

15 Hope and Faithfulness



Do not ask me to leave you!
For wherever you go, I will go.

Based on Ruth 1:16

Share

Do you have friends, cousins, grandparents, or other relatives who live far away? When you are not able to see them very often, you probably begin to miss them and look forward to a visit with them.

Activity

Try to remember the last time you saw a friend or a relative whom you missed very much. Then complete the story by writing in the information and circling the bold words that describe that experience.

I remember the last time I saw my **friend** **cousin** **grandmother**
grandfather **aunt** **uncle** **other**: _____, whose
name is _____.

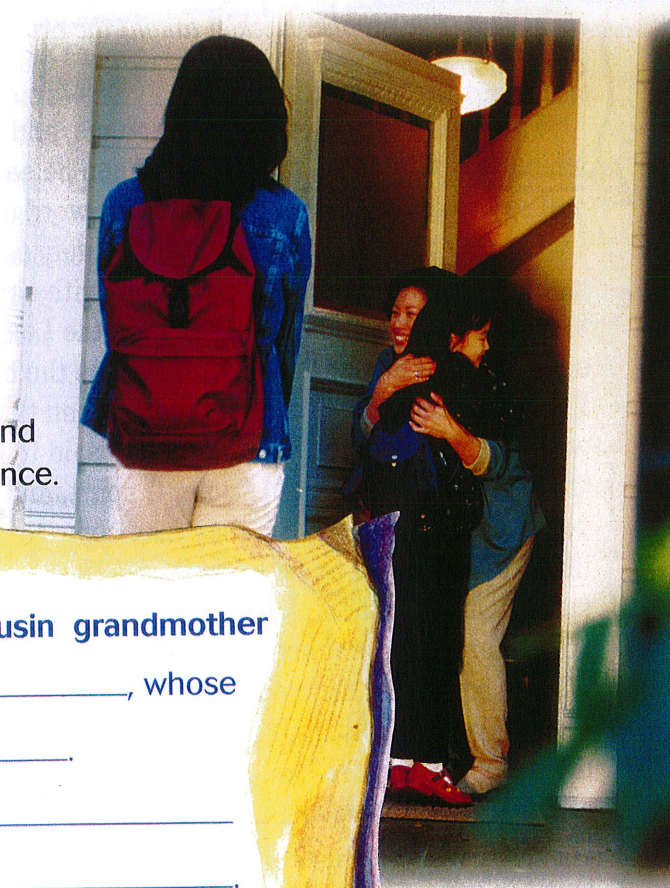
When we first saw each other, we _____.

It was a very happy time. _____ is special to me
because _____.

I missed _____ because **he** **she**
has always shown love for me by _____.

It has been _____ **months** **years** since the last time I saw
_____.

I am looking forward to the next visit with lots of hope!



How did God
give hope to the
Jews in exile?



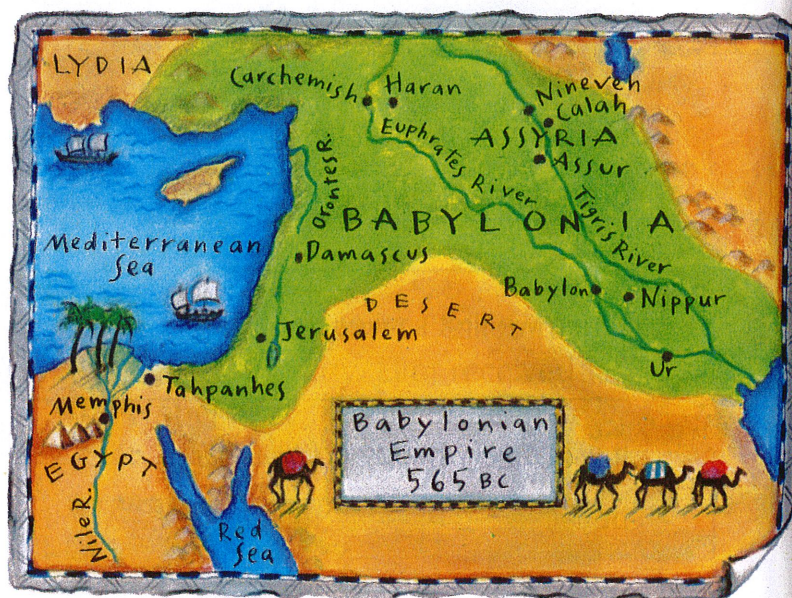
Hear & Believe

Scripture Vision of the Dry Bones

The Babylonians conquered Judah, the southern kingdom, and exiled its citizens around 587 B.C. The Babylonians destroyed the Temple. Without their Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews in exile had to find other ways to feel God's presence. Prophets helped them learn that God did not just exist in Jerusalem and in the Temple. God was with them wherever they went. The prophet Ezekiel taught the exiles how to have faith again by telling them of a vision he had.

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he set me in the center of the plain, which was now filled with bones. Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord God: I will bring spirit into you so that you may come to life. I will put sinews upon you, make flesh grow over you, cover you with skin, and put spirit in you so that you may come to life and know that I am the LORD.'" I prophesied as I had been told, and I heard a noise. It was a rattling as the bones came together, bone joining bone. I saw the sinews and the flesh come upon them and the skin cover them, but there was no spirit in them. Then the LORD said to me, "Prophesy to the spirit and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: Come, O spirit, and breathe into these so that they may come to life.'" I prophesied as he told me, and the spirit came into them; they came alive and stood upright, a vast army. Then he said, "These bones are the whole house of Israel. They have been saying, 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off.' Therefore, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will put my spirit in you so that you may live, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD.'"

Based on Ezekiel 37:1, 4–12, 14



Together Again

Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones gave people hope that God would bring them back to their kingdom. The plain scattered with bones represents the Jews scattered across foreign lands during the Exile. The coming together of the bones represents the coming together of God's people after the Exile. Ezekiel said that God told him to prophesy over the bones so that God's spirit would bring life to them. Then the bones became live people, united as an army. This represents God's bringing the exiles home to Israel. Ezekiel's vision came true.

In 539 B.C. Cyrus, leader of the Persians, conquered the Babylonians. He said that the exiles could return home. The Jews who returned had high hopes. They rebuilt the Temple. They also prayed and studied God's word in synagogues, smaller places of worship. Jerusalem again became the center of worship and government. New prophets led the people in worshiping God. People honored God's covenant with feasts and celebrations.

The Sabbath was an important occasion for the people then, as it is for us and for Jewish people today. On our Sabbath—Sunday—we recall and celebrate Jesus' Resurrection. For Jews the Sabbath is a memorial of Israel's freedom from Egypt. The Sabbath also recalls the seventh day in the Bible story of Creation, when God rested. During the Exodus, God commanded the Israelites to always keep holy the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is a way of honoring God's covenant with his chosen people.

Our Church Teaches

We obey God's commandment to keep holy the Sabbath by attending Mass each Sunday. We must also attend Mass on holy days, confess our sins in Reconciliation at least once a year, receive the Eucharist at least during the Easter season, observe the Church's days of fast and abstinence, and contribute to the Church to provide for its material needs. These are the **precepts of the Church**. They are our obligations as Catholics. Above all, we are required to do good and avoid evil, showing respect for the value of human life.

By living according to the teachings of our Catholic faith, we can hope for everlasting happiness that God promises us. Hope is our trust in God to help us achieve everlasting life. Hope is one of the **theological virtues**, three spiritual qualities that come from God and help us become more holy. The other two virtues are faith and charity. Through faith, we believe in God, in everything God has revealed, and in all that the Church teaches us to believe. Faith is necessary for salvation. Charity is the love we show for others and for God. **Moral virtues** help us avoid sin, which separates us from God. Temperance is a moral virtue. It means not doing too much of any one thing, such as eating too much, driving too fast, or abusing alcohol. Temperance helps prevent danger or sin. For example, speeding and drunk driving can kill or hurt people, and endangerment of human life is a serious sin.



page 271 to learn more about the virtues.

We Believe

Sin separates us from God and makes us people in exile. We come closer to God by making good moral decisions and following the teachings of our faith.

Faith Words

precepts of the Church

The precepts of the Church are the Church's teachings about our obligations.

theological virtues

The theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity—come from God and help us become more holy. They connect us with the Trinity.

moral virtues

The moral virtues are four spiritual qualities—temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude—that help us avoid sin.

How can you be an example of faith, hope, and charity?

Respond

Faith and Charity

The Book of Ruth in the Old Testament tells this special story about faith and charity.

A Jewish woman named Naomi moved from Bethlehem, in Judah, to Moab with her husband and two sons. But soon after leaving Bethlehem, Naomi's husband died. Naomi's sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.

For ten years the widow and her family lived peacefully. Then suddenly, both of Naomi's sons died. Now she was in a foreign land without her husband or her sons. And her native people, the Jews, were far away. Naomi decided it was time to return to Bethlehem. Both of her daughters-in-law decided to go with her.

On the road to Bethlehem, Naomi said to Orpah and Ruth, "Go back to your mothers' houses! May the Lord grant each of you a husband and a home in which you will find rest."

Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and returned to her homeland. But Ruth said, "Do not ask me to leave you! For wherever you go, I will go. Your people shall be my people. Your God shall be my God."

Naomi and Ruth continued their journey and arrived in Bethlehem during the harvest. They were desperately poor and needed food to eat. Ruth went into someone's fields and picked up grain left behind by the harvesters. For many hours she gathered food for Naomi and herself.

Then the owner of the fields, Boaz, approached Ruth. "I have heard what you have done for your mother-in-law," he said. "You have left the land of your birth and have come to a foreign land. May the Lord reward you for what you have done!" Over time, Boaz came to love Ruth. He knew that she was a good woman who lived a life of faith and charity. Boaz and Ruth married. They became the great-grandparents of David, the king.

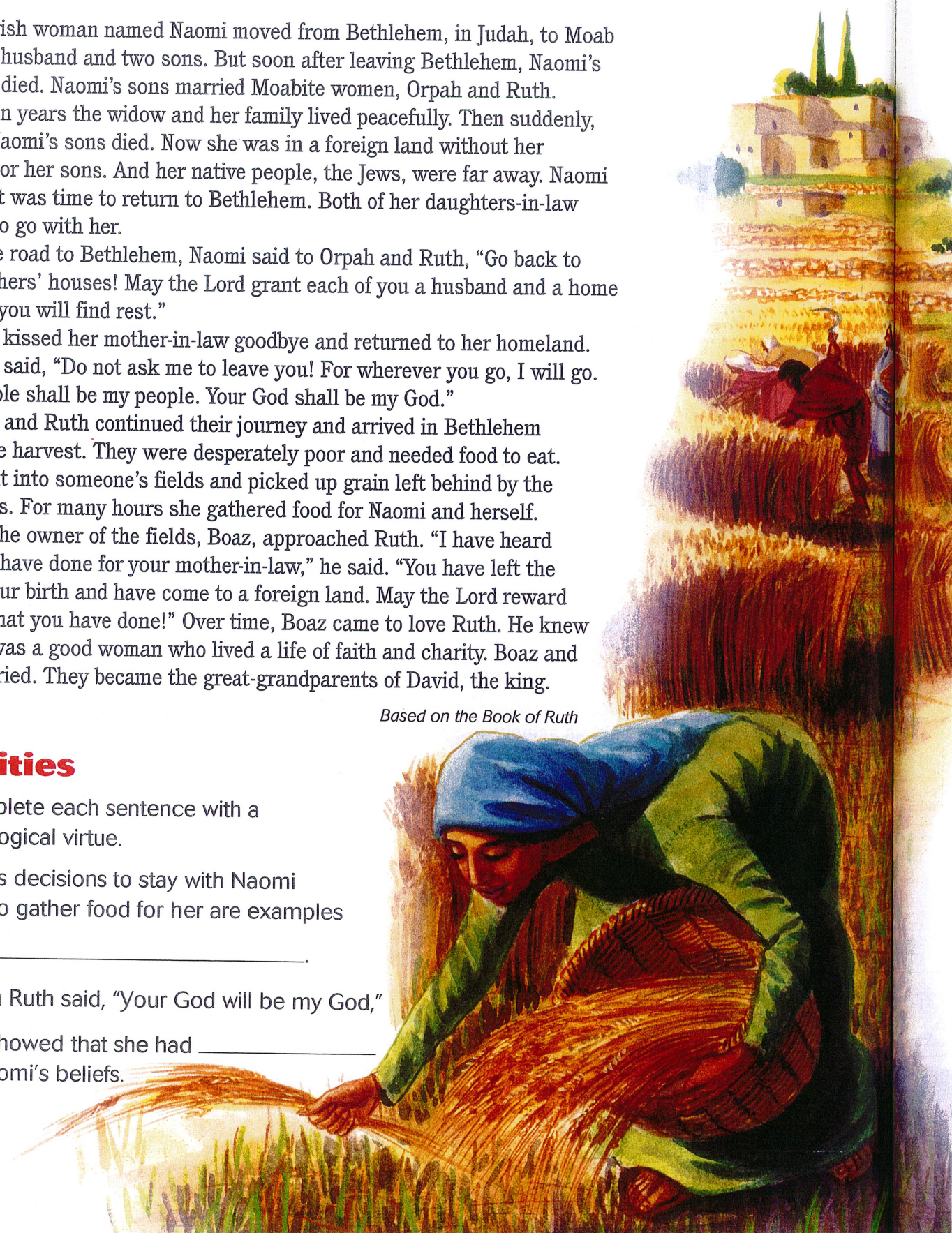
Based on the Book of Ruth

Activities

1. Complete each sentence with a theological virtue.

Ruth's decisions to stay with Naomi and to gather food for her are examples of _____.

When Ruth said, "Your God will be my God," she showed that she had _____ in Naomi's beliefs.



Match the word to its definition.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Ruth | _____ faith, hope and charity, which come from God and help us become more holy |
| 2. Book of Ruth | _____ helps us believe in God and what he has revealed and in the Church's teachings. |
| 3. faith | _____ conquered Judah, sent the citizens into exile and destroyed the Temple |
| 4. Ezekiel | _____ the Church's teaching about our obligations |
| 5. Precepts of the Church | _____ had the vision of the dry bones, which gave the exiles hope the God would bring them together again. |
| 6. Moral virtues | _____ remained faithful to her mother-in-law; married Boaz |
| 7. Theological virtues | _____ tells a special story about faith and charity |
| 8. Sabbath | _____ temperance, prudence, justice and fortitude, which help us to avoid sin |
| 9. Babylonians | _____ the day the recalls the seventh day in the story of creation, when God rested |

How is being apart from God because of sin like the Israelites exile from the homeland?
