

Theme & Passage(s)	<p>Theme: Ruth, the Risk Taker</p> <p>Passages: Ruth 2, Psalm 91 1-4, Isaiah 40</p>
Welcome	<p>Without getting too clever about this make an imaginary line across the room you are meeting in. One end represents Risk Takers, the other end Cautious Types. Everyone place themselves along this line. Are there any surprises? Explain the reason for why you chose your position.</p>
Worship	<p>Use the discussion to lead into a focus on Jesus, the ultimate Risk Taker. Read John 1 v.1-5, 10-14 slowly, then in silence reflect on what God in Jesus risked for us. Reread the passage and then spend time praising God for what he has given us.</p> <p>Song suggestions include: The servant king (120), You laid aside your majesty (633), chosen because they are familiar and can be sung Acapulco.</p> <p>Conclude this section by sharing these words (600) from Ruth 1 together as a sign of commitment to God and each other. “Where you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge, do not ask me to turn away, for I will follow you. We'll serve the Lord together and praise him day to day, for he brought us together to love and serve him always.” Numbers in brackets are for SHOF 1.</p>
Word/ Read & Reflect	<p>Begin in silence welcoming the Holy Spirit to guide you. Suggest you read Ruth 2 with different voices for all the characters as well as a narrator. Share your immediate reactions to the story. Here are some discussion pointers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What sort of risks did Ruth take in committing herself to the God of Israel. Have we / should we experience moments when we take risks in following Jesus as our Lord? 2. Risk Taking seems to go hand in hand with becoming vulnerable. For Ruth this meant physical danger. For Boaz it possibly involved his standing within the community. What might it mean for us? 3. Naomi finally realises that she is not beyond the loving kindness (Hebrew word is “hesed”) of the God of Israel, despite her failings and her grief. Are there situations when we can feel outside God’s love? What can we learn from this story about how we can support each other through such times? 4. Ruth at long last receives affirmation of her choice from Boaz. How do we deal with periods when we seem to have little encouragement.?
Working it out	<p>This story is a wonderful example of the cycle of grace beginning with acceptance, then sustenance leading to significance and finally fruitfulness. Be mindful this week about where you are in this cycle. Take time with God. Is there something he wants you to act on from which you are shrinking?</p>
Extra	<p>Pray for Diana following her ordination on Sunday. As she enters the busy field of the NHS pray that her ministry will open up a cycle of grace to many.</p>