# Gospel of Mark Weekly Talk Ideas | Sean McGever

## Mark Chapter 1

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| Scripture suggestion, basic overview, and background:Basic intro to the Gospel of Mark:1. Shortest gospel (Mark: 678 verses; John 869 verses; Matthew: 1071 verses; Luke 1151 verses).
2. Mark’s writing style is simple, crisp, and energetic with more emphasis on action than on words (over half of Jesus’ miracles are in Mark, but only eighteen of Christ’s seventy parables are in Mark). A great gospel for YL.
3. Main focus: Jesus as the Servant who saves and calls people to follow Him in the way of the cross.

The first chapter of Mark has so many interesting things happening and so many options for a club talk. There are stories of Jesus healing a man with a demon (21-28), healing many others (29-34), and cleansing a leper (40-45). But, since we will get to healing stories later in the semester as we work through Mark, I’m choosing to highlight the baptism of Jesus (14-15) as a way to introduce Jesus in my club as my first club talk of the semester. It is a short story, which is probably great for a first club talk of the semester. Remember, the focus is on who Jesus is – we will be tempted to make the voice from heaven about us (i.e. “you are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased”) but this is a message about Jesus and the language (see note on “beloved son” below) requires it to be about Jesus’ unique and perfect human and divine nature which is something that we do not share. As a brief side-note for students of the meaning of “the gospel,” note that in Mark chapter 1, Jesus can already proclaim “the gospel” (1:14) and call people to “repent and believe in the gospel” (1:15) even before the cross and resurrection.  |
| Possible main point(s):* How would you expect God to announce that God came to earth? Jesus came from an obscure small town and let the heavens do the talking for him.
* A voice from heaven said that Jesus is the beloved and only Son of God. What did you grow up hearing about Jesus? Today, who do you say Jesus is?
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| What this shows us about Jesus:* God did not come as an imposing, overwhelming, conquering king with thunderbolts and lightening. Instead, God came down to a humble, simple town, as a human.
* Jesus is God’s unique son. Jesus was not only human; Jesus is unique because He is also God.
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| What this has to do with our life:* We are, like John, imperfect, human, quirky people who God invited to a front row seat, not just to listen, but to participate in what God wants to do in the world.
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| Relevant technical details:* Nazareth (v. 9) = An insignificant agricultural village with 500-2000 inhabitants during Jesus’ lifetime that had a poor reputation (Jn. 1:46). Jesus grew up in an overlooked small town, not a well-known city of esteem. Consider highlighting an obscure town in your state that might be similar in order to highlight this.
* Baptized (v. 9) = At the time, baptism was a Jewish religious ritual used to symbolize forgiveness and cleaning.
* Heavens torn open (v.10) = Mark does not use the word “open,” he uses the vivid verb “torn/ripped” [Gk: schizo]. This is the same work Mark later uses to describe when the Temple curtain is “torn/ripped” from top to bottom during the crucifixion (15:38). This tearing/ripping is a dramatic occurrence, perhaps like something out of a sci-fi movie where the sky rips open and something arrives from a different realm of reality. Note: Only Jesus saw this “he saw…” (v.10)
* Beloved Son (v.11) = The word Mark uses can be understood as “only” or “unique” son. The point is, Jesus is not a son in only a general sense (“we are *all* sons and daughters of the creator”), but in a unique way which we do not share.
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| Possible illustrations:* *Blindfold*: Put on a blindfold to describe what your life was like before you really heard who Jesus is. Then take off the blindfold and rip it in half (to symbolize the heavens being torn open). You may want to consider pre-cutting the blindfold if you are weak (like me) or don’t want to be embarrassed (like me) if I can’t rip it.
* *Video of a grand entrance*: Show a video of a silly pro wrestler entering an arena/ring (great options at [THIS LINK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxliJHLjU54)), or a glamourous celebrity doing everything they can to look impressive as they are mobbed by people (see this funny clip of Will Smith being introduced on Jimmy Fallon at [THIS LINK](https://youtu.be/w74Zjj47HzI?t=5m27s)).
* *Admission ticket*: Bring a ticket from a concert or event that you attended. Talk about how you got to see and participate in something amazing. Then talk about how, at YL, we want to give you a front row seat to see and participate in what God wants to do in your life and in the world.
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*For more details, see ylhelp.com*

Mark 1 (ESV)

**John the Baptist Prepares the Way**

**1**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

**2**As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

 “Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way,

 **3** the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’ ”

**4**John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5**And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6**Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. **7**And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. **8**I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**The Baptism of Jesus**

**9**In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10**And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11**And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

**The Temptation of Jesus**

**12**The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. **13**And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

**Jesus Begins His Ministry**

**14**Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15**and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

**Jesus Calls the First Disciples**

**16**Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. **17**And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” **18**And immediately they left their nets and followed him. **19**And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. **20**And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

**Jesus Heals a Man with an Unclean Spirit**

**21**And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. **22**And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. **23**And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, **24**“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” **25**But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” **26**And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. **27**And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” **28**And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

**Jesus Heals Many**

**29**And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. **30**Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. **31**And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

**32**That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. **33**And the whole city was gathered together at the door. **34**And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

**Jesus Preaches in Galilee**

**35**And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. **36**And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, **37**and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” **38**And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” **39**And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

**Jesus Cleanses a Leper**

**40**And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” **41**Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” **42**And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. **43**And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, **44**and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” **45**But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.