

simply

MARK

fast-paced evidence

simplifying life
re-prioritizing life
cultivating a deeper walk with God

All Bible verses are taken from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

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You may copy this resource or any part of it to build up God's Kingdom.
Please include the following reference information:

More studies available at
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

Simply MARK

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The WORD Among Us

The [Simply Series](#) is a different kind of Bible study. It is not doctrine or life application. It is relational, which means there are no right or wrong answers to the questions in this facilitator's guide.

Relational Bible studies focus on building relationships with God and each other. They create a space for the WORD among us to wash over us, plant seeds in our lives, and change us by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit.

Relational Bible studies give everyone, no matter what their perspective or depth of Bible knowledge, space to share and contribute to the dialogue as we journey together. They help us discover how our personal story intersects with the Bible story.

These guides are designed to facilitate real and authentic dialogue in such a way that secular and unchurched Truth seekers come away saying, "This is different! This is real."

People need the Everlasting Gospel. Simple Church is about creating a space for Truth seekers to journey together.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to "spend" with Truth seekers from all walks of life.

How to Use This Leader's Guide

This leader's guide assumes you have:

1. Read through the www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com web page.
2. Completed the online Simple Church training.

Title

outline

Bible story reference will be listed here.

Message of Hope: Have this idea crystal clear in your mind. This is what you want people to remember for the rest of the week.

Helpful Tip: These tips show up here and there.

The Basic 8: These are covered in the [free online training](#).

1. Collection Box (explained in PhaseONE training videos)
2. Connection Card Envelopes
3. Business Cards
4. Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet
5. A variety of extra Bible translations.
6. Child Safety Poster
7. Blessing Board
8. Email link to online Simple Church Weekly Summary Form (When officially launched this is emailed to your Details Coordinator every Sunday.)

Welcome: We are glad everyone is here. We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of Truth seekers. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to share and contribute.
- Cell phones should be put on "vibrate," or turned off.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. *[Insert rotation question for the week.]*

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions:

Week 1: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 2: How would you like to re-prioritize your life?

Week 3: How would you like to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

Week 4: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 5: etc.

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

For example:

1. What was his (pointing to the person) highlight for the week?
2. What was her name (pointing to the person)?
3. How did she want to simplify her life?

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

This is what page 2 of a typical leader's guide for a given week actually looks like.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. *Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.*
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Bridge: This transitions the group from the Kick-off Question into the Bible story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Bible story reference will be listed here. (Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers for digging questions:

- Remember: there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions. Help people contribute their perspective to the dialogue.
- You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the questions listed. Use them as a resource from which to select during your discussion.
- Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on these questions.
- Affirm each answer, no matter what is said, by saying something like, "Excellent, someone else"; "Thanks for sharing, someone else"; "Good, someone else"; "How about the rest of you, what do you think".
- Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
- If someone gets off-focus, simply say (after they have stopped talking), "What was the question? Let's read it again."

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Some helpful pointers:

- Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on these questions.
- These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it interacts with the Bible study.
- At appropriate times affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Group Prayer:

1. We are blessed by being a part of this group, yet it exists for those who are not yet here.
2. Put an **Empty Chair** in the middle of your prayer circle. Pray for the people who are not yet here.
3. Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

At the end of prayer, ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate the questions for next week. Anyone can facilitate the questions. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Lunch:

1. Keep it simple. Keep it easily reproducible.
2. Hostess (one of the CORE4) provides the beans.
3. During lunch have the **Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet** available.

Bible Baptism

outline

Mark 1:1-13

Message of Hope: God has sent someone to help you experience Jesus.

Needed for Today: This study will give people the opportunity to request baptism or request rebaptism. Have the Connections Card Envelopes printed and set out. There is a checkbox for people to request baptism or rebaptism. The Connection Card Envelopes are found in the **Drop Box**.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [Insert rotation question for the week.]

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What do you think is one of the more important decisions you make in life?

Bridge: Today's story is about a very important decision, but it may not be what most people first think of. Mark gets right to the point about this. What is this decision? Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 1:1-13

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Mark begins this story with the Good News about Jesus by quoting the prophet Isaiah. Why would good news about Jesus begin with Isaiah, and why would Jesus need a messenger to prepare the way for Him?

✂-----

2. What could Biblical water baptism symbolize?

✂-----

3. Verses 8, 9, and 12 talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be baptized with the Holy Spirit?

✂-----

4. Why do you think Jesus's temptation is the next thing Mark talks about after His baptism?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who were the significant people in your life who helped prepare the way for you to learn about Jesus? How did they go about it?

✂-----

- B. If you were going to prepare the way for your friends to experience Jesus, what would you do?

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

Invitation: Bible baptism is one of the most important steps in a person's life. If you would like to be baptized or rebaptized you can talk with any of us or check the box on the Connection Card Envelope that talks about baptism.

✂-----

- D. Remember: **God has sent someone into your life to help you experience Jesus.**

Showdown

outline

Mark 1:14-28

Message of Hope: God is more powerful than Satan.

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Check-In:

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2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. *[Insert rotation question for the week.]*

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was one of the first times you recognized evil in this world?

Bridge: Many movies have a war plot between a good guy and a bad guy. Today's story has a good guy and a bad guy, but it is not some make-believe movie plot. This story will introduce us to the real war that is going on in our world.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 1:14-28

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Back to verse 14, this story does not tell us, but why do you think John was arrested?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 16-22 again. What might have motivated these people to walk away from their business to follow Jesus, and what do you think was different about Jesus's teaching that gave Him such authority?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 23-28 again. What can we learn about Jesus's authority over evil spirits?
✂-----
4. To put it bluntly, this story is a showdown of power and authority between God and Satan. What do you think Mark wants us to learn about this war?

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had been an eyewitness, what part of this story would you have told your friends about?
✂-----
- B. Where do you see the showdown between God and Satan going on in your own life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God is more powerful than Satan.**

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

World War X

outline

Mark 1:29-34

Message of Hope: God is more powerful than demons.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who do you know that has served in a war?

Bridge: Believe it or not, each of us are part of a war that is going on right now. Today's story is a short story that has a big punch. It will give us a small glimpse into this global war that is going on around us. However, much of this war is invisible unless you know what you are looking for. Today's study is called *World War X*, so let's read it.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 1:29-34

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. If this story had happened in our town, people would most likely be talking about it. Which part of the story do you think people would focus on?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 30-31 again. There is no verbal command to "be healed." Jesus just takes Simon's mother-in-law by the hand and the fever leaves. What might this tell us about Jesus?
✂-----
3. A verse similar to verse 34 was in our story last week. How do you think the demons knew who Jesus was?
✂-----
4. How is demon possession the same or different today as it was in Jesus's day?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, when have you seen demonic powers at work, or when have you seen miracles happen?
✂-----
- B. Simon took Jesus to his mother-in-law. If someone was going to bring Jesus to you, what would you wish Jesus would do for you?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God is more powerful than demons.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Healing

outline

Mark 1:35-45

Message of Hope: Jesus wants to bring healing to your life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last time you got up before daybreak—really early in the morning? Why did you get up so early?

Bridge: Today's story begins with one person who is up before daybreak and ends with a big problem. But the best part of this story is what happens in the middle. And in the middle of our story is where we will find the heart of God.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 1:35-45

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think everyone was looking for Jesus, as recorded in verse 37?
✂-----
2. Verse 39 says that Jesus did two things. Why do you think Jesus did both of these together?
✂-----
3. Let's read verse 40 again. Why would this begging leper add the words, "if you are willing"?
✂-----
4. In today's world, not everyone is healed. How do you make sense of that?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, when was a time you asked or even begged for a miracle that *did or did not* happen?
✂-----
- B. Our story started with Jesus getting up before daybreak and going to pray. When you need to get away for some quiet time with God, where do you go?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus wants to bring healing to your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Identity Crisis

outline

Mark 2:1-12

Message of Hope: Jesus, the Son of God, has the authority to forgive your sins.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When facing a crisis and needing help from a friend, who are you most likely to call?

Bridge: Today's story brings every person face to face with a crisis. But this is a very different crisis than what most people would naturally think of. As we read this story, see if we can discover what crisis every human faces at some time in their life.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 2:1-12

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What do you think was attracting all these people to Jesus?
✂-----
2. What motivated Jesus to switch gears from physical healing to forgiving sins?
✂-----
3. How do you think this story proves Jesus's ability to forgive sins? Proves Jesus's identity as the Son of God?
✂-----
4. In previous stories over the past few weeks, Jesus has commanded the demons to keep quiet about His identity. Why would Jesus choose this story to reveal His identity?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had been the paralytic in this story, what would you had done after you had been healed and had your sins forgiven?
✂-----
- B. When did you begin to comprehend that Jesus is either the Son of God or the best liar that ever existed?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus, the Son of God, has the authority to forgive your sins.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Sinners Invited

outline

Mark 2:13-17

Message of Hope: Jesus came to invite people like you and me to follow Him.

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1. What is your first name?
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3. *[Insert rotation question for the week.]*

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3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If your income doubled overnight, what would you do with the extra money?

Bridge: Today's story is about someone who probably had a very large salary and walked away from it to do something very different. That is not what people would normally do, so let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 2:13-17

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think Levi got up so quickly and followed Jesus, and what do you think Jesus had in mind when He said, "Follow me and be my disciple"?
✂-----
2. Read verse 16 again. Why would it bother the Pharisees that Jesus would be eating with sinners?
✂-----
3. Let's read verse 17 again. What might have motivated Jesus to make this statement?
✂-----
4. How would you summarize the heartbeat of Jesus's message in this story?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if the other disciples (who used to be fisherman) had paid Levi inflated taxes, how would you have felt when Jesus invited Levi to be one of the disciples?
✂-----
- B. How can you reach out to those in our community whom others consider "unacceptable"?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus came to invite sinners like you and me to follow Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Patches

outline

Mark 2:18-22

Message of Hope: Jesus does not want to patch your life but give you a new life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is the longest period of time you have gone without food?

Bridge: Today's story is about people who were skipping meals, but not to lose weight.
Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 2:18-22

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. We don't think of church denominations in the New Testament, but they existed. What were the three denominations in this story, and what do you think made them different from each other?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 19-20 again. Why do you think Jesus uses a wedding example to answer their question, and what do you think Jesus is saying about Himself in this wedding example?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 21-22 again. What additional insights do these examples give us?
✂-----
4. What do the old and new clothing and wineskins represent in this story?

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a scale of one to ten, with one being *fasting* and ten being *feasting*, where you would score your personal friendship with Jesus? Are you fasting or feasting?
✂-----
- B. Where in your life do you feel like you are trying to patch or temporarily hold it together?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus does not want to patch your life but give you a new life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Creation's Invitation

outline

Mark 2:23-28

Message of Hope: There IS rest for the weary.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last restful day you had, and what made it restful?

Bridge: Today's story is about rest, something we all need. But this story goes much deeper than sleeping or taking a nap. We live in a world that never shuts down; it goes twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. But in the midst of this out-of-control world, God gave us a very special invitation that most of the world has forgotten.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 2:23-28

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think the Pharisees care about what Jesus and his disciples were doing, and what is the law the Pharisees are talking about?

Tip: Hold your finger in Mark and let's take a quick history tour.

Read Exodus 20:8-11 (part of the Ten Commandments)

Read Genesis 2:1-3 (part of creation, before sin entered this world)

Video resources: [Created for Something Better](#), [Fooled by a Myth](#)

✂-----

2. From what we have just read, what are the benefits and blessings that people receive when they keep Creation's Sabbath?

✂-----

3. Let's read verse 27 again. What is Jesus's message in this verse?

✂-----

4. Read verse 28 again. What does it mean to be "Lord" over the Sabbath?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, when was one of the first times you began to learn about Creation's Sabbath?

✂-----

- B. What is or would be one of the blessings of keeping Creation's Sabbath in your life?

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D. Remember: **Creation's Sabbath is God's personal invitation to spend a special day with Him resting. There IS rest for the weary.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Tipping Point

outline

Mark 3:1-6

Message of Hope: God loves you so much He set aside His work and wants to spend a special day—Sabbath—with you.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

There are all kinds of questions in life. But when a question pops into your mind, in general, how do you tend to go about finding answers to your question?

Bridge: Today's story is about something that more and more people are asking questions about. So, if you have not given it much thought before today, not a problem. Today's story is full of healing and special blessings that God established when He created this world. What are these special blessings? Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 3:1-6

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Why do you think the Pharisees were against Jesus and wanted to kill Him?

✂-----

2. Why would healing be considered “working” on the Sabbath?

✂-----

3. Where does the idea of not working on the Sabbath come from?

Tip (review from last week): *Bookmark our story. Let's take a quick history tour.*

Read Exodus 20:8-11 (part of the Ten Commandments)

Read Genesis 2:1-3 (part of creation, before sin entered this world)

✂-----

4. Back to Mark—let's read verse 4. What is Jesus's message?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. How do you make sense of the idea that today, Creation's Sabbath, is a day for resting from our work and for doing good for others?

✂-----

- B. What are some of the blessings and benefits you receive on Sabbath?

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D. Remember: **God loves you so much He chose the Sabbath to set aside His work and spend it with you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Evil Obeys

outline

Mark 3:7-12

Message of Hope: Even evil must obey God's commands.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is the longest distance you have walked, hiked, or run at one time?

Bridge: Today's story begins with people who are walking from all over the countryside to one location. There are no cars or bikes; possibly some rode on horses or donkeys, but probably the majority of the people just walked. Why are they willing to walk such long distances? Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 3:7-12

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's re-read verses 7 and 8. Does anyone have maps in their Bible that show how big of an area people came from to see Jesus?
✂-----
2. While it seems unlike Jesus, why do you think He wanted to keep His distance from the crowd?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 9 and 10 again. If Jesus is in a boat just off the shore, all these people cannot get close to Him. What do you think Jesus was originally hoping to do this time?
✂-----
4. Would someone read verses 11 and 12? These verses almost seem like they do not fit with this story. What does Mark want us to understand from these two verses?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. Imagine that you had been hearing about Jesus. He is the talk of the city. How far would you have been willing to walk to see Jesus with your own eyes?
✂-----
- B. If it is true that even evil spirits have to obey Jesus's commands, how does that change or confirm your view of Jesus's authority in your life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Even evil must obey God's commands.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Divided or United

outline

Mark 3:13-35

Message of Hope: Jesus is able to forgive our sins and unite us with Him.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the phrase *divided or united*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story talks about being divided or united. It also talks about betrayal, family, blasphemy, Jesus, Satan, power, authority, and the Holy Spirit. Now that is a lot to cover, but it will be quite easy because today's stories will look at them in bite-size pieces. Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 3:13-35

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's read verses 24-27 again. What is the message Jesus is teaching the people?
✂-----
2. What do these verses tell us about power and authority between Jesus and Satan?
✂-----
3. What is blasphemy? What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit?
✂-----
4. In verses 33-35, what is Jesus really saying about His family?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. As you think about your life, what kinds of things typically drive wedges between you and those you love?
✂-----
- B. How have you gone about bringing unity when a relationship has been divided?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Satan will try to divide you, but Jesus has the ability to forgive all your sins and unite you with Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Planting Seeds

outline

Mark 4:1-20

Message of Hope: God wants to plant seeds of truth in your heart.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

If you were to plant a garden, what are some of the seeds you would like to plant?

Bridge: Today's story is about planting seeds in all kinds of soil. But this story goes far beyond gardening and has a much deeper meaning. It talks about the seed that God is planting in our life and how that seed will either die or flourish.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 1-20

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Let's read verse 15 again. What reasons does Jesus give as to why seeds don't take root in some people's lives?
✂-----
2. Read verses 16 and 17 again. What kinds of persecution do people face today because of believing and following God's Word?
✂-----
3. Let's re-read verse 18 and 19. What are the “worries of life,” the “lure of wealth,” and the “other things” that choke out God's Word in our culture?
✂-----
4. Read verse 20 again. How does God's Word “produce a harvest” in people’s lives, and what is the harvest produced?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, what are some of the new seeds that have been recently planted in your life, and what could hinder these new seeds from growing and thriving in your life?
✂-----
- B. How could you put down deep roots in order to face opposition that may come because of the new seed God has planted in your life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God is planting seeds of truth in your heart.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Use It or Lose It

outline

Mark 4:21-25

Message of Hope: Jesus wants to take you deeper.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time all the lights went out, and you had to use candles?

Bridge: Today's story begins with candles or a small lamp, but it is not because the lights have gone out. This small lamp represents something much deeper and more important in our lives. This story also makes a startling claim about everyone's life. So, let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 34:21-25

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Read verse 22 again. This is a pretty serious claim. Why do you think Jesus is making this claim?
✂-----
2. How would people live their lives differently if they really believed that someday everything they did will be out in the open?
✂-----
3. Why do you think Jesus introduces this story by using the lamp/candle illustration, and what do you think Jesus is wanting us to hear and understand about this story?
✂-----
4. Let's read verse 25 again. In learning a new language, it is often said that one must use it, or you will lose it. What is Jesus's message in this verse?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. Who is someone that has been a spiritual lamp in your life, and how have they given you spiritual direction or guidance?
✂-----
- B. What new spiritual teaching or understanding has God given you recently?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God wants to take you deeper, but you must use the spiritual understanding He is giving you, so you don't lose it.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Kingdom of God

outline

Mark 4:26-34

Message of Hope: Either the Kingdom of God is real, or Jesus is a good liar.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

How much farming or gardening, if any, have you done in your life?

Bridge: Today's story is about farming. Some of us may have farmed or gardened, and others of us may have never planted a seed. But the good news is that you don't have to be a farmer to understand today's story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 4:26-34

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. At the beginning of both stories Jesus uses the phrase "Kingdom of God." What do you think this is referring to?
✂-----
2. This first story, verses 26-29, has several symbols. What are they, and what do you think they represent?
✂-----
3. In verse 27 and the first part of verse 28, Jesus emphasizes that the farmer does not make the seed grow. What is Jesus trying to teach us in this story?
✂-----
4. The second story, verses 30-32, is another picture of what the Kingdom of God is like. What glimpses or perspectives is Jesus trying to emphasize in this story?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, do you feel like you are more like a single mustard seed or part of a field of seed? Why?
✂-----
- B. What questions about the "Kingdom of God" would you like to better understand?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Either the Kingdom of God is real, or Jesus is a good liar.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Life's Storms

outline

Mark 4:35-41

Message of Hope: God can calm the storms in your life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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3. *[Insert rotation question for the week.]*

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Facilitator's Directions:

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2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of the worst or most extreme weather storms you have been in?

Bridge: Have you noticed that storms seem to be getting bigger and more destructive around the world? Today's story talks about a storm, but it also talks about the personal storms we face in life.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 4:35-41

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. If you had been one of these disciples, what would you be thinking by now?
✂-----
2. Let's read verse 38 again. How is it that Jesus can actually sleep during a storm like this one?
✂-----
3. Someone please read verses 39-41 again. What do these verses tell us about Jesus?
✂-----
4. Why do you think Jesus asks His disciples, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" What does this story tell us about Jesus's disciples?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, what was a storm that God calmed in your life?
✂-----
- B. Is there a current storm in your life you would like God to calm?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God can calm the storms in your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Mercy Came Running

outline

Mark 5:1-20

Message of Hope: Mercy will come running past all your failures to the point of your need.

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Facilitator's Directions:

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3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

When was a time you were helpless and someone came to help you?

Bridge: Today's story is about a person who is so completely helpless that there is nothing he can do. But the story does not stop there. Another person comes and not only helps him but sets him free. So, let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 5:1-20

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Read verses 6 and 7 again. What does this tell us about evil spirits?
✂-----
2. Read verses 8-10. From these verses, what can we determine that Jesus believes about evil spirits?
✂-----
3. What different parts of this story show us that Jesus has power and authority over evil spirits?
✂-----
4. Read verses 18-20 again. It could be seen as unkind of Jesus to not let this man come with Him. Why does Mark say that Jesus does not allow this man to come with Him?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, what is a small or large miracle that you have seen Jesus do for someone you know?
✂-----
- B. Verse 19 talks about two things this man was to share—the miracle and how Jesus had been merciful to him. Where have you seen miracles or mercies in your own life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Song: *Mercy Came Running*
- E. Remember: **Mercy will come running past all your failures to the point of your need.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Reversing Fear

outline

Mark 5:21-43

Message of Hope: Your faith builds someone else's faith.

Tip: *Pray that questions about what happens when people die will be raised. But do not take the time in Simple Church to answer this question. Schedule a time next week after lunch (following Simple Church) to share a summary. When people have additional questions, start mid-week Bible studies.*

- John 11:24 (the entire story) teaches what the NT and Jesus believed about death.
- Video (25 minutes): [What Happens When You Die?](#)
- Video (25 minutes): [Hell—When the Smoke Clears.](#)

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What would you say is the opposite of fear?

Bridge: Today's story is about fear, but more importantly it is about the opposite of fear. And in the opposite of fear is where we find comfort, courage, hope, and peace of mind. Today's story is called *Reversing Fear*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 5:21-43

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Verse 22 said that Jairus was a leader of the local synagogue. Most religious leaders were against Jesus, so what do you think was different about Jairus?
✂-----
2. Read verses 28 and 32. What do you think made this lady think that touching Jesus's robe would heal her, and why does Jesus publicly identify her when she probably did not want to be noticed?
✂-----
3. In verses 35 and 36 Jairus's daughter dies just after he has heard Jesus say to the lady, "your faith has made you well." How did this experience help Jairus with his own faith in Jesus?
✂-----
4. Someone please read verse 39 again. What is Jesus really saying when He says, "she's only asleep"?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. Let's review all the people in this story. On a personal note, who do you most identify with, and why?
✂-----
- B. When was a time that someone else's spiritual experience helped you grow in your own spiritual journey?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Your faith builds someone else's faith.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair. Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Homecomings

outline

Mark 6:1-6

Message of Hope: My degree of belief, no matter how large or small, helps others to believe in Jesus.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When and where did you attend a family, school, or other kind of homecoming event?

Bridge: Most homecomings are a wonderful time, but today's story takes an unexpected turn for the worse. But even in this sad set of circumstances there are valuable lessons for us to learn. Many of the lessons we learn today will protect us from making the same mistakes in our own lives. Today's story is called *Homecomings*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 6:1-6

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Some Bibles have maps in the back. Where is Nazareth?
✂-----
2. Let's re-read verse 2 and 3. Some translations say that “they scoffed” and “were deeply offended and refused to believe.” Why do you think those who had watched Jesus grow up are now treating Him like this?
✂-----
3. Let's read verse 4. Of all the things Jesus could have said, why do you think He says this?
✂-----
4. Different cultures approach “belief” differently. Some see it as an individual choice and other cultures see belief as a community choice. Which way does Jesus’s culture lean in this story? Which way does our own culture lean?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had been part of this story, where do you see yourself fitting into it?
✂-----
- B. When you think about your own life, what are some of the best gifts you have received from family and friends?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **My degree of belief, no matter how large or small, helps others to believe in Jesus.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Sent to Serve

outline

Mark 6:7-13

Message of Hope: Jesus is also sending us.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Have you ever been sent on a mission—maybe something as simple as being sent to the grocery store or something as big as being sent around the world?

Bridge: Today's story is about being sent on a mission. It is actually a mission that millions of people have been sent on, but we will see that this mission is quite interesting and will give much food for thought. So, let's read the story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 6:7-13

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's jump back to the beginning of this story and read verse 7 again. Why do you think Jesus sent people in teams of two?
✂-----
2. Why do you think Jesus needs to give “authority” to cast out demons? And how would someone know if a person was casting out demons and healing people under a “false” authority?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 8 and 9. Why would Jesus include these instructions?
✂-----
4. Verse 11 talks about shaking the dust off of their feet and abandoning them to their own fate. What is the purpose of this; what good does it accomplish?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. How do you think people responded to the disciples' message? On a personal note, how will our community respond?
✂-----
- B. If Jesus were to send you out as one of His disciples, what do you think you would do first?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus is also sending us.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Who is Jesus?

outline

Mark 6:14-28

Message of Hope: People are still trying to figure out who Jesus is.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who is a person of note or what is an event that lots of people seem to be talking about?

Bridge: Today's story might seem a bit morbid, and we may wonder why this story is in the Bible. We may not find all the reasons why it is included, but this story does ask a very important question that every person will have to answer at some point in their life. What is that question? Well let's read our story for today.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 6:14-28

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. A quick history question: Our story started with people trying to figure out who Jesus was. Who was John the Baptist, and who was Elijah?

Tip: (For John the Baptist, see Mark 1:9-11. For Elijah, see 1 Kings 18 and 19)

✂-----

2. Let's read verses 17-20 again. It is one thing to not like someone or what they say, but why do you think Herodias is looking for an opportunity to kill John the Baptist?

✂-----

3. Why do you think Herod respected John, feared him, protected him, liked to listen to him, and did not want him killed?

✂-----

4. Why do you think Herod so quickly abandoned his values of protecting John the Baptist and played politics instead?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had been Herod and realized what Herodias was trying to do to John, what do you think you would have done? When it comes to standing up for what's right, what do you usually do?

✂-----

- B. Our story started with people wondering who Jesus was. If you had been part of this story and someone asked you, how do you think you would have answered their question?

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D. Remember: **People are still trying to figure out who Jesus is.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Compassion

outline

Mark 6:30-44

Message of Hope: Jesus has compassion on you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last time you skipped a meal or two?

Bridge: Today's story begins with an amazing, miraculous feeding of over ten thousand people. But more important than the miracle is the compassion that prompted the miracle. As we read this story, notice the extent that Jesus is willing to give up His own wants and wishes to care for the needs of other people. Our story begins in Mark 6:30 and is called *Compassion*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 6:30-44

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's do some quick math. How many loaves of bread and fish do you think it took to feed all these people?
✂-----
2. So much for getting away to a quiet place to rest. Why would Jesus think that He could actually get away without people seeing and following Him?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 33 and 34. What do you think Jesus meant when He described the people as "sheep without a shepherd"?
✂-----
4. Let's read verses 35-40 again. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach His disciples in this experience?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who is someone who has had compassion on you, and how did they show it?
✂-----
- B. Where in your life do you sense the need for God's compassion?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **The same Jesus who had compassion on this crowd has compassion on you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

I Am Here

outline

Mark 6:45-56

Message of Hope: In the storms of life, Jesus is right beside you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of your favorite water activities?

Bridge: Today's story involves lots of water and some amazing supernatural activity. But the most important part of the story is not about the water. It is about peace. Peace of mind, peace of heart, and a peace with God even when you find yourself in the middle of raging storms. So, let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 6:45-56

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. In last week's story, Jesus and His disciples were trying to get away to rest but ended up feeding ten thousand people. In today's story, Jesus is still trying to get some peace and quiet. What might have caused this growing need for peace and quiet?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 47-49. If the disciples were in serious trouble, why would Jesus walk past them instead of walking over to them?
✂-----
3. Let's re-read verses 50-52. What do you think Mark is hoping that we will discover in this story about Jesus?
✂-----
4. Why were the disciples' hearts hard after all they had seen and experienced with Jesus?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. In today's world, what are the different things that harden people's hearts towards Jesus, and what would soften people's hearts in today world?
✂-----
- B. As you reflect on your own life, what has softened your heart towards Jesus?
✂-----
- C. How does God let you know that He is near and close to you even in the storms of life?
✂-----
- D. **Song:** *Sometimes He Calms the Storm and Sometimes He Calms His Child.*
- E. Remember: **In the storms of life, Jesus is right beside you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Clean Hearts

outline

Mark 7:1-23

Message of Hope: God is more concerned about cleansing our hearts.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *hypocrite*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story has some fighting words. Hypocritical church leaders are publicly exposed, and people learn the difference between God's laws and man's traditions. Sounds quite interesting, so let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 7:1-23

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. The last few verses, 20-23, are the punch lines that are the most important part of this story. Can someone summarize the punch line?
✂-----
2. What do you think was the real reason the Pharisees and teachers of religious law came from Jerusalem to see Jesus?
✂-----
3. Some people use verses 18 and 19 to say that we can eat anything and it will not hurt us. How do you think Mark or Jesus would respond to this idea?

Tip: *In these verses, Jesus is not declaring that a person can eat anything. Some foods and liquids are life destroying, and some are plainly unhealthy. See Lev. 11:2–23 for lists of animals, birds, fish, and insects that were not only deemed ritually unclean but physiologically unhealthy. What Jesus is attacking is the belief that if pious Jews simply observed the ritual purity laws, they would thereby be morally clean. On the contrary, no food in and of itself can defile a person's character. What ethically defiles are the evil thoughts (realized in outward actions), which originate inside of a person. See note on Matthew 15:11. For the issue of clean and unclean in the New Testament, see Acts 10:9–16; 15:19–20.*

✂-----

4. Back to Jesus's main point in this story. Let's find the verses that use the word "defile." How do these things defile a person's heart?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. This story started with faultfinders coming to see Jesus. On a personal note, when faultfinders come to see you, what do you tend to do, or how do you cope?
✂-----
- B. How do you strive to guard your heart and keep it pure?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God is more concerned about cleansing our hearts, then everything else will fall into place.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Persistence

outline

Mark 7:24-37

Message of Hope: Persistence pays off in Kingdom work.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something in your life that you have begged for?

Bridge: Today's story is actually two-in-one. They are similar stories that are short, simple, and to the point. As we read them let's see if we can figure out the reason why they are in the Bible. One clue: today's study is called, *Persistence*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 7:24-37

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. One story takes place in the region of Tyre and the other in Sidon. What clues do we find as to the nationality of these two places?
✂-----
2. Both stories use the word “begged.” What similarities do you think Mark is wanting us to notice between these two stories?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 27-29 again. This seems a bit odd. What do you think Jesus is trying to say?
✂-----
4. What motivates people to persistently intercede on behalf of other people?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who are the people in your life that have persistently prayed for you over the years?
✂-----
- B. If someone was to be persistent about you, what would you like them to be persistent about?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Persistence pays off in Kingdom work.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Little Things

outline

Mark 8:1-10

Message of Hope: Jesus knows what you need and cares about the details of your life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Have you ever run out of food, or what was the closest you have ever come to running out of food?

Bridge: Today's story is about four thousand people who almost ran out of food. As we read this story, notice how much compassion and concern Jesus had about the little things in these people's lives.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 8:1-10

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's briefly look back to a similar story we read a few weeks ago. Where was the story and what differences and similarities do you notice between these two stories?
✂-----
2. Read Mark 8:4 again. Why do you think Jesus's disciples act like this is something new and they have no idea what to do?
✂-----
3. Why do you think Jesus looks for a little bit of food to bless and multiply instead of starting with nothing?
✂-----
4. If Jesus lived in our area, what are some of the basic needs you think He would help people with today?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, what are some of the basic needs—little or big—that Jesus has helped you with in your life?
✂-----
- B. During life we go through times of plenty and times of little. What is a “little piece of bread” that you would like to bring to Jesus and ask Him to multiply?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus knows what you need and cares about the details of your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Blind Spots

outline

Mark 8:11-21

Message of Hope: Jesus is patient with those who are trying to learn more about him.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you have argued about?

Bridge: Today's story is about two groups of people who argue. It is interesting how Jesus walks away from one group of arguers, but He stays with the next group of arguers. There must be something going on that is deeper than the surface arguing. Let's read today's story which is called *Blind Spots*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 8:11-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's go back to the beginning of this story and read verses 12 and 13 again. Very rarely do we see Jesus walking away from people. Why do you think He quickly gets back into the boat and leaves the Pharisees?
✂-----
2. What are the characteristics of good yeast and contaminated yeast? What was Jesus referring to when He said, "the yeast of the Pharisees"?
✂-----
3. Let's read verse 18 again. What might be the blind spots Jesus was longing for his disciples to "see and hear"?
✂-----
4. In verse 11, Jesus left the Pharisees when they began to argue. What might have kept Jesus from leaving His disciples when they started arguing?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. In today's world, what are some of the common blind spots or misunderstandings people have about Jesus?
✂-----
- B. On a personal note, what is a blind spot or "leftover basket of food" you used to have, but as you have grown, it is no longer a blind spot in your life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus is patient with those who are truly searching for Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair. Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Spiritual Journey

outline

Mark 8:22-26

Message of Hope: A spiritual journey has many steps.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you lost your eyesight, what do you think would be most difficult for you?

Bridge: Today's story is an odd short story. It seems that Jesus, when asked to heal a blind person, has to try two times before He completely heals the blind person. But there may be deeper things going on, so let's take a look at this story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 8:22-26

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think Jesus took this person out of the village before healing him?
✂-----
2. What are the different reasons we can think of why Jesus used a two-step process to completely heal this blind man?
✂-----
3. Why would Jesus tell this man not to go back to the village on his way home?
✂-----
4. What hints can we find as to where this man lived, since Jesus told him not to go into the village on his way home?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who are some of the people in your life who have helped you receive your spiritual sight, and how have they helped you?
✂-----
- B. This blind man went from blind to blurred sight to 20/20 vision. Where would you say your spiritual sight was six months ago? And where is it today?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **A spiritual journey towards Jesus has many steps along the way.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Turning Point

outline

Mark 8:27-33

Message of Hope: Jesus is the Messiah.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What was a turning point in your life?

Bridge: Today's story is a turning point in Mark's story. The disciples have been with Jesus, seen Him heal dozens of people, and feed thousands of people with a sack lunch. They have researched, evaluated, and pondered who Jesus really was. In today's story Jesus asks them a turning-point-sized question. So, let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 8:27-33

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Based on what we know about Peter, what are some different ways we would describe his personality?
✂-----
2. If Jesus has the ability to know what people are thinking, why do you think Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do people say I am?"
✂-----
3. What are the possible reasons why, in verse 30, Jesus tells His disciples not to tell anybody who He is?
✂-----
4. Let's read verses 32 and 33 again. Why is Jesus using such strong language with Peter?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had been Peter, how do you think you would have responded to Jesus's strong language?
✂-----
- B. What is the most convincing evidence for you that Jesus is the Messiah?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus is the Messiah.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Your Invitation

outline

Mark 8:34 – 9:1

Message of Hope: Jesus wants you to turn from your sinful ways and follow Him.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a recent time you received an invitation and accepted that invitation?

Bridge: Today's story is a personal invitation that Jesus gives to each one of us. He never forces, manipulates, or puts pressure on us to accept this invitation. He simply says, "if you want to," which seems a bit low-key. But maybe it has to be that way, so let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 8:34 – 9:1

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Jesus begins verse 34 with, "If any of you wants to be a follower" Why do you think that Jesus does not assume people want to be His disciple?

✂-----

2. What does a person look like who has taken up their cross and followed Christ?

✂-----

3. Let's read verse 35 again. How would you try to explain to a five-year-old what it means to "give up your life" to Christ in order to "save it"?

✂-----

4. Verse 38 also begins with the word "if." Why do you think freedom of choice is so important to Jesus and for the way His Kingdom works?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who is someone you admire who has made this kind of life change; what differences have you noticed?

✂-----

- B. What do you think your next step is as you continue to turn from selfish ways and follow Christ?

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D. Remember: **Jesus wants you to turn from your sinful ways and follow Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

A Glimpse of Heaven

outline

Mark 9:1-13

Message of Hope: Our humble Savior is also our glorious King.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is the highest place you have ever climbed to?

Bridge: Today's story begins with four people climbing up a mountain. But as we will soon discover, this story is unlike any story we have read in the book of Mark. It involves two other humans who lived hundreds of years before Jesus's time. There is lots to dig into and talk about in this story, so let's read it.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 9:1-13

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think Jesus only takes three of His disciples?
✂-----
2. Who are Elijah and Moses; where did they come from, and who might they represent? What are possible reasons why God would send Elijah and Moses instead of angels?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 7 and 8 again. Who do you think spoke these words, and what is their significance?
✂-----
4. In verses 9 and 10, what contributed to the confusion of the disciples?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you were to go on a spiritual retreat, where would you like to go, and what would you like to do?
✂-----
- B. This story ended with the disciples being a little confused. What is something in your life that is confusing and you wish was clearer?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Our humble Savior is also our glorious King.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Help My Unbelief

outline

Mark 9:14-29

Message of Hope: All things are possible when we believe God!

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who have you known that could not hear or speak?

Bridge: Today's story is about a boy that could not speak or hear when controlled by an evil spirit. And people were beginning to wonder if the evil spirits were more powerful than Jesus since His disciples had just tried and failed to cast them out of the boy. As we read this story, notice how confused the crowd is. Notice how desperate the boy's father is. And notice how he asks Jesus to help his unbelief.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 9:14-29

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What does this story teach us about evil spirits?
✂-----
2. This story begins with the teachers of religious law arguing with Jesus's disciples. Why do you think this situation sparked such an argument?
✂-----
3. Verses 22-24 are interesting; let's read them again. What might have prompted this father to end his request with, "if you can"? How is it possible for someone to both believe and have unbelief at the same time?
✂-----
4. Let's read the last two verses again, 28 and 29. It almost seems that Jesus is suggesting that His disciples did not pray. What is Jesus trying to teach his disciples?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, when was a time that you asked something of God and it did not happen; and when was a time when you asked and it did happen?
✂-----
- B. How do you fight against unbelief and encourage belief in your life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **All things are possible when we believe God!** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Upside-Down Greatness

outline

Mark 9:30-37

Message of Hope: In God's Kingdom, service is greatness.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *betrayal*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is actually two stories. They may not seem to be related, but together they show what upside-down greatness really means. The first story begins with the pain of being betrayed by someone, and the second story ends with the importance of being a servant to the same people who betrayed you. This is not a natural response. We want to get revenge. Yet Jesus gives us an example of how to respond when we are betrayed.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 9:30-37

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Let's go back to verses 31 and 32. Why do you think the disciples were afraid to ask?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 33 and 34 again. How could a misunderstanding of what Jesus said about His death and resurrection lead to a discussion about who would be the greatest?
✂-----
3. Verse 35 is the punch line of this story. How is it that being last makes one first in God's Kingdom?
✂-----
4. It seems that, out of the blue, Jesus uses the example of a child in verse 37. How does this verse connect to what Jesus is talking about?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who is someone you know that lives out this servanthood principle in their life? How do they do it?
✂-----
- B. When you've been betrayed, how do you or how could you live as a servant?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **In God's Kingdom, service is greatness.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Mini Stories

outline

Mark 9:38-49

Message of Hope: (*Leader: See the affirmation exercise the group does together that is listed at the bottom of the next page. You will need a piece of paper and a pen for each person.*)

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one character quality you admire in someone else?

Bridge: Today's story is a collection of mini stories. The first one begins with casting out demons, and the last one ends with character qualities of salt. But each story has a punch line that Jesus is teaching us. Some of these mini stories make sense, and some of them may be hard to understand. So, let's jump in and take a look at these mini stories.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 9:38-49

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. The first mini story in verses 38-41 makes it sound like people have a default that is for God unless they intentionally choose against Him. What do you think?
✂-----
2. This is one of those “truth sayings” of Jesus. How would one decide if this “reward” is talking about heaven or a reward on this earth?
✂-----
3. The next mini story is in verse 42. What are the different ways we can cause children (or anyone) to sin?
✂-----
4. Verses 43-48 is the longest mini story, so let's read it again. What do you think Jesus is saying?
✂-----

Affirmation Directions: (Give each person a piece of paper and a pen.)

- A. **5-10 minutes**—For each person in our circle, list at least one quality that you have seen in their life and how you have seen that quality lived out in their life.
✂-----
- B. **10-20 minutes**—Start with one of the CORE leaders. Go around the circle so that everyone can take a few minutes to share both the quality they wrote down and how they have seen it in their life. Then move to the next person and repeat the affirmation process.
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Strong Marriages

outline

Mark 10:1-16

Message of Hope: God wants to bring healing, hope, and real happiness to your life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

In our culture, what do you think the word *adultery* means?

Bridge: Today's story is about a very sensitive topic—adultery and divorce. We all live in a broken world where many have felt the hurt and pain from broken relationships. But there is hope. As we read this sensitive story, we pray that you will experience healing and encouragement.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 10:1-12

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think the question in verse 2 was used as a trap question?
✂-----
2. Verse 4 is quoting the law Moses gave about divorce. Let's look in the sidenotes and foot notes to find the original reference. Where is this quote found in the Old Testament, and what additional information does this law include?
✂-----
3. What do you think Jesus intended in verse 9 when He says, “let no one split apart what God has joined together”?
✂-----
4. What was God's ideal plan for marriage, and where in this story do we find this summary?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who is someone you know who fought to preserve their marriage? What made the difference?
✂-----
- B. No matter what a person's past experience has been and as all of us look to the future, what is one thing you can do to strengthen your own marriage or someone else's marriage?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God wants to bring healing, hope, and real happiness to your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair. Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Simple Complexity

outline

Mark 10:13-22

Message of Hope: Even in a complex world, you can find peace and freedom.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

What is a care-free, happy memory you have from your childhood?

Bridge: Today's stories contrast the difference between a simple, trusting, and worry-free relationship with Jesus with a complex, calculated, and worry- or guilt-driven relationship with Jesus.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 10:13-22

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What are obvious and not so obvious differences you notice between these two stories and why do you think Mark put them back-to-back?
✂-----
2. In verse 13, what could have caused the disciples to scold the parents for bringing their children to see Jesus, and why would Jesus have such a strong reaction with His disciples?
✂-----
3. What makes Jesus's angry reaction anger without sin?
✂-----
4. Let's read verses 15 and 16 again. In verse 15 what is the deeper message Jesus is saying?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, how do you try to keep a childlike relationship with Jesus, and how does life tend to complicate your relationship with Jesus?
✂-----
- B. How could you capture a simple, trusting, and worry-free relationship with Jesus?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Even in a complex world, you can find peace and freedom.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Salvation Issues—part 1

outline

Mark 10:17-22

Message of Hope: Jesus always invites, but He never forces people.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

What is one of your favorite or most valued material possessions?

Bridge: Last week we read and contrasted two stories, but we did not talk much about the second story. Today's story is about a man with great material possessions. But these possessions became too important to him, even more important than eternal life. This story provides a lot to think about and talk about, so let's read it.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 10:17-22

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Why do you think Jesus did not list all of the Ten Commandments?
✂-----
2. Let's read verse 21 again. It may appear that Jesus asks this man to do something that is not part of the Ten Commandments. But which of the Ten Commandments did he lack, and why was it crucial to his salvation?
✂-----
3. If we are saved by grace, why does Jesus say that obedience to the Ten Commandments is important?
✂-----
4. What does "treasure in heaven" refer to?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, after reading this story how would you answer the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"
✂-----
- B. Jesus invited this man to take the next step of surrender. What is a next step that you sense Jesus is inviting you to take?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus always invites, but He never forces people.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Salvation Issues—part 2

outline

Mark 10:17-31

Message of Hope: Everything is possible with God.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the term *blind spot*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is part two. Last week we looked at part one, so in order for today's story to make sense, let's read part one and part two and then focus our discussion on the second half. This story is about a blind spot that Jesus makes plain. It is mind-boggling, and yet it is a hope-filled and encouraging breath of fresh air.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 10:17-31

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think the disciples were so amazed or astonished at Jesus's question?
✂-----
2. Why would Jesus use the camel going through the eye of a needle as an example?
✂-----
3. Let's read verse 26 again. This is the turning point. The disciples' understanding of salvation had just been shattered. What have the disciples finally understood that caused them to ask this question?
✂-----
4. What do you think is the punch line to this story?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. What are some of the common things people are unwilling to give up in order to follow Christ? On a personal note, what is something you have given up to follow Christ?
✂-----
- B. The disciples had blind spots in their understanding that Jesus helped clarify. What possible blind spot could Jesus be trying to clarify in your life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Everything is possible with God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Upside-Down Greatness—part 2

outline

Mark 10:32-45

Message of Hope: There is a Kingdom blessing when you live as a servant slave.

***Tip:** Notice the same pattern in part one (Mark 9:30-37) and part two (today's story). First, Jesus predicts His death. Second, Jesus explains how a life of service and slavery is the greatest in God's Kingdom.*

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is a special favor you have asked someone for?

Bridge: Today's story begins with two disciples asking for a special favor. But it ends with Jesus turning the common values of this world upside down. This world says look out for me; care for my things first; put others second; stand up for myself. Jesus says be a servant; be a slave.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 10:32-45

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What do you think motivates or prompts James and John to ask such a favor?
✂-----
2. If you had been one of the other disciples, how do you think you would have responded to James and John's special request?
✂-----
3. Jesus uses two strong words—*servant* and *slave*. Why does Jesus use these words, and what are the implications for people to live their lives as servants and slaves?
✂-----
4. In verse 43 Jesus said, “But among you it will be different” and then goes on to talk about servants and slaves. That was two thousand years ago. How has it been different among Christ's followers?

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, who is someone you know that lives their life as a servant and a slave, and how do they go about living that way?
✂-----
- B. What are some of the blessings you have received while living as a servant slave?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **There is a Kingdom blessing when you live as a servant slave.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Desperate

outline

Mark 10:46-52

Message of Hope: When you cry out to God, He does not ignore your call.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

When we get desperate sometimes we do things without thinking or caring what others think.
When was a time you were in a desperate situation?

Bridge: Today's story is short, only five verses. We will meet a blind guy named Bartimaeus, who is desperate to get Jesus's attention even though those around him are trying to discourage him. The good news is that Bartimaeus's persistent attempts to find Jesus pay off. So, let's read the story to see what happens.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 10:46-52

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. This story begins by saying that they reached Jericho. What clues do we find in earlier stories as to where Jesus and His disciples had come from, and how far they have traveled? *(Encourage people to look at the maps in their Bible.)*
✂-----
2. Why do you think Bartimaeus addressed Jesus as "Jesus, Son of David"?
✂-----
3. Let's read Bartimaeus's answer to Jesus's question in verse 51 again. Why do you think his answer was so specific, "I want to see!" instead of something like, "Do whatever you think will help me be ready for heaven"?
✂-----
4. Let's read verse 52 again. How do we see the blind man exhibiting his faith in this story?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, if you had been blind Bartimaeus, how do you think you would have gone about getting Jesus's attention?
✂-----
- B. People told Bartimaeus to be quiet. Sometimes other people discourage us in our search for Jesus. When have you been discouraged in your search for Jesus?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **When you cry out to God, He does not ignore your call.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair. Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Beginning of the End

outline

Mark 11:1-11

Message of Hope: Today is the beginning of the rest of your life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Facilitator's Directions:

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2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (☞-----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who is a well-known person that you have seen in person?

Bridge: Today's story is about a well-known Person who comes to town. There is a procession, a crowd who follow Him, and fanfare that makes it extra special. But this story does not follow typical celebrity-style processions. Today's story is called *The Beginning of the End*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 11:1-11

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. This story is often referred to as the *Triumphal Entry*. What was triumphal about this, and why do you think it ended so quickly in verse 11?

✂-----

2. This event had been predicted five hundred years before in Zechariah 9:9, so many recognized this as another evidence of Jesus being the Messiah. Why do you think Jesus used this event to mark the beginning of the end of His life and mission here on earth?

✂-----

3. Let's read verses 2 and 3 again. What is significant about Jesus's use of a colt that had never been ridden?

✂-----

4. Verses 8 and 9 talk about the crowd of people, with Jesus being in the center of the procession, and how people had cut branches in the fields to make a path for him. Do you think this was a planned event, a last-minute event, or something that developed?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A. On a personal note, if you knew the end of your life was near, how would you live the last days of your life?

✂-----

B. When we think about it, today is the beginning of the end for each one of us. What are some of the more important things that you would like to make a higher priority in your life?

✂-----

C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D. Remember: **Today is the beginning of the rest of your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Bookends

outline

Mark 11:12-26

Message of Hope: Faith development is an adventure.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

What is one of your most favorite fruits?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a fruit tree and ends with the same fruit tree. But sandwiched in between these two trees is another story which almost seems to be out of place. So, let's take a look at these stories, and see if we can make sense of them.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 11:12-26

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Why do you think the temple scene is sandwiched in between the two fig tree stories?
✂-----
2. If it was not the season for figs, why would Jesus expect to find them on the tree and “curse” the tree since it was out of season?
✂-----
3. Verses 15-18 may or may not be the first time Jesus has seen people buying and selling in the temple. Why would Jesus take such a drastic action in the temple this time?
✂-----
4. Let's read verses 22-26 again. When Peter points out the dead fig tree, why does Jesus respond by talking about faith and moving mountains?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. This “ask and believe” concept seems so straight forward, yet why do so many seem to not have this kind of experience? What are some of the other things that God factors into His “ask and believe” promise?
✂-----
- B. On a personal note, when was a time you asked and believed, and God answered your request? When was a time God said *no* or *wait*?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Faith development is an adventure with God, not a formula.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Authorities

outline

Mark 11:27-33

Message of Hope: God, the ultimate authority, can be trusted.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

When you hear the word *authority*, what thoughts and feelings come to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is a hot topic: authority. And it is a topic that every one of us has to face in life. People deal with and respond to authority differently. So, as we explore this story, let's be sensitive to people's sensitivities.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 11:27-33

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Verse 28 lists two key questions the leaders asked Jesus. Of all the questions these leaders could have asked Jesus, why do you think they focused on these two questions?
✂-----
2. Let's read Jesus's response again in verse 29-30. Why does Jesus not directly answer their questions?
✂-----
3. What would Jesus say are the real issues going on in this story?
✂-----
4. What is the difference between human authority and God's authority?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. Authority ultimately comes down to an obedience issue. On a personal note, how do you decide if a human authority goes against God's authority?
✂-----
- B. Why do you trust God as the ultimate authority in your life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God, the ultimate authority, can be trusted.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Unexpected Turn

outline

Mark 12:1-12

Message of Hope: Jesus came to save us, but we get to decide if we will accept Him.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

If you had to leave town for an extended period of time, who would you ask to care for your house, yard, pets, or business, and why would you choose them?

Bridge: Today's story is a parable, which means it is a pretend story with a special message. It is about a vineyard and an owner who moves away. He hires help to take care of his vineyard while he is gone. But the unexpected turn of events in the parable cause the religious leaders' discomfort when they understand the deeper meaning.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 12:1-12

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. At what point in this story do you think the Pharisees realized the story was about them?
✂-----
2. What scripture passage is Jesus quoting from? Your Bible's footnotes or side notes might be of help.
✂-----
3. Let's read verse 9 again. Who does Jesus have in mind when He says that He will give His vineyard to others?
✂-----
4. Let's read two verses from last week's story: Mark 11:28 and 11:33. This story is tied to last week's story which dealt with the sensitive subject of authority. How does today's story answer their questions about Jesus's authority?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, who is someone, a servant, that God may be sending across your path to provide help, encouragement, or direction in your life, and how do you receive them?
✂-----
- B. Where do you sense God is inviting you to work in His vineyard?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus came to save us, but we get to decide if we will accept Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair. Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Trapped

outline

Mark 12:12-27

Message of Hope: There is life after death—when God will raise His people and take them to heaven.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you were stuck or trapped?

Bridge: Today's story is actually two different stories that have a common theme of people trying to trap or trick Jesus. After last week's story, the church leaders were angry, so they turned up the heat and tried to manufacture a way to arrest Jesus. Let's start with the last verse from last week's story and continue with the new stories.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 12:12-27

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Verse 14 drips with flattery. Why would the leaders think that flattery would help them trap Jesus?
✂-----
2. Let's re-read verse 17. This question is about paying taxes. Although it failed, how do you think this question was supposed to be a trick question?
✂-----
3. The second story we read has a lot of people dying. In our culture, what are the different beliefs about death?
✂-----
4. Let's read verse 24-27 again. Jesus says, "For when the dead will rise." What does this tell us about what Jesus believed about death? What is He saying in this passage?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, how would you have felt if you were a religious teacher and Jesus told you, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures and you don't know the power of God?"
✂-----
- B. What are some of the things you most look forward to about heaven, and why?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **There is life after death—when God will raise His people and take them to heaven.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Most Important

outline

Mark 12:28-34

Message of Hope: When feeling lost at sea and looking for direction, this story provides clear direction.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

What is something you do most days because you believe it has meaning and importance?

Bridge: Today's story boils the meaning of life down to what really matters at the end of the day. It is kind of like one of those stories we can come back to when we feel like we are lost at sea. In some ways this story might be familiar, but let's dig a little deeper. Today's story is called *Most Important*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 12:28-34

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Most of the questions people have been asking Jesus are an attempt to trip Him up and trap Him. What clues in today's story do we find that this teacher of religious law is truly seeking and asking an honest and sincere question?
✂-----
2. The last sentence in this story says that nobody else dared to ask Jesus any more questions. What do you think it is in this story that caused people to be afraid of asking more questions?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 28-31 again. Where do these commands come from in the Old Testament? Why do you think people often say that this is a summary of God's moral law, the Ten Commandments, which are found in Deuteronomy 5?
✂-----
4. The last part of verse 33 is profound. Let's read it again. Here this sincere religious teacher admits that the two-part command is more important than all the other laws of Moses. What do you think puts this command on a higher level of importance?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. On a personal note, if you had been the person to ask Jesus this question, how would you have felt if Jesus would have responded to you by saying in verse 34, "you are not far from the Kingdom of God"?
✂-----
- B. Of this two-part commandment, which one was emphasized more while you were growing up? And even though they are equally important, which one do you find yourself emphasizing now?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **When feeling lost at sea and looking for clear direction, this story provides clear direction.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Giving

outline

Mark 12:35-44

Message of Hope: God knows our true motives.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When did you give a gift to someone that cost you more in terms of time, sacrifice, and money than others may have realized?

Bridge: True to the book of Mark, his stories are short and to the point. Today we will read short stories. They may not appear to have anything in common. But we may discover they have more of a connection than we originally thought.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 12:35-44

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think Mark includes this story about David calling the Messiah his son?
✂-----
2. If you were going to try to reach out, befriend, and hopefully inspire a hypocrite to change, what do you think might soften their heart?
✂-----
3. Why do you think Jesus highlights widows in these stories? What is the message Jesus is trying to teach?
✂-----
4. Let's try to understand this story from the poor widow's perspective. If she knew about the hypocritical activity of the religious leaders, what would motivate her to give everything she had to live on?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. Money is often a sensitive topic, but Jesus is not afraid to talk about it and highlights the faith of the poor widow. On a personal note, what blessings are given to the giver when they meaningfully give of their financial resources to God's work?
✂-----
- B. Why do you give to God's work?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **God knows our true motives.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Deception

outline

Mark 13:1-23

Message of Hope: I don't have to be spiritually deceived.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you have had to endure?

Bridge: Today's story is about the signs of the end of the world. But this story is also a bit confusing because Jesus seems to mix signs that relate to the destruction of Jerusalem together with signs about the end of the world. Let's see if we can figure out the difference.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 13:1-23

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Now that we have the big picture, let's read this story again, one verse at a time, and see if we can determine if each sign is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world, or to both.

✂-----

2. Sometimes people think that “endures to the end” has nothing to do with being saved, but in verse 13 Jesus links them together. Why do you think people say that enduring to the end has nothing to do with being saved?

✂-----

3. Let's read verses 21-23. Since false prophets can perform signs and wonders, how can we know if what we see with our own eyes is true or deceptive?

✂-----

4. While this story may seem like a lot of doom and gloom, woven throughout this story are many positive actions and instructions. Let's find them.

Tip: verse 5 - watch; verse 6 - not be alarmed; verse 10 - not worry; verse 13 - stand firm/endure; verse 18 - pray.

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A. On a personal note, when have you been deceived, even if it was by a sleight of hand or what some call a magic trick?

✂-----

B. Having read this story of warning, what could you do to make sure you are not deceived by people telling you things that are not true spiritually?

✂-----

C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D. Remember: **You don't have to be deceived spiritually.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Keep Watching

outline

Mark 13:21-37

Message of Hope: Jesus is coming soon—keep watching.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

Growing up, what is something you heard so many times that it almost lost its significance or punch?

Bridge: Today's story begins with the ending verses from last week where Jesus warns of such smooth deceptions that, if possible, even the most spiritual person would be deceived. As we explored last week, there are things that can protect us from these amazingly convincing deceptions. Today's story continues with tips so that we do not get tricked, and then this story ends with hope and one of the best promises.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 13:21-37

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Verses 24 and 25 list four interesting signs that are to happen before Jesus comes back. What are they? Does anyone know enough history to know if and when they happened?

✂-----

2. Let's read verses 26 and 27. There are a lot of beliefs floating around about how Jesus will come back. Jesus himself says how He will come back. What are the key items in these verses that will keep one from being deceived?

✂-----

3. Let's read verses 28-31 again. How do you make sense of verse 30?

✂-----

4. If we can read the signs and know that Jesus's coming is near, why do you think Jesus says two times that nobody knows the day nor the hour?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

A. When you see buds on the trees you know Spring is near. What are the signs that you see around the world that suggest Jesus's coming is near?

✂-----

B. On a personal note, what is something that helps you stay alert and continually watching while you wait for Jesus's coming?

✂-----

C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D. Remember: **Jesus is coming soon—keep watching.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Loved by the Unloved

outline

Mark 14:1-9

Message of Hope: Jesus loves to spend time with those who are unloved.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you had saved an entire year's wage, how would you choose to spend it?

Bridge: Today's story is about someone who spends an entire year's wage on one thing. It is also a touching story of Jesus's love for the unloved, and their love for Him.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 14:1-9

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. People usually don't recover from leprosy, but Simon seems to have been healed. Any ideas or clues to Simon's background and how he was healed?
✂-----
2. Who do you think this lady was, and why do you think Jesus aggressively defends her?
✂-----
3. What does Jesus mean when He says, "She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time"?
✂-----
4. What is it about this story that it would be remembered and discussed wherever the Good News is preached around the world?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you knew you did not have long to live, who would you like to spend time with?
✂-----
- B. What is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things someone has done for you?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus loves to spend time with those who are unloved.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Betrayed

outline

Mark 14:10-26

Message of Hope: Jesus promised to wait until we are with Him in heaven to eat this special meal again.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

How would you describe betrayal? Or maybe you have been betrayed—what did it feel like?

Bridge: Today's story is a story of betrayal. But it ends with a promise of Jesus—a promise that reminds us that either Jesus is the greatest liar that ever lived, or He is coming back to take His faithful follower to Heaven.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 14:10-26

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What do you think would motivate one of Jesus's closest friends to betray Him?
✂-----
2. Let's read the last few verses, 22-26. How might the broken bread represent Jesus's body, and how might the spilled (poured out) wine represent His blood?
✂-----
3. What is the covenant Jesus is talking about, and how does Jesus's blood confirm the covenant between God and His people?
✂-----
4. Why does Jesus end with this promise in verse 25?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. In today's world, what are some of the common ways people betray Jesus and may not even know it or realize it?
✂-----
- B. This special meal is commonly called *communion*. On a personal note, when was the last time you participated in communion? Or maybe this story has raised some questions; what question might you have?

Tip: When would be a good time, in the next couple of weeks, for us to share communion together?

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus promised to wait until we are with Him in heaven to eat this special meal together.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Reconnecting

outline

Mark 14:27-42

Message of Hope: Even when we may desert and deny Christ, He wants to reconnect with us.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When is a time you felt alone or deserted in life?

Bridge: Today's story does not depict normal human behavior. Most of us, when abandoned by someone would have very little interest in reconnecting with the person who deeply hurt us. Today's story is about betrayal, abandonment, and denial—with a 180-degree turn.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 14:27-42

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. In the first couple of verses of this story, Jesus gives a prophecy and a promise to His disciples. What is the prophecy and what is the promise, and how did the disciples respond to both?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 32-34 again. What do you think Jesus was instructing the disciples to “keep watch” for?
✂-----
3. In these verses, Jesus uses words like *deeply troubled*, *distressed*, and *crushed with grief*. His death is just around the corner, and yet what do you think are some of the other things that are weighing so heavily on Him?
✂-----
4. In verse 38, it sounds like Jesus wanted the disciples to pray, not necessarily for Him, but for themselves and the temptation they were going to face. Why do you think prayer is the key to overcoming temptation?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, how does prayer actually help you overcome temptation?
✂-----
- B. Jesus predicted all of His disciples would desert Him, and all of His disciples vowed they would not. How does a person go about reconnecting with Christ after denying and deserting Him?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Even though we may desert and deny Christ, He wants to reconnect with you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Evidence

outline

Mark 14:42-52

Message of Hope: Evidence builds a strong faith in Christ.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

When was the last time you saw or knew of someone who had been arrested?

Bridge: Today's story could be confused with a crime scene, but the police are not your typical police. In fact, the whole thing is a setup to frame an innocent person. But even in this unjust setup, some of the most convincing evidence is given that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 14:42-52

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Verse 43 suggests that Jesus knew Judas had arrived even before everyone else knew. How do you think Jesus knew His betrayer had arrived?
✂-----
2. Jesus did not have a history of being violent, so why would the crowd come with weapons to arrest Jesus?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 48 and 49. Sometimes Bibles have footnotes or endnotes that cross reference to other Scriptures. What are these verses, and let's read some of them.
✂-----
4. Why do you think Mark includes that last two verses in the story?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

- A. In this story people responded to a crisis in different ways. On a personal note, how do you think you would have responded in this situation?
✂-----
- B. This story is about evidence. What is the most convincing evidence for you that Jesus is God's Son the Messiah?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Evidence builds a strong faith in Christ.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

A Renewed Promise

outline

Mark 14:53-65

Message of Hope: Jesus promised again that He is coming back to take us home.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *oxymoron*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story seems like an oxymoron. The very people who were looking for the Messiah to come are the same people who reject Jesus and falsely accuse Him. But even in the midst of being falsely accused, Jesus renews His promise to us.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 14:53-65

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. In verse 53, why do you think everyone was gathered at the high priest's home instead of at the Sanhedrin office?
✂-----
2. Someone read verses 51 and 52 from last week's story and 54 from today's story. What clues might suggest that these three verses refer to the same or different person?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 58-62 again. Of all the false testimonies against Jesus, why do you think Mark only records the false testimony in verse 58?
✂-----
4. Why had Jesus remained silent during the false charges, but then responded when the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Why did the priest claim Jesus's answer was blasphemy?

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. In today's world, what are different ways that people follow Jesus at a distance?
✂-----
- B. On a personal note, what are some of the more convincing evidences that Jesus's claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, is true?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus again promised that He will come back to take His people home.**
How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Close Denial

outline

Mark 14:66-72

Message of Hope: Close denial is better than complete abandonment of Christ.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What words would you use to describe how you felt, if or when, you were rejected?

Bridge: Today's story is often used to highlight how Peter denied Christ three times. But Peter is the only disciple that is still following close to Christ, close enough to deny him. All the rest had long abandoned Christ. Today's story explores the blessing of being close enough to Christ to deny Him.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 14:66-72

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. When Peter heard the first rooster crow in verse 68, is there anything in this story that suggests he realized what he had just done, or do you think he was clueless of what was happening?
✂-----
2. What is different and what is similar between Peter's three denials?
✂-----
3. Verse 71 is the crux of the story. Let's read it in all the different versions we have here. What are the differences between swearing and cursing?
✂-----
4. This story ends with Peter weeping because of what he did. If you had been Peter at this point, what new resolution might you have made as you moved forward?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, when have you taken some risks to follow Jesus?
✂-----
- B. Peter often gets criticized for denying Christ, but he was the only disciple that was still following close to Christ. All the others had run away. What helps you stay close to Christ, even when others have distanced themselves from Christ?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Close denial is better than complete abandonment of Christ.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Accused

outline

Mark 15:1-15

Message of Hope: Jesus went through death on the cross to save you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you were a child, were you ever bullied or pushed around by others? What happened?

Bridge: Today's story is about adult bullies who falsely accused Jesus and arranged for His death sentence. At times false accusations and bullying still happens. But in today's story, everyone knew these accusations were not true.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 15:1-15

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. This might seem obvious to some, but why do you think they took Jesus to Pilate?
✂-----
2. Let's read verse 2 in the different translations we have here. Most all translations include the word "you." Why does Jesus answer this way, instead of simply saying, "Yes, I am"?
✂-----
3. Verse 6 introduces the governor's custom of releasing one prisoner that the people request. Do you have any footnotes in your Bible that help us understand where this custom of releasing a prisoner during the Passover came from?
✂-----
4. What do you think Pilot really believed about Jesus, and why would Pilate have Jesus flogged first, if Jesus was going to be crucified?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had been a mouse in the corner watching this story unfold, at what point would you have realized that Jesus was innocent and the leaders were making all this up?
✂-----
- B. When in your life did you begin to realize that Jesus went through death on the cross not to be popular or because it was out of His control but in order to save you?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus went through death on the cross to save you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

The Death Sentence

outline

Mark 15:21-32

Message of Hope: Jesus accepted the death sentence so that you and I could accept an eternal life sentence.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
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3. *[Insert rotation question for the week.]*

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

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Facilitator's Directions:

1. Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last time you attended a funeral or memorial service?

Bridge: Today's story is about a funeral where most of the attendees came to mock and scoff at the person. As inappropriate as this sounds, it really happened, and in some ways this still happens today. Let's read the story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 15:21-32

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What is myrrh, and if everyone was so against Jesus, why would they even think to offer Him wine drugged with myrrh?
✂-----
2. Read verses 24-28 again. Do your footnotes say anything about where in the Bible it was predicted that they would throw dice or cast lots to see who got Jesus's clothing?
✂-----
3. In the last part of the story, why do the mockers focus on these two accusations: 1) rebuilding the temple in three days, and 2) Jesus could save others, but could not save Himself?
✂-----
4. Verse 32 says, "so we can see it and believe Him." Why did they think they would believe if Jesus did these miracles now?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. In today's world, if someone is going to mock and scoff Jesus, what are some of the more common ways they go about doing it?
✂-----
- B. On a personal note, what symbolic crosses tend to weigh you down in life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Jesus accepted the death sentence so that you and I could accept an eternal life sentence.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Abandoned

outline

Mark 15:33-41

Message of Hope: At times we may feel abandoned, but God is still with us.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was one of the last times the electricity and lights went out and everything was dark?

Bridge: In today's story the lights go out at noon, and everything becomes dark. Some people may have wondered what had happened, and others knew something supernatural was happening.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 15:33-41

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Do you think God had abandoned Jesus, and why do you think that Jesus felt abandoned?
✂-----
2. What is the difference between what Jesus said, "My God, my God" and taking God's name in vain?
✂-----
3. What do you think is the meaning or significance of the Temple curtain being torn from top to bottom?
✂-----
4. What might have been the tipping point that convinced the soldier, in verse 39, that Jesus was the Son of God?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, what part of Jesus's death proves most convincing to you that He is the Son of God?
✂-----
- B. When was a time when you felt abandoned or completely on your own and alone in life?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **At times we may feel abandoned, but God is still with us.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Risky Business

outline

Mark 15:42-47

Message of Hope: The cross of Jesus gives hope to rich and poor, male and female.

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Kick-off Question: *(60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)*

What is a risk, small or large, that you have taken in life?

Bridge: Today's story is about risk-taking. We often think about risk-taking in the context of business, but today's story is going to focus our attention on another kind of risk-taking that is much more difficult, where a lot more is at stake, and the personal reward and loss is much greater.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 15:42-47

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. We are not told a lot about Joseph. Does your Bible have any additional footnotes or cross-references talking more about him? What were the risks that Joseph took when he asked Pilate for Jesus's body?

✂-----

2. Why do you think Mark begins this story by emphasizing that "this all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath"?

✂-----

3. What do you think is significant about the Roman officer's confirmation that Jesus was indeed dead?

✂-----

4. Mary Magdalene shows up in today's story, in last week's story, and in next week's story. Why do you think Mark continues to highlight her presence, when others are not mentioned?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

A. This story includes risky choices by several people—Pilate, Joseph, Mary. On a personal note, if you were to take a risky step to stand up for Jesus like Joseph did, what could you lose and what could you gain?

✂-----

B. If you had had been one of the two Mary's that saw where Jesus was buried, what do you think you would have done next?

✂-----

C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D. Remember: **The cross of Jesus gives hope to rich and poor, male and female.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Empty

outline

Mark 16:1-8

Message of Hope: The empty tomb invites all of us to follow and obey Christ.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you like to find empty?

Bridge: There are many things we do not like to find empty. But some things are better found empty than full. Today's story is one awesome example of something that is better found empty.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 16:1-8

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. In verse 1, Mark includes Salome. What additional information do your Bible's footnotes and cross-references say about this person?
✂-----
2. Mark starts this story by saying it was Saturday evening when the Sabbath ended. Most people think the day changes at midnight. But in this story, it states that it was after the Sabbath, Saturday evening, when they went to buy burial supplies. How do you make sense of this difference? Why do you think this is pertinent to highlight this detail?
✂-----
3. Let's read verses 7 and 8 again. Why do you think Jesus mentions Peter by name?
✂-----
4. Verse 7 says that Jesus had told them He would meet them in Galilee after He had risen. Where does Mark record Jesus actually saying this, and what would be significant about this prophecy?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if you had watched Jesus die, seen His body be taken down from the cross and buried in the tomb, and then discovered an empty tomb on Sunday morning, what do you think you would have done?
✂-----
- B. What kinds of things soften your heart and draw you close to Jesus?
✂-----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **The empty tomb invites all of us to follow and obey Christ.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer: Empty Chair. Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Believed & Baptized

outline

Mark 16:9-20

Message of Hope: Even though the disciples were slow to believe, God did not give up on them.

***Tip:** Today's story will invite people to prepare for baptism or rebaptism in the coming weeks. Be sure to have a small stack of Connection Card Envelopes to share with everyone. And be sure to have the box on the table so people know where to put the Connection Card at their own leisure.*

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you believe strongly in, even if others do not agree with you?

Bridge: Today's story is the last story in the book of Mark. He has told the stories, presented the evidence for Jesus Christ, and invited people to follow Jesus. Jesus has died, rested in the grave on Sabbath, and been raised from the grave. After all this, it is hard to believe that Jesus's own disciples had a hard time believing—that gives all of us hope.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Mark 16:9-20

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Notice who Jesus appeared to and the order in which He appeared to them. Why do you think Jesus did not begin with the eleven disciples?
✂-----
2. Let's read verses 15-18 again. How many times is the word "will" or "shall" used in these verses?
✂-----
3. How and where do we see these kinds of things happening around us in today's world?
✂-----
4. Why does Mark emphasize and link believing with being baptized?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, if Jesus had lived in our lifetime, who do you think He would send you to tell? Why?
✂-----
- B. Being slow to believe is not wrong; we see the evidence of the disciples being slow to believe. But eventually each person has to decide. What has helped convince you or what has helped make you a stronger believer in Jesus Christ?

Tip: Mark connects believing with baptism. There may be someone here that would like to prepare for baptism. Or maybe there is someone who has already been baptized, has then gone their own way for a while, and would like to be rebaptized. Take one of these Connection Card Envelopes and check the box that talks about baptism. Put it in the box on the table and we will plan a special time for your baptism or rebaptism.

✂-----

- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D. Remember: **Even though the disciples were slow to believe, God did not give up on them.** How can this group pray for you this week?