

## Life Group Leader Guide

Our new mission statement is: *Building Bridges to Connect Everyone to the Dynamic Life in Christ*. What does being connected and living that life look like and feel like? This spring we will be going through the Book of Mark to discover what it means to live the Dynamic Life in Christ.

These discussion guides will follow along with the sermon series by either using the main passages from the weekend messages or using another passage on the same topic. These guides will be organized using the acronym HEAR as a way to teach people to read the Bible. HEAR stands for **H**ighlight the passage, **E**xplain the passage, **A**pply the passage, and **R**espond to the passage.

Each week, there will be a page to print off for each member of your group. The printed sheet will have the Bible passage you'll discuss and some questions in the margins to guide them in examining those verses.

Additionally, there will be a leader's guide that will give you helpful notes on the passage (i.e. background information and definitions) as well as discussion questions to lead your group. These don't need to be printed for each member of your group. These guides are designed to be discussed BEFORE the sermon, so the group can discuss the passage before the pastor shares his insights. However, they can just as easily be used after the weekend message.

Our hope is these tools will (a) help your group members learn to study/read their Bibles outside of the group and (b) give you a helpful outline for facilitating the group discussion. If you have comments or questions about the discussion guides, we'd love to hear your constructive feedback. Send feedback to [groups@foresthill.org](mailto:groups@foresthill.org).

### *How to Use This Discussion Guide*

- Print off the "Life Group Member Guide" for each member of your group – or email it to them in advance.
- Use the summary statement for each week to quickly understand the text's theme. You can use that as a reference point to help guide your discussion or bring it back if your group begins to get off topic.
- Use the prayer prompt at the end of each guide to help you close in prayer.

Additionally, here are some tips and guidelines to help you lead these discussions:

1. **Choose the questions that best fit your group and your time constraints.** There are a lot of questions in this guide and your group may not be able to discuss them all. That's okay! You don't have to ask all of them. Before your group begins, choose the questions that are most likely to help your group understand what God is saying in the text and how to apply it to their lives.
2. **Prepare for your group time by reading the passages and the notes in a study Bible.** A good study Bible can give you some insights into the passages and how they connect to the whole book or the whole story of the Bible.
3. **Begin every group meeting with prayer.** We can only understand and apply God's Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, invite the Spirit to open your hearts and minds to what He says to His people.
4. **Keep the conversation focused on Scripture as much as possible.** Some people may want to bring in their opinions or continually refer to what the teaching pastor said during his message. This is helpful in small doses, but the goal of this discussion guide is to help you determine what God is saying in His Word. Encourage the group to continue to return to the Scripture. One way to do that is by saying, "That's a great insight! Where do you see that in the Scripture we're studying?"
5. **Encourage participation, but don't let anyone dominate.** Encourage everyone to share insights, ask questions, and read aloud. But don't allow any one person – even yourself, the leader – to monopolize the time. Some people are just unaware of themselves and how much they speak, so gently encourage them to listen and make space for others to talk.
6. **Help your group members to be specific in the application of Scripture.** It is easy to generalize when we talk about the Bible and how to apply it. So ask your group members specific questions – for example, "What part of the world do you sense God wants you to pray for? How will you do that? How will you make that a habit?"

We pray that you will hear God speak through Scripture and that His Spirit will move you to obey Him. The Word of God – the Bible – lets us know the God who loves us and saves us. May this discussion guide help you and your Life Group to become more immersed in His Word.

**Date of Sermon:** July 5, 2020

**Topic of Sermon:** Resurrection and Commission

**Main Passage:** Mark 16:1-16 (Focus passage on Mark 16:1-8 in the Life Group)

**BEFORE your group meeting:**

- Look up the main passage in a study Bible and read the study notes
- Print off or send the “Group Member Guide” for your group members
- Review the “Group Member Guide” for yourself
- Have enough pens for each group member.

**Topic of Life Group Meeting:** Because we are sure of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can even be more empowered to follow Him and tell others about Him.

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### Icebreakers (optional)

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**When was the last time you shared some good news with others? What was it about? What were some of the reactions of others? How did it feel telling it?**

Leader’s Note: Introduce the next part of the group meeting. You can read this introduction or put it in your own words:

*“Today, we’re going to spend a few minutes studying the focal passage on our own before we discuss it as a group. I’ve printed out a copy of the Bible passage for you. There are some questions in the margins to help you. Spend most of your time on the Highlight and Explain questions. Feel free to mark up, underline or highlight the passage. I’m going to give us about 5 minutes to do this. Let me begin by praying that God will open our minds and hearts to His Word.”*

When you come back together, use the questions below to guide the discussion.

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### HIGHLIGHT the Passage

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- Review events from Mark 14 and 15. What might be feelings of the disciples after knowing what Jesus went through at the crucifixion? What might be some of their reasons to be afraid?
- Read Mark 16:1-8. Who were some of the people mentioned and what were they doing?
- What happened to the stone?
- What might have been some of the women’s thoughts as they entered the tomb?
- Who encountered them in the tomb? What was their reaction?
- What were they asked to do and how would you describe their response?

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### EXPLAIN the Passage

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- What is the significance that it was women who were there at the tomb? How would you describe their devotion?
- The angel specifically mentioned to find the other disciples and Peter. Why did the angel single Peter out? What had Peter done before that may have left him feeling lots of shame? Go back and read Mark 14:66-72.
- What are some things this passage revealed about Jesus? His nature, His work, or His character?

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### APPLY the Passage

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- No matter what we have done or said in our lives, Jesus uses everyone to tell the story of Him to others. Have you ever felt that you were not good enough to share God’s love with others? If so, why not?
- How does the fact that the angel asked them to go and tell others about Jesus encourage you as you face your own fears and doubts about sharing your faith with others?
- By God’s power, what is God calling you to do in response to His resurrection? Who would you like to tell about it?

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### RESPOND to the Passage

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- The actions we take to serve God are not rooted in our emotion for God, our zeal for God, nor our own personal skills and abilities. We can tell others about Jesus because of what He has done for us. Jesus is the foundation of the faith and service.
- Finish your time in prayer. Pray for the courage to share with others the work of Christ in your life.

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## COMMENTARY NOTES ON THE MAIN PASSAGE

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Verses 1-2:

“Jesus had been in the garden tomb without normal preparation of the body. So Sunday, when the Sabbath with its restrictions on what one might do had passed, three women brought spices intending to rewrap and anoint Jesus’ body.” -Lawrence Richards, Teacher’s Commentary

“This scene at the garden tomb is the first time some of the women get a mention in the book of Mark. They’re the silent followers. We know they were at the cross, watching everything (15:40–41), but they are silent in the text.” –Francis Chan, The Gospel of Mark Study Guide

Verse 3:

This was a circular stone that was rolled to block the entrance of the cave to keep out intruders. – Ryrie Study Bible

Verse 4-5:

See Matthew 28:2. The angel rolled away the stone. Angels were celestial beings created by God for specific purposes. They are not made in the image of God as humans. “Angels frequently appear as messengers in the Bible, traveling from one place to another.” –Zondervan Academic

Verse 6:

“He is risen!” The foundation of the Christian faith in these three words. Without it, Christianity is false.

Verse 7:

Jesus said in Mark 14:28 just this statement. He was going ahead of them to Galilee.

Verse 8:

“Mark wraps up his gospel by telling us that the women scattered from the empty tomb and kept their mouths shut because they were afraid. Throughout the story, even Jesus’s closest friends responded to his power and mission in fear. So, Mark’s asking us what *we’re* going to do. Be silent and afraid? Or be confident in the knowledge that we serve the God-Man Jesus who paid the price for our redemption?” –Francis Chan, The Gospel of Mark Study Guide

\*A note of Mark 16:9-20:

“These verses do not appear in two of the most trustworthy manuscripts of the NT, though these are part of the many other manuscripts and versions. If they are not a part of the genuine text of Mark, the abrupt ending at verse 8 is probably because the original closing verses were lost.” – Ryrie Study Bible

Life Group Member Guide

Focal Passage: Mark 16:1-8 (CSB)

Passage in Context: Mark 16:1-16 (CSB)



**Bible-Reading Tip:** Begin by asking God to open your eyes and hearts to His Word. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul writes that the Spirit – who lives inside everyone who believes in Jesus – knows the depths of God and reveals Him to those who follow Jesus. So, always begin your time of reading the Bible with a prayer for Him to open your eyes and ears to what He will reveal. This doesn't mean that you will always have an emotional encounter or a special revelation, but you are acknowledging that He is that One through whom all wisdom is revealed.

Mark 16:1-8

**1** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so they could go and anoint Him. **2** Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb at sunrise. **3** They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us?" **4** Looking up, they observed that the stone—which was very large—had been rolled away.

**5** When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; they were amazed and alarmed. **6** "Don't be alarmed," he told them. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been resurrected! He is not here! See the place where they put Him. **7** But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see Him there just as He told you.' "

**8** So they went out and started running from the tomb, because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them. And they said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid.

(The rest of the passage covered in the sermon, but not in this study...)

Mark 16:9-16

**9** Early on the first day of the week, after He had risen, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had driven seven demons. **10** She went and reported to those who had been with Him, as they were mourning and weeping. **11** Yet, when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe it. **12** Then after this, He appeared in a different form to two of them walking on their way into the country. **13** And they went and reported it to the rest, who did not believe them either.

**14** Later, He appeared to the Eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table. He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who saw Him after He had been resurrected. **15** Then He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. **16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

**HEAR Bible Reading Method**

**HIGHLIGHT** the passage

- Underline any repeated words or key ideas you see.
- Note any questions you have about what you read.
- In 2-3 sentences, summarize what was said or what happened.

**EXPLAIN** the passage

- What was revealed about God? His character, desires, and/or actions?
- What was revealed about people? What we are/do or what we should be/do?

**APPLY** the passage

- From this reading, what truth do you need to embrace?
- By God's power, how will you THINK, SPEAK, or ACT differently based on what you read?

**RESPOND** to the passage

- Talk to God about what you've seen and learned in this passage.
- Ask Him to help you apply the truth to your life.