

Our new mission statement is: *Building Bridges to Connect Everyone to the Dynamic Life in Christ*. But 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 using passages from the book of Mark.

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 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 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: April 26

Topic of Sermon: Dispatching Disciples

Main Passage: Mark 6:7-13

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” (page 4) for your group members
- Review the “Group Member Guide” for yourself
- Have enough pens for each group member.

Topic of Life Group Meeting:

Icebreakers (optional)

- Describe a time when you were given a difficult task but few resources to carry it out? What was that experience like for you?

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 today? 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

- Read Mark 6:1-13. How do verses 1-6 relate to 7-13? (Compare & Contrast the sections)
- How do those in Jesus’ hometown respond to Him?
- Share in your own words what Jesus was asking the disciples to do.
- Was there anything unusual about what he asked them to do?
- Read Mark 3:13-18. Compare and contrast the two passages.
- What does Jesus instructions to the disciples say about the role He desires His followers to play in His mission?
- What are some things this passage revealed about people?
- What are some things this passage revealed about God? His nature, His work, or His character?

APPLY the Passage

- What truth from this passage do you need to cling to? What makes that truth significant to you?
- By God’s power, what is God calling you to change in how you think, speak, or act?
- Where and to whom might Jesus be sending you?
- What makes you hesitant to serve as a representative of Jesus to others?
- In what ways do you think and feel you have inadequate resources to serve as His representative?
- In what ways has Jesus given you resources to serve as His representative?
- What is one simple way this week you can continue to “build bridges” with one person you are hoping to have a spiritual conversation with by the end of the year?

RESPOND to the Passage

- Finish your time by thanking Jesus for His desire to use you as His representative and also ask for wisdom and insight into what that could look like for you.

COMMENTARY NOTES ON THE MAIN PASSAGE

6:1-2. Jesus goes to his **hometown** of Nazareth despite tensions with his natural family (see Mark 3:21, 31-35). As is so often the case, Jesus begins to **teach** (see 1:21, 39; 3:1; 4:1; 6:34; 8:31)... Jesus was most likely asked to give a message following the reading of the scripture (Luke 4:16-30), which most commentators understand to be the same incident, though this is not certain. **Where did this man get these things?** This verse testifies to the genuine humanity of Jesus. Until he began his ministry, his deity was so hidden that even the people in his hometown, who had known him well since childhood, had no idea that he was also fully God.

6:3. The questions of v. 2 are followed by skeptical, slightly derogatory questions: is not Jesus a simple **carpenter**, the **Son of Mary?** The latter comment may hint that Jesus was rumored to be an illegitimate child. Joseph must have had at least four sons, among whom were **James** (see Acts 12:17; Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12;) and **Judas** (not the betrayer; see Jude 1) as well as at least two daughters. Because of the tension between Jesus' obvious wisdom and power and his simple origins, the people take **offense at him**.

6:5-6. With some exceptions, Jesus **could do no mighty work there**. Jesus will not force his miracles on a hostile, skeptical audience. It stands in contradiction to the character and will of Jesus to heal where there is fundamental rejection of him (**unbelief**); nevertheless, Jesus continues **teaching** (see Mark 1:22; 4:1,2; 6:2)

6:7-13. Sending of the Twelve. What was anticipated in 3:14-15 now happens. The Twelve are by now trained emissaries of Jesus' message (see 1:14-15): like Jesus, they are to proclaim repentance (6:10-12), cast out unclean spirits (v.7), and heal (v. 13). The message of the kingdom is thus spread even further.

6:8-9. The travel instructions are unique and specific for the disciples (in contrast to the more general teaching in 8:34-38)/ These unique instructions serve as signs to Jewish people of peace, defenselessness, trust in God, and urgency. The scene echoes the first exodus (Ex. 12:11). In both instances there is liberation from servitude. **Bread, bag, money in their belts, and two tunics** all represent that which secures life; the provisions are to come from people who repent upon hearing the disciples' message.

6:11. Later rabbinic sources note that Jews who returned from Gentile regions were to **shake off the dust that is on their feet** as a form of cleansing. Here it also serves as a sign **against them**. But there is no human militancy in the proclamation of Jesus' message. God is the sole judge. The act of shaking off the dust is an illustration of the fact that their rejection of God's message leaves the town accountable to God.

Life Group Member Guide

Focal Passage: Mark 6:7-13 (CSB)

Passage in Context: Mark 6:1-13 (CSB)



Bible-Reading Tip: As you read through the passage use your imagination to enter into this story and see, think and feel what, Jesus and the disciples might have seen, thought and felt. Imagine you're watching a Youtube clip of this scene unfolding. Consider that this narrative isn't simply a story but it actually happened in real time.

6 He left there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. "Where did this man get these things?" they said. "What is this wisdom that has been given to him, and how are these miracles performed by his hands? 3 Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren't his sisters here with us?" So they were offended by him.

4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his household." 5 He was not able to do a miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And he was amazed at their unbelief. He was going around the villages teaching.

7 He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs and gave them authority over unclean spirits. 8 He instructed them to take nothing for the road except a staff—no bread, no traveling bag, no money in their belts, 9 but to wear sandals and not put on an extra shirt. 10 He said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place. 11 If any place does not welcome you or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." 12 So they went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

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.