

PEER PRESSURE

LESSON TEXT

Ruth 1:1-22

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will use the example of Ruth and Naomi to define the qualities of a good friend.
- The students will discuss the impact that their friends can have on their spiritual lives.
- The students will express appreciation to one person who helps them make good decisions.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- For the teacher:*
- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
 - globe or map of the world
 - 3 women's scarves
 - 3 men's hats
 - extra Bibles
 - 16 sheets of white typing paper or index cards

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 7 copies (6 for selected students and 1 for the teacher)
- Page D, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Dynamic Duos
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer
 Victories
 Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

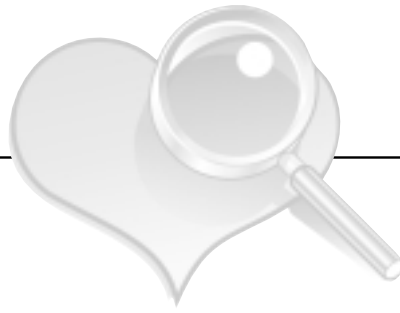
Story: "How the Ostrich Got His Long Neck"
 Scripture Study
 Activity: Stand Up!

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Proverbs 13:20
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

He who walks with the wise grows wise,
 but a companion of fools suffers harm.
 Proverbs 13:20



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Next to parents, friends are the greatest influence on a preteen. During these years, however, children begin to spend less time with their parents and more time in the company of their peers, who are often schoolmates and neighbors from non-Christian families. It is vital for preteens to have a deep understanding of how friends can influence their decision making.

Children in the kingdom need to make friends everywhere in order to be like Jesus and to win the world for Christ, but their closest and best friends should always be disciples. The goal of this lesson is to help the students understand the benefits and blessings of choosing to have their deepest relationships within the church.

TEACHER TIPS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Ruth 1:1-22. Think of a time when the friendship of a disciple helped you change your life for the better. Thank God for that person and be prepared to share about that relationship during the Scripture Study part of the lesson.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

DYNAMIC DUOS

This activity is a fun way to cause the students to think about the effect one person has on another person.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

Reproducible Pages:

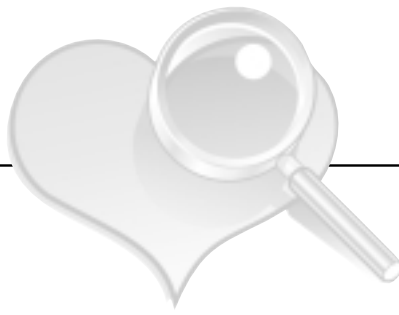
- Page A, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute a copy of Reproducible Page A (Dynamic Duos) and a pen or pencil to the students as they arrive.
2. When all the students are finished with the worksheet, go over the answers. Say the name of the first half of each duo, and have the students give the name of the second half. Refer to the "Dynamic Duos" Answer Key below for the correct answers.
3. As you talk individually with the students, make the point that each of the partners in the pair dramatically affects the other one.

"DYNAMIC DUOS" ANSWER KEY

Batman & Robin	Hansel & Gretel
Tom Sawyer & Huckleberry Finn	Popeye & Olive Oyl
Bullwinkle & Rocky	Charlie Brown & Snoopy
Laurel & Hardy	Robin Hood & Little John
Yogi Bear & Boo Boo	Mickey Mouse & Minnie Mouse
Superman & Lois Lane	Chip & Dale
Fred Flintstone & Barney Rubble	Sylvester & Tweety



STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful for the friends and family they have been given.

VICTORIES

Take time to have the students share about the challenge they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Who would like to share something that they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the kingdom of God is worldwide, and the victories of our brothers and sisters on the other continents can inspire us and spur us on.





GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

STORY

HOW THE OSTRICH GOT HIS LONG NECK

This story will help the students realize the importance of choosing their closest friends wisely.

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

PREPARATION

Practice reading aloud the story "How the Ostrich Got His Long Neck" so that you will be able to present it effectively to the students.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the students: *I am going to read you a story from Africa called "How the Ostrich Got His Long Neck." This story shows how dangerous choosing the wrong friends can be.*
2. Read the story to the students, using different voices for the ostrich and the crocodile characters.
3. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page B (the story) to take home.



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Today we are going to talk about choosing friends. Share with the students about one of your close friends in the kingdom and how that person has changed your life for the better.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 3 women's scarves
- 3 men's hats
- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 7 copies (6 for selected students and 1 for the teacher)

Now we are going to read about two people in the Bible who became good friends. As we read, think about your own friends, and how you could be more like these people.

First, I will need six volunteers, three boys and three girls. Have the six volunteers come forward and designate each student one of the following roles and props:

Elimelech - man's hat	Naomi - woman's scarf
Mahlon - man's hat	Ruth - woman's scarf
Kilion - man's hat	Orpah - woman's scarf

Explain that this will be a dramatization of a story in the Bible on friendship. Tell the volunteers that the "stage" will be the front of the classroom. Give each volunteer a copy of Reproducible Page C, and explain that they can use this as a guideline for the dramatization, but they can also add their own ideas. Have the volunteers put on their props, with the girls draping the scarves over their heads.

You should narrate (read Ruth 1:1-22). As you read, have the actors dramatize the story and read any lines their characters say in the scripture. **OPTION:** A simpler option is to have all the students stay in their seats while you read Ruth 1:1-22, and have three different female students read the lines of Naomi, Ruth and Orpah.



After the dramatization, summarize the rest of Ruth's story to the class: *In Bethlehem, Ruth provides food for herself and Naomi by going to the fields of a local well-to-do relative of Elimelech named Boaz. She follows behind the harvesters to "glean in the fields" (i.e. gather the grain left behind by the reapers). Her hard work and pure heart are noticed by Boaz who instructs his men to protect her and secretly make sure plenty of grain is left behind for her to glean. Boaz ends up marrying Ruth. They have a son who becomes the grandfather of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.*

Discuss the story, using these questions:

- *Why did Ruth and Naomi become friends?*
- *Why did Ruth stay with Naomi?* (Emphasize that Ruth chose to stay with people who followed God instead of her own people.)
- *What were the consequences of Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi?* (Stress that God blessed Ruth's good choice. He met both her physical needs [food and housing] and her emotional needs [marriage].)
- *What do you think happened to Orpah?*
- *What is important to you in choosing a friend?*
- *Why do we sometimes choose friends who are not good for us?*
- *Have you ever done something wrong when you were with a group, something you would not have done if you were alone? What happened?*
- *Describe a time a friend helped you make a good decision.*

ACTIVITY

STAND UP!

This game will test how well the students work together, and it will demonstrate that the actions of your friends have an influence on what you do.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the students: *Let's test how unified your friendships are!*
2. Divide the students into pairs, girls with girls and boys with boys.
3. Have each pair stand back-to-back and interlock their arms with their partner.
4. Each pair must attempt to sit down on the floor and stand up again, keeping their arms locked and their bodies back-to-back the entire time. To accomplish this, the pair must be unified and must work together.
5. Let the pairs practice a few times together, and then have a contest to see who can complete the exercise first.
6. Ask the students this question: *What did you learn about how someone affects you when you are closely linked with them?*



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.
Proverbs 13:20

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- extra Bibles
- 16 sheets of white typing paper or index cards

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have the students look up Proverbs 13:20 in their Bibles and read it aloud as a group several times.
2. Discuss what the verse means, and then have everyone close their Bibles.
3. Select one student to be the “unscrambler.”
4. Assign one word from the memory verse to sixteen of the other students. If you don’t have enough students to cover the number of words, assign two consecutive words to a few of the students. (Remember to also assign the scripture reference—Proverbs 13:20.)
5. Give each of the students a piece of paper and a pen, and have them write their word(s) in large capital letters.
6. Have the students line up against a wall holding their papers in front of them so that the memory verse words appear in the correct order.
7. Have these students take turns calling out their word(s) so that the verse is said in the correct order.
8. Rearrange or “scramble” the students so that the words are no longer in the correct order.

9. Have the unscrambler direct the students to move so that the verse is back in the correct order.
10. If time permits, select different students to be the unscrambler and repeat the activity.
11. Distribute a copy of Reproducible Page D (Memory Verse) to each student to take home.

NOTE: This activity might take more time than you have allotted. If so, simply allow the students to say their memory verse together several times or do a shorter fun activity to reinforce the verse.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you explain to them the challenge for the week.

Ask each student to identify one of his friends who helps him make good choices in his life. Then have each student develop a plan for expressing appreciation to that person. Some suggestions are:

- Call the person on the phone and tell him why you are thankful for him.
- Write a note or make a card for the person, expressing gratitude for a times he helped you in a special way.
- Find a scripture that reminds you of the person, and share it with your friend.
- Make cookies or brownies (or the person’s favorite treat), and deliver them with a thank-you note.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Identify a friend who helps you make great choices
and express your appreciation to this friend.

PEER PRESSURE

LESSON TEXT

Colossians 4:7-14; Proverbs 27:17;
1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Timothy
4:3-4

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will use scriptures to define the influence of both good and bad friends on their lives.
- The students will discuss the impact that their friends can have on their spiritual lives.
- The students will express appreciation to one person who helps them make good decisions.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For the teacher:

- 1 cotton ball or tissue rolled into a ball
- 3 small, identical, opaque paper or plastic cups
- 9 empty soda cans or 12 oz. paper cups
- 2 small, soft balls (e.g. a Nerf ball) or one pair of men's tube socks
- masking tape
- muffin baking tin
- marker
- 10 pennies
- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for the teacher (or can read from the original)

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Carnival Games
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer and Review
 Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

Scripture Study
 Story: Wrong Does Not Equal Cool

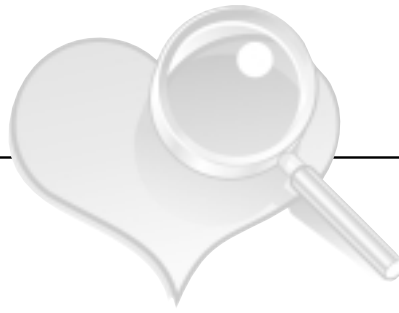
Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Proverbs 13:20
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

He who walks with the wise grows wise,
 but a companion of fools suffers harm.

Proverbs 13:20



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Next to parents, friends are the greatest influence on a preteen. During these years, however, children begin to spend less time with their parents and more time in the company of their peers, who are often schoolmates and neighbors from non-Christian families. It is vital for preteens to have a deep understanding of how friends can influence their decision making.

Children in the kingdom need to make friends everywhere in order to be like Jesus and to win the world for Christ, but their closest and best friends should always be disciples. The goal of this lesson is to help the students understand the benefits and blessings of choosing to have their deepest relationships within the church.

TEACHER TIPS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Meditate on Proverbs 27:17, Colossians 4:7-14, 1 Corinthians 15:33 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Thank God for the specific changes that have happened in your life because of the friendships you have in the kingdom.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

CARNIVAL GAMES

The purpose of this preclass activity is to unify the students and give them a chance to enjoy being together. These students need to be afforded every opportunity to build their friendships on all levels because they will need each other to keep growing spiritually through the next few years.

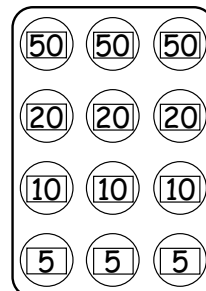
MATERIALS USED

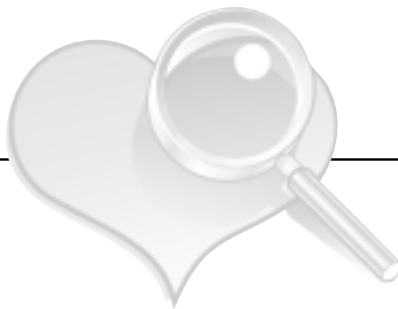
For the teacher:

- 1 cotton ball or a tissue rolled into a ball
- 3 small, identical, opaque paper or plastic cups
- 9 empty soda cans or 12 oz. paper cups
- 2 small, soft balls (e.g. a Nerf ball) or one pair of men's tube socks
- masking tape
- muffin baking tin
- marker
- 10 pennies

PREPARATION

1. If you are using tube socks, make them into balls by rolling up each sock into a ball shape and securing it by folding the top cuff over the rolled part.
2. Place a piece of masking tape on the inside bottom of each well in the muffin tin. Use a marker to write point values on each piece of tape as shown in the following diagram:





INSTRUCTIONS

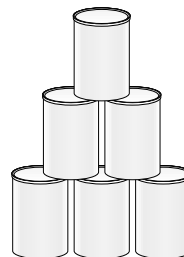
1. As the students arrive, direct them toward one of the games.
2. Call out "Change!" every five minutes to allow the students to play all the games.
3. Follow the game instructions as detailed below.

WHERE IS IT?

1. Put three identical paper cups, turned upside down, in a straight line on a table or on the floor.
2. Two students do this game together. Have one student hide the cotton ball under one of the cups with the other student watching.
3. The first student then moves the cups around to mix them up.
4. The other student guesses which cup the cotton ball is under.

HIT THE CANS!

1. Stack six empty soda cans or 12 oz. paper cups in a pyramid fashion on a table (three on the bottom, two in the middle, one on top—as seen in the figure at the right). Save the extra three cans to use as replacements, as needed.
2. Determine a throwing line, and mark it on the floor with masking tape.
3. Have the students stand behind the throwing line and then throw the ball (or rolled-up socks) at the cans, trying to knock them all down.



PENNY TOSS

1. Create a reasonable toss line for this game, and mark it on the floor with masking tape.
2. Position the tin flat on the floor so that the wells with the highest values are farthest from the toss line.
3. Give the student three pennies.
4. The student should pitch each penny toward the wells in the muffin tin to try to obtain the highest total score possible.
5. Pennies must land in the well (not on the rim) for the points to count.

STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them again. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with one of the students praying about the class members supporting each other and helping each other make great choices in life.
- Have one student recite the memory verse for this lesson: Proverbs 13:20.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson (Core Lesson).

GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so that as many as possible can share.



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Begin the lesson by asking the students to think about one of their best friends. Then have a few students share why they enjoy being with that person.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- extra Bibles

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to 1 Corinthians 15:33. Select a volunteer to read the scripture. Ask: *Why do you think this is true? How can another person influence how we act or think?* Discuss the possibilities of peer pressure, such as complaining, being disrespectful, being critical, being prejudiced, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcoholic beverages and taking drugs. Have the students share about anyone they know (without naming them) who has started doing those things because of the friends they hang around with.

Then have the students turn to 2 Timothy 4:3-4, and select another volunteer to read those verses. Discuss how "false teachers" ("bad company") can lead even a disciple into "turning away from the truth" (God's word) and "turning aside to myths" (wrong ways of thinking about God). Stress that in this situation, disciples **CHOSE** to have friends who were not teaching and living the truth. Our friends can even influence whether we follow God or not!

Now have everyone turn to Colossians 4:7-14, and have a third volunteer read that passage. Explain: *The apostle Paul was one of the strongest and most effective evangelists in the early church. This scripture lists some of the people he chose to have as friends. What kind of influence did they have on Paul?* Help the students find the following:

FRIEND

EFFECT ON PAUL

Tychicus

Inspired Paul to be a servant; gave Paul affection; let other people know about Paul's needs; encouraged Paul to stay faithful

Aristarchus

Encouraged Paul to keep working for the kingdom; comforted Paul and Justus Encouraged Paul to work hard; prayed fervently for Paul and other disciples

Epaphras

Luke

A friend who encouraged Paul and all the disciples





STORY

WRONG DOES NOT EQUAL COOL

In this story Charlie is influenced by a friend to do something that displeases God and his parents. The students will finish the story and discuss what they learn from Charlie's choices.

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for the teacher (or can read from the original)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read the story to the class.
2. Say to them: *Now, you finish the story...*
3. (Ask them the following questions to enable them to finish the story and learn from it.)
 - *What do you think Charlie might have said to Philip?*
 - *Why did Charlie allow Philip to influence him to do something wrong?*
 - *How would the time in the store had been different if Charlie had been with a friend who wanted to do what would please God?*
 - *What situation have you been in where someone influenced you to do something wrong? Something right?*





SCRIPTURE MEMORY

He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.
Proverbs 13:20

INSTRUCTIONS

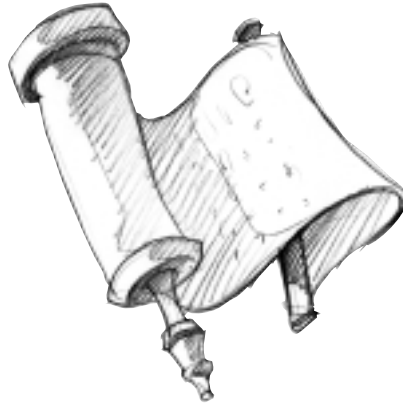
Review the scripture memory verse that was given during the previous lesson. Practice the verse together as a group, encouraging the students to have the verse completely memorized by the next class.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of the challenge for the week. (The students were to identify one friend who helps them make good choices in their lives and develop a plan for expressing appreciation to that person.)

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Identify a friend who helps you make great choices and express your appreciation to this friend.

DYNAMIC DUOS

Choosing a close friend can affect your life in good ways and bad ways. Can you name the other half of these "Dynamic Duos"?

Batman and _____

Tom Sawyer and _____

Bullwinkle and _____

Laurel and _____

Yogi Bear and _____

Superman and _____

Fred Flintstone and _____

Hansel and _____

Popeye and _____

Charlie Brown and _____

Robin Hood and _____

Mickey Mouse and _____

Chip and _____

Sylvester and _____

HOW THE OSTRICH GOT HIS LONG NECK

(An African Folk Tale)

Long, long ago, Ostrich had a short neck, just like all the other birds. In those days, Ostrich wanted more than anything else to be friends with Crocodile. However, all the other animals warned Ostrich that he was making a mistake.

“You can’t trust Crocodile,” said Monkey. “He’s mean and has no manners, and he scares all the other animals away from the river.”

“He’s lazy, too,” added Wildebeest. “All he does is lie around all day, basking in the sun and waiting for dinner.”

“And he only thinks of himself,” warned Elephant. “He’ll snap at you as soon as you turn your back. No, Crocodile can’t be trusted.”

But Ostrich paid no attention at all and insisted on playing with Crocodile. One day Crocodile was quite hungry, for he had skipped breakfast that morning. So he said to Ostrich, “My good friend, I have a terrible toothache today. Would you mind sticking your head into my mouth and seeing what’s wrong with me?” He opened his jaws very, very wide.

“Why, of course, dear Crocodile,” Ostrich said. And he stuck his head inside.

“But you have so many teeth!” Ostrich called. “Which is the one that aches?”

“It’s the one in the back,” Crocodile moaned. “Look in the back!”

So Ostrich stuck his head in further. “It’s awfully dark in here,” he called out again. “And so many teeth! I’m not sure which one aches.”

“It’s in the very, very back,” Crocodile assured him. “Go back just a little more.”

So Ostrich stuck his head in even further. “Here?” he called.

“There!” Crocodile shouted. And he snapped his jaws shut on poor Ostrich’s head!

“Help!” Ostrich yelled, and he pulled as hard as he could to get his head out. But Crocodile pulled right back.

They both pulled, and they pulled. Ostrich pulled one way, and Crocodile pulled the other. And as they pulled, Ostrich’s neck began to stretch.

And s-t-r-e-t-c-h.

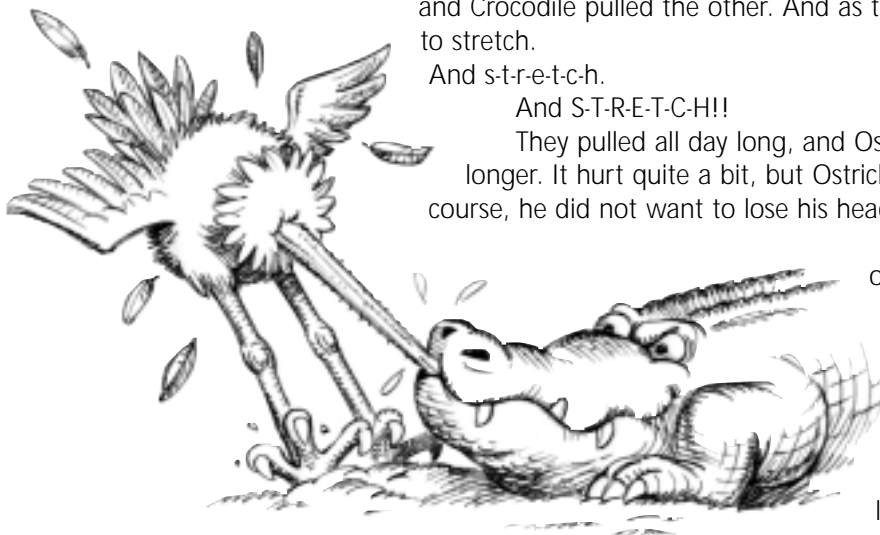
And S-T-R-E-T-C-H!!

They pulled all day long, and Ostrich’s neck grew longer and longer. It hurt quite a bit, but Ostrich kept pulling because, of course, he did not want to lose his head.

At last Crocodile got tired of pulling and let go. Ostrich jumped back and ran away from the river as fast as he could. He ran right back to his good friends, Monkey, Wildebeest and Elephant. And to this day, he still has a very long neck to remind him to stay away from the _____ likes

of Crocodile.

Core/Getting into God’s Word/1 copy for each student



DRAMATIZATION IDEAS FOR RUTH 1:1-22

The narrator (the teacher) reads the scripture text while the actors portray the story. All dialogue is read by the appropriate character, not the narrator.

- v.1 Empty stage; then ELIMELECH and NAOMI walk across the stage with MAHLON and KILION behind them
- v.3 ELIMELECH puts his hand to his heart, gasps and pretends to die, then leaves the stage; NAOMI cries
- v.4 MAHLON and KILION beckon RUTH and ORPAH to come on stage and stand beside them
- v.5 MAHLON and KILION pretend to die in some dramatic fashion then leave stage; NAOMI, RUTH and ORPAH cry
- v.7 RUTH and ORPAH follow NAOMI across the stage
- w.8-13 NAOMI, RUTH and ORPAH read the appropriate words
- v.14 ORPAH leaves; RUTH grabs NAOMI's hand
- w.15-21 RUTH and NAOMI read the appropriate words
- w.22 NAOMI and RUTH walk across stage together





SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.

PROVERBS 13:20

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Identify a friend who helps you make great choices, and express your appreciation to this friend.

WRONG DOES NOT EQUAL COOL

It was a hot summer afternoon. Charlie was sitting in his front yard, watching the cars whiz by. He was bored. None of his closest friends were home, and he had no one to hang out with. Then Phillip zoomed by on his skateboard. Charlie was very impressed with Phillip's skateboarding ability and really wanted to impress him in some way. He called to him, "Phillip, want to do something with me?"

"Sure, why not? Let's go to the store."

"Yeah, let's go."

Charlie wanted so much to be accepted by Phillip that he decided to ignore the fact that his mother did not allow him to leave the house without telling her where he was going. So, off he went, running behind Phillip, trying to keep up as Phillip very coolly boarded down the street.

When they went into the store, Phillip said, "Watch this" and he quickly hid a candy bar under his jacket. "Now you go," he motioned to Charles. Wanting very much to be grown up and cool, Charles reached out for the candy bar. But his hand was shaking so badly that when he picked it up, he dropped it onto the floor.

The store clerk glanced over at the boys, and saw the candy bar on the floor. "Can I help you?" she said, her eyebrow raised in disapproval.

"No, thanks," Charlie mumbled, putting the candy bar back into the rack.

Both boys walked immediately to the door and walked out onto the parking lot. Charlie's heart was pounding wildly in his chest. He looked over his shoulder to see if anyone was following them out. He was greatly relieved when he saw that no one had come after them. Charlie looked at Phillip straight in the eye and said, "....."

