

Participant's Guide

Name: _____

Contents

Introduction

Jesus the Galilean

Week 1: A child of God worth following **1:1-20**

Week 2: Stolen from the strong man **3:7-35**

Jesus the Messiah

Week 3: Passing by **6:30-52**

Week 4: Children of honor **10:46-52**

Week 5: Faithfulness for the unfaithful **11:1-11, 15:21-41**

Week 6: The beginning **16:1-8**

Introduction

For many of us, the stories of Jesus found in the Gospels can feel like old news. We've heard them

time and time again in Sunday School, in sermons, and books. While they are regarded as holding the timeless truths of our faith, they can also feel stale. In part, this is the result of the stories being separated from each other and taken apart from the larger narrative.

We aim to bring those stories back together with this study. We are intentionally weaving the individual stories together to give insight into the intent of the author to create a compelling witness of God's in-breaking kingdom.



Each Week

This booklet is primarily for use during your weekly Life Group meetings. The questions are for your group to discuss after watching the video for the night. The only portion of the booklet intended for use outside of Life Group is the "Thoughts & Questions" page included after each section. As you read through the book of Mark each week in preparation for your Life Group meeting, this section will give you space to write notes.

You will be reading more scripture each week than what we will be focusing on in the study. Feel free to discuss any part of the scripture you read along with anything in the video you find interesting. This booklet is meant to help generate, not limit, discussion.

Week 1: A child of God worth following



Mark 1:1-20

Before starting the video, please read aloud the scripture listed above.

1. In comparing Jesus to both the political ruler of his day as well as the religious icons of Judaism, the author of Mark intends to show that Jesus has a deeper authority and higher calling. If this story were written today, to whom might Jesus be compared in order to make this same point?

2. If you have been baptized, how would you describe the experience? Did it feel connected to repentance and protest like Jesus' baptism?

3. Can you think of a time in your life in which being a follower of Jesus has meant making choices which were at significant odds with what you perceive to be the dominant culture?

4. If you were to produce an introduction to the life and ministry of Jesus, what might you include? Why?

Birth narrative?

Childhood stories?

Ministry calling?

Other things we've not read?

***Before your next Life Group
meeting please read***

Mark 1:-21-3:35



Week 2:

Stolen from the strong man



Mark 3:7-35

Before starting the video, please read aloud the scripture listed above.

1. List a few examples of how you have seen Christianity divided by artificial boundaries (ex: ethnicity, nationality, denominations, politics).

2. What would a church look like if those divisions were fully and truly eradicated?

3. Why would anyone believe that Jesus' actions came from evil intent? Can you imagine a scenario today where something Jesus might do would cause controversy and even condemnation from religious people?

4. Jesus defines his family as those who are committed to his mission.
Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Throughout the New Testament the church family is described as being so deeply connected that they are like a body. A community drawn together and unified by Jesus. How have you seen this view lived out or failed to be lived out?

***Before your next Life Group
meeting please read***

Mark 4:1-6:52



Week 3: Passing by



Mark 6:30-52

Before starting the video, please read aloud the scripture listed above.

1. Have you ever experienced the sense that even in difficult times, God was with you? How about, like with the disciples, not being able to see God at those times?

2. It is easy to ask more of a passage than the passage was intended to answer. This particular scripture is not really meant to answer the difficult question, "Why does God let bad things happen?" Instead, it is meant to say, "When bad things happen, God is not absent nor uncaring." What do you think about that distinction?

3. "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." - St. Augustine

How does this quote work with what we read in the story of the fish and loaves? How about the storm? What are benefits and limits to this idea?

4. Do you find these stories comforting or unsettling? What kinds of questions do they raise about how God interacts with his creation/followers?

***Before your next Life Group
meeting please read***

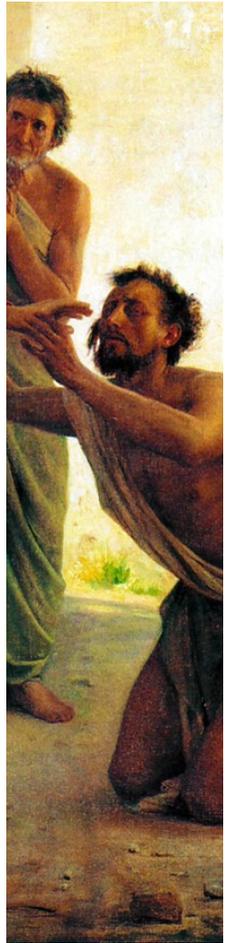
Mark 7:1-10:52



Week 4: Children of honor

Mark 10:46-52

Before starting the video, please read aloud the scripture listed above.



1. List eight titles / identities / roles which you use to define yourself (ex: mother, teacher, middle-class)?

1.

5.

2.

6.

3.

7.

4.

8.

2. Would you say that your identity as “child of God” ranks above all others?

3. Is that the primary identity you see in others when you engage with them?

4. What title/role/identity might Jesus ask you to leave behind before you could be truly committed to his cause?

5. Batimeaus' declaration of Jesus as Son of David means he is a worthy king. That is precisely what the earliest Christian creed, "Jesus is Lord," means. This Lordship is a sovereign authority over all in the kingdom. Joining the kingdom of God means committing to Jesus as king.

What are your thoughts about having a king who has full authority over you?

Does it matter that this authority is an invitation and not coerced?

***Before your next Life Group
meeting please read***

Mark 11:1-15:41



Week 5: Faithfulness for the unfaithful



Mark 11:1-11, 15:21-41

Before starting the video, please read aloud the scripture listed above.

1. How has the church attempted to make Jesus into something he isn't? Have you ever done the same?

2. Much of the scene around Jesus' entry to Jerusalem was politically charged. Jesus, however, would not be coopted by any of the political parties of his day. How might this scene play out today? Would every political group try to claim Jesus? All the way to the cross?

3. At his death, Jesus is described as being without any followers at the cross and only a few at a distance. In light of Mark 1:1, what does Mark 15:39 say about who truly sees Jesus?

4. If the crucifixion is the clearest image of the heart of God, how does this impact how we read the rest of the Bible? -how we treat others? -how we spend our money? -everything?

***Before your next Life Group
meeting please read***

Mark 15:42-16:8



Week 6: The beginning



Mark 16:1-8

Before starting the video, please read aloud the scripture listed above.

1. What stories have shaped your life (family history, cultural traditions, national stories)?

2. Do you think the church is regularly perceived as a place where people get to begin again? Have you witnessed or experienced that sort of second chance in the church?

3. Jesus is letting his disciples know that they are still welcomed and loved. On the other hand, his invitation to meet him in Galilee seems to be the same as before: "Follow me." History shows us that eventually many of Jesus' early followers remained faithful and became martyrs. What do you think changed their faithfulness?

4. What has been the most interesting or most transformative part of studying the book of Mark together?