

Contextual Stories - Choose Your Own Adventure

Hello RUTH Con friends!

Sometimes it is difficult respond to scripture, because we do not know how to make the leap from the context of the original readers of the Bible to that of our own modern context. This can be especially true when it comes to issues of justice. Injustice can be so complex that it can feel impossible to know where to start to respond. Or injustice can be so normalized for us, that it can be hard to discover what we are actually blind to.

For your application for the afternoon of May 5th, we've gathered a collection of articles to help you contextualize the story of Ruth within our 21st century setting. Each of these stories has been chosen to help broaden your imagination for what it could look like for our Jesus communities to be places of healing and redemption that are hubs of hesed-love for those vulnerable communities.

We would also like to note that not all of these are written by Christ-followers. We encourage you to reach each of these stories while keeping in mind the story of Ruth and the story of God's interactions with his people from Genesis through to Revelations.

Choose at least two stories to read, reflect, and respond to. The stories and experiences in these articles are not always easy to hear. So, give yourself good space to listen and process through your feelings and thoughts. Spend about 20-30 minutes per story." Choose at least two stories to read, reflect, and respond to. Spend about 20-30 minutes per story."

For each article, we have also provided a few reflective questions, however these are only designed to be a starting place for dialogue. We recognize that these articles may bring up more questions than answers. We encourage you to write these down as you read and reach out to mentors and members of your community to continue processing through your questions.

Articles

1. *Frustration grows as Chinatown seniors face possible eviction* - Travas Prasad
 - a. Synopsis: Michael Lam, and member of the InterVarsity SFU community, shares alongside his family, regarding the recent sudden eviction of seniors living in Grace Seniors Home in Vancouver.
 - b. Character Focus: Naomi, Ruth
 - c. Reflection Questions
 - i. Consider The Lam family is choosing to be a nexus of loyal-love like Ruth was to Naomi. How can your community be radically loyal to in your home city?
 - ii. Where do you long to see God bring healing and restoration to broken relationships between generations?

- iii. Which vulnerable communities might God be inviting your community to advocate on behalf of?
 - d. <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/mobile/frustration-grows-as-chinatown-seniors-face-possible-eviction-1.5392612?fbclid=IwAR1sF2qh2hhxibsJgTp2hKtL9qIaq-8e5Db8b9UtmRnfxpE1nIdwFwMal7k>
2. *Remembering Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Colour killed by Canadian police* – Desmond Cole
- a. Synopsis: It is a remarkable thing that Ruth’s loyalty is noticed by Boaz and by those in Bethlehem. This is not always the case to those who face daily oppression and racial prejudice. One of the ways we begin to practice hesed is by listening to the stories of those to whom this is their experience. This article contains the stories of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color who have been killed by the Canadian police – a system that should have protected them but which has often failed to.
 - b. Character Focus: Ruth, Boaz
 - c. https://www.pyriscence.ca/home/2020/5/29/cdnpolice?fbclid=IwAR2UpkrTuN_9uSsZc9VuVZ9c9tEITD60YtCSCyBv7Zq_InwY-tVIWtAW4T4
 - d. Reflective Questions
 - i. As you read these stories, consider what God’s heart might be for these communities. Then Meditate on a Psalm of Lament (Psalms 10, 13, 22, 39, 44, 51, 56, 60, 74, 79, 80, 85, 90, 92,) as a way to respond.
 - ii. How might you or your community practice listening and learning from the stories of other vulnerable communities?
3. *Biblical Hospitality: What Happened When Our Christian Family Stopped Inviting Our Church Friends to Dinner* by Sara Gaston Barton
- a. Synopsis: Sometimes, Christian’s practice of love and hospitality towards those in their community comes at the cost of creating barriers to those beyond and outside of their community. This article is a beautiful image of what true loyal-love and Kingdom hospitality can look like.
 - b. Character Focus: Boaz, Ruth
 - c. Reflective Questions
 - i. Where is Jesus inviting you and your campus ministries to redefine and restructure what hospitality and community looks like?
 - ii. Who is God inviting you to practice hospitality towards?
 - d. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/biblical-hospitality-what b_8908102
4. *There was a ‘giant picnic’ at the US-Mexico border* - Khushbu Shah
- a. Synopsis: The border between the United States and Mexico is one fraught with tension, fear and injustice – much in a similar way to the relationships between Moab and Israel. For us in Canada, this border made feel irrelevant, but we must remember members of the North American community. This is a part of our story. This article shows a beautiful

picture of “feasting” in the face of hate through a picnic table set up on either side of the border wall between these two enemy nations.

- b. Character Focus: Ruth
 - c. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/10/us/border-wall-picnic-trnd/index.html?no-st=1540327592>
 - d. Reflective Questions:
 - i. Consider this article in light of this article illustrating the journey many faces immigrating from Central America and Mexico to the United States and Canada: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/25/world/americas/mexico-border-photos-john-moore.html?fbclid=IwAR0JxX_NcigyRefCxkw_hh7qUXETnwTzLDM9UM39Zaq-JRsWcQmOxhtzgmU
 - ii. How can our communities create spaces of peace where enemies or rivals or those with differing worldviews can come together and build trusting relationships with each other?
5. *Honouring the Lives of Women Who Refuse to Be Scrubbed Away* – Sarah Shin
- a. Synopsis: Sarah Shin, author of *Beyond Colorblind*, reflects on the recent shootings in Atlanta in light of the story of Ruth, Tamar and Rahab.
 - b. Character Focus: Ruth
 - c. <https://www.missionalliance.org/honoring-the-lives-of-women-who-refuse-to-be-scrubbed-away/>
 - d. Reflective Questions:
 - i. How can we build communities of healing where women are honored and valued?
 - ii. When we hear stories of violence against women, how do we respond? How might this article be inviting us to respond in new ways?
6. *Stories Give Insight into the Refugee Experience* – Barb Draper
- a. Synopsis: This book review of George Melynk’s and Cristina’s Parkerv’s ‘Finding Refugee in Canada: Narratives of Dislocation’ provides a brief introduction towards the experience of refugees in Canada. Canada often has promoted itself as a champion of refugee policy and care, however as Barb Draper puts it “the record has significant blemishes.” Consider this as you read this review.
 - b. Focus: Ruth, Naomi
 - c. <https://canadianmennonite.org/stories/stories-give-insight-refugee-experience>
 - d. Reflective Questions
 - i. Consider how you and your community could learn more about the experience of refugees in your city and on your campus. Take time to look into organizations like WUSK (World University Service of Canada) and Journey Home, who actively advocate and care for students in Canada.
 - ii. How might God be inviting us and our communities to be generous with our resources in seeking to care for refugees and immigrants to Canada?

7. I am Not Your Clansman – Othniel Spence
 - a. Synopsis: Racial injustice often hides within ordinary places around us that we simple take as the norm. Like the name of a sports team. Othniel Spence recounts his experiences of racism and racial prejudice at Simon Fraser University. Take notice of how Spence’s faith and relationship with Jesus has spurred him on to share his story.
 - b. Focus: Ruth, Boaz
 - c. <https://www.theparkjournal.com/previous-features/i-am-not-your-clansman>
 - d. Reflective Questions
 - i. Where might Jesus be inviting you to use your influence to advocate on behalf of another community on your university campus?
 - ii. How do we become a people who allow God to reveal to us the places where we our blind to injustice?

8. *7 Lessons from psychology that explain the irrational fear of the outsiders* – Brian Resnick
 - a. Synopsis: So much of current events around the world is characterized by our fears of the outsider. This article examines key things that we can learn about how we can respond to these fears.
 - b. Focus: Boaz, Naomi
 - c. <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/1/28/14425658/fear-of-refugees-explained>
 - d. Reflective Questions
 - i. Consider these lessons in light of how Boaz, the Next-of-Kin and the inhabitants of Bethlehem respond to Ruth in different ways. Where might you be currently be influenced by an irrational fear of the outsider? How will you choose to live in faithful love rather than in fear?

Optional Afternoon or Post-RuthCon viewing:

Link: [Borders and Belonging: A Conversation with Pádraig Ó Tuama](#)

