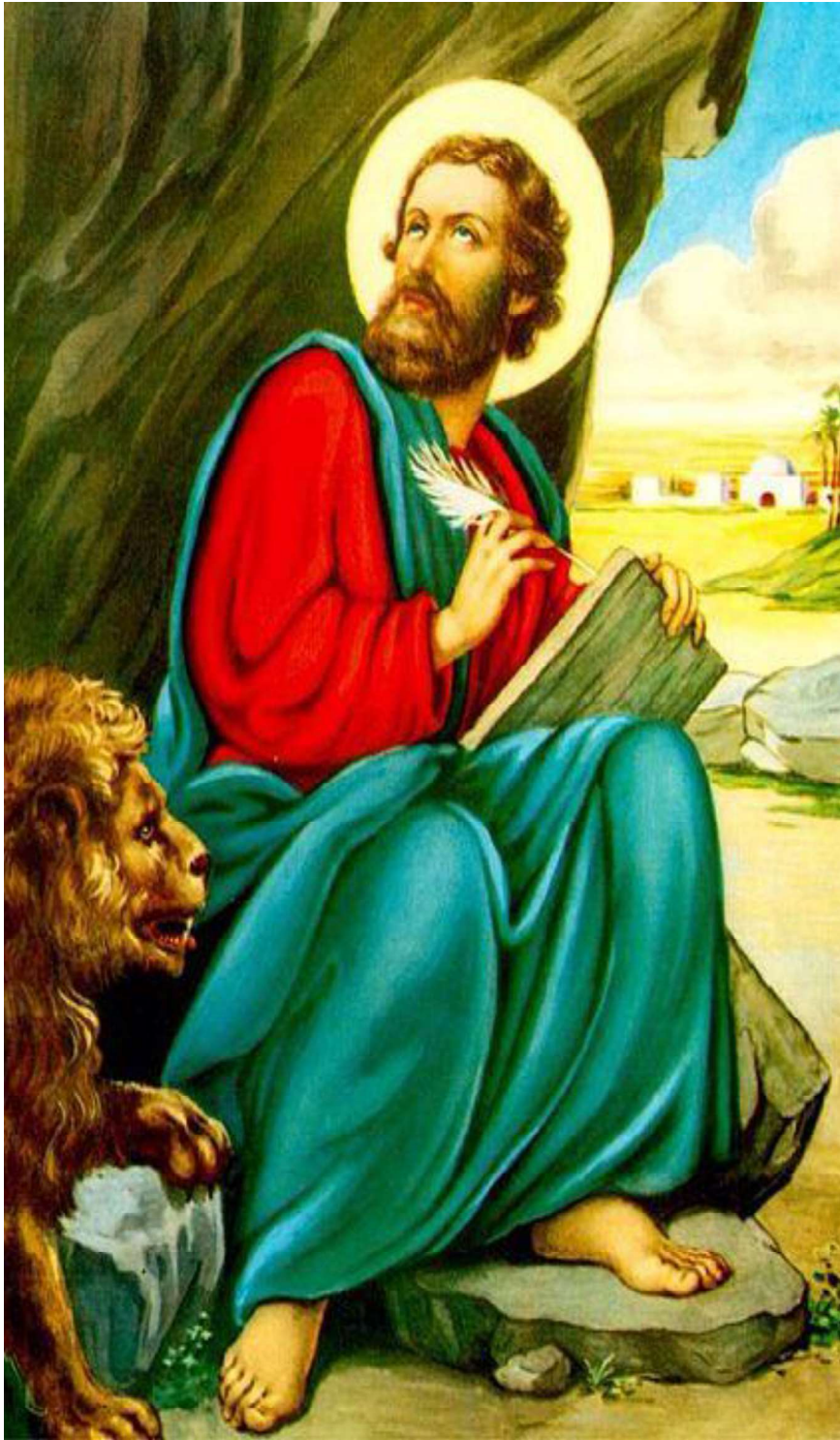


# The Gospel According to St. Mark

## Bible study Curriculum for Elementary Ministry



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## Introduction

### The 4 Gospels comparison

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
To whom it was written	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Christians
Subject	The Messiah the king	The Messiah the conqueror of Satan	Christ the lover of mankind	Christ the Incarnate Word
Main message of Jesus	Fulfills the Law	Performs wonders	Saves mankind	Dwells among us
Gospel content	Focuses on prophecies	Focuses on deeds	Focused on history	Focused on theology
Symbol	The human face	The lion	The Ox	The Eagle



An 8 minutes illustrative video that could be used by servants to prepare or to show the kids a part at the beginning of each unit. Use only till minute 8:20, as the last part is not verified.  
<https://youtu.be/HGHqu9-DtXk>

### Servant's preparation:

A link to the whole series of 22 sermons covering the whole book of St. Mark's gospel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq9HrbU1b8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy>

An introductory sermon to the Gospel of St. Mark by Abouna Daoud Lamei in English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq9HrbU1b8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy>

### Who is St. Mark?

- ❖ He was born in Libya near Egypt to Jewish parents.
- ❖ He is a relative to St. Barnabas and to St. Peter, the disciple.
- ❖ He moved to Jerusalem with his family while Jesus was preaching.
- ❖ His house was the first church where Jesus instituted the Eucharist with His disciples.
- ❖ His Jewish name is "John" while his Roman name is "Mark".

- ❖ He was chosen among the 70 apostles.
- ❖ He was with Jesus at Cana of Galilee wedding, Passover and when Jesus was arrested, he was the young follower who left his garment and ran away.

### Why do we see a lion in his icon?

- ❖ St. Mark attracted his own father to Christianity when he struck two hungry lions dead with the sign of the cross.
- ❖ He started his gospel by describing John the Baptist as a lion roaring in the wilderness and he also portrayed Jesus as the Divine Master serving with power like a lion.

### The message of the Gospel:

- ❖ He began his preaching with St. Peter in Jerusalem then joined St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey. But he left them and returned to Jerusalem. Later he traveled with St. Barnabas to Cyprus. Afterwards, St. Paul needed St. Mark with him and they both preached in Colosse (Col 4:10), Rome (Phil 24; 2 Tim 4:11) and perhaps in Venice, from which St. Mark proceeded to Libya his homeland.
- ❖ In 61 A.D. he went to Egypt and established the church of Alexandria which we all belong to. Then he preached in Rome with St. Peter.
- ❖ It is believed to be the oldest of the four Gospels written between the years 65 to 70 A.D.
- ❖ While in Rome, the people asked him to write a summary of what they had received by word of mouth, so he wrote it to the Romans after the death of St. Peter and inspired by his teachings.
- ❖ Since he wrote his gospel to the Romans, he did not include many prophecies from the Old Testament as opposed to the gospel of St. Matthew which was written for the Jews and which therefore included many of those prophecies. St. Mark also explained in his gospel to the Romans many popular Jewish words and traditions.
- ❖ The Romans believed in authority and influence through war and violence, so he presented to them Jesus Christ as the true ruler over devils 1:27, disease 1:42, nature 4:41, plants 11:12-20, and the temple 11:33. Angels minister to Him 1:13, He is Lord of the Sabbath 2:28, He knows what's in the heart and mind of people 2:8, He speaks with authority 1:21, He feeds the multitude 6:30-44, and He is the destroyer of death 5:21-43. His authority is evident through love, service, humility, and through pain.



### 1- Unit 1: (Chapter 1-6)

#### Getting to Know Christ: Chapter 1:1-11

#### His Ministry in Galilee: Chapters 1:12-6:30

- 1) In chapter 1, St. Mark begins by describing Christ as a servant to mankind, sacrificing Himself, aiming to deliver us. That is why he does not detail the birth of Christ but rather focuses on His ministry.
- 2) John the Baptist prepares the road for Christ the Servant (Chapter 1)
- 3) Jesus served in Galilee, prayed for us in the desert, healed many on the Sabbath, in the house, by the sea, and wherever He went.
- 4) Jesus called others to preach with him (the disciples)
- 5) Resistance of His service (Chapter 2)
- 6) Jesus continued His preaching (Chapter 3)
- 7) The people marveled at His parables despite resistance from the scribes (Chapter 4).
- 8) He commanded the evil spirits, death, and disease (Chapter 5).
- 9) Strange behavior towards this Servant who is unique in His love and work (Chapter 6)

### 2-Unit 2:

#### His Retreat from Galilee (Chapters 7 to 9)

- 1) Jesus left Galilee not to avoid trouble but to prepare his disciples' minds to accept the cross. He fed the multitude, healed whoever touched Him, comforted even the Gentiles.
- 2) St. Mark recorded many conversations and questions that revealed Jesus's person and mission in chapters 8 to 10.
- 3) Through His transfiguration, He acknowledged His kingdom.

### 3-Unit 3:

#### His Service in Judea chapter 10:

In this chapter, he provides us with life examples for the path of the cross.

- A. The difficult commandment (no divorce)

- B. Accepting children with love
- C. Wealth
- D. Leaving all to take up the cross
- E. Discarding the love of higher positions.

#### **4- Unit 4:**

#### **Crucifixion and Resurrection Chapters 11 to 16**

- 1) The events of the passion week,
- 2) His entry into Jerusalem (Chapter 11).
- 3) Resisting Him in Jerusalem (Chapter 12).
- 4) The cross and the signs of the end (Chapter 13).
- 5) The preparation for the cross (Chapter 14).
- 6) The events of the crucifixion (Chapter 15).
- 7) His resurrection declared the glory of this unique Servant, who is capable of rising from the dead.
- 8) The One who rose from the dead is still serving us, as He sent His disciples to preach and He is still serving His church.
- 9) He ascended to heaven so that our hearts may ascend with Him also.



## Chapter 4

### Servant's preparation:

A sermon about Chapter 4 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abouna Daoud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5lFsgXIDuI&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=5>

### Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson, please review book overview questions.

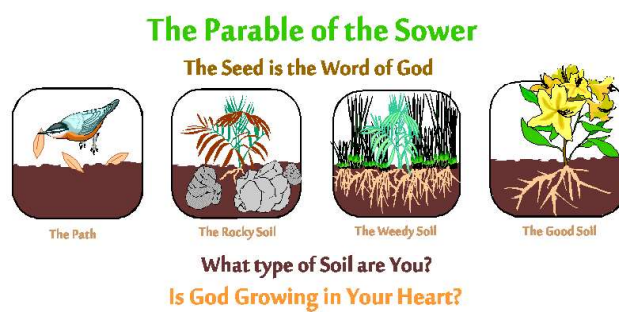
- ✓ Who is St. Mark? He was one of the 70 apostles whose house was the 1<sup>st</sup> church Jesus used and who later preached in many countries including Egypt where our Coptic church originated.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Romans
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? To show the great power of Jesus Christ who through His amazing actions demonstrated His Divine power.

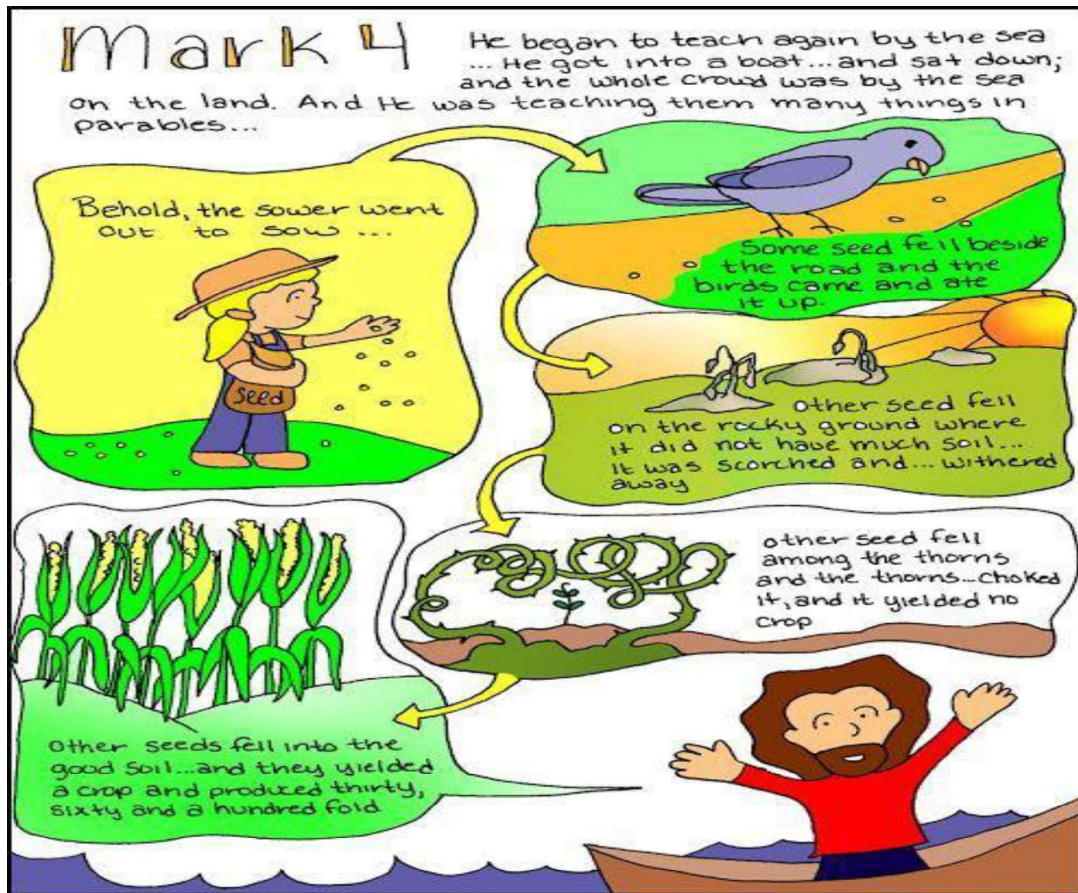
### Remember:

Last lesson we talked about how Jesus Christ healed the man with the stiff hand on Saturday, explaining to the Jews that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus also was accused of having a demon, but He answered saying that a divided kingdom cannot stand. He told them that the only unforgiven sin is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because He is like the candle in our hearts leading us to repentance. We explained how to keep our flame [the Holy Spirit] alive through daily prayers and studying the bible. Neglect leads to turning off His flame which is so dangerous as it is the unforgiven sin.

### Main points in the Chapter:

- 1) The Parable of the Sower and its explanation
- 2) Light Under a Basket
- 3) The Parable of the Growing Seed
- 4) The Parable of the Mustard Seed
- 5) Wind and Wave Obey Jesus





**Lesson overview:**

In a few minutes, briefly explain the main events of the chapter with a picture for each event, reading parts of the chapter.

In this chapter, Jesus tells the parable of the sower which we'll explain in a few minutes. Then, He likened the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed that starts tiny then grows into a big tree. When the disciples were in the boat with Jesus and a strong storm came, they were scared and woke Him up. He silenced the wind, telling the disciples that they lack faith in Him.

**Goal we learn:**

In this chapter, you can focus on the parable of the sower, what each kind of soil represents and how it applies on us. We need to figure out what kind of soil we are. Check the lesson delivery for details.

**Lesson delivery idea**

A video showing the parable of the sower.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb7bvF5Ucrk>

**PARABLE OF THE SOWER**  
**1: SEEDS THAT FALL ON THE PATH**



***Let us help the children discover how truly wonderful the Word of God is, and how we must keep it close to our hearts with truth and understanding. We must not let the evil one snatch it away.***

**AS KIDS ARRIVE (15 minutes)**

Have six or seven different types of seeds on the table. For example, you could have watermelon, orange, apple, grass, flower, acorn, and pumpkin.

As the children arrive, have them examine the seeds on the table, and have them guess what types of seeds are displayed. Just before class starts, tell the children what types of seeds are on the table. Ask the kids how they think something as small as a watermelon seed can grow into such a delicious fruit. How can an acorn planted in the dirt and watered grow into an Oak tree?

It would also be helpful to have different types of soil available. You should place the variety of soils in separate cups and label them accordingly. For example, you might have cups labeled, "Good Soil," "Rocks," and "Sand." Ask the children which soil would be best for the seeds.

**DISCUSSION**

Sower is another name for farmer. We will follow four different groups of seeds throughout this lesson series. We see that although Jesus was speaking about seeds in the parable, the story really applies to people. Today we will see how the seeds that fell on the path are like people that have no interest in God.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does sow mean? What is another name for someone who sows seeds? (*Plant, farmer.*)
2. In our story today, where did the seeds fall? (*On the path.*)
3. What happened to the seed that fell on the path? (*Birds came and ate it up.*)
4. Will we get to heaven by just hearing the Good News about Jesus? (*No, we must receive the Good News, and then ask God to forgive us.*)
5. Does the evil one (Satan) try to steal God's message from our hearts? (*Yes!*)
6. Why would the evil one want us to forget God's message? (*So we won't follow and worship God.*)
7. How can we keep from forgetting God's message? (*Read our Bibles, pray to God, Worship God.*)

**APPLICATION (2 minutes)**

God knows we have a lot to learn and that we may not understand everything in the Bible. God wants us to make the effort to learn more about Him by reading our Bibles and by praying. God will gladly give us knowledge and understanding if we seek Him. There are some people that have no desire to learn more about God, these people are like the seeds that fall on the path.

**2: SEEDS THAT FALL ON ROCKY PLACES**

***Let us help the children discover how truly wonderful the Word of God is, and how we must not let fear and the temptations of this world take it away.***

**DISCUSSION**

**Introduction:**

In this section, we will see how seeds that fell on rocky places are like people that have hard hearts and little faith in God. When life gets a little rocky, their Christian walk quickly withers and dies.

**Discussion Questions:**

What happened to the seed that fell on the rocky places? *(It withered because it had no root).*

What does the word persecution mean? *(To oppress, harass, annoy or bother.)*

What are some ways that we may be persecuted or have trouble because we are Christians? *(Some people may make fun of us, call us names, pick fights, not want to be our friends.)*

How can we help our faith withstand trouble and persecution? *(Pray to God for strength, read the Bible to see how others withstood times of trouble.)*

**APPLICATION**

Some people hear the Good News about Jesus and happily accept it. As soon as someone laughs at them or makes fun of their faith, they deny everything Jesus stands for. If things get tough, they give up. When trouble comes, they quickly abandon their relationship with Jesus. They worry more about men than they do about God. Their hearts become hard, like the rocky places some of the sower's seeds fell on.

**3: SEEDS THAT FALL AMONG THORNS**

**Let us help the children discover how truly wonderful the Word of God is and how we must not let worry, selfishness, or greed steal it away.**

**DISCUSSION**

We should keep God first in our lives. We will see how the thorns declared war on the growing plants and choked them out. There are many things in this world that compete for our time; many of them will try to draw our attention away from God. We need to weed out the things in our lives that keep our relationship with God from growing.

**Discussion Questions:**

What happened to the seed that fell among the thorns? *(It got choked out, by the thorns.)*

What are some things that we worry about? *(Sickness, school, friends, family.)*

Should we let these worries become more important than God? Why or why not? *(No, God is able to help us.)*

Let's list some of our favorite things: toys, sports, food, and pets. Should these things have higher priority in our lives than God? *(Video games, football, pizza, dog. No, God should have top priority.)*

How can we be sure we spend time with God each day? *(Set time aside each day, make it important.)*

**APPLICATION**

Many people hear the Good News, which is the gift of salvation, but they are more worried about their day to day activities. They spent a lot of their time trying to get more money. They think that the more money they have, the happier they'll be. Sadly, this just isn't true. Seeking the things of this world is like the seed that fell among thorns. People can only be happy when they have a genuine relationship with God, through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

**4: SEEDS THAT FALL ON GOOD SOIL**

**Let us focus on the sower's seeds that fall on good soil. The children will discover how the wonderful Word of God helps us grow spiritually and gives us everlasting life with Jesus.**

## **DISCUSSION**

The seed that fell on good soil. It grew very well; in fact, it grew so well that it produced more seed. These seeds also grew to be strong plants. As Christians we should be sharing our faith with others, that way other people will hear the Good News and they may become Christian. The body of Christ continues to grow when we share seeds (the Good News) with others.

### **Discussion Questions:**

What happened to the seed that fell on good soil? *(It produced a crop -- a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.)*

How does the seed falling on good soil compare to us being a Christian? *(We need to share our faith with others so they can become Christians. This also helps us grow spiritually.)*

How can we share the Good News about Jesus with others? *(Tell them, pray for them, share the Good News out of the Bible, ask them to come to Sunday school.)*

## **APPLICATION**

Those who hear the Good News and take it to heart, can accept the free gift of salvation from Jesus Christ. We should live a productive life for our Lord. Please note that we cannot work our way into heaven, but if Jesus is the Lord of our lives, we will want to live for Him. We will follow His rules and tell other people about Him. We won't be perfect, and we will still make mistakes, but we will try our best to live a life that is pleasing to God.

### **Another delivery method or game: [Science experiment]**

Get 3 jars: Fill the 1<sup>st</sup> with some water and salt, fill the 2<sup>nd</sup> with water, salt and baking soda, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> with water and baking soda. [Salt represents Satan and baking soda represents our hearts.]

Add to the 1<sup>st</sup> cup some vinegar [vinegar represents the word of God], nothing will happen

Add to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cup some vinegar, you will notice a slight chemical reaction

Add to the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup some vinegar, a huge amount of foam is formed.

When we hear the word of God and we don't accept it, we are like the first cup, Satan took it away and no reaction occurred. When we hear the word but we get distracted with this world, a slight reaction occurs because we don't give full attention to it. But when we hear it and act on it, we are like the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup where a huge chemical reaction occurred since no Satan [salt] was allowed.

### **Activity:**

You may start your lesson with this fun game.

You need a balloon and 4 volunteers. Each will be assigned a role: bird, rock, thorn, or good soil.

Let them pass the balloon around. They will sure notice that the easiest way to play is to be the good soil. Explain how this applies to our story.

**M**ake groups of four. Have each group make a small circle, and assign one of the following roles to each of the four children in each group:

- **Birds** put their hands at their ribs and flap their arms like bird wings. They can only use their “wings” to bat the balloon.
- **Rocks** put their hands at their sides and stand very still. They can only use their heads or shoulders to bat the balloon.
- **Thorns** put their hands at their sides. They can only use their legs and feet to kick the balloon.
- **Good dirt** stands relaxed. They can use either their hands or their feet to bat the balloon.

Say: **Today we are going to see how well you can pass the balloon around your group. You can only hit the balloon in the way I showed you, no matter what other people in your group are doing. Let's see how many times you can pass the balloon around your group.** Let the children trade roles and try this activity in each of the four roles. Ask: **What was the easiest way to play our game today?** Say: **When seeds fall on good soil, they grow quickly and easily. Our hearts are like good soil when we hear and do what God tells us to through the Bible, our church, and our parents.**

This game can be simplified for younger children by showing them one action at a time and having all the children perform the same action together.

**Memory Verse:**

**24 “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.”**