.16 - 18). She was deciding to give up the possibility of remarrying, having a family, and financial security to care for Naomi. "Without faith, it is impossible to please God for whoever would approach God must believe that God exists and that God rewards those who seek God" (Heb. 11:6). Our faith in God will make us act courageously even during times of trials and suffering. Ruth's faith compelled her to act so Naomi would not suffer alone. It is so good to have someone who supports us through the difficulties of life. "Some friends play at friendship, but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin" (Prov. 18:24).

God blessed Ruth and Naomi. The day they reached Bethlehem was the start of the barley harvest (v.22). God had ended the famine and now there would be an abundant harvest. The widows were able to glean the fields and eat all that was left for them. Ruth's decision to worship God, as well as live and die amongst God's people, is a testimony that it was planned so she could become a part of Jesus' lineage (Matt. 1:5 - 6).

What can we learn from Naomi and Ruth's relationship? How do we choose supportive, caring friends?

SANKOFA

Born in 1939 in Brownsville, Tennessee, Anna Mae Bullock would later take on the stage name of Tina Turner as a R&B singer with her husband and music partner, Ike Turner. They were popular and had much musical success. Ike was extremely abusive. After many years of performing, touring, and living with Ike's physical abuse, Tina left him.

Tina had to start all over with no money and no real prospects of a professional future in a music industry that would say that a black woman her age was too old to start over again. Nevertheless, she did; and, she became a huge pop music solo artist. She would be called the "Queen of Rock and Roll."

Anna Mae "Tina" began singing in her church in rural Tennessee; and, even though she faced some extremely low and painful moments in her personal and professional life, she was able to persevere and achieve. Given her music and even her faith path, some might be surprised to find her story in our lesson today as we study the story of Ruth and Naomi; but, in them all we learn that our lowest and worst moments do not have to be the last moments which define our lives. *What other similarities do you see in the story of Tina Turner and that of Ruth and Naomi? What are the differences? What other lessons can we learn from them?*

REAL TALK-FAITH WALK

When Ruth decided to follow Naomi, she was also making a decision to follow God. Whom do you ignore in your school and neighborhood? How does God want us to treat others? Why is it important to invite and include those who are considered outsiders to be a part of God's family?

1. How many miles are there between Moab and Bethlehem (research)?
2. How long would it take to walk from Moab to Bethlehem (estimate)?

3. What dangers do you imagine were present as Naomi and Ruth traveled to Bethlehem?
4. What steps can we take in preparation for trials that might come? How can we remain faithful during times of difficulties?

SUMMARY

As we live, there will be times of suffering and trials. When we find ourselves in these situations, it is nice to have family members or friends to support us. Naomi and Ruth were both grieving over the death of their husbands. Their cultures, family backgrounds, and ages were quite different. Naomi was Ruth's mother-in-law; but, they had a great affection for each other and a commitment to the God of Israel. Naomi's faith in God influenced Ruth's decision to accept the God of Israel.

When we face the hardships of life, we can look to the story of Ruth's courage and faith to encourage us to move forward trusting God. *Who do you draw strength from when life gets difficult? Can others depend on you to be supportive when they are troubled? How trustworthy are you?*

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: God, help me to be faithful to you and a trustworthy friend to all. AMEN.

Song: "I Need You to Survive" by Hezekiah Walker
<https://youtu.be/-0IJ0HqYY3A>

The Faith of David

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:1-58

Focus Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:31-37, 45, 48-50

KEY VERSE: David said, “The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.” 1 Samuel 17:37a

WORDS TO KNOW

UNCIRCUMCISED – *not circumcised; spiritually unclean heathen*

DEFIED – *to openly resist or refuse to obey*

WADI – *a ravine that is dry except during the rainy season*

PHILISTINE – *pronounced: fil – uh – steen*

ELAH – *pronounced: EH – laa*

GOLIATH – *pronounced: guh – LAI – uhth*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 1 SAMUEL 17:31-37, 45, 48-50

- 31** When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him.
- 32** David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."
- 33** Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth."
- 34** But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock,
- 35** I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it.
- 36** Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God."
- 37** David said, "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you!"
-
- 45** But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."
-
- 48** When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.
- 49** David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.
- 50** So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David's hand.

INTRODUCTION

In our churches and communities, most leadership positions are held by adults. They have the power to make decisions based on what they deem as “in the best interest of all.” When youth desire to implement changes, their ideas are often disregarded. It can be very discouraging when people ignore you, believing that you are too young to have the knowledge and life experiences to address issues. Every voice has value and needs to be heard.

In today’s lesson, David, who is a shepherd boy, confronts Goliath and resolves the conflict with the Philistine. *What role does faith have when you are facing “giant” problems?*

BIBLE STORY

In 1 Samuel chapter seventeen, we find ourselves watching a battle between Israel and the Philistines in the Elah valley (17:2). The Philistine giant, Goliath, who was ten feet tall (six cubits and a span, v.4), and wore a full armor suit, taunted the Israelite soldiers. Saul was the tallest Israelite soldier so he could go to battle with Goliath. But just like the other Israelite soldiers, Saul felt afraid and intimidated.

The three eldest sons of Jesse who were soldiers received a food package from their father, who sent it with David. David inquired, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (v.26) It was a bold, faith-driven question. David saw a mortal man defying almighty God. His older brother, Eliab, became enraged that David was there. But when Saul heard David’s words, he requested David’s presence.

David desired to go fight Goliath, but Saul only saw David as an inexperienced boy. We must be sensitive in how we treat others because God can use anybody. God does not consider age, race, sex, socioeconomic status, etc. David witnessed to Saul about the times when God gave him the power to overtake bears and lions. This demonstrated that David had a close relationship with God that enabled him to have great faith in God’s power to deliver. He had full confidence in victory over Goliath.

David used a slingshot and one stone to slay the giant. A sling was an offensive weapon of battle made of a leather thong that was wider in the middle than at the two ends. The stone was placed in the middle, and the sling was spun around the head. The stone was hurled at the intended target. In this situation, the target was Goliath. He was hit in the head and fell.

David cut Goliath's head off. Taking Goliath's head, while grisly, was not a matter of evidence but of having a trophy to prove to Israel that God's power was with them: in essence, a public proof of God's power on behalf of those who put their confidence in God (1 Samuel 17:47). The Philistines fled after Goliath fell because he was their champion.

What steps did David take to demonstrate his faith in God? How do you demonstrate your faith in God?

SANKOFA

Have you ever heard of the Children's March or Children's Crusade? In many parts of the United States of America and in other parts of the world, people were segregated based on their race. This was certainly the case in the Southern region of the USA. Businesses, schools, churches, and other spaces were separated by race—blacks went to or used certain spaces that were different and set apart from those for white people.

Many persons fought to change these practices. Many religious leaders and church members, black and white, worked to pressure other leaders to stop such discrimination. Even children participated. On May 2, 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama, more than 1000 school children marched throughout the city protesting segregation as a public demonstration to pressure civic and business leaders to change these unfair laws. They sang songs and hymns as they marched for two days. Some were arrested. On the second day, the police used water hoses and released yapping dogs on the young marchers. This caused many in the nation to be outraged and brought attention in the mass media to how cruel segregation and racism could be. These children with the help of many supportive adults took a stand and helped to bring about change—giving a blow to the giant of racism. Kids have power to face giants—big problems and obstacles. *Against*

what do you feel called to take a stance—what giants need to fall? What actions will you take? How will you do it?

REAL TALK-FAITH WALK

Think about the “giants” (problems/struggles) in your life as well as those of your peers. On the sticky notes or index cards given to you, write down one or two words that describe the “giants.” When finished, attach them to the posterboard in front of the class. Compare and contrast the “giants” that were posted by the class. Share suggestions about how to deal with them.

When we reflect on our past struggles, we can sometimes see how God helped us overcome and/or work through them. Take one minute and share with one person how God faithfully delivered you during a time in the past. Every time we trust God to help us builds up our faith. Therefore, the next time trouble comes, we can rely on our faith in God and have confidence in God’s power.

There are social, political, and faith-based movements that help enact change in society and the world. Are you interested in or passionate about any specific current issue? What groups advocate on behalf of those affected by this issue? What can you contribute?

The methods used to enact change vary. During biblical times, God in some circumstances would command God’s people to use violence against enemies. *Do you feel violence is necessary today to enact change? Which is better, violence or peaceful protests? What does the Bible say about killing? What about being peaceful?*

SUMMARY

The conflict between the Philistines and Israel demonstrated the need to have faith in God to defeat our enemies. Saul was the best match to go against Goliath, but he feared defeat. Therefore, the Israelites sat in the valley of Elah for 40 days and listened to Goliath taunting them. David, however, saw a mortal man defying almighty God. He ignored the criticism. David acted knowing God was present with him. When we are faced with insurmountable problems, we can be assured God is with us and we are not fighting alone. *What can you*

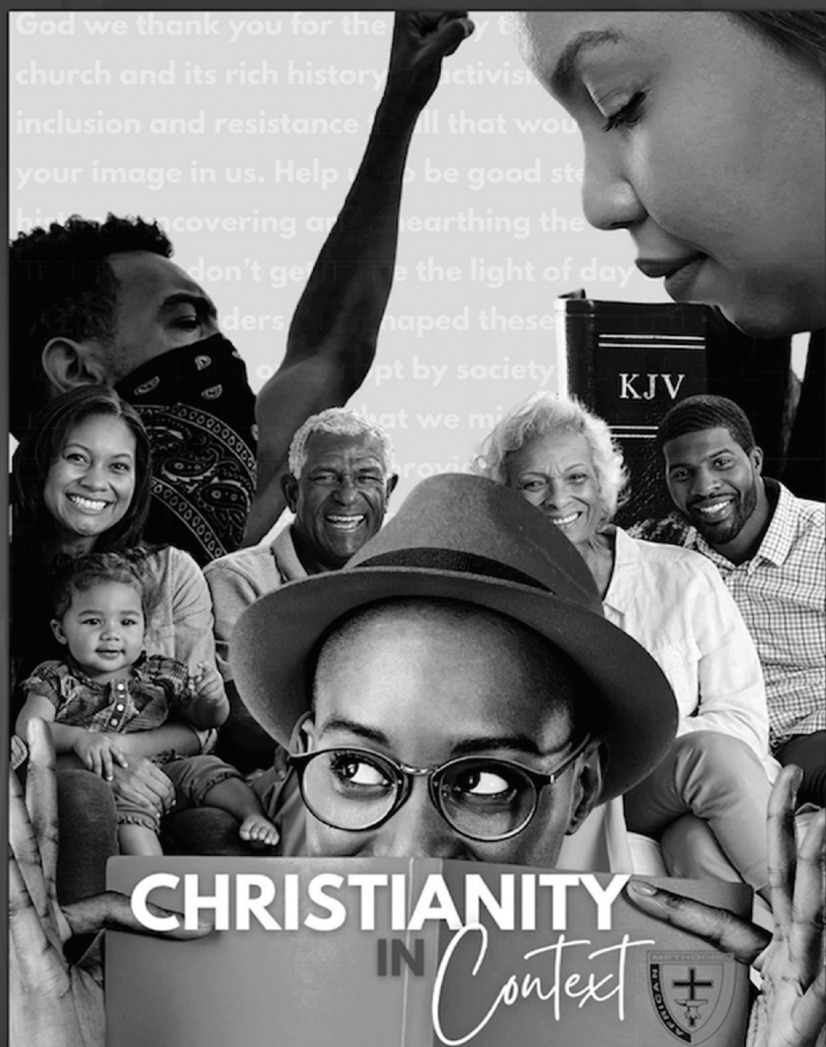
learn from the faith of David? How can we put our faith into action?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: God, we praise and honor thy name. Thank you for being present with us. We trust in your power to help us overcome any battle. Amen.

Song: "Fight My Battles (Surrounded)" by Elevation Worship
https://youtu.be/PELFixXo_Dk

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