

For the next few months we will be going through the Gospel of Mark. 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 will 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 would love to hear your constructive feedback. Send your feedback to us at

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 main idea 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 respond section 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. 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 as you build bridges with others in your sphere of influence. May this discussion guide help you and your Life Group to become more engaged with His Word and lead you on in a dynamic life in Christ.

Date of Sermon: May 31

Topic of Sermon: Cleansing of the Temple

Main Passage: Mark 11:15-18

BEFORE your group meeting:

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

Main Idea: The purpose of the Church and its meeting places is to build bridges to God for ALL people

Icebreakers (optional)

- What is so important to you that you would fight for 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.

HIGHLIGHT the Passage

- What key ideas, words or phrases stood out to you from the passage? What is the significance of those?
- Did this passage raise any questions for you?
- How would you summarize this passage in your own words? Would anyone else add or emphasize something to that summary?

EXPLAIN the Passage

- What are some things this passage revealed about Jesus?
- What made Jesus angry? What did the people buying and selling not understand?
- What was the reason that Jesus gave for his anger? How is he addressing an injustice?
- How do the priest and scribes respond to Jesus’s actions?
- As Jesus is displaying his authority, what is this setting up?
- What do you think is the real heart of this issue that Jesus addresses?

APPLY the Passage

- What truth from this passage do you need to cling to? What makes this truth significant to you?
- How did you feel seeing Jesus angry about the treatment of the Temple? How does that impact your heart?
- What impact do Jesus’s action imply to us today?
- How do our actions represent our faith to God? To Others, neighbors, co-workers, friends, family?
- What barriers are in your life that keep you from moving closer in your relationship with Jesus?
- By God’s power, what is God calling you to change in how you think, speak, or act?
- How does hearing and reading this passage encourage you to surrender something in your life?

RESPOND to the Passage

Take a moment to list out, privately, any barrier that keeps you from drawing closer to God. Then pray and ask him to reveal himself as greater than the barrier. Go to pray as a group and lift up each other as you pursue to engage God with your whole heart.

COMMENTARY NOTES ON THE MAIN PASSAGE

11:15 The temple. The court of the Gentiles, the only part of the temple in which Gentiles could worship God and gather for prayer. Pilgrims coming to the Passover Feast needed animals that met the ritual requirements for sacrifice, and the vendors set up their animal pens and money tables in the court of the Gentiles. Pilgrims needed their money changed into the local currency because the annual temple tax had to be paid in that currency. Also, The Mishnah required Tyrian currency for some offerings. Does were required for the purification of women (Lev 12:6, Lk 2:22-24), the cleansing of those with certain skin diseases (Lev 14:22), and other purposes (Lev 15:14,29). They were also the usual offering of the poor (Lev 5:7).

11:16 A detail only found in Mark. Apparently the temple area was being used as a shortcut between the city and the Mount of Olives.

11:17 The written text Jesus quoted was Isaiah 56:7. Only Mark added for all nations. The den of thieves quotation is from Jr 7:11, part of Jeremiah's sermon in which he condemned temple goers for their attitudes and behaviors and predicted the temple's destruction (7:12-15).

11:18 Jesus's last word in v 17, "thieves" (GK *lestes*). Involved foreshadowing since within three days he would be arrested as if he were a thief ("criminals", 15:27). The words **a way to kill him** recall the plot in 3:6 by the Pharisees and Herodians.

Life Group Member Guide

Focal Passage: Mark 11:15-18 CSB

Passage in Context: Mark 11:15-19 (CSB)



Bible-Reading Tip: The use of parallel passages such as occurs throughout the Gospels helps to give a bigger and fuller context of the stories, encounters and events in the Bible. For example, we see the context for the writing of many of Paul's letters (that became known as the Pastoral Epistles) by reading the Book of Acts.

¹⁵ They came to Jerusalem, and he went into the temple and began to throw out those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves,

¹⁶ and would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple.

¹⁷ He was teaching them: “Is it not written, **My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?** (Isaiah 56:7) But you have made it **a den of thieves!** (Jeremiah 7:11)

¹⁸ The chief priests and the scribes heard it and started looking for a way to kill him. For they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was astonished by his teaching.

¹⁹ Whenever evening came, they would go out of the city.

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.