

Journey INTO THE Bible

MARK LEADER'S GUIDE

LESSON SIX
MARK 14:1—16:8

Death and Resurrection

Introduction

Suggestion: While people are gathering, ask them to take a seat at any table and introduce themselves to those they might not know. When you are ready to begin the Bible study, start with an Opening Prayer (either the one below, or a prayer of your own choosing).

Opening Prayer

Blessed are you, Jesus, for you have suffered for our sake and redeemed us with your blood. Send forth your Spirit to guide us that we may understand more fully how to continue living the Gospel. Open our ears that we might better hear your voice, open our eyes that we see you in one another, and let your words be on our lips that we may proclaim the glory of God and the coming of the kingdom. Amen.

Suggestion: After welcoming everyone and making any important announcements such as location of the restrooms and a reminder to set cell phones to vibrate or turn them off, read aloud "Setting the Stage." You can introduce it as a brief word from the author of this Bible study to set the context for this lesson.

Setting the Stage

The Gospel According to Mark is the shortest of the synoptic Gospels. Lesson Six bring us to the close of Mark's story, which began with "The beginning of the good news." This beginning story is just over 11,000 words in the original Greek. Comparing that to today's writing, it would barely fill up the pages of these six lessons. But Mark is clear from the start that he offers his audience the "beginning," which may be an indication that the story is much longer. Indeed, the story of Jesus' followers is still alive today.

Remember that the community Mark wrote for endured persecution for their Christian faith. The last chapter of the Gospel leaves no doubt as to the consequences of standing against the political and religious authorities that prevail against Jesus' mission. We may not be oppressed in the same way Mark's community was harassed and punished, but each of us understands the challenges and risks involved in living as Christians in today's culture. The Gospel reminds us of the hope of the Good News. What is the hope you see in the Gospel for your community?

Text One: 14:12–25

Suggestion: Read the first passage aloud to the group, or have someone who feels comfortable reading in public do the first reading. Invite people to read along in their own Bibles. Then invite the group to begin discussing this passage using the Think and Talk prompts on page 2 of the handout. Allow fifteen to twenty minutes for discussion. If the group has finished the discussion early, you might suggest one or more of the questions below for further discussion.

Additional Questions for Text One

1. Look back to the earlier chapters in the Gospel for other meals Jesus shared with his disciples. What are the similarities to the two meals in chapter 14?
2. Few people in North America are persecuted, as the early Christians were, for following Jesus, for breaking bread in his name, and for preaching the Good News. In other places, governments forbid Christians to worship together and to share communion. We must admit that the most powerful people today often are at the communion table. Those with whom Jesus broke the bread and drank the cup were far from the most powerful people. In what ways are we challenged, are we made powerless, and are we called to suffer as followers of Jesus?

Break

Text Two: 15:42—16:8

Suggestion: Read the second passage aloud to the group, or have someone in the group do the reading. Invite people to read along in their own Bibles. Then invite the group to begin discussing this passage using the Think and Talk prompts on page 4 of the handout. Allow fifteen to twenty minutes for discussion. If you see that a group has finished their discussion early, you might suggest one or more of the questions below for further discussion.

Additional Questions for Text Two

1. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome were watching as Jesus died on the cross. Mark tells us that these women followed Jesus and served him. What significance do you see in Mark naming only the women at the cross as Jesus “breathed his last”?
2. Read verse 8 in chapter 16. Recall moments in your life when you have been unable to describe an event. Remember the opening lines of Mark’s story: “The beginning of the good news.” How do you describe the Good News? Is this a story without an end?

Wrapping Up

Suggestion: With about twenty minutes remaining, bring to a close the discussion on the second text. Let the participants know they have fifteen minutes left in this session and ask if anyone wants to share with the whole group something he or she learned in the course of doing this Bible study. Instruct the participants to be brief, and be sure to stop the sharing when time is up.

Since this is the final session of the Bible study, it might also be helpful to allow people to express the things they liked about this study and the things they felt were missing. This feedback could be valuable for future Bible study programs. Prepare a few questions beforehand in order to start the reflection process in case people are hesitant at first to speak.

Closing Prayer

Turn to Luke 1:46–55. Pray together the words of the Virgin Mary. Or you may choose to close Lesson Six with the Our Father or a prayer from a member of the group.

Alternate Closing Prayer

If the group has been comfortable enough with each other over the past six weeks, you might try closing this session with a “Prayer of the Faithful,” but instead of voicing petitions to pray for, ask the group to express one thing they are grateful for from this shared time together.