

Mark study guide

6 sessions for a small group

Mark moves fast and rarely explains. Watch what he chooses to show you and what he leaves out. The gaps are doing work.

Each session lists the reading, who and what appears in it, and questions that send the group back to the text. Nothing here needs to be prepared in advance beyond reading the passage.

Background on every passage, free at protos-app.com/commentary/mark

Mark 1-3

108 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · John · Sabbath · Galilee · Pharisees · Andrew

Questions

- Before anyone explains it, walk through what actually happens here. Who does what, in what order?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Andrew turns up in this section. What does the passage actually show, as opposed to what you already assumed?
- The word Sitting is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What did the writer choose to include here, and why that detail?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

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Mark 4-6

140 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · John · Herod · Herodias · James · Bethsaida

Questions

- Tell the story back in your own words. What is easy to skip over?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- Read this section from where Herodias was standing. What changes?
- Define Sea from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- This is a story, not a lesson with a moral attached. What is it showing rather than telling?
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

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Mark 7-9

122 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Elijah · Peter · Scribes · Pharisees · Herod

Questions

- What happens in this section that you would struggle to explain to someone who has never read it?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- What does the writer tell us about Herod, and what is deliberately left out?
- Where else have you heard Tradition used, and is it being used that way here?
- Whose perspective are we given, and whose are we denied?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

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Mark 10-11

84 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Jerusalem · John · Bethany · David · Zebedee

Questions

- Read it once more, slowly. What do you notice the second time that you missed the first?
- Where does the tone shift, and what causes it?
- What question does this section answer that you had not thought to ask?
- What would this section sound like if Zebedee were telling it?
- The word Kingdom is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What would you have written differently if you wanted to make a point?
- What is the hardest thing in this passage to accept, and why that one?

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Mark 12-13

81 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · David · Scribes · Moses · Abraham · Isaac

Questions

- If this were the only part of the book you had, what would you conclude about Jesus?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Abraham turns up in this section. What does the passage actually show, as opposed to what you already assumed?
- Define Angels from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- What did the writer choose to include here, and why that detail?
- If this is true, what have you been getting wrong?

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Mark 14-16

138 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Pilate · Peter · Scribes · Passover · Barabbas

Questions

- Where does the pace change here, and what is the writer slowing down for?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- Read this section from where Pilate was standing. What changes?
- Where else have you heard Hour used, and is it being used that way here?
- This is a story, not a lesson with a moral attached. What is it showing rather than telling?
- What would you want to be reminded of from this section in six months?

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Where this came from

This guide was put together by Protos, a free Bible study site. The background for Mark came from the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary, which is public domain, and the people and terms in each session come from a verse index we compiled by hand.

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