

A photograph of two women, one with blonde hair and one with dark hair, looking at a book together outdoors. The blonde woman is pointing at the book. The background is a blurred city street with buildings.

BIBLE DISCOVERY COMMUNITIES

How to Get Started

Hosting a Discovery Group

Whether you are meeting in person or online, try to find ways to help people feel welcome and at ease. A Discovery group is a mutual space...everyone is exploring and, on a journey, together. Your group needs to feel more WITH than TO or FOR. No one is going to have anything done to or for them, only with them. So, things that you might do in another small group or meeting such as refreshments and name labels might help.

Introductions

Take some time to get to know each other, especially in week one. You might want to invite people to say their names and where they are from. Adding a fun question such as favourite biscuit, pizza topping or crisp flavour can often help. You might want to ask people to share whether they've ever read the Bible before.

A Simple Outline

You might want to begin by praying very simply and opening, perhaps picking up on some of the things people have already shared. You could adapt the following example: *Father God Thank you that you've brought us all here today. We're here to read the Bible together. For some of us it's a new and slightly scary experience. Please help us to help each other. Be with us and help us as we listen, speak and hear from each other to also hear you.*

Amen

A Simple Outline cont:

- Introduce the passage from Mark, a book in the Bible written by one of Jesus' friends, an eyewitness.
- Explain that you are going to explore a short passage from the Bible together through four simple questions. The questions are open, it's not like school, there is no 'right' answer and we're here to listen to and learn from each other. No one has to be an expert!
- Read the passage twice, ideally with two different voices. Some Bible apps on phones will read a passage to you which can also act as a different voice. It can help to tell people what the first question is before you read the passage so they can be listening for what stands out to them.



Top Tips

- When dealing with responses to the questions try to affirm and make links.
- Resist the temptation to add lots of background information/context, and try to let most of the conversation come from the group.
- As facilitator, do join in with your own responses to model examples, but try to let others respond first.
- If someone asks a question or makes a response that doesn't seem relevant it can often be helpful to ask where they've got it from in the passage.
- Depending on the size and confidence of the group expect to spend 5-10 minutes on each question.

Navigating Mark

For people who have never read the Bible before it might help them to know that:

- The Bible is 66 different books of different types of literature
- The part of the Bible before Jesus is called the Old Testament
- The part of the Bible with the life of Jesus and the early church in it is the New Testament Mark is in the New Testament.
- Mark was Jesus' friend, so his book is like a biography or eyewitness account
- The books in the Bible are divided into chapters which are the numbers in bold and then into verses which are the little numbers that seem to float above the text.



The Discovery Questions

1. What stands out to you from what you've just heard?
2. What does the passage tell us about God/Jesus?
3. What does the passage tell us about people?
4. If this is God's word to us, what difference could it make to our lives?
5. Did it make a difference? (Follow up question from week two onwards).

Option

Mark starts at pace; a lot happens as Mark tries to show us who Jesus is. Mark 1 includes Jesus' baptism, as well as calling the disciples and healings. Some groups might find helpful to begin here as it might help them to reflect on whether they were baptised/Christened and why Jesus needed to be. So it might be appropriate for some groups to begin with Mark 1:1-31 (p3-4) or 9-28 (p4).

Discovery Bible Sessions Using Mark's Gospel

The following are suggested passages that might help your group explore who Jesus is and some of the basics of the Christian faith. Choose the length of time and passages best suited to your group. Remember, the discovery approach is a mutual one where all are open to the Holy Spirit, no one has all the answers and 'truth' is discovered together.

4 Weeks

1. Who is Jesus?	Mark 2:1-12	Jesus Heals the Lame Man (p9)
2. Our Response	Mark 4:1-20	The Sower (p19-21)
3. Why did he die?	Mark 15:21-41	The Crucifixion (p95-98) The
4. New Life	Mark 16:1-20	Resurrection (p101-103)

5 Weeks

1. Who is Jesus?	Mark 2:1-12	Jesus Heals the Lame Man (p9)
2. Our Response	Mark 4:1-20	The Sower (p19-21) The Rich
3. Qualifications	Mark 10:17-31	Young Ruler (p60) The
4. Why did he die?	Mark 15:21-41	Crucifixion (p95-98) The
5. New Life	Mark 16:1-20	Resurrection (p101-103)

6 Weeks

1. Who is Jesus?	Mark 2:1-12 Mark	Jesus Heals the Lame Man (p9)
2. Our Response	4:1-20	The Sower (p19-21)
3. Power and Authority	Mark 6:30-44	Feeding the 5000*(p35)
4. Qualifications	Mark 10:17-31	The Rich Young Ruler (p60)
5. Why did he die?	Mark 15:21-41	The Crucifixion (p95-98) The
6. New Life	Mark 16:1-20	Resurrection (p101-103)

*You might want to look at Mark 6:30-56 (p36) to include Jesus walking on water as well, or just one of the miracle stories.

A Month of Mark

Some people might want to read a short passage every day for a month to really get into the book and build a habit. This might help but emphasise that it's optional!

Day	Passage from Mark	Pages
1	The time has come	3-4
2	Everyone is looking for you	7
3	Get up	9
4	Follow me	10
5	Out of his mind	13-14
6	Jesus went up on a mountainside	16
7	Who is this?	19-21
8	Even the wind and waves obey him	23
9	Tell them (end on 'amazed')	25-26
10	Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee	26-29
11	Go and see	31-32
12	Give them something to eat	35
13	He walked on the lake	36
14	Unclean	39-42
15	But what about you?	45-46
16	Jesus and his disciples	49
17	A voice came from the cloud	51-55
18	They left that place	56
19	Why do you call me good?	59-60
20	What do you want me to do for you?	63
21	One question	65-66
22	In the morning	69
23	Man of honour	70-72
24	You are not far from God's Kingdom	75-76
25	Watch out!	79-82
26	What do you think?	85
27	Take it. This is my body	86-90
28	I don't know this man	92
29	What wrong has he done?	95-98
30	Who will roll the stone?	101-103