

## LENTEN DESSERT DISCUSSION: **BROKEN BITS AND WEIRDNESS, BUT GOD STILL LOVES US**

We get to meet 5 of the Bible's most dismal failures and find out how God loved them and worked mightily through them, weirdness and all. Our Lenten resource by Fay Rowland, will invite us into the stories of their lives, a new one each week: Ruth, Martha, Jonah, Peter and Thomas. And in our breakout group (randomly assigned) we will get to talk about one of them each week, and how their story relates to ours.

First up this Wednesday, Feb. 24, is **RUTH!**

Here is the reading:

### Reading

#### from Deuteronomy 23

No Ammonite or Moabite may come into the meeting to worship the Lord, and none of their descendants for ten generations may come in.

#### from Ruth 1

Long ago when the judges ruled Israel, there was a shortage of food in the land. So a man named Elimelech left the town of Bethlehem in Judah to live in the country of Moab with his wife and his two sons. His wife was named Naomi.

Then Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died, and she was left with her two sons. These sons married women from Moab. One was named Orpah, and the other was named Ruth. Naomi and her sons had lived in Moab about ten years when her sons also died. So Naomi was left alone without her husband or her two sons.

Naomi heard that the Lord had come to help his people and had given them food again. So she and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab and return home. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back home, each of you to your own mother's house. May the Lord be as kind to you as you have been to me and my sons who are now dead. May the Lord give you another happy home and a new husband."

The women cried together out loud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law Naomi good-bye, but Ruth held on to her tightly.

Naomi said to Ruth, "Look, your sister-in-law is going back to her own people and her own gods. Go back with her."

But Ruth said, "Don't beg me to leave you or to stop following you. Where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God."

## from Matthew 1

This is the family history of Jesus Christ. He came from the family of David

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Boaz was the father of Obed.

(Obed's mother was Ruth.)

Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of King David.

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Jacob was the father of Joseph.

Joseph was the husband of Mary,

and Mary was the mother of Jesus.

Jesus is called the Christ.

31

### **Prompts for Breakout discussion groups:**

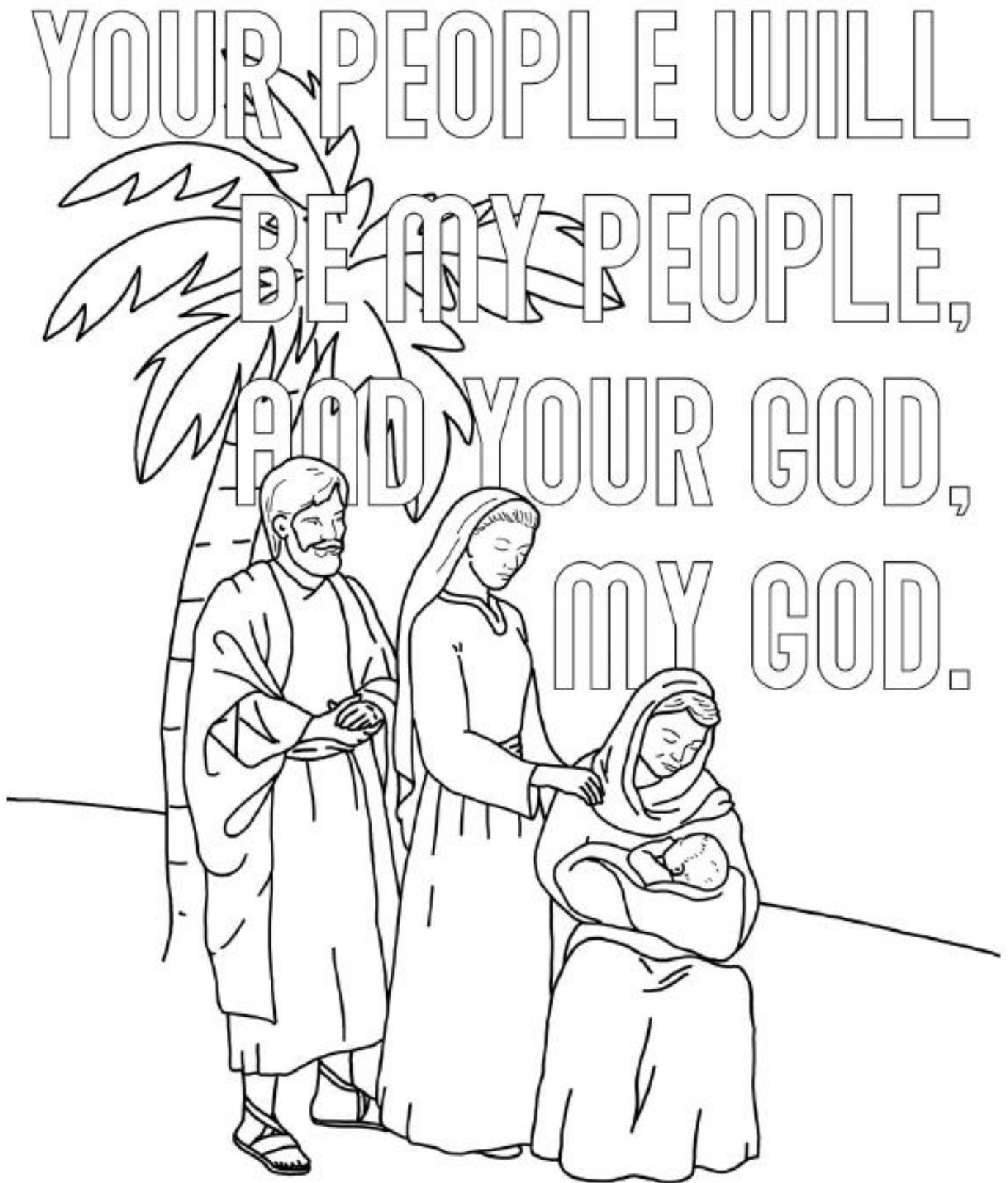
*You will have about ten minutes in your groups. Feel free to let the Spirit flow: stay with just one question if the discussion on one really takes off. Or cover all four, if you like. Main idea is to let everybody talk and learn from each other.*

- Ruth was the Great-Grandma of King David. She was extremely independent and brave, way ahead of her time. Do you have a Grandma or Great-Grandmother who said “no” to what was traditionally expected of her and instead forged her own path? Tell your group about her.
- If you were Naomi, what would you say to Ruth, when she refused to go back home, like you asked her? How much does it matter that Ruth is from a group of excluded foreigners?
- Have you had a time in your past when you felt excluded or unwanted, or were treated as a foreigner? Share something about that experience.
- Do you ever feel unworthy to be accepted into God's family? How does Ruth's story challenge that?

*Gleanings: Have one person ready to share a highlight or two from your discussion time together.*

## Colouring

Praying with pencils. Give yourself a few minutes of peace in God's presence.



# Labyrinth

Take your fingers for a walk through this labyrinth, entering on one side of the trunk and leaving on the other.

You can decorate the lines with leaves or colour the path, then take a soothing amble through the branches.

What your family tree?

