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**The Goal:** The goal of this study is to read the Gospel of Mark and ask two simple questions each week:

1. **Who is Jesus?**
2. **Who are we because of Him?**

My prayer through this study is that your students would discover a vibrant relationship with Jesus and, in turn, that their identities would be shaped by Him. These small group guides are designed to be used in a small group only format, and are ready to hand your leaders with little to no tweaking on your part.

There are high school guides *and* middle school guides. The middle school guides are a bit shorter and sometimes exclude the additional biblical context. Look at each guide and decide which one you would like to use for your group. Even if you have high school students, you may choose to use the middle school guides if you don’t have as much time or they have shorter attention spans.

Although other passages are also used, here is the general layout:

Week 1: Good News **(Mark 1:1–3)** *What is the good news?*

Week 2: Follow Me **(Mark 2:13–17)** *Becoming a Disciple of Jesus*

Week 3: Seeds and Soil **(Mark 4:1–20)** *Cultivating a Teachable Heart*

Week 4: Faith **(Mark 5:21–43)** *The Role of Faith in the Life of the Christian*

Week 5: Share **(Mark 6:6–12)** *Share the Gospel*

Week 6: Matter of the Heart **(Mark 7:1–23)** *Religion vs. Relationship*

Week 7: Doubt **(Mark 9:14–24)** *Wrestling With Doubt Can Build Your Faith*

Week 8: Love God Love People **(Mark 12:28–34)** *Love God Love People*

Week 9: Salvation **(Mark 14:3–50)** *God’s Plan for Jesus*

Week 10: Veil **(Mark 15:21–41)** *No Longer Separated by Sin*

Week 11: Buried **(Mark 15:42–47)** *What to Do When Hope Seems Lost*

Week 12: It’s a Comeback **(Mark 16:1–20)** *Resurrection and Restoration*

**If you like *The Gospel of Mark*,**

[check out my other DYM resources here!](http://bit.ly/2HZV09R)

**Elements/Ideas Included:**

* **Weekly Activities or Handouts**

*Check each week’s small group guide to find any handouts to be printed, activities, or “Youth Pastor Notes” for supplies you might want to provide to small group leaders.*

* **Soccer Ball Hot Seat**

*A great ice breaker I wanted to mention because it requires a bit of prep. You will need to buy a soccer ball, volleyball, beach ball, or playground rubber ball, and write ice breaking questions on it. Depending on how many small groups you have, you may want to delegate the actual writing on the questions to your small group leaders. Each group will need one.*

<https://www.thatafterschoollife.com/toss-and-talk.html>

* **Prayer/Praise Jars**

*I mention this in advance in case you would like to provide each small group with the jars/paper to utilize this idea.*

* **“Ask It” Basket**

*The dollar stores usually have $1 plastic shower caddies. But honestly, any basket or bucket will do. You could ask your leaders to bring one from home, or you could provide them. This idea is introduced in week 7.*

* **Student Survey**

*I always do a survey like this when I’m starting to lead a new small group. This survey is in a separate document that you can print out for each student. Even if they are super vague in their answers, it gives leaders something to go off of to get to know their group. It’s also a great way to collect birthdays and favorite candy so they can use those later when they want to do something special for each student.*

* **Weekly Social Media Posts *(below)***
* **“As Yourself” Service Project (promo graphics included)**

*It would be amazing for each small group to do their own service project or “As Yourself” night at the end of this study. Jesus did plenty of “fishing trips” with His disciples before He ascended back to Heaven. This is an opportunity for students to not just study the Bible, but practice living it!*

*If you choose to do an “As Yourself” format, groups save their money over the course of the 12 weeks. On the night (or day) that you hold the event, groups meet up and students bring their cash. Encourage everyone to participate, even if they only have a dollar—but, of course, encourage them to save and sacrifice so that this can end up being a big give. Have leaders bring money, too. The adult leader has a brown paper bag. Each student takes turns putting their cash into the bag so that no one sees how much each person brings. Then, the leader counts it all, and the group decides what they want to do with it. The name obviously comes from Mark 12:31, where Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” You could also organize regular service projects—which would be equally as awesome, but the thing I like about this concept is that it requires very little prep work for the youth pastor or the small group leaders. You can encourage students to love “with no strings attached,” or you can give them invite cards to give out with your church’s name, address, and service times if you want to have more of an evangelism emphasis, as well. I’ve done this both ways, and it can be a great learning opportunity.*

Ideas: Pool your money and …

-Bring coffee or healthy snacks to nurses at one of the hospitals in town.

-Buy someone’s gas or groceries.

-Buy a few gift cards and hand them out at the hospital to people in waiting rooms.

-Pay for people’s meals at a fast food restaurant or people’s coffee at a coffee shop.

-If it’s winter, hand out hot chocolate at the mall or Walmart.

-Leave a big honkin’ tip at a diner.

-Order out catering platters for one of the fire or police stations.

-Make cookies for students in their classes (not just best friends) and have them tell everyone why they did it.

-Have students write encouraging notes to all of their teachers and include a Starbucks gift card.

-Visit a nursing home and bring flowers, balloons, and cards.

-Do something intentional to bless students’ parents.

-Have students come up with a creative idea!

**Weekly Social Media Posts**

**Week 1: “Good News”**

Raise your hand if you are sick of bad news! 🙋‍♂️ In Mark 1:1, we see that Jesus is the bringer of good news. Why? Because He has gotten us “off the hook” for our sin. That’s really good news. You can be forgiven if you believe in your ❤️ that Jesus died on the cross for you and was raised from the dead. 🙌

Just for fun … what’s the best news you ever received?   📰  Comment below. ⬇️

**Week 2: “Follow Me”**

Yes, we want you to follow us on social media 📲—but more than anything, JESUS is saying to you, “Follow me.” ✝️ Anyone can follow Him, but it’s a big decision! In Mark 2:3, Jesus asks Levi (Matthew) to be His disciple. The Bible says that a disciple has to “deny themselves” to follow Jesus. Here’s the kicker, though—when you “lose yourself” for Jesus’ sake, the Bible says you will find a better life than you could have created for yourself.

Just for fun … if you could have any celebrity follow you, who would you choose? 👸🏾 Comment below. ⬇️

**Week 3: “Dig it”**

On a scale of 1 to 10, how teachable do you think you are? In Mark 4, we see that are hearts are a lot like soil. When seed (truth from the Bible) is scattered in our life, we can choose to make our hearts “good soil” where good things grow. 🌱 Things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc. Or, we can have hard hearts that get defensive when we get corrected. What kind of soil is your heart?

Just for fun … if you could be any vegetable, which one would you choose?  🥒 Comment below. ⬇️

**Week 4: “Disappointed”**

What do you do when God doesn’t answer your prayers on your timetable?  🙏🏾 In Mark 5, Jairus was so hopeful that Jesus would heal his daughter. Instead, she died. Can you imagine his disappointment? But what happened next? Jesus raised his daughter from the dead—an even greater miracle! Let’s have FAITH in Jesus, even when things don’t turn out the way we thought they would.

Just for fun … if you could have any super power, which would you choose? 💪 Comment below. ⬇️

**Week 5: “God Our Sins Paying Everyone Life”**

Unpopular truth: no one is a good person 😮. The Bible calls the things we do wrong “sin,” and sin broke our relationship with God. We actually deserve death for that sin. BUT GOD so LOVED each and every person on this 🌏 that He sent Jesus to die in our place. We can be completely forgiven. All we have to do is repent (say sorry and turn toward Jesus). In Mark 6, we see how important it is to tell everyone we know about this “gospel.”

Who are you going to invite to youth group next week?

**Week 6: “I’m a Hypocrite”**

What’s one of the biggest complaints you hear about Christians? “They are hypocritical,” right? Exactly. In the book of Mark 7, we see Jesus calling out the religious people right and left for being hypocritical. If you say you are a Christian, then you should live what you say.

But ... plot twist! ↪️ We all need to admit that we are ALL hypocritical. We all have sinned, remember? We need to be aware of the fact that we can’t live life 💯 without Jesus’ forgiveness for all our shortcomings. And we need the Holy Spirit to live a life that is more consistent. We want people to know we are Christians by our love, not by saying one thing and doing another.💥

**Week 7: “I Doubt It”**

True or False: Faith and doubt are opposites. 👍 👎

”I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief.”

This is an amazing thing for a follower of Jesus to say, just like this man did in Mark 9. Faith and doubt actually don’t have to be opposites. God can handle your questions! Asking questions, wrestling with what you believe, and going to God with doubt are normal, healthy, and can actually build our faith! That’s the key—go to God with your doubt. Let Him speak truth into your life. Don’t walk away when you are going through a dry season. Run TO GOD with your doubt.

**Week 8: “Love God, Love People”**

We can make following Jesus too complicated. Jesus himself boiled it down to these two commands in Mark 12: 1. LOVE GOD. 2. LOVE PEOPLE. The end. Who do you need to love today who’s not easy to love?

Just for fun … who do you love most in the world and why? Comment below. ⬇️

**Week 9: “Anxiety”**

Anxiety plagues 25% of teenagers. Maybe you clicked on this post because you are one of those. We want you to know that are not alone. If you are struggling with anxiety, we would love to help—DM us and we’d love to meet up and talk. ☕️

But, did you know that Jesus experienced anxiety? Right before he was taken to the cross to die, He was so anxious that Mark 14 says He was sweating drops of blood❗️Moral of the story: Jesus can relate to you in your pain. He wants you to come to Him when you are freaking out or feeling depressed or angry or confused. He knows what you are going through and wants to give you His “peace that surpasses understanding.”

**Week 10: “Forgiveness”**

God loves me.

I am His treasured child.

He would do anything to get me back if I got lost and He did.

He died for me.

I am clean.

I am forgiven of all my sin.

God has a purpose for my life.

I want to bring Him glory and enjoy His love.

Thank you, Jesus.

**Week 11: “When Hope Is Lost”**

Jesus was in the tomb for three days. All hope seemed lost. 💔 But the disciples had forgotten what He had told them! You may be in a dark place right now, but the dawn is coming! Resurrection is coming!

How can we be praying for you this week? How can we support you?  🙏🏽 DM us.

**Week 12: “Everything Sad Will Come Untrue”**

Jesus’ death on the cross was not the end. He’s in the restoring and resurrecting business! Jesus made the greatest comeback known to humanity, and He can do the same thing in your life, too. Get pumped, because God’s not done and you’re not done. Walk in confidence today that Jesus has a mighty plan for your life!  👑

Just for fun … what’s your favorite HAPPY ending from TV, movies, or books? Comment below. ⬇️