

The Gospel of Mark

UNIT 2, LESSON 10

Learning Goals

- Traditionally, the author of Mark's Gospel is thought to be a man named John Mark, who was not an Apostle, but was a traveling companion of St. Peter.
- Mark wrote to a Gentile audience in Rome.
- Mark's Gospel is concerned with presenting the mystery of Christ.
- Jesus performed four types of miracles: miracles of nature, miracles of healing, miracles of the supernatural, and miracles of supply.



Connection to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- CCC 125-129
- CCC 515
- CCC 547-550
- CCC 1965



Vocabulary

- Gospel
- Gentile
- Mystery
- Miracle
- Exorcism
- Healing

BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

MARK 1:14-15

Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to [his] disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied.

MARK 6:41-42

Lesson Plan

Materials

- › What Do We Know about Mark?
- › Mark's Audience and Message
- › The Structure of Mark's Gospel

DAY ONE

Warm-Up

- A. Create a prayerful atmosphere in your classroom. Project and read aloud to your students Mark 1:9-11. Ask your students to reflect prayerfully on the Scripture reading as they listen:

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

- B. Project and pray with your students the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you allowed yourself to be baptized by John as an example for all of us. The Father proclaimed that He was pleased in you, His beloved Son. Send your Spirit upon us so that we might imitate you as adopted sons and daughters of the Father. Help us to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God.

Our Father...

- C. Have your students take turns sharing with a partner for five minutes about the following prompt:

- › If you were a famous writer, what would be some important facts to know about you in order to better understand why you wrote things the way you did?

- D. Explain to your students that in the next few lessons, they are going to learn about what influenced Mark to write his Gospel the way he did. The Gospel of Mark is the shortest and most action oriented of the four Gospels. It is also considered by most scholars to be the earliest written of the four Gospels. In fact, it is thought that the authors of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels used Mark's Gospel as a source for their own Gospels. Therefore, Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's Gospels are very similar to one another. All three present the story of Jesus' life in a similar way with similar details, while each adds unique details to the story. Traditionally, the author of Mark's Gospel is thought to be a man named John Mark, who was not an Apostle, but was a traveling companion of St. Peter. In this lesson, we will begin by learning about the author of Mark's Gospel and his audience, and then study the divisions of Mark's Gospel.

Activity

- A. Have your students turn to **What Do We Know About Mark? (page 142)** and, working individually or with a partner, read the Scripture passages and record the information each provides about the author of Mark's Gospel and his audience.
- B. After your students have completed the worksheet, review and discuss the correct answers. Note: *The last five questions on **What Do We Know About Mark?** cannot be answered with Scripture. Provide the answers to these questions to your students during the discussion.*

What Do We Know About Mark?

Directions: Read the Scripture passages and record the information each provides about the author of Mark's Gospel and his audience.

Part 1

1. Name? _____ or Mark (Acts 12:12).
2. His mother's name: _____ (Acts 12:12).
3. Cousin of _____ (Colossians 4:10).
4. Traveled with _____ and _____ on a missionary journey (Acts 12:25).
5. _____ and Barnabas had a disagreement about him, so Paul chose _____ to take with him instead (Acts 15:36-39).
6. Paul still thought Mark was helpful in _____ (2 Timothy 4:11).
7. Traveled with _____ in Rome (1 Peter 5:13).

Part 2

8. Was called the _____ of Peter by Papias in AD 135.
9. Wrote his Gospel before the destruction of the _____ in AD 70.
10. After the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, he was believed to become the _____ of Alexandria, where he was martyred.
11. His remains are thought to be buried in the large basilica in _____, Italy.
12. His feast day is _____.

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Formative Assessment

Without looking in their workbooks, have your students answer the following questions on their own paper:

- What are three things you learned about St. Mark today?
- What are two questions you still have about St. Mark?
- What is one thing that surprised you about St. Mark?

DAY TWO

Warm-Up

- A. Create a prayerful atmosphere in your classroom. Project and read aloud to your students Mark 1:14-15. Ask your students to reflect prayerfully on the Scripture reading as they listen:

Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

- B. Project and pray with your students the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you proclaimed the coming of God's Kingdom and called your people to repentance and faith. Help us to recognize our sin and repent and to believe in the Gospel, the Good News of salvation that you won for us on your Cross.

Hail Mary...

- C. Explain to your students that each Gospel writer wrote his Gospel for a different audience. This means that he used different writing techniques and included different kinds of information that was specific to his audience. In this lesson, students will learn about Mark's audience and message.

Mark's Audience and Message

Part 1
Directions: Use the information below to complete the note-taking template that follows.

Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels and likely the first written. Mark tells the story of Jesus' life at a fast pace, quickly moving from one scene to the next. This gives the reader of the Gospel a sense of movement as she moves throughout the Gospel. Despite the short length of this Gospel, it often contains more details about Jesus' ministry than the others.

Mark was writing to an audience of Gentile Christians, possibly living in and around Rome. Gentiles are people of non-Jewish ethnicity – anyone who was not a Jew. This means Mark's audience was primarily non-Jewish converts to Christianity. The evidence for this fact is that Mark took the time to explain many Jewish customs that his non-Jewish readers would not have automatically understood (for example, in Mark 7:3-4, Mark explains to his reader the traditional Jewish ritual of handwashing before meals). This background information is unlike Matthew's Gospel, which was written for Jews. Matthew assumed his readers knew about Jewish customs. Further, in Mark's Gospel a Roman centurion is the first to acknowledge Jesus

as the Son of God (Mark 15:39). This makes it clear that Mark is making the case for non-Jews to believe in Jesus.

Mark likely wrote his Gospel before AD 70 because he makes no mention of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, which happened in AD 70. The Temple of Jerusalem was the center of Jewish religious life and a major landmark in the city of Jerusalem. When the Romans invaded Jerusalem in AD 70, they destroyed the Temple, which was a very significant event to the Jewish people. It would likely have been mentioned in the Gospel if it had already occurred.

Mark was a disciple of St. Peter and wanted to help people in the midst of turmoil and persecution to understand Jesus better. He wanted to prepare people for the challenges of suffering and persecution. Mark uses words and phrases such as "immediately" and "at once" very often – to create a sense of urgency and of the need for repentance and action right NOW rather than waiting until it's too late. Mark also highlights Jesus' humanity and suffering, spending much time on His Passion and death.

1. Mark's Gospel is the _____ of the four Gospels and likely the _____ written.

2. Mark's Gospel moves at a _____ pace, but often contains more _____ about Jesus' public ministry.

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Activity

- A. Have your students turn to **Mark's Audience and Message (page 143)** and work individually or with a partner to read and fill in the blanks on Part 1.
- B. When your students have completed Part 1, review and discuss the correct answers.

Assessment

- A. Have your students work individually or with a partner to complete Part 2 on **Mark's Audience and Message**. Students will look up the given Scripture passages and fill in the blanks.
- B. When your students have completed Part 2, review and discuss the correct answers.

DAY THREE

Warm-Up

- A. Create a prayerful atmosphere in your classroom. Project and read aloud to your students Mark 16:15-16. Ask your students to reflect prayerfully on the Scripture reading as they listen:

He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned."

- B. Project and pray with your students the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you commanded your disciples to go into the world and proclaim the Good News of salvation. Help us to respond to the Good News so that we too can be saved. Give us your Spirit so that we might take up your command in faith and share the Gospel with all those we meet.

Glory be...

- C. Explain to your class that one of the main focuses of Mark's Gospel is the mystery of Jesus. In the beginning of the Gospel we hear Jesus telling people to keep the fact that He is the Messiah secret. Most scholars believe that this is because the Jewish people were expecting a Messiah who would be a military hero who would raise up Israel and free them from Roman or foreign oppression and reestablish Israel as an earthly kingdom. But Jesus knew that was not the type of messiah He would be. He knew all along that He would give His life to save His people and not to establish an earthly kingdom, but the Kingdom of God. Mark used an outline of sorts to structure His Gospel to deliver His message. There are four main divisions in the "outline" of the Gospel of Mark:
1. **The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus** (Mark 1:1-13: Do not share this information with students until after the activity is completed) – In this division we hear about the ministry of John the Baptist, the Baptism of Jesus, and Jesus' temptation in the desert.
 2. **The Mystery of Jesus** (1:14-8:26) – Jesus calls the Apostles, Jesus cures people and casts out demons, and teaches about the Kingdom of God.
 3. **The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed** (8:27-9:32) – Jesus asks who people say that He is, begins to predict His Death, is transfigured, and moves toward Jerusalem and His Passion. This section can be confusing because Jesus still teaches with parables and performs miracles throughout.
 4. **The Full Revelation of the Mystery** (9:33-16:20) – The priests try to find ways to trap Jesus; Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection; and everything becomes clear to the Apostles.
- D. Explain to your students that over the course of the Gospel Jesus reveals the mystery of who He is gradually and in stages until the full revelation is made clear in His sacrifice on the Cross, His Resurrection, and His Ascension.

Activity

- A. Arrange your students in groups of three or four, then have them turn to **The Structure of Mark's Gospel (page 146)**. Have each group look up the given Scripture passages and determine which division of Mark's Gospel each belongs to and why.

Note: You may choose to assign certain passages to each group rather than have each group look up all of the passages.

- B. When your students have completed the worksheet, review and discuss the correct answers.

The Structure of Mark's Gospel

Directions: Look up each Scripture passage and decide which section of Mark's Gospel it best fits under and then describe why you think so.

- **The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus** – The ministry of John the Baptist, the Baptism of Jesus, Jesus is tempted in the desert.
- **The Mystery of Jesus** – Jesus calls the Apostles, cures people and casts out demons, and teaches about the Kingdom of God.
- **The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed** – Jesus asks who people say that He is, begins to predict His Death, is Transfigured, and moves toward Jerusalem and His Passion.
- **The Full Revelation of the Mystery** – The priests try to find ways to trap Jesus; Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection; and everything becomes clear to the Apostles.

Passage	Which section?	Why?
1 Mark 14:22-26		
2 Mark 1:6-8		
3 Mark 9:2-8		

Assessment

- A. Project the four main divisions of the Gospel of Mark:
- The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus.
 - The Mystery of Jesus.
 - The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed.
 - The Full Revelation of the Mystery.
- B. Then read the following Scripture passages aloud to your students and ask them to identify which division they belong to and discuss why they think so.
- [But] later, as the eleven were at table, he appeared to them and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had been raised. He said to them, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (16:14-15). *The Full Revelation of the Mystery.*
 - It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (1:9-11). *The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus.*
 - Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days (8:31). *The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed.*
 - At once the Spirit drove him out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him (1:12-13). *The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus.*
 - On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, “Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him” (16:5-6). *The Full Revelation of the Mystery.*
 - As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (1:16-17). *The Mystery of Jesus.*
 - A leper came to him [and kneeling down] begged him and said, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean” (1:40-41). *The Mystery of Jesus.*
 - After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them (9:2-3). *The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed.*

DAY FOUR

Warm-Up

- A. Create a prayerful atmosphere in your classroom. Project and read aloud to your students Mark 6:41-42. Ask your students to reflect prayerfully on the Scripture reading as they listen:

Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to [his] disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied.

- B. Project and pray together with your students the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you fed the crowd with a miracle that multiplied five loaves and two fish. You continue to feed us today with the miracle of the Eucharist, your Body and Blood. We pray, O Lord, that you draw us nearer to you in the Eucharist so that, having been fed, we too can go out and do your will.

Hail Mary...

- C. Ask your students how they would define a miracle. Accept reasoned answers.
- D. Explain that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines a miracle as “a sign or wonder, such as a healing or the control of nature, which can only be attributed to divine power.” Then ask your students if they or someone they know has ever witnessed a miracle. *Allow time for students to share any stories they have of miracles they or others have witnessed.*

Activity

- A. Explain the following to your students in a mini-lecture:
- For Mark and the other Gospel authors, a miracle is an act of God that is witnessed by people. In the Bible, Jesus performs four main types of miracles.
 - The first type are miracles of healing. Jesus healed people of their diseases or ills. He even raised the dead! Examples include the paralyzed being able to walk, lepers being cured, and the raising of Jairus’s daughter from the dead.
 - The second type of miracle are miracles of the supernatural. Jesus cast out demons that had possessed people; such people were then able to regain control and rejoin their community.
 - The third type of miracle are miracles of nature, in which Jesus showed His power over nature. Examples include His walking on water and calming a storm.
 - The fourth type of miracles are miracles of supply, in which Jesus created something out of little or nothing, or made one thing become something else. Examples include the multiplication of the loaves and fishes to feed the crowd of 5,000.
 - We do see many of these types of miracles in the Old Testament and in the Acts of the Apostles, but Mark focuses on Jesus’ performing miracles to show that He is the Messiah and the Son of God.

B. Arrange your students in groups of four and assign each group one of the miracles below. Have each group read the story of the miracle from Scripture and then create a brief skit to demonstrate the miracle. Every student should be involved in the skit in some way.

- Mark 1:21-28: Cure of a demoniac – Supernatural.
- Mark 1:40-45: Cure of a leper – Healing.
- Mark 2:1-12: Cure of a paralytic – Healing.
- Mark 4:35-41: Calming of the storm – Nature.
- Mark 5:1-13: Exorcism of Legion into herd of pigs – Supernatural .
- Mark 5:21-43: Raising of Jairus's daughter – Healing.
- Mark 6:45-51: Jesus walks on water/calms storm – Nature.
- Mark 6: 34-44: The Feeding of the 5,000 – Supply.

Formative Assessment

Have each group perform their skit and have the class guess which type of miracle the skit demonstrated.

Answer Key

1. John
2. Mary
3. Barnabas
4. Barnabas and Paul
5. Paul/Silas
6. Ministry
7. Peter
8. Was called the interpreter of Peter by Papias in AD 135.
9. Wrote his Gospel before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.
10. After the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, he was believed to have become the bishop of Alexandria, where he was martyred.
11. His remains are thought to be buried in the large basilica in Venice, Italy.
12. His feast day is April 25.

What Do We Know About Mark?

Directions: Read the Scripture passages and record the information each provides about the author of Mark's Gospel and his audience.

Part 1

1. Name? _____ or Mark (Acts 12:12).
2. His mother's name: _____ (Acts 12:12).
3. Cousin of _____ (Colossians 4:10).
4. Traveled with _____ and _____ on a missionary journey (Acts 12:25).
5. _____ and Barnabas had a disagreement about him, so Paul chose _____ to take with him instead (Acts 15:36-39).
6. Paul still thought Mark was helpful in _____ (2 Timothy 4:11).
7. Traveled with _____ in Rome (1 Peter 5:13).

Part 2

8. Was called the _____ of Peter by Papias in AD 135.
9. Wrote his Gospel before the destruction of the _____ in AD 70.
10. After the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, he was believed to become the _____ of Alexandria, where he was martyred.
11. His remains are thought to be buried in the large basilica in _____, Italy.
12. His feast day is _____.

Answer Key

1. Shortest/first
2. Fast/detail

Mark's Audience and Message

Part I

Directions: Use the information below to complete the note-taking template that follows.

Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels and likely the first written. Mark tells the story of Jesus' life at a fast pace, quickly moving from one scene to the next. This gives the reader of the Gospel a sense of movement as she moves throughout the Gospel. Despite the short length of this Gospel, it often contains more details about Jesus' ministry than the others.

Mark was writing to an audience of Gentile Christians, possibly living in and around Rome. Gentiles are people of non-Jewish ethnicity – anyone who was not a Jew. This means Mark's audience was primarily non-Jewish converts to Christianity. The evidence for this fact is that Mark took the time to explain many Jewish customs that his non-Jewish readers would not have automatically understood (for example, in Mark 7:3-4, Mark explains to his reader the traditional Jewish ritual of handwashing before meals). This background information is unlike Matthew's Gospel, which was written for Jews. Matthew assumed his readers knew about Jewish customs. Further, in Mark's Gospel a Roman centurion is the first to acknowledge Jesus

as the Son of God (Mark 15:39). This makes it clear that Mark is making the case for non-Jews to believe in Jesus.

Mark likely wrote his Gospel before AD 70 because he makes no mention of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, which happened in AD 70. The Temple of Jerusalem was the center of Jewish religious life and a major landmark in the city of Jerusalem. When the Romans invaded Jerusalem in AD 70, they destroyed the Temple, which was a very significant event to the Jewish people. It would likely have been mentioned in the Gospel if it had already occurred.

Mark was a disciple of St. Peter and wanted to help people in the midst of turmoil and persecution to understand Jesus better. He wanted to prepare people for the challenges of suffering and persecution. Mark uses words and phrases such as "immediately" and "at once" very often – to create a sense of urgency and of the need for repentance and action right NOW rather than waiting until it's too late. Mark also highlights Jesus' humanity and suffering, spending much time on His Passion and death.

1. Mark's Gospel is the _____ of the four Gospels and likely the _____ written.
2. Mark's Gospel moves at a _____ pace, but often contains more _____ about Jesus' public ministry.

Answer Key

3. Christians/Rome
4. Non-Jewish
5. Customs
6. Centurion
7. AD 70
8. Temple of Jerusalem
9. St. Peter
10. Understand/
suffering/
persecution
11. Immediately/at
once
12. Humanity
13. Apostles or
disciples
14. Son

3. Mark's audience: Gentile _____, possibly in and around _____.
4. Gentiles are people of _____ ethnicity.
5. Supporting evidence: Mark explained Jewish _____ (Mark 7:3-4).
6. A Roman _____ the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God (Mark 15:39).
7. When he wrote: before _____.
8. Supporting evidence: He makes no mention of the destruction of _____ (which happened in AD 70).
9. Why he wrote: Mark was a disciple of _____.
10. He wanted to help people in the midst of turmoil and persecution to _____ Jesus better and to prepare them for the challenges of _____ and _____.
11. Supporting evidence: Mark uses words and phrases such as _____ and _____ to show a sense of urgency and need for repentance and action right NOW.
12. Mark also highlights Jesus' _____ and suffering, spending much time on His Passion and Death.

Part II

Directions: Look up the given Scripture passages about the main messages of Jesus and fill in the blanks.

Verse	Message
Mark 1:16-20	13. Jesus calls us all, just as He called His _____.
Mark 1:11	14. Jesus is the _____ of God.

Answer Key

- 15. Miracles
- 16. Man
- 17. Pity/anger/love/
sorrow or sadness
- 18. Kingdom/repent/
gospel
- 19. Authority
- 20. Raised
- 21. Mary Magdalene/
disciples/
proclaim
- 22. Heaven

Verse	Message
Mark 2:9-12 Mark 4:39-41	15. Jesus performed many _____.
Mark 1:11	16. Jesus is the Son of _____.
Mark 6:34 Mark 3:5 Mark 10:21 Mark 14: 34	17. Jesus responds with human emotions including _____, _____, and _____.
Mark 1:15	18. Jesus teaches about the _____ of God and that we need to _____ and believe in the _____ to follow Him.
Mark 1:22	19. Jesus taught with _____.
Mark 16:5-6	20. Jesus was _____ from the dead.
Mark 16:9 Mark 16:14 Mark 16:15	21. The risen Jesus appeared first to _____ and then His _____ and told them to _____ the Gospel to every creature.
Mark 16:19	22. Jesus ascended into _____.

Answer Key

- 1. The Full Revelation of the Mystery; Jesus is at the Last Supper with His disciples, instituting the Eucharist.
- 2. The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus; John the Baptist is speaking of the one greater than he who is coming.
- 3. The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed; Jesus is transfigured before His disciples.

The Structure of Mark’s Gospel

Directions: Look up each Scripture passage and decide which section of Mark’s Gospel it best fits under and then describe why you think so.

- **The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus** – The ministry of John the Baptist, the Baptism of Jesus, Jesus is tempted in the desert.
- **The Mystery of Jesus** – Jesus calls the Apostles, cures people and casts out demons, and teaches about the Kingdom of God.
- **The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed** – Jesus asks who people say that He is, begins to predict His Death, is Transfigured, and moves toward Jerusalem and His Passion.
- **The Full Revelation of the Mystery** – The priests try to find ways to trap Jesus; Jesus’ Passion, Death, and Resurrection; and everything becomes clear to the Apostles.

Passage	Which section?	Why?
1 Mark 14:22-26		
2 Mark 1:6-8		
3 Mark 9:2-8		

Answer Key

- 4. The Mystery of Jesus; Jesus feeds the 5,000.
- 5. The Full Revelation of the Mystery; The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- 6. The Mystery of Jesus; Parable of the Sower and the Seeds.
- 7. The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed; Peter recognizes Jesus as the Messiah but is told to keep it secret.
- 8. The Full Revelation of the Mystery; Jesus experiences His agony in the garden.
- 9. The Mystery of Jesus; Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.
- 10. The Full Revelation of the Mystery; Jesus ascends into Heaven.

Passage	Which section?	Why?
4 Mark 6:34-44		
5 Mark 11:7-10		
6 Mark 4:1-9		
7 Mark 8:27-30		
8 Mark 14:32-34		
9 Mark 3:1-5		
10 Mark 16:19		