LESSON 1

A FAMILY FLEES FROM FAMINE



Aim: **To show the children that the refugee and famine problems we experience in Africa today are not new. People in Bible times experienced them, too.**

Scripture Reading: **Ruth 1:1–5**

Memory Verse: **Psalm 121:1**
I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from?

Note: Over the next eight weeks, the children will learn Psalm 121 – one new verse each week. The theme of this Psalm is: The Lord is our Protector.

Presenting the Lesson

Starting point

Everybody in the class probably knows families who have left their homes in the rural areas and walked many kilometres and with much difficulty to the towns. **Ask them: Why do people do this?** Answer: They come to find food and safety in the towns.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. During the times of the judges **(Look, Listen & Live, Book 3)** there was a famine in Israel. A man called Elimelech lived in Bethlehem with his wife, Naomi, and their two sons. The name Bethlehem means "House of Bread". But there was no bread in Bethlehem! There was a famine. What would Elimelech do to feed his family?
2. Elimelech took his family to the country of Moab. That was about 80 kilometres south of Bethlehem. **Show Picture 1. Explain that they had to walk there so they could take along only what they could carry.**
3. In Moab there was food, but they were foreigners. The language, customs and religion were all different from their own. The Moabites did not worship the Lord God Almighty. **Think of the difficulties Elimelech and his family would have experienced.**
4. Sadness struck the family when Elimelech died. Fortunately for Naomi, she still had her two sons. They had married women from Moab in the meantime. But then both her sons died, too.
5. Ten years after she had come to Moab Naomi was left without any of her own people in that foreign country. She had no husband and no sons, just two foreign daughters-in-law. Her life had turned out very sad, she thought. She could see no hope for the future.

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Our Response to the Story

Talk about the famines that have hit Africa in recent years, especially in Ethiopia and the Sudan. Perhaps you or one of the children has a personal experience to share.

In October 1988 there was no food in Juba, Southern Sudan. One month later the Lutheran World Federation began flying food into the town. Christians from all over the world gave food and money to make this airlift possible.

Instil the Memory Verse

This verse asks a question. What do you think is the answer? **Give the children time to respond.** We find the answer in the second verse of Psalm 121. **Read verse 2 to them.**

Israel's neighbours were heathen tribes who worshipped idols instead of the one true God. They believed that these gods lived in the highest places, so they built their altars on the hilltops and mountains. But the writer of Psalm 121 knew that help would not come from the mountains; help comes from the living God alone.



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