

WEEK 7: MARK 1 - PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

HIGH SCHOOL

GOAL

To develop a better understanding of Mark 1:1-45

LESSON

Materials Needed: Orthodox Study Bible, whiteboard, dry erase markers

Extended Learning Opportunities:

The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to St. Mark pages 13-23

The Gospel of Mark the Suffering Servant by Fr. Lawrence Farley pages 17-35

GOSPEL OF MARK - CHAPTER 1

Read Verses 1-6 and then Discuss:

In ancient times, the roads were not maintained in the same way that we take care of our roads today. Whenever the king was going to travel somewhere, the people were expected to repair the road - clear away branches, plants, fill in potholes, smooth out bumps, etc. St. Mark is explaining to us that St. John the Baptist is preparing the way for the coming of the King - Jesus Christ. As Orthodox Christians, we spend a great deal of time striving to prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion (the Body and Blood of Christ), for the birth and Resurrection of our Lord, and other feast days as well. How do we do this? By fasting, praying, helping those around us, and going to confession. We are clearing away all the obstacles in our way to Christ, who is the true King.

There was some controversy though with St. John baptizing people in preparation of Jesus Christ. While the Jews were familiar with ritual cleansing, they did not understand why they needed to be baptized along with the Gentiles. They felt insulted by this because they were the chosen people of God, while the Gentiles were not. Surely, they were more prepared for the coming of the Messiah than the Gentiles. This is something we need to be careful about as Orthodox Christians. We cannot assume that just because we have the right faith, that we will be saved by default.

Verses 7-8:

There are two ways of looking at these verses - 1) In those times, a slave could do any lowly task for their master except taking off their shoes. This was seen as even beneath the slave and every person took off their own shoes. St. John is emphasizing that he is not even worthy to take off Jesus' shoes! 2) St. John baptized many people, and by their repentance (*admission of their sins and seeking forgiveness*), St. John released the bonds of their sins (*the straps of the sandals / shoes*), but he was not able to do the same for Jesus because Jesus did not have any sins.

Verses 9-11:

Jesus does not confess any sins, like all the other people had done before being baptized, because He doesn't have any to confess. Jesus is baptized by St. John in order to reveal Himself to everyone present that He is the Messiah. We also learn that the Holy Spirit descends on us as well during our baptism.

Verses 12-13:

Mark gives us only a glimpse of what happened here compared to Matthew and Luke, but he emphasizes that Jesus immediately begins his ministry by confronting Satan. He is at the frontlines of the battle to save us! Additionally, we learn that we will also face temptations after our baptism. We make the choice whether to give in to our temptations or not and whether we seek God during those temptations or not.

Verses 14-20:

Along the shores of the Sea of Galilee (*locate on the map on the next page*), Jesus begins to recruit His disciples, starting with Simon (*also known as Peter - This is the person who St. Mark travels with later as an apostle and the Gospel of Mark is based on St. Peter's teachings.*) and his brother, Andrew. Next Jesus calls James and John (*who writes the Gospel of John, is the youngest of all of Jesus' disciples, and is later entrusted with the care of the Theotokos*). These men left everything behind in order to follow Jesus and become fishers of men. What is a fisher of men? This means that the disciples would gather people, instead of fish, and teach them that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to save us all.



Locate the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum

Verses 21-28:

St. Mark starts Jesus' ministry with an exorcism. This is important because Jesus' work on earth can be seen as one big exorcism - overthrowing Satan - and liberating all people from his bond. Additionally, we learn that the demon that Jesus cast out of the man recognized Him as the Son of God and thought it was the time of the Judgment.

Verses 29-31:

"This account makes clear that if you, O reader, are suffering from an illness and God heals you, make use of your health to minister to the saints and to serve God." - Blessed Theophylact, *The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. Mark*

Verses 32-39:

There was a flood of people seeking Jesus in order to be healed. After he had healed a great many, Jesus got up early the next day and found a quiet place to pray. When the disciples found Him and explained that more people wanted to see Him, Jesus informed them that He came to minister to those who needed Him, not for praise and glory. Therefore, Jesus tells his disciples that they need to move on to the next city because others need Him as well.

Verses 40-45:

Jesus heals the leper by touching him. Lepers were seen as unclean and no one wanted to contract leprosy, which is a disease of the skin, either. Lepers were outcasts in communities, but Jesus purposely touches the leper and heals him because the leper recognized Him as God.

Even though Jesus had told the former leper not to tell anyone about being healed, he told everyone! Jesus had to even scold (*reprimand*) him, but it didn't matter. The man kept telling people and now an even larger crowd than before were seeking out Jesus - to the point that He had to stay in the wilderness because He couldn't make it into the cities.

REVIEW:

- Who does Jesus recruit as His disciples?
- What was their occupation?
- Where were these men when Jesus asked them to follow Him?
- What was the city they went to with Jesus?
- In your own words, what is the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark about?

WEEK 7: MARK 1 - PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

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3RD - 4TH GRADE

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Jesus heals the leper by touching him. Lepers were seen as unclean and no one wanted to contract leprosy, which is a disease of the skin, either. Lepers were not allowed near other people, but Jesus purposely touches the leper and heals him because the leper recognized Him as God.

Even though Jesus had told the former leper not to tell anyone about being healed, he told everyone because he was so happy to not have leprosy anymore! Jesus had to even scold (*reprimand*) him, but it didn't matter. The man kept telling people and now an even larger crowd than before were looking for Jesus - to the point that He had to stay in the wilderness because He couldn't get passed all the people to make it into the city.

REVIEW:

- Who does Jesus recruit as His disciples? (Simon/Peter, Andrew, James, John)
- What was their occupation? (Fishermen)
- Where were these men when Jesus asked them to follow Him? (Sea of Galilee)
- What was the city they went to with Jesus? Capernaum
- In your own words, what is the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark about?

Find the Sea of Galilee and the city of Capernaum on the map

JESUS' JUDEAN AND PEREAN MINISTRIES

The map displays the geographical context of Jesus' ministries. Galilee is in the north, Samaria in the center, Judea in the south, and Perea to the east. The Jordan River flows through the region. The Mediterranean Sea is to the west, the Sea of Galilee to the north, and the Dead Sea to the south. Major cities and locations are marked with red dots: Capernaum, Nazareth, Caesarea Maritima, Joppa, Bethel, Ephraim, Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethany, and Bethlehem. A scale bar in the bottom right corner shows 0 to 10 kilometers and 0 to 10 miles.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHERE JESUS LIVED
AT <http://bit.ly/ZEABmaps>

WEEK 7: MARK 1 - PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

1ST - 2ND GRADE

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LESSON

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GOSPEL OF MARK - CHAPTER 1

The Baptism of Jesus:

- Read page 178 to students
- Discuss the icon of the Baptism of Jesus on page 179 (Where is Jesus? Where is St. John the Baptist?)
- What is the name of our parish?

Jesus is tempted by the devil:

- Read pages 180-181
- Should we always do everything we want to do? Do you think Jesus was hungry after fasting for 40 days in the desert? Sure, He was - but He knew the devil was trying to trick Him and He didn't give in to it.

Jesus and His disciples:

- Read pages 182-184
- Who was one of the people Jesus asked to follow Him? (Simon / Peter)

REVIEW:

- Who baptized Jesus? (St. John the Baptist)
- What is the name of our church? (St. John the Baptist)
- Who tempted Jesus while he was in the desert for 40 days? (The devil)
- Who is one of Jesus' 12 disciples? (Simon / Peter)

JESUS' JUDEAN AND PEREAN MINISTRIES



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WEEK 7: MARK 1 - PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

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- What is the name of our parish?

Jesus and His disciples:

- Read pages 182-184
- Who was one of the people Jesus asked to follow Him? (Simon / Peter)
- How many disciples did Jesus have? (12)

REVIEW:

- Who baptized Jesus? (St. John the Baptist)
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