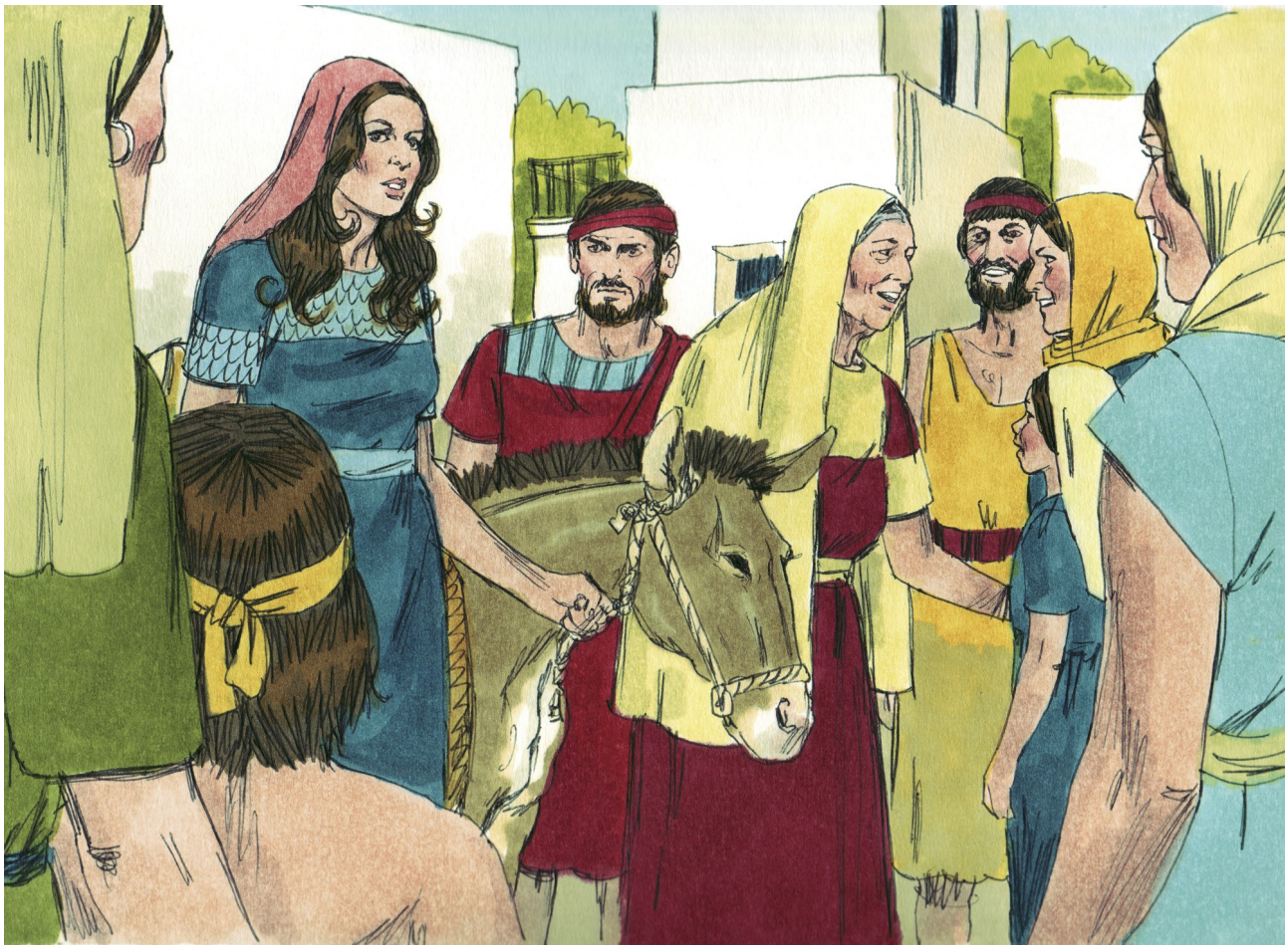
A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

A Second Skin

Based on Book of Ruth · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 6 and up

PERFORMANCE TIME
10–12 minutes

CAST SIZE
5 puppets

PROPS REQUIRED
Puppets in a range of skin tones (see Prop Options)

MAIN THEME

Being adopted into God's family through Jesus is like getting a “second skin” — people of every background become one family, the way Ruth the outsider became part of Israel, and eventually an ancestor of Jesus himself.

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To print just the play on its own, print pages 5–8.

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

A “black” child wants to quit the puppet show after a new kid makes a cruel comment about her skin color. A “Latina” child reminds her that everyone who loves Jesus is family, no matter what they look like — a truth the “white” child, who doesn't yet know Jesus, has never heard before. The children then watch Boaz comfort his son Obed, who's facing the same kind of unkindness because his mother, Ruth, was a Moabite outsider. Realizing their stories match, the two scenes come together: being adopted into God's family through Jesus means getting a “second skin” that unites people from every background.

Spiritual Concept

Ruth was a foreigner from a people despised by Israel, yet she became part of God's family — and, remarkably, an ancestor of Jesus himself. This play draws a direct line from Ruth and Obed's experience of being outsiders to a modern child's experience of prejudice, and lands on the same answer both times: when Jesus adopts us into his “forever” family, that new identity matters more than any difference in appearance, culture, or background.

Age Suitability

Best for ages 6 and up; the play names real prejudice and unkindness directly, which works best with an audience old enough to have a real conversation about it afterward.

Performance Time

10–12 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

BLACK CHILD (BC) — A modern child who loves Jesus. Hurt by a new kid's comment about her skin and ready to quit the puppet show — finds comfort and courage through Latina Child's friendship.

LATINA CHILD (LC) — A modern child who loves Jesus. Steps in as family for Black Child and gently confronts White Child's careless comment.

WHITE CHILD (WC) — A modern child who does not know Jesus yet. Makes a hurtful comment, tries to brush it off as a joke, but is genuinely curious once the other two explain what they mean by “family.”

BOAZ — Bible-times man, Ruth's husband and Obed's father. Comforts his son and helps him understand his mother Ruth's story of being an accepted outsider.

OBED — Bible-times child, son of Boaz and Ruth. Facing unkindness from other children because his mother was a Moabite — his story mirrors Black Child's almost exactly.

Prop Options

- Getting the skin, eye, and hair colors of the modern children right is essential in this play. Home-made spoon puppets, or printed-picture puppets can be an economical option. Puppets made of synthetic materials can be dyed using RIT DyeMore Synthetic Liquid Fabric Dye. Having puppets of different skin tones is also a powerful way to expand your audience identification for ALL the plays. Most “people puppets” are available only in white (very white!) skin tones.
- A chime or bell sound effect to mark the shift back in time to Boaz and Obed's scene.

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

Character Notes

This play names real prejudice directly rather than talking around it — keep BC's hurt and WC's careless comment genuine,

not exaggerated for comedy, so the resolution lands with real weight.

OBED's “need some muscles?” line is a light comic beat amid a serious scene — played for a small laugh, not to undercut the moment.

The parallel between BC's story and OBED's story is the heart of the play — let the recognition (“you are saying the exact same things I said!”) land clearly.

Staging

A fun way to include more people, especially pre-readers eager to help, is to have a hand-held “curtain” ready for the scene change. Helpers can run up and screen the center stage for a moment while chimes are rung and the puppets switch places.

The modern children and the Bible-times characters each “watch” the other's scene from the wings, per the source's staging — the same show-within-a-show device used elsewhere in this collection.

Play a chime or bell to mark the shift back in time to Boaz and Obed.

Reading the Script

CAPS = volume/intensity.

“He/she” and “his/her” in White Child's stage direction reflect that the character's gender is left to the performers.

Racial and ethnic descriptors in the cast list (Black Child, Latina Child, White Child) are the author's own, intentional to this script's theme — preserved as written.

A SECOND SKIN

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(Enter BC, with head down, hands in front of face, shaking head. Enter LC.)

LC: What's wrong?

BC: I don't think I want to be in this puppet show any more!

LC: But you were so excited! What's happened?

BC: You would not understand.

LC: How do you know that? Try me.

BC: No, never mind. I'm just gonna go home.

LC: Please! You are my friend! You're in my Jesus-family, too! Remember what Jesus says in the Bible?

BC: What?

LC: Everyone who loves Jesus is his brother and sister.

BC: *(sarcastically)* Well, tell that to the new kid.

LC: To who?

BC: That new kid. I don't know their name.

LC: What happened?

BC: I guess my skin is too dark!

LC: What? Really?

BC: Yep.

LC: Well that is just ridiculous.

BC: Easy for you to say, you don't have to worry.

LC: You mean because I'm a bit lighter than you?

BC: Yep.

LC: Listen. I am your friend, and part of your family. Anyone who picks on you has to deal with ME too. And remember, Jesus is right here with us, and his Holy Spirit will help us!

BC: Well, maybe…

(Enter WHITE CHILD (WC). She/he stops short on seeing them together.)

WC: Oh. Who is this?

LC: This is… my sister/brother!

WC: Your sister/brother? Ha! Look at his/her skin.

LC: Yes, we are family. And there is SOMETHING we need to sort out right away!

WC: What?

LC: God made every-single-person. Did you know that?

WC: Well, I guess so.

BC: And everyone who follows Jesus and loves him is adopted into his family!

WC: I never heard that. That's a strange kind of family.

LC: YOU might think some people's skin is too dark—

WC: *(tries to shift the blame)* YOU all are too sensitive. I was just joking!

BC: Some things are never funny.

LC: And it's ok that everyone doesn't look just like you, or just like me. We can still be family!

BC: It's like we get a second skin, on the INSIDE.

WC: I don't get that.

BC: Oh, wait! Remember that today's puppet show, is about this exact thing?

LC: Yes, let's make room for the other puppets, from Bible times. Boaz and his son Obed. Now you listen carefully, ok?

WC: Ok.

(Exit all to wings. Play chime to change scene. Enter OBED, with head down and hands in front of his face. Enter BOAZ.)

BOAZ: Hey, my little man! Obed!

(OBED keeps his head down.)

BOAZ: Son! What's wrong?

OBED: *(head still down)* Daddy, I don't think I want to be in this puppet show any more.

BOAZ: But you were so excited. What happened?

OBED: Daddy, you would not understand.

BOAZ: How do you know that? Try me.

OBED: No, never mind. I'm just gonna go home—

(BC calls over from wing.)

BC: Hey! Obed!

OBED: *(look over at the black puppet)* You aren't supposed to be talking now, it's the Bible-time-puppets' turn.

BC: But you are saying the exact same things I said!

OBED: Really?

BC: And I bet you are worried about the exact same thing.

OBED: But how would you know?

BC: Because, I know your story! In the Book of Ruth, in the Bible! Ruth was your mom!

BOAZ: That is right, Obed. When your mother came here, from Moab, people noticed that she did not look or talk just like them.

BC: Ruth and Naomi were not sure how she was going to be treated, at first.

BOAZ: But everyone noticed how kind Ruth was, and how she cared for Naomi.

BC: And you protected her, Mr. Boaz!

OBED: But still, Daddy, some of the other kids are really mean to me! They say I am strange, like her.

BOAZ: They don't understand. But the truth is, God gave us Ruth, and she is part of God's people now.

BC: And I am too! People from every country, and every skin color, have become part of God's family.

OBED: That is really good.

BC: Did you know that the Savior, Jesus, was born on earth to one of your great-great-great-granddaughters?

BOAZ: Wonderful! We do know God always keeps His promises.

BC: Well, I better let you get back to your part of the puppet show.

BOAZ: No, we are done. Now it's our turn, to watch how you three get things sorted out.

OBED: Let me know if you need some muscles.

BOAZ: Obed! That is not helpful at all. Come on.

(Exit BOAZ and OBED, go to wings and watch. Modern CHILDREN unite center stage.)

WC: I have heard of Jesus, but not the way YOU talk about him.

LC: We can tell that you don’t know him yet.

BC: But that’s ok! We will introduce you!

LC: God promised to save us a long, long time ago—

BC: Even before Boaz, and Ruth, and Obed.

WC: Save you? From what?

BC: From being selfish, from thinking “It’s all about me!”

WC: But… what if I DO think “It’s all about me!”

LC: Well if we ALL think that same way, we are all sunk. Here: we will show you!

(Play with this – have LC and BC pretend a fight.)

LC AND BC: It’s all about ME! No, me!

OBED: Hey, need some muscles?

LC: It’s ok Obed, we are just kidding now.

BC: See, when everyone is living THAT way—

LC: We end up not trusting each other—

BC: And we only want to be with people who are just like us—

WC: Oh! Right! And we don’t even trust THEM, not very much. I get it.

BC: But when we let Jesus be in charge, he adopts us into his forever family.

LC: It’s like getting a second skin! And we all match him.

BC: Just think, you could be…

BC, LC, BOAZ, AND OBED: Part of our forever family!

BOAZ: You can read more about Ruth and Boaz and Obed in the Bible, in the book of Ruth.

ALL: And that’s all for today! Goodbye!

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. Why did BC want to quit the puppet show at the start of the play?
2. How did OBED's story turn out to be so similar to BC's?
3. What did BC mean by getting "a second skin, on the inside"?
4. Ruth was an outsider who became part of Israel — and part of Jesus' own family line. What does that tell you about who belongs in God's family?
5. Has anyone ever made you feel like you didn't belong? What would you want a friend to say, the way LC spoke up for BC?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: The Book of Ruth — Ruth, a Moabite outsider, follows her mother-in-law Naomi to Israel, marries Boaz, and becomes an ancestor of King David and, eventually, Jesus. (Full book — reference only.)

Additional Scripture:

- Galatians 3:28 — “There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (NLT)
- Ruth 1:16 — “Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.” (NLT)

Song Suggestions

- “Jesus Loves the Little Children” — Cedarmont Kids — https://open.spotify.com/track/1dsTpCLOhHWcLvqy5CqhSG
- “In Christ There Is No East or West” — Concordia Publishing House — https://open.spotify.com/track/1xk4CS33MUnbtmajCbJzTq

Ministry Context

Especially valuable for a series on belonging, unity, or God's family across cultures — and a good choice for a diverse congregation or VBS setting where kids may have their own experiences with exclusion. Consider having a leader ready to talk further after the performance, since the play names real prejudice directly.