

**SUB TOPIC THEME:**  
**What To Do When**  
**Life Makes No Sense****Lesson Objective:**

*The purpose of this lesson is to empower young people on what they need to do when life makes no sense. We will accomplish this objective by looking at Naomi's life experience as portrayed in the Old Testament book of Ruth.*

**Set Up Info:*****Supplies Needed:***

1. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below).
2. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
3. A shoe or ball to help facilitate discussion.
4. A life of integrity where the leader's actions are in harmony with the words spoken. Teens need to see the difference before they hear the difference!

***Instructive Prep:***

The book of Ruth is a masterful piece of literature. It may only be four short chapters in length, but it is full of powerful insights for everyday living. Despite its richness, however, commentators are uncertain as to its actual date of writing. They are equally unsure as to who wrote the book. What we do know with certainty is that the events in the plot are historically accurate and took place during the time of Israel's judges (Ruth 1:1).

You will recall that these years were not exactly high points in Israel's history. Following the death of Joshua and that great generation that entered the Promised Land, the people of Israel began to adopt the wicked ways of the Canaanites whom they were supposed to have annihilated. Instead, they intermarried with them and served and worshiped their gods. They violated the terms of the Covenant found in Deuteronomy 28. As a consequence God brought upon his people the exact repercussions he promised he would if Israel failed to uphold her end of the agreement. Periodically, God would appoint a judge who would deliver his people from the oppression of Israel's enemies. There would be times of

spiritual revival, but they were to be short-lived. On the whole, it was a time of moral decay and anarchy, where “everyone did whatever they pleased” (Judges 21:25).

That is the historical setting of the book of Ruth. In the midst of this spiritual decay, we find a romantic story of two upright individuals who honored God and each other. Consequently, it is a message of hope for Christians today. And look how God honored their faithfulness because through Ruth and Boaz eventually came our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

For the purposes of this lesson, however, we will focus not on Ruth but Naomi. The primary reason for this shift is because of the extent of Naomi’s hardships. Although we believe Ruth is the “heroine” of the story because of her example of faithfulness, it is Naomi that experiences the greatest crisis of faith. In the end, her faith is restored. For this reason, we believe this lesson will have special appeal for students who may be going through a similar crisis of faith.

You, as the leader, will want to draw attention to all that Naomi loses in chapter one and all that she gains in the second half of chapter 4. Highlight the fact that God never left Naomi nor forsook her even when her circumstances would suggest otherwise. Indeed, God was faithful and provided for Naomi’s needs in some pretty creative ways! In the end, Naomi ends up getting even more than she lost. That is pretty cool.

The other thing you will want to draw attention to is what Naomi did when she suffered great loss. First, she returned home. She went back to familiar sights, sounds, places, and friends. There she received encouragement when she needed it most. Second, Naomi did not fail to recognize God’s providence in the circumstances of life. Naomi’s response to Ruth in 2:20-22 and her scheme in 3:1-4 suggest she knew Ruth’s encounter with Boaz in the field was more than coincidental. We too must not fail to see God’s activity even during difficult times.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: learn, feel, do, and what next. We want students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate by doing something during this study that brings them to a point of decision. Finally, the what next focuses on a change of attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, our goal is a greater degree of personal wholeness in kids’ lives (i.e. spiritual, emotional, mental, and behavioral), so the application section based on God’s truth is really the crux of the time together. Have fun and lead well!

**Intro:**

*A painful reality of life as a military teen is that oftentimes life does not make much sense. It is often the case that our responses during those periods of confusion serve as monumental markers in life. They can be defining moments. Many characters in the Bible provide us with examples of what to do when life throws us curve balls. Naomi is one of those people.*

**Intro Story:**

Shea was a military kid just like you. It was during the hot July days of 2005 that his family received the news that every military family fears most. Shea's dad was a Warrant Officer and pilot for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. A team of Navy SEALs had come under enemy fire in the rugged mountains of eastern Afghanistan. CW3 Goodnature was one of our brave heroes who answered their urgent radio calls for assistance. Unfortunately, everyone in that rescue mission, including the team of elite SEALs, lost their lives that day. All except one who ended up writing a New York Times Bestseller book entitled *Lone Survivor* by Marcus Luttrell.

Sadly, Shea's story is not unique. Thousands of other military teens have had to endure similar hardships. The hard reality is that we will all experience setbacks in life – that is just part of life. Things will happen that simply do not make sense.

**Personal Reflection Questions:**

*Take a shoe or a ball and give it to one student. He or she can pass or toss it to another student to begin the discussion on question one. After answering, each person gets to pass it to someone who hasn't answered. Do the same randomness throughout all the questions.*

1. In what ways can you relate to Shea's story? Explain. What are some of the fears you face? How do you deal with those fears?
2. To the degree that you're comfortable, share with the group a time that was particularly confusing for you, a time where everything that was going on was not making much sense.
3. How did that experience influence your thoughts about God? Did it cause you to question your faith or doubt God's existence?

**Central Bible Passages:**

*For this lesson, students will read out loud the book of Ruth in its entirety. Due to the length of the book, it will not be reproduced here. Rather, leaders should encourage students to read directly out of their own Bibles. If time is a consideration, then consider reading only chapter 1 and 4:13-22.*

**Life Application:**

1. As a group, create a list of all that Naomi lost in chapter one and all that she gained in the second half of chapter 4. Was God faithful to Naomi, an old widow, even during a difficult season in her life? What was the means by which God chose to provide for Naomi?
2. What did Naomi do when life threw her a major curve ball? How can we do the same in our context today?
3. Does following God always feel good? Is it a good idea to trust our feelings? Why or why not? What or who should we trust when things get tough?
4. Are there any habits or practices that we can begin to cultivate now that will prepare us for those inevitable hardships that are bound to come? If so, what? See if you can generate a list of 5-10 good habits or practices.
5. Let's take an inventory of our circumstances. It may be the case that someone we know might be going through a tough time. If so, could it not be the case that maybe God wants to use us in order to help out a friend? If so, then let's pray for that person right now and ask God how we can be available to serve our friends in need.