

# At THE MOVIES

## Life Group Leaders Guide

### Directions

This packet contains the background information, series information, and weekly curriculum you will need to lead a life group during our *At the Movies* series. Everything on this page is to help you stay connected to the series as a whole. Behind this page is the individual curriculum to help you point people to Jesus. The *Purpose* and *Move* sections of the curriculum are for the leader to read or paraphrase to the group. The *Notes and Commentary* section is for the leader to get background information and go deeper into the passages before leading the life group. The curriculum was designed with your freedom in mind. Read through the curriculum and decide what will work best for your group. SOAP the passages with the group, use only certain questions, write your own questions, or use the curriculum verbatim. As the leader, you know what will point your people to Jesus.

### Series Overview

From thrilling fight scenes that keep us on the edge of our seat to love stories that bring us to the verge of tears, movies have a universal touch that brings all of us together. At The Point, we want to harness that. We want to pair the captivating box office stories with the truth and relevance of scripture to point all people to Jesus. Enter *At the Movies*! Over the next four weeks we will be taking 4 major box office hits, utilizing their theme, and pairing them with scripture. This series will not only be entertaining and relevant but a great starting point for many people to make their way back to God. This series will coincide with some strategic outreaches to help our people invite friends, family, and neighbors to our church. So, grab some popcorn, find a comfy chair, and get ready for the show! This is going to be epic!

### Life Group Overview

During the *At the Movies* series our life group curriculum will cover stories in the bible that share the same overarching story as the movie and scripture that was mentioned from stage. Unlike previous studies, we will try our best to keep the study focused around one major story or passage. This not only will allow the story theme of the series to seep into life group but will also make SOAPing the individual passages in group easier for life groups that want to go that direction.

### At The Movies Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon	Topic of life group
Week 1	7/16	<i>Rogue One</i> : The book of Esther	Ruth 1:1-18
Week 2	7/23	<i>The Conjuring</i> : Luke 8:26-39	Genesis 3:1-7 & Matthew 4:1-11
Week 3	7/30	<i>Beauty and The Beast</i> : 1 Corinthians 13	Acts 9:10-19
Week 4	8/6	<i>Hacksaw Ridge</i> : Daniel 1	Daniel 3:8-30

# The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

## At The Movies - Week 1 - Ruth 1:1-18

### Purpose of Study

This past Sunday we saw Esther come to the realization and then action that she existed for “such a time as this.” She was willing to offer her position and life as a sacrifice for others. This week, we will study another “such a time as this” woman who viewed herself as an offering for the good of others. Hopefully, the study of these women will help us see that we exist in a “such a time as this” moment in history and push us to living a life in complete sacrifice to God for His glory. Note to the leader: this Old Testament story (much like Esther) must be told alongside historical background for the gravity of the story to sink in. In an effort to make that clear, embedded in this study are many *Background* sections to be read aloud or paraphrased to the group. All background sections are adapted from *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Ruth* by Robert L. Hubbard Jr.

### Flow of Study

**Optional Icebreaker:** Have you ever had a moment where you hit or missed the game winning shot (can be something outside of sports)? What was that like?

**Move #1:** Since the sermon series and life groups are covering the same topics, it might be a good idea (both for content and time) to begin the discussion with some unpacking questions from this Sunday’s sermon.

1. Did anything stand out to you from the sermon this weekend?
2. What is one thing from the sermon that you want to apply this week?
3. Why do you think understanding the theme of “such a time as this” is so important for the believer?

**Move #2:** We will begin our study by working through the beginning of the book of Ruth where another woman makes a “such a time as this” decision. Historically, this story comes most alive when you understand the background of the situation, to help with that, we will break up our scripture into chunks and read a background before each section to help the scripture come alive.

**Background:** The book of Ruth takes place with a dark backdrop that will be mentioned in the first few verses. Due to a famine, a family is forced to leave their hometown of Bethlehem to take shelter in the neighboring country of Moab. Historically, Moab has been considered an enemy of these people so going there to live was not only dangerous but shameful. This family was going from the known to unknown and unfortunately, moving to a new country in search of food turns out to be the least of their worries, especially for the mother.

### Read Ruth 1:1-5 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. <sup>2</sup> The man’s name was Elimelek, his wife’s name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. <sup>3</sup> Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other

Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup> both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

1. What stands out to you from this section of scripture?
2. In this type of stage-setting and historical writing it is common to state how long a family would be sojourning in a foreign land but the author of Ruth gives no such consolation. How does this speak to the desperation of the situation?
3. Imagine moving to potentially dangerous territory out of dire necessity, losing your husband, and then losing your two sons. What would that be like?
4. To the intended audience, these 5 verses would read like a movie that goes from bad to worse. Have you ever experienced a situation like that?

**Background:** At this point, Naomi has been stripped of everything. She is the female Job. She has gone from wife to widow. From mother to non-mother. Her fate is indeed bitter. As a sonless widow, she lacks the provision and protection of a husband or sons in a male-dominated society. Further, her age and poverty effectively seal off all options normally open to a widow. The 10 years mentioned in the previous set of verses would read to the audience as her having no option to return to her father's house because they are probably deceased at this time. Also, since she is older and beyond childbearing years she would have a hard time finding a husband to remarry and probably does not have a specific trade or physical ability to work. Although it is hard for us to imagine, culturally, she would have been considered in the worst possible situation for a woman in this society with no hope for any kind of redeemed future. For a person in her time this is a bad as it gets. This is rock bottom. However, the next section will begin with a ray of light. The famine of her land and people has ended which means if she is open to it, her exile in a foreign land could at least be over. Naomi and her daughters-in-law will begin traveling away from Moab but along the way a tough conversation between the ladies takes place.

### Read Ruth 1:6-13 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. <sup>7</sup> With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. <sup>8</sup> Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. <sup>9</sup> May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud <sup>10</sup> and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." <sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— <sup>13</sup> would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!"

1. What stands out to you from this section?

2. Naomi decides it is better for her to suffer in misery alone...not to bring these young ladies along for the ride. By looking at this passage, what are the daughters-in-law giving up by staying with Naomi (keep in mind, we found out in verse 4 that these women are Moabites)?
3. Reread verses 11-13. How does Naomi's unpacking of her situation to her daughters-in-law show where her heart is? What does the phrase "the Lord's hand has turned against me" show about Naomi's hope of a future?
4. To the intended audience, these verses would read like a cliff-hanger moment in a movie that would keep people on the edge of their seat. By going with Naomi, the daughters-in-law would be signing up for the same fate that Naomi is experiencing. Widows, without sons, in a foreign land, with no hope of remarrying. By not going with Naomi they would be leaving behind their mother-in-law who they obviously care for deeply (seen by the weeping in verse 10 and verse 14 [coming up next]). Have you ever experienced a situation or moment like this?

**Background:** At this point, they have most likely traveled away from Moab but have not completely made it to Bethlehem. The daughters-in-law now have a choice to make. In their culture, it was mandated that if they are to marry again it needs to be to a relative of their previous husband. Since they are Moabites, the likelihood of them being chosen by a relative of their previous husband is slim to none. Also, Naomi is now too old to have a son of her own for them to marry (and even if she did they would have to wait until that son reaches maturity). There is no inbetween, they need to make one of two choices (go home to a normal life or pursue a life of dying to self for the good of Naomi) and move in that direction.

### Read Ruth 1:14-18 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. <sup>15</sup> "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." <sup>16</sup> But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." <sup>18</sup> When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

1. What stands out to you from this section?
2. Each daughter-in-law has a physical action that follows their decision. What do you think Orpah's kiss represents? What do you think Ruth's clinging represents?
  - a. **Background:** Although a kiss in our culture is sweet. At this moment it was regarded as the cutting of ties and the ending of a relationship. These two would never see each other again. In contrast, clinging in scripture is used alongside many situations regarding intense loyalty and deep affection (much like a marriage). Orpah is taking Naomi's advice and Ruth is abandoning her Moabite roots and fully committing to Naomi. Although it can be easy to see Orpah in a bad light, that is not the author's intention. Orpah is to be seen as a sensible and pragmatic woman that heeds advice. Ruth is to be seen as having an adventurous faith, one willing to abandon the sensible for the unknown for the sake of another.
3. Commentators note that verses 16-17 are Ruth's conversion experience. Reread those verses. What about them resembles a faith conversion?

4. Is this common with faith conversions we see today? Was this sort of seriousness applied to your faith conversion?
5. What is the significance of Ruth's phrase "your people will be my people and your God my God?" What is she renouncing in doing this?
6. The statement from question 5 is not only for Ruth but for all Christians. God's people become "our people" at salvation. What do you think this looks like in practice? How does this look in your life?
7. Earlier, Naomi mentioned her God in regards to him "turning against her (verse 13). What does Ruth's decision to make this God her God show regarding her faith and hope in the situation? What does it show regarding her love for Naomi?
8. Reread verse 17. What is the significance of "where you die I will die?"
  - a. **Background:** People in the audience could be tempted to think that Ruth is going to commit to Naomi until she passes and then she will return back to Moab to pick up where she left off. This phrase and her swearing to God show her commitment (to Naomi's God and Naomi's people), even after Naomi's death.

**Move #3:** Nowhere in the story was the phrase "such a time as this" mentioned however the idea of sacrificing for something more is seen all throughout the book. Let's take some time to unpack that idea as it relates to Ruth and then relate it to our lives.

1. What is something that stood out to you tonight that you are going to take with you?
2. In what ways were the characters of Esther and Ruth similar to each other?
3. How is Ruth's response to Naomi a foreshadowing of Jesus and some of his teaching?
  - a. Some of Jesus teachings that directly relate could be **Matthew 8:21, 10:37, 19:29**, and **Luke 9:57-62**.

**Prayer:** End your study with a time of prayer where people can share prayer requests and be prayed for before they leave. If possible, please steer some prayer towards what your group talked about during this study.

**Next Steps:** The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. Challenge your people read the rest of the book of Ruth this week to see how the story ends.
2. Send out the following link to your group this week to help them further dissect the book of Ruth. This is JD Greear's (from The Summit Church) fantastic teaching on the book of Ruth --> <https://goo.gl/o5k97V>

## Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation. This section is much smaller in this curriculum because much of the commentary has been placed in the *Background* sections above.

### The Book of Ruth

- *Ruth: Hope in the Dark* from JD Greear at The Summit Church --> <https://goo.gl/o5k97V>

- This is a fantastic unpacking of the book of Ruth which will give you great insight into the book.