

## MARK 1:1-3:6 – WHO IS THIS GUY??

*Dear Small Group Leader,*

*I truly believe the most valuable book to read with students is the Book of Mark. As believers, Christ is to be the center of our lives. What better thing then can we do with our time than get to really know Him! I find that most Christians know more about how to “act” like a Christian, and a bunch of “Do’s & Don’ts”, and woefully little about the person and words and ministry of Jesus.*

*As we read the words of Christ and study his actions, we will become more like Him. He is too compelling to do otherwise.*

*For this first lesson, you will take on a big chunk of scripture. But it will go quickly. It’s best to read this first section in one piece so you can get a sense of the momentum of the gospel. The Book of Mark is fun because it’s so “action-packed.” If you run out of time, feel free to stretch this lesson to one more week. But don’t drag it out more than that.*

***REMEMBER:** if YOU seem excited, the students will catch your enthusiasm. If you act like Bible study is somewhat like doing homework or taking medicine, your evening will feel like a root canal without novocaine. So make sure you are prepared for the lesson, and pray for receptive hearts!*

*It is a privilege to teach the gospel. Enjoy yourself! 😊 KELLY*

### **OPENING EXERCISE: “GOSPEL TRIVIA”**

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Buy some sort of prize – a candy bar, a cheap gift certificate, a funny toy, whatever. (Make sure it won’t be distracting during the rest of the lesson.) Get two contestants up front who think they know a few things about the Gospel of Mark. Give them some sort of noisemaker (bell, party horn, squeaky toy, rattle, etc.) that they can use to play the game.

You will ask the following questions, one at a time. **(Instruct the other students that they CANNOT answer the questions, or help the players answer).** After asking the question, the first student to use the noisemaker gets to answer the question. If they are correct, they get a point. The winner wins the prize!

Questions (answers in italics):

- Who can name the four gospels of the New Testament? (*Matthew, Mark, Luke & John*)
- What century was the Gospel of Mark written in? (*1<sup>st</sup> century*)
- How many chapters are in the Book of Mark? (*sixteen*)
- Who announced to the Jews in chapter one that Jesus was coming? (*John the Baptist*)

- Name at least four of the disciples. (*Simon Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot*).
- How long was Jesus' ministry on earth? (*three years*)
- What was happening to Christians at the time the Book of Mark was written? (*Christians were being persecuted by the Roman Empire*)

(If you want, you can come up with a few more of your own – not too many though. We don't want this to take too long or be too distracting.)

### **FILL THEM IN**

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Tell the students that we will be studying the Book of Mark. We are excited to be studying it! As Christians, Jesus could and should be the center of our lives – so here's a chance to get to know Him better.

### **There are 2 main purposes for the gospel stories (print these as bookmarks for your group?):**

1. *To tell the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, in order to persuade readers to follow him.*
2. *To encourage believers in their faith, and give them the information needed to share and defend their faith.*

### **READ - give the students the attached worksheet**

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We're going to read the first two chapters (plus 6 verses of chapter 3) of Mark together. Mark seemed concerned with 3 things in Jesus' ministry:

- a. *popularity with the crowds*
- b. *discipleship for the few*
- c. *opposition from the authorities*

In your small group, read this week's chapters in Mark and find examples of these three concerns of Mark in the section we've just read.

Example:

Mark 1:22 *"The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law."* (shows his popularity with crowds.)

***BREAK UP THE READING INTO SECTIONS and name the examples as you go along. Don't try to read the whole thing in one chunk and then find examples. That's too much information at once for their young minds!***

Then ask:

***"Why do you think Mark would be concerned with these three issues?"***

*(LEADER: there's no right answer here. But we want to get the students to see the two main purposes we referred to in the beginning are served by the focus that Mark gives to these concerns:*

- 1. To tell the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, in order to persuade readers to follow him. (His popularity helps to show his appeal to people, his discipleship of the few shows what it will take to become a Christian, his opposition from authorities highlight the importance of the cross and his sacrifice for us!)*
- 2. To encourage believers in their faith, and give them the information needed to share and defend their faith. (His popularity reminds suffering believers of his appeal and the reason they chose to follow him, his discipleship of the few reminds them of how they need to grow, his opposition reminds them that he suffered in the same ways they may be suffering.)*

**END WITH THIS QUESTION:** "What is one new thing you learned about Jesus today?" *Try to ask this question every week!*

## WORKSHEET

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We're going to read the first two chapters (plus 6 verses of chapter 3) of Mark together in small groups. Mark seemed concerned with 3 things in Jesus' ministry:

- d. *popularity with the crowds*
- e. *discipleship for the few*
- f. *opposition from the authorities*

In your small group, read this week's chapters in Mark and find examples of these three concerns of Mark in the section we've just read.

Example:

Mark 1:22 "The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law." (shows his popularity with crowds.)

***BREAK UP THE READING INTO SECTIONS and name the examples as you go along. Don't try to read the whole thing in one chunk and then find examples. That's too much information at once for their young minds!***