



Ruth

Session 1: Bittersweet

Note the meanings of the Hebrew names in *Ruth*:

Bethlehem:

Elimelech:

Moab

Naomi

Mahlon

Chilion

Orpah

Ruth

1. What did you learn in this session that was new to you?
2. What surprised (or even shocked) you?
3. How do the name meanings in *Ruth* change your understanding of the story?
4. Knowing the meaning of the Hebrew names in *Ruth*, what ironies can you identify in Chapter 1?

5. No one would *really* name their children something that means “sickness and disease” and “annihilation.” What does this suggest about the nature of the book of Ruth – history or parable?

6. How might the original audience have heard this story differently than we do today?

7. What other examples can you give outside of the Bible of names that have particular meanings? To what purpose?

8. Look up Genesis 19:30-38, Numbers 22, and Deuteronomy 23:3-6. What do they make clear about the ancient Israelites’ feelings about the Moabites?

9. Look up 1 Samuel 16:1-13 to find out what ancient Israelites thought about Bethlehem. What other places in the Bible illustrate Bethlehem’s significance?

10. What are the implications of this session’s material for your personal life? Your spiritual journey? For your local faith community?

