

# KINDNESS WITHOUT BORDERS

## A Dramatic Sermonette for Five Readers Based on the Book of Ruth

**Characters:** Narrator, Naomi, Orpah, Ruth, Boaz

**Running Time:** Approximately 10 minutes

**Staging Suggestions:** Narrator on one side of the stage (perhaps at the pulpit) and character readers on the other side of the stage; sheaves of wheat, large pieces of draped cloth.

*Narrator, Naomi, Orpah and Ruth take their places.*

**Narrator:** They're easy to miss. Those moments . . . those interactions when we have an opportunity to grow something good. Maybe it's fear. Or self doubt. Maybe we don't think we can make a difference. What is one small gesture, after all? But small gestures have a way of accumulating, of becoming more than the sum of their parts. The story in the book of Ruth offers us a profound picture through a diverse collection of faithful people who lived love and offered hope. Here is their story.

**Naomi:** As you know, it's been ten years since my husband, two sons and I moved here to Moab because there wasn't enough food in Bethlehem. The famine was very severe. But we found hope here. And our boys grew up and married you, dear Orpah and Ruth. You and your customs were so new to me but my heart has grown in deep love and affection for you and your people. You have become my daughters. And even though our husbands have died, we have supported each other.

**Orpah:** We love you too, mother Naomi. But we also know that your heart aches for your hometown, Bethlehem. You miss your people and now there is word that the famine is over and food is plentiful again.

**Ruth:** We know that you would love to go back and so we have decided to go with you. The acceptance and devotion you have shown to us, we now offer to you. We will travel together to Bethlehem.

**Naomi:** Yes, I do miss my homeland. But I am torn. You are my family and I don't want to leave you, but asking you to come with me is too great a sacrifice for you. You must stay here. These are your people.

**Narrator:** But the two young women insisted. So they packed their belongings and the trio set out for Bethlehem. On the way, as they looked back on the city, they shed tears for what they were leaving behind.

**Naomi:** This is too hard for both of you. There is so much you are giving up. You are still young and have a future if you stay. Please, please go back to your people. You can marry again and have children. I am still healthy and am able to travel. I will manage. God is with me.

**Orpah:** Naomi, you have been a gift to me. I will accept your wisdom and return home. May your God bless you and keep you and be gracious to you. *(Orpah exits.)*

**Narrator:** The women embraced and wept and Orpah returned to her home.

**Ruth:** Naomi, you are a wise and caring woman. I can't think of anyone I would rather be with than you. And you have shown me the love and the loyalty of God. Do not make me go back. I have made the decision to stay with you. *Where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your God will be my God. And where you die, I will die.*

**Narrator:** And so the two of them, Naomi and Ruth, made their way to Bethlehem. But transitions aren't always easy. Coming back to her people reminded Naomi of the

days when her husband and sons were still young and alive. It just wasn't the same. There were so many changes. Changes that overwhelmed her. There were new and unfamiliar rituals and relationships. Old friends had passed on. Merchants didn't offer her credit like they used to. And people weren't always accepting of Naomi and the foreigner she had brought home with her. It was a difficult time. Naomi struggled with crumbling hope and faltering faith. How would they, two single widows, ever survive? Where was God now?

**Ruth:** Naomi, I know this is hard for you. It's hard for me too. But this is not the time to give up on God or each other. I have an idea. As you know, it is the beginning of the barley harvest and the crops are thick this year. I will go behind the reapers and gather the leftovers. At least that might give us enough to live on.

**Naomi:** Ruth, that is too much. You know there is danger in those fields when you are a woman alone.

**Ruth:** I will not take no for an answer, Naomi. It's our only hope.

**Narrator:** So Ruth went to gather what she could. *(Boaz enters)* Now one of the fields belonged to Boaz, who happened to be a relative of Naomi's deceased husband. He noticed this foreign woman gleaning in his field and enquired about her. His servants filled him in.

**Boaz:** So this is the woman who came back with Naomi? Wow! She's very brave! You have to admit that. And you say she asked you for permission to gather the excess barley, and she works in the fields steadily from morning till evening to provide for her mother-in-law? She obviously has a lot of integrity and is a hard worker. I'll go talk to her.



**Narrator:** So Boaz went over to where Ruth was working.

**Boaz:** I see you are a hard worker and I deeply respect what you are doing for your mother-in-law. I will arrange it so that you can stay near the other women in my fields for protection. They will accept you. And I have ordered my men not to bother you in any way. You don't need to go to any other fields. I have plenty. Please help yourself to water from the large jugs when you are thirsty, and to all the grain you can collect behind the reapers.

**Ruth:** I can't believe that you are treating me, an outsider, so graciously. Thank you for your kindness.

**Boaz:** I have heard about the many ways you have comforted and cared for Naomi. You left your own homeland and brought her back here and are providing for her. That's a huge commitment and I greatly admire you for that. May you be rewarded for your faithfulness to Naomi and to God.

**Ruth:** I am honoured, sir. Thank you for your kindness.

**Narrator:** Later, at mealtime, Boaz invited Ruth to the table to eat and drink and then he told the reapers to intentionally leave more sheaves for her to collect. *(Boaz exits.)*

**Ruth:** *(wait for Boaz to exit)* Naomi, look! Come outside. You've got to see this!

**Naomi:** Oh my! How many baskets are there? How did you ever get all this barley home?

**Ruth:** Boaz! Boaz spoke to me today and let me collect as much as I could. He even told his servants to help me carry it home. Naomi, we have enough to sell and eat. And I can go back for more every day as long as the harvest lasts. We will be okay!!

**Naomi:** Thank you, God! And thank you, Boaz!

**Ruth:** He is a very kind man. And I think he likes me too.

**Naomi:** You are still young, Ruth, and I have been concerned about your future. This might just be the answer God has led us to. *(Naomi exits)*

**Narrator:** And indeed it was. Boaz and Ruth were eventually married. And what's really interesting is that from them and their offspring came the lineage of Jesus. An intersection of these two diverse cultures brought forth the Messiah. What an incredible starting point! It reflects a God who is not exclusive, but inclusive. A God who cherishes and cares for the foreigner and the widow. A God who offers hope when life feels hopeless.

**Ruth:** And it all started with a wonderful woman who took her faith seriously and showed me unswerving kindness when it wasn't easy. Why did Naomi choose to love me when I was not the Israelite daughter-in-law she had hoped for? Why did she risk acceptance when fear could have easily overshadowed possibility? Naomi chose to leave fear behind and accepted Orpah and me and my people. And Naomi's unswerving kindness rubbed off on me, giving me a totally new perspective. The light of God that shone through her and then later through Boaz set us all on a path of hope.

**Narrator:** They're easy to miss. Those moments . . . those interactions when we have an opportunity to grow something good. What if all of us traded self-doubt and fear and, instead, risked love? Naomi, Ruth and Boaz all left a legacy of faith and possibility. What legacy do we want to leave?

**END**

