

Meeting *Jesus* in Mark

(NLT)



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This resource is written without any expectation of prior biblical knowledge or literacy on the part of the participants. It is a method that allows people with little Bible knowledge or literacy to participate equally with others.

It involves people listening to a short story from the Gospel of Mark and then discussing it in small groups of four to six people. The same passage is read three times and after each reading there is a small group conversation.

A facilitator is required to read the passage to the participants and brief them on what to listen for and talk about in their small groups. After about 30 minutes, the participants have heard God's Word and engaged in three short conversations and a prayer time.

It involves the following common format and set of questions read by the facilitator:

- Say:** "Listen to the story and see what you can remember from the story."
Read the passage aloud to the group. This is a simple retelling question.
Say: "As a group, try to retell the story. What do you remember? What happened?" (10 minutes)
- Say:** "Listen to the story again and imagine that you are there, present in the story – watching and listening. What do you see, hear and feel?"
Read the passage aloud to the group. This is an experiential question.
Say: "In your group, share what you felt, heard and saw." (10 minutes)
- Say:** "Listen to the story again. What do you think God might be saying to you in this story? What encouragement or challenge is there for you?"
Read the passage aloud for the final time. This is an application question.
Say: "In your group, share what you feel God might be saying to you. Spend some time in prayer together – for one another." (10-15 minutes)

Other questions after the third reading may include:

- What does this tell you about God?
- What does this tell you about people?
- What do you like about this story?
- What do you find confusing about this story?

Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴ Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News.

¹⁵ "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

¹⁶ One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁷ Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" ¹⁸ And they left their nets at once and followed him.

¹⁹ A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets.

²⁰ He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.

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Mark 2:1-12

¹ When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. ² Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, ³ four men arrived carrying a paralysed man on a mat. ⁴ They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. ⁵ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralysed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, ⁷ "What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"

⁸ Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? ⁹ Is it easier to say to the paralysed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'? ¹⁰ So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralysed man and said, ¹¹ "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

¹² And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"

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Mark 2:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) ¹⁶ But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?"

¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

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Mark 4:1-9, 13-20

¹ Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. ² He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. ⁴ As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. ⁵ Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!” ⁹ Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

¹⁰ Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the parables meant ...

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, “If you can’t understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables? ¹⁴ The farmer plants seed by taking God’s word to others. ¹⁵ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. ¹⁶ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. ¹⁸ The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God’s word, ¹⁹ but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. ²⁰ And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

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Mark 6:45-56

⁴⁵ Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. ⁴⁶ After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray.

⁴⁷ Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning[a] Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost. ⁵⁰ They were all terrified when they saw him.

But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage! I am here!" ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, ⁵² for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in.

⁵³ After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret. They brought the boat to shore ⁵⁴ and climbed out. The people recognized Jesus at once, ⁵⁵ and they ran throughout the whole area, carrying sick people on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ Wherever he went—in villages, cities, or the countryside—they brought the sick out to the marketplaces. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

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Mark 8:27 – 9:1

8²⁷ Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

28 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets.”

29 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?” Peter replied, “You are the Messiah.” But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. 32 As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.

33 Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. “Get away from me, Satan!” he said. “You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. 35 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. 36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? 37 Is anything worth more than your soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

9¹ Jesus went on to say, “I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!”

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Mark 14:1-11

¹ It was now two days before Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The leading priests and the teachers of religious law were still looking for an opportunity to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. ² “But not during the Passover celebration,” they agreed, “or the people may riot.”

³ Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head.

⁴ Some of those at the table were indignant. “Why waste such expensive perfume?” they asked. ⁵ “It could have been sold for a year’s wages and the money given to the poor!” So they scolded her harshly.

⁶ But Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? ⁷ You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. ⁹ I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed.”

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

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Mark 14:32-43

³² They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, “Sit here while I go and pray.” ³³ He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. ³⁴ He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁵ He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. ³⁶ “Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

³⁷ Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? ³⁸ Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

³⁹ Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. ⁴⁰ When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open. And they didn’t know what to say.

⁴¹ When he returned to them the third time, he said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Up, let’s be going. Look, my betrayer is here!”

⁴³ And immediately, even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders.

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Mark 14:66-72

⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Peter was in the courtyard below. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest came by ⁶⁷ and noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and said, “You were one of those with Jesus of Nazareth.[a]”

⁶⁸ But Peter denied it. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed.[b]

⁶⁹ When the servant girl saw him standing there, she began telling the others, “This man is definitely one of them!” ⁷⁰ But Peter denied it again.

A little later some of the other bystanders confronted Peter and said, “You must be one of them, because you are a Galilean.”

⁷¹ Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying—I don’t know this man you’re talking about!” ⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed the second time.

Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me.” And he broke down and wept.

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Mark 15:21-32

²¹ A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) ²² And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull"). ²³ They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it.

²⁴ Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes and threw dice[b] to decide who would get each piece. ²⁵ It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ A sign announced the charge against him. It read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷ Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.[d]

²⁹ The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. "Ha! Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. ³⁰ Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!"

³¹ The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! ³² Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!" Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.

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Mark 16:1-8

¹ Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. ³ On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴ But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside.

⁵ When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, ⁶ but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. ⁷ Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died."

⁸ The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.

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