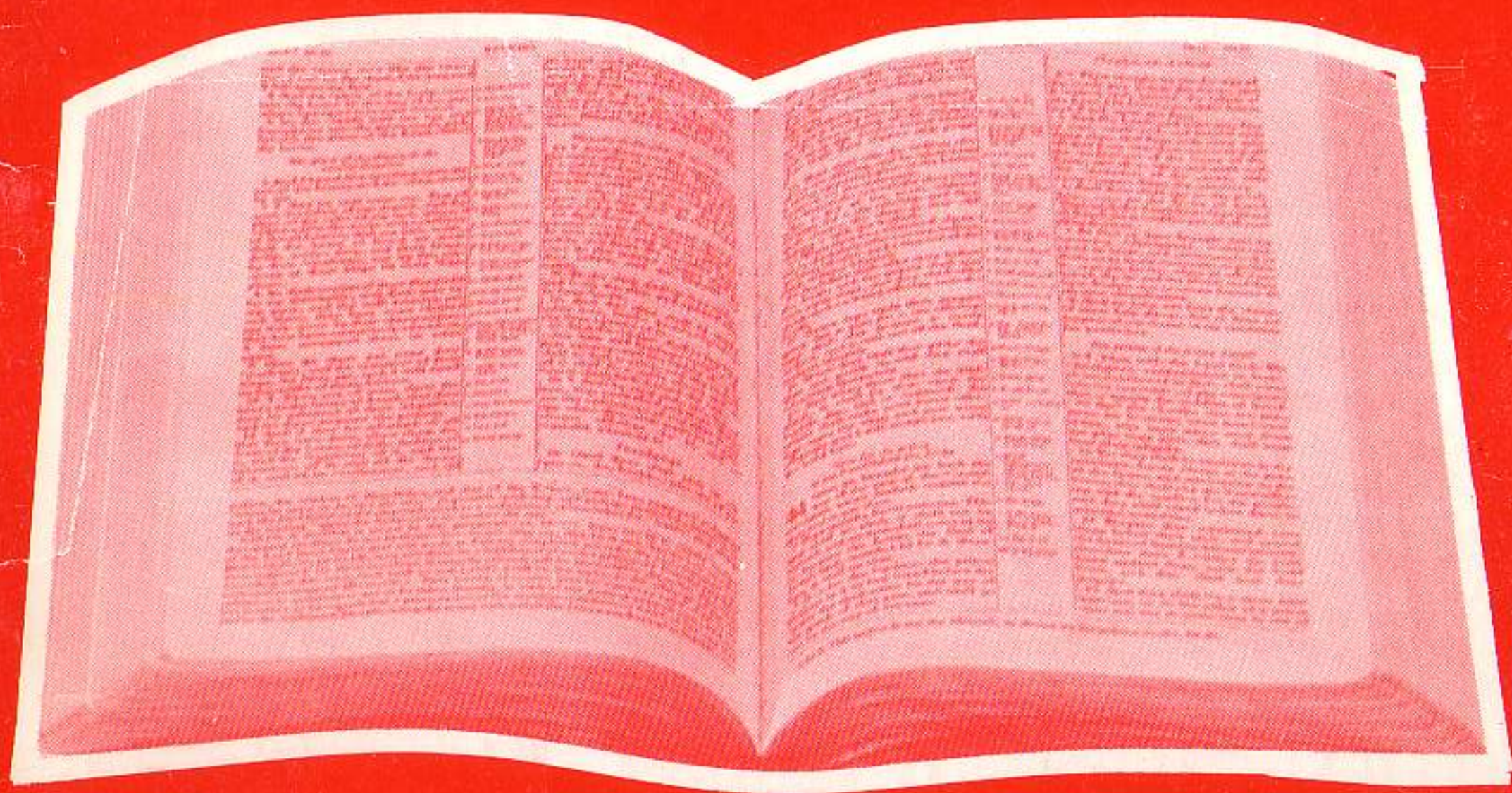


**STUDIES IN
THE GOSPEL OF MARK
(TEACHER)**



BIBLE LESSONS FOR ADULTS

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

(TEACHER)

BIBLE LESSONS FOR ADULTS

**Africa Coordinated Curriculum
for Bible Study**

A1-1Tc

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**Published and Printed by
BAPTIST PUBLICATIONS HOUSE
Thika Road, Ruaraka
Box 30370, Nairobi**

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CHAPTER ONE

JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS WORK

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:

Mark 1:1-20; Matthew 3:13-17; 4:1-11;
Luke 2:40-52; Isaiah 40:3-4

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:

Mark 1:1-20; Luke 2:52

MEMORY VERSE: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

TEACHING AIM: I will help my students see that they can prepare and do God's work.

TEACHING AIDS: Take some tools used for work, like a pencil or pen, a tool or a needle and thread.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 1:1-8. Mark begins his story of Jesus by quoting the prophets. The gospel did not begin in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. A long time before that, Isaiah and other prophets told about him. People expected a Messiah, a king. God promised to send one who would save people from their sins. God keeps his promises.

The prophets also said that a messenger would come before Jesus. The messenger would announce the coming of the Lord. The messenger would prepare people to hear the good news. All of this happened as the prophets said it would.

John, called the baptizer, was the messenger. He was a great preacher so many people came to hear John preach. They confessed their sins, and John baptized them. John had a special message to give the people: There is one coming who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1:8)

Read Mark 1:9-11 Jesus grew up in the village of Nazareth. He worked hard in the carpenter shop, and his body grew strong. Jesus studied in the synagogue (a small Jewish church and school) and learned the Scriptures. (See Luke 2:52.)

Jesus went to see John, the baptizer, when he was ready to begin his work. He asked John to baptize him and John agreed. Jesus, God's Son, prepared for his public work by being baptized.

A wonderful thing happened as Jesus came up out of the water! The Holy Spirit, like a dove, came to Jesus. God, the Heavenly Father, spoke to Jesus. Jesus' baptism was like an announcement. He was almost ready for the work God sent him to do.

Read Mark 1:12-13. At once, following the baptism, the spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness. This wilderness was a lonely place upon a dry, rock mountain. Wild animals were there. Jesus grew hungry, thirsty and lonely, so angels came to take care of him.

Satan was there. He was the greatest danger of all. He wanted to rule over Jesus. He wanted Jesus to work for him. Jesus was at war with Satan for 40 days. In Matthew 4:1-11 you can read about three of the major temptations. Jesus knew Satan's strength and power.

Jesus used Scripture to defeat Satan. His victory prepared him to begin his work among sinful people.

Read Mark 1:16-20. Jesus left the wilderness and went to the area called Galilee. Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee watching men fish. He saw some men working very hard. Jesus needed helpers who were willing to work hard. He chose Simon and Andrew, two brothers, to go with him. They left their nets, their boat and their father. They went to help Jesus in his work.

Jesus then chose two more brothers, John and James. These were men Jesus could teach and train. They were men who would carry on Jesus' work after he returned to heaven. Jesus, God's Son, was now ready to start his public work.

Read Mark 1:14-15. Jesus left his home in heaven to give us a message of hope. The kingdom of God had come to earth. To enter the kingdom of God, Jesus said that we must do two things: repent (turn from our sins) and believe the gospel.

All through his life, Jesus prepared for his work. He was busy learning

and working in Nazareth. John baptized him in the Jordan River. He chose his helpers in Galilee and began his work there. Jesus, God's Son, was prepared and ready. He pleased God and people were ready to listen.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "Today we begin a study of the book of Mark. John Mark wrote the book. He is mentioned several times in the book of Acts. He was a good friend of Peter, Barnabas and the apostles. Mark wrote his story of Jesus before Matthew, Luke and John. Mark's story of Jesus is short but filled with exciting stories of Jesus' life and work. You will like this study in Mark."

Ask the class to bow in prayer. Pray for open minds as you study the book of Mark.

Hold up the work tools which you brought. Ask: "How do we use these tools?" Let the students answer. (For example: we use the needle and thread to sew, or we use the pencil to write.)

Say: "Yes, we use these tools for our work. Before we start our work, we prepare. We get a pencil or pen when we work at an office. Some of us study and prepare a long time before we get a job.

In our lesson today, we learn that Jesus prepared for his work. Up to

this time, he has been living and preparing in Nazareth."

INTERPRETATION

Have someone read Luke 2:52. Say: "Jesus grew strong in every area of life. Then there was a big announcement before he began his public work. Let us read this announcement." (Read Mark 1:1-3.

Say: "The announcement meant that Jesus was ready to begin his work. The Jewish people had waited a long time for a king. Jesus was that holy one of God with good news for everyone."

Ask: "Who is the announcer of this good news? Yes, John was the messenger God sent. John was a great preacher! Many people came to hear him. They confessed their sins, and John baptized them in the Jordan River. Baptism can not save us from our sins. It is a public act to show that we believe in Jesus."

Ask: "Can baptism save us?" (No, it is only a picture of our death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ.)

Say: "Jesus was ready to begin a new life, so he asked John to baptize him. At Jesus' baptism, God did a wonderful thing. He sent the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. God, the Father, spoke words of love to his only Son, Jesus Christ."

Read Mark 1:12-13. Say: "God loved his Son, but he sent him to do a hard work. The Spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness to battle Satan. This also was a part of Jesus' preparation.

The wilderness was a lonely terrible place. Jesus suffered so much. In every temptation Jesus defeated Satan. Jesus had studied the Scriptures, so he defeated Satan with Scripture. The battle was over in 40 days. Jesus was now ready to go to Galilee."

Ask someone to read Mark 1:16-20. Say: "Galilee was a beautiful district. Many people fished on Lake Galilee. They prepared for their daily work, mending their nets and boats. Jesus needed helpers, so he went to a place where people worked hard. Jesus did not need lazy helpers! On Lake Galilee he found and chose his first helpers: Peter, Andrew, James and John.

Ask: "Did they agree to go with Jesus?"

Say: "Jesus was ready to train men to help him. They must also prepare. They must be ready to do the work when Jesus returned to heaven."

Have someone read Mark 1:14-15. Say: "Jesus was ready now to preach and teach. The good news had arrived! From this beginning, Jesus would carry on his work until he died on the cross. He came as the prophets said he would. He prepared and obeyed the Father."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Tell the class to repeat with you Luke 2:52.

Say: "We want to be like Jesus. We want to grow in mind and body. Also, we want to please God and get along

well with other people. We, as adults, can prepare for Jesus' work. How can we prepare?

1. Repent of our sins, as Jesus said.
2. Believe in Jesus, the Saviour.
3. Prepare daily by reading and hearing his Word.

4. Prepare daily by praying and committing ourselves to Jesus.

5. Answer his call to be his helpers. We must be ready every day to do what he wants us to do. Let us bow our heads and think about those five points." Close with prayer.

CHAPTER TWO

JESUS BEGINS HIS WORK

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:
Mark 1; Matthew 9:35-38; Luke 4:16-21

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 1:21-45; Matthew 9:35-38

MEMORY VERSE: "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'" (Mark 1:38).

TEACHING AIM: I want to help students know that Christians can have purpose and power in daily life.

TEACHING AIDS: Write on a big piece of paper or on the chalk board: Purpose and Power.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 1:21-22. The time had come! Jesus was ready to fulfil his purpose on earth. He came to preach, teach and heal. He also came to die for our sins. He came with power and began to teach in the city of Capernaum on Lake Galilee.

Jesus chose a good place to teach: the synagogue. There was a synagogue

in every village for worship and learning. Some people already knew about Jesus. They were ready to listen. Many people crowded into the synagogue that day.

Jesus knew the Scripture and taught with authority. He clearly explained God's Word. He knew God's laws. People were amazed! He was not like their usual teachers. Those teachers seemed unsure of themselves. Jesus taught with purpose and power.

Jesus heals:

1. In the synagogue. Read Mark 1:24-28.

That day in the synagogue, another great thing happened. A man was there who was controlled by an unclean spirit. That unclean spirit knew a great power was there. The power was in Jesus. That spirit knew that Jesus was the holy one of God.

That knowledge caused the man to shout. He made so much noise that Jesus stopped teaching. Jesus ordered him to be quiet, then, Jesus healed the man. People could see that Jesus was

different. His fame spread all over Galilee.

2. In a home. Read Mark 1:29-31.

Jesus went home with Simon Peter. Peter's mother-in-law had a bad fever. This kind of fever was common near Lake Galilee.

Jesus' disciples now knew that he had great power. They also knew that he cared about people. They were not afraid to ask Jesus for help. Jesus went to the sick woman and lifted her up. At once the fever left her. She was not weak from the fever. She was strong enough to work so she served them all.

Jesus healed in public places and he also healed in homes. Jesus helped people wherever he was.

3. In the street. Read Mark 1:32-34.

Jesus was still working when night came. People from all over Capernaum came to Jesus. They were sick and needed help. Jesus used his power to make people whole. He worked long hours to fulfil his purpose on earth. Many people slept without pain that night.

Jesus grew tired and rested. But, he had a greater need in his life. He needed to talk to his Father. He got up before anyone else and went to pray. Jesus got power and strength from his Father. (See Mark 1:35-37.)

4. A leper. Read Mark 1:40-42.

Leprosy is an awful disease. It affects the nerves, the skin and the whole body. There was no cure for leprosy in those days. All people

feared it. All lepers were outcasts. They had to live without their families. No one would touch them or even get near them. They were required to shout, "Unclean! Unclean!" Lepers looked and smelled bad.

Jesus was not afraid of this disease. He was not afraid to touch the leper. Jesus looked at the leper and felt great pity. Jesus loved him. He touched him and healed him. Jesus came to serve, and his power was great. The healed leper went away to tell people about Jesus.

Read Mark 1:38-39 and Matthew 9:35-38. Jesus also came to preach the good news. In chapter one we read one of his sermons, "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

Jesus and his helpers decided to go on a long journey. They went all over Galilee, so it took a long time. People everywhere wanted to see and hear Jesus. Jesus' words in Mark 1:38 tell us of his purpose on earth, "...Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came out." Jesus was doing the work of his Father.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Hold up the paper with the words: Purpose and Power. As you hold it, say: "In today's lesson we will learn that Jesus came to do his work with purpose and with power. Also, we will see ways we can serve Jesus in the

same way." (Put the paper where it can be seen throughout the lesson.)

Say: "In chapter one, as we began our study of Mark, we learned that Jesus prepared for his work. In our lesson today we read about some exciting events in Jesus' work. Let us pray asking God to open our hearts to his message. (Lead a prayer.)

INTERPRETATION

Say: "Jesus came to fulfil a purpose. God sent him to bear a message. He sent him to use his power to help sick and suffering people. Today there are needs like this in our world. People hurt. We are Jesus' helpers. He left work for us to do. Let us see how Jesus worked with purpose and power."

Ask someone to read Mark 1:21-22. Say: "Jesus chose the synagogue as the best place to teach. The synagogue was a small building in every village. People gathered to learn and to pray. It was like a school. People, mainly men, studied the Scriptures there. Jesus studied in the synagogue and was well-prepared to teach. People were amazed when he spoke! Jesus taught with the authority of God. He clearly explained the laws of God."

Say: "Jesus' words were full of meaning. He also did great works of healing. He wanted people to know that his power came from God." Let us look at this.

1. Jesus healed in the synagogue. Ask a student to read Mark 1:23-26. After briefly discussing this healing, say:

"Jesus healed a very sick man there. Satan controlled this man causing him to shout. He disturbed the meeting. Jesus attacked evil. He used simple words but with authority. He did not use a strange language. There was no magic rite. The demons knew Jesus. They feared his power. Evil spirits fled when Jesus came into a person's life. Their power was gone. The man went away talking about Jesus."

2. Jesus healed in a home. Tell a student to read Mark 1:29-31. Discuss this healing with your students. Then say: "Jesus had been very busy all day. He went home with Simon Peter. Peter asked him to help his mother-in-law who was very ill. Jesus did not need a crowd to watch him heal. Jesus had special knowledge with special power. He used it to heal a woman burning with fever. In the quiet of a home, Jesus used his power. The woman got up at once and served Jesus and his helpers."

3. Jesus healed in the street. Ask someone to read Mark 1:32-34.

Say: "Jesus' fame spread all over Capernaum. Crowds of people came in the evening bearing their sick to Jesus. They knew Jesus was a man of action. They liked his words, but they also believed he would act. He did! He healed many kinds of diseases. People went home well and happy."

4. Jesus healed a leper. Have a student read Mark 1:40-42. Using your Background Study, discuss leprosy with your class. Then say: "This healing shows Jesus' great love for all people. No one was more ugly

or feared than a leper. He was an outcast. Lepers were lonely people without friends and family. Jesus touched the leper! It was an act of courage and concern. The leper became a whole and clean man. He went to tell people the good news of Jesus' love and power."

Tell the class to name the four acts of healing in this lesson.

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Tell the class to read together Mark 1:38. Say: "We can be thankful for a Saviour who cared for all people. Jesus went on and on. He kept working because he saw people's needs. He included us. We who are Christians are healed also. We are healed of sin. We are clean like the healed leper. No evil spirit can rule us or harm us again. Jesus lives within us. His power can rule in our lives each day."

Hold up the paper again (or point to the board). Read the words: "Purpose and Power."

Ask: "What is your purpose in life. Do you have some goals you wish to reach?"

Have the class to name some goals in their lives. (Teacher, be prepared to start the discussion. You might say, "One of my goals is: I want to help all of my children to be saved.")

Ask: "How will we get power that we may reach these goals?" (Some answers are by letting the Holy Spirit rule in our lives, by walking daily close to Jesus in prayer, by giving myself to Jesus and his work and by putting Jesus before all other goals.)

Say: "Let us bow our heads in prayer. Each of us pray silently that God's power will rule in our lives each day. (Wait silently about 1 minute.)

Pray the closing prayer.

CHAPTER THREE

JESUS MEETS HIS ENEMIES

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 2; 3:1-6

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 2:1-12, 13-17; 3:1-6

MEMORY VERSE: "But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).

TEACHING AIM: This lesson will help each student gain strength for daily trials.

TEACHING AIDS: Bring to class a piece of rope or string or wire.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 2:1-5. Jesus returned to Capernaum. News spread fast that Jesus was there. Many people came to the house where he was staying. Soon the house was full.

Four friends carried a paralyzed man to Jesus. They could not get

through the crowd. They carried the man to the roof. The men made a hole in the roof and lowered the man into the room. Jesus saw their faith. He told the man his sins were forgiven. Jesus knew that sin was the man's biggest problem.

Read Mark 2:6-9. In chapter two people liked what Jesus said and did. Many believed in him and followed him.

Today we learn about people who did not like Jesus. They were Jewish religious leaders. They did not want people to like Jesus and to follow his way. These men were proud men and felt themselves to be holy. They wanted people to follow customs and laws written by priests and elders. These laws were not God's laws which Jesus taught. So, they argued with Jesus. They got angry and accused him. They did not believe Jesus was God's Son.

Read Mark 2:10-12. Jesus had power over sin and illness. God gave him this power. Jesus wanted to prove to his enemies that his power came from God. He told the crippled man to get up and walk. This man was carried to Jesus, but he was able to get up and walk away. Everyone was amazed for no one had ever seen such a thing.

Read Mark 2:13-17. Levi (Matthew) worked at the tax office. People did not like tax collectors. They believed that all tax men were corrupt. Tax men tricked people and got rich. People did not want to talk with them nor eat with them. Their

only friends were other tax men and sinners (people who did not obey Jewish laws).

Jesus knew Matthew's heart. He needed a man like Matthew. Jesus called him to come and help him. Matthew left his business and obeyed Jesus. He gave up money and a job. Matthew gave his life to Jesus.

Matthew invited Jesus to a feast at his house. Tax collectors and those called sinners also came. Matthew wanted them to know his new friend, Jesus.

Jesus' enemies came also. They came to spy on Jesus. Jesus did not follow the old Jewish customs. Read Mark 2:17 to see Jesus' answer to his enemies. He meant that the Jewish leaders who thought they were so good were really not good at all. They needed to trust Jesus and to obey him. Jesus came to spend time with sinners. He forgives those who repent.

Read Mark 3:1-6. Jesus was not afraid to go on with his work. He went to the synagogue to pray on the Jewish Holy day. His enemies were there. They watched him heal a man's hand. Jesus saw inside their hard hearts. He knew they did not care about people's needs. Jesus did! The religious leaders only cared about customs and man's written rules. On that day Jesus' enemies decided to kill him.

Jesus, God's only Son, came to bring life to us all. Those who listen to Jesus and obey him will have eternal life. That is Jesus' great gift to us.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Hold up the piece of rope or string or wire. Bind your hand tightly with it. Let the class watch as you try to move your fingers.

Say: "We are all bound by sin and customs. They hold us tightly. To move within their grip is painful. We do not like to change because some people will oppose us. They judge us. (Unwrap your fingers.)"

INTERPRETATION

Say: "In today's lesson we learn about Jesus and his enemies. These enemies were religious men keeping Jewish rules. There were hundreds of these rules. Priests and elders wrote them. They believed that these rules were holy. Jesus obeyed God's law but did not follow all of the Jewish rules. The religious leaders hated Jesus because of this. They could not see good because they were evil."

Ask: "Can you think of a custom of your people which is not Christian?" Let the class discuss two or three of these. (Teacher, be prepared to name one or two such customs.)

Ask: "Did some people get angry when people in your community started becoming Christians?"

Say: "Yes, in some places, people got angry. They did not want people to give up the old ways of worship. Some people were killed because they became Christians."

Tell one person to read Mark 2:1-5. Ask: "What do you think of these four friends?" Wait for answers. Discuss friendship.

Say: "We all agree they loved their crippled friend. Jesus loved them all. He saw their faith."

Ask: "Did Jesus heal the man at that time?" (No)

Read Mark 2:5 again. Say: "Jesus saw the man's greatest problem was sin. Jesus first forgave the man's sins. Then, the religious leaders talked against him. Jesus knew what they were thinking. He knew their hearts. Then, Jesus healed the man to show he had God's power. This showed his authority was from God."

Ask: "What did the man do?" (He obeyed Jesus, got up and went home.)

Say: "Jesus needed more helpers. He knew a man who could help. His name was Levi (or Matthew)."

Read Mark 2:13-14. Say: "Jesus knew Matthew was a tax collector. He knew his enemies would not approve. Jesus called Matthew and he obeyed. Matthew gave up all he had for Jesus. He gave a dinner party for Jesus and invited his friends. He wanted them to know Jesus."

Read Mark 2:16. Say: "Notice that the religious leaders were there also. They were not there to eat with tax-men and sinners. They came to spy on Jesus. They felt such pride in themselves. They loved themselves more than others. They came to judge Jesus."

Ask: "Whom did Jesus love?"
(sinners)

Read Mark 2:17. Say: "In this verse Jesus meant that the Jewish leaders, who thought they were good, were not good at all. Those men needed to repent and obey Jesus as Matthew did. Jesus came to save sinners.

Have someone read Mark 3:1-5. Say: "Once again Jesus faced his enemies. They were all in the synagogue watching him. They came to catch him breaking their laws. Jesus wanted to help a man with a withered hand. He knew the religious leaders were there to accuse him. Jesus did what he came to do: he healed the man's hand. Jesus went on with his work in spite of his enemies. We must not be weak when people oppose us as Christians. Jesus' power can make us strong. His power is strong enough for every trial."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Read Mark 3:6. Say: "Jesus' enemies now began to make plans to kill him. Jesus was not afraid. He came to do the father's work. He came to bring change into people's lives. Man-made rulers are not enough. Customs are not enough. Customs and rules will not save us from sin. There is new life in Jesus Christ."

Ask: "Did Jesus stop his work when enemies came?"

Say: "No, Jesus went on with his work of helping people."

Ask: "What should we do when people laugh at us Christians? What should we do when people oppose our church?"

Give the students some time to talk about these problems. Teacher, be ready to give examples of problems like these. Perhaps some have suffered real pain or are rejected by family and friends.

Ask: "What if someone at home opposes you? What should you do?"

Say: "We can be loving, kind and helpful. We must pray daily. We must give ourselves to Jesus. This will give us strength. We must read the Scriptures daily. This will give us wisdom to deal with problems. We must stay faithful to Jesus and his church. Friends and family may oppose us, but we must stay faithful to Jesus. Find a friend with whom you can share your problems. Pray with this friend as often as you can.

Read Luke 6:27.

Tell the class to repeat it with you.

Request someone to pray asking for strength for daily trials and problems.

CHAPTER FOUR

PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND JESUS

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:
Mark 3; Luke 7:18-23; Matthew 12:22-32.

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 3:7-35

MEMORY VERSE: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matthew 12:30).

TEACHING AIM: I will help each student decide to stand firm for Jesus and his church.

TEACHING AIDS: Write in large letters on the chalk board (or on a large piece of paper): **FOR OR AGAINST.**

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 3:7-12. Jesus' great healing power caused people to follow him. The crowds were now too big for the synagogue. Jesus went outside near the lake to work. The people were from many distant areas and also from Galilee. Jesus' fame spread so much that people walked as much as 100 miles to see him. Jesus was in danger as people pushed to get near. They wanted to touch him. They did not know he was the Son of God, but they wanted to be near him.

Those with unclean spirits knew that Jesus was God's Son. Evil knew good. Satan knew the power of Jesus.

But the crowds did not understand him.

Read Mark 3:13-19. Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew to help him. He needed more men to carry his message far and wide. In these verses we see the names of the men Jesus chose. He knew their hearts. He knew their weaknesses. They could be trained to do his work.

These 12 men obeyed Jesus' call. They did not know all about Jesus. They did not know each other. They did not know where Jesus would lead them. They knew there were enemies. However, they wanted to be with Jesus. They went to serve him. Eleven of them gave their whole lives to Jesus. One betrayed him. Reread the list of names now.

Read Mark 3:20-21, 31-35. Jesus left his home in Nazareth to do the work of the heavenly Father. Jesus left the family business. He left a loving family. He no longer had a home, a job or money. His family did not understand. They were also afraid. There were enemies who might hurt Jesus. They feared the crowds. Perhaps they feared for their own lives.

Also, they did not know the 12 men who were with Jesus. They were strangers to Jesus' family.

Jesus loved his family, and he knew they did not understand. He knew he must go on with his work. He could not go home with his family.

Jesus' new family was the church. The people who obeyed and believed in him were his family.

Read Mark 3:22-30. Religious leaders from the temple in Jerusalem came to Galilee. They came to check on Jesus' life and work. They were against Jesus because he did not keep all of their laws. They called him a sinner and accused him of working with Satan. Jesus reminded them that his work was to get rid of evil and unclean spirits.

Jesus warned them of a serious sin. It is a sin which God never forgives. To call God's Holy Spirit evil and of Satan is a sin which sends a person to hell. He who believes that will never understand who Jesus is. He cannot go to heaven for he will never repent.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "In chapter three we began to meet Jesus' enemies. In today's lesson we find that most people did not understand Jesus. His life and work were different. People did not understand his power and authority. Crowds followed him. The twelve helpers obeyed him. But, at this time, no one really knew who Jesus was."

Have someone pray asking for God's help as you study his holy Word.

INTERPRETATION

Ask: "Do we today know who Jesus is? Can you tell someone who Jesus is? Do you feel that you know Jesus well?"

Give the class time to answer and discuss these questions. Teacher, be prepared with answers also.

Say: "We know more today than those first Christians. We come together to study and learn more."

Read Mark 3:7-12. Say: "Once again we find great crowds of people rushing to Jesus. Jesus' life was in danger as the crowds pushed to get near him. People came from distant districts. They only knew two things: they were sick, and Jesus healed. They did not care where he got his power. They did not know he was God's Son. They only knew he cared and would help."

Ask: "In these verses, who did know Jesus?" (the unclean spirits) Read Mark 3:11 again.

Say: "Evil knew the holy Son of God. Evil knew his power over them. God's Son always rules over evil. Jesus is our victory over evil. Evil cannot ever rule over a Christian. We do not need to fear Satan."

Hold up the paper (or point to the chalk board) which says "FOR OR AGAINST."

Say: "People were making choices about Jesus. Some were for him, meaning, they chose Jesus. Some were against him. (Put the paper down.)"

Let us read now about some men who chose to obey Jesus."

Read Mark 3:13-19. Say: "Jesus needed workers to carry his message. He chose a group to train. They were a mixed group. One was rich, but most were poor. Some had studied. Some were just like us. They had two things in common: they obeyed Jesus, and they had courage to go with Jesus. They decided to be for Jesus." (Point to the sign.)

Read Matthew 12:30. Repeat the verse, and say it as a group.

Read Mark 3:20-21 and 31-35. Ask: "In these verses who did not understand Jesus?"

Say: "This is a shock to us. Jesus' own family did not know who he was. They were worried about him. Perhaps they came to take him home to Nazareth. They did not know the group of 12 around him. They knew Jesus had powerful enemies."

Say: "Jesus now gives us a great Christian truth. Kinship is not only flesh and blood. The real family of Jesus are those who believe and obey him. We are his true family. The church is his family."

Ask: "Could Jesus go home to Nazareth?"

Say: "No, Jesus could not leave his work. Surely he wanted to please his Nazareth family. He loved them. He knew they did not understand, but he had to go on with his work."

Read Mark 3:22-27. Say: "The temple at Jerusalem sent religious

lawyers. They came to accuse Jesus. They said Jesus was working with Satan. They were against Jesus. (Point to the sign.) Jesus reminded them that he was fighting evil and unclean spirits. How could he then be on Satan's side?"

Read Mark 3:26 again. Say: "Jesus used God's power to overcome evil."

Have someone read Mark 3:28-30. Say: "These words of Jesus are a strong warning. All sins can be forgiven but one. We cannot say that the Holy Spirit is an evil or unclean spirit. The religious leaders said this because they had no sense of sin. They did not feel sorry for sin. There can be no forgiveness without sorrow for sin."

Point to the words: FOR OR AGAINST.

Ask: "Were the religious leaders for or against Jesus?"

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "Now we have the big question. Are you really FOR Jesus? This means, have you accepted him as Lord of your life? Is he in charge of you? Do you have courage to be FOR Jesus when others are AGAINST him?" Let your class discuss this. How can they show they are For Jesus?

Read together Matthew 12:30 again. Say: "We can be strong because Jesus is strong. We gain strength when we study and worship together. We grow stronger when we pray with each other."

Sometimes our friends and family may not understand us when we do right. They may even work against us. We cannot be for Jesus for one day and for Satan the next day. We have to decide. We need to stand firm even when people do not understand us.

Consider the following:

1. A young, Christian man wants to go to seminary. God called him to preach and serve the church. His family do not understand. They oppose him. Read Ephesians 4:11-12. Who is right, the parents or the son? Discuss this with class members.

2) A Christian woman does not want to marry now. She wants to go to Bible School. She wants to learn God's Word and serve Jesus. Her family and friends do not understand. Read Philippians 4:3 and Acts 2. What do you think?

3) A Christian wife cannot bear children. Her husband's family urge her husband to take a second wife. The young couple are Christians and refuse to do this. Read Genesis 2:18, 24 and 1 Corinthians 7:2. Who is right?

In each case, the Christian is right. Why? Each one is trying to obey Jesus and his Word. We must also stand firm with Jesus. He kept on with his work. It was not easy. Read Philippians 3:7-11, Philippians 4:6-7 and 13.

Now read Matthew 12:30. Pray to be strong in faith. Ask Jesus to show you ways to serve him.

Say: "Let us bow in prayer and commit our lives to Jesus." After silent prayer, pray (teacher) a prayer of dedication to Jesus.

CHAPTER FIVE

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:
Mark 4; Luke 17:29-34; 18:15-17

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 4:1-24, 26-34

MEMORY VERSE: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33).

TEACHING AIM: I will help students understand Jesus' parables about the kingdom of God.

TEACHING AIDS: Bring to class a few seeds of different kinds and a lantern or candle and matches.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 4:1-2, 10-13, 33-34. Jesus was a great teacher! But he had no class room nor students. He taught outside by a lake or on the road. Sometimes he taught on a mountain. He taught working men and women like us. They were not used to a classroom. Jesus knew he must get

their attention. He decided to use a lot of stories which we call parables. Parables compare daily life and godly truths. They were about life as the people knew it, but Jesus used parables to tell of his kingdom. People then and now love Jesus' stories.

Jesus' enemies could not understand the real meaning of these stories. They thought they had all wisdom so they closed their ears to Jesus' stories. The crowds listened and learned. Jesus' helpers listened and believed. In private times, Jesus taught his disciples deeper truths about the kingdom of God.

Read Mark 4:1-9. In chapter four we learned that Jesus went to the lake so he had space to teach large crowds. People kept on pushing close to Jesus. He got into a boat and taught the crowds on the shore.

This first of Jesus' parables (stories) is like a picture of people's hearts. As he taught, Jesus perhaps looked out on a field where a man was sowing grain. Many of the people were farmers. They knew about digging, planting and harvesting. Jesus' story was about seed which fell on four kinds of soil: hard, infertile paths where some seed fell; the soil where rocks below did not permit growth; the soil with thorns which took over the crop; and the good, fertile soil.

Every farmer there knew about such kinds of soil. Jesus' story was about the lives of people who hear the Word of God. The harvest was those

who believed and became a part of God's Kingdom.

Read Mark 4:14-20. Jesus' helpers needed to know more. They asked Jesus to explain the story about the seed and the soil.

Read Mark 4:21-24. Sometimes Jesus' stories made people laugh. In this way Jesus taught a truth and people remembered. Jesus asked them, "Do you light your lamp and hide it under something?" (Mark 4:21) The people must have laughed and shouted back, "No, no!" A light helps people to see.

Christians must let others see God's light in their lives. We must tell the truth of God's kingdom. That truth gives light to people's lives.

Read Mark 4:26-29. In this story Jesus explains how the kingdom of God grows. The seed is God's Word. It is the message of salvation planted in lives. It is like a seed taking root. We do not see it happen. We do not make it grow. Only God does that. The Word will take root in lives. God's powerful kingdom grows and produces Christian lives all over the world.

Read Mark 4:30-32. Once again Jesus uses an object known by the people. In Jesus' land, the mustard seed was very small. But it made a large plant. Birds nested in its branches. It was shade from the hot sun.

The kingdom of God is like that small seed. It began with a small group who believed in Jesus. Today,

Jesus' kingdom lives in all the world. Like the mustard tree, God's family has become large. Jesus created the church to plant his seed, the Word. Christians must put God's Kingdom first in their lives. Read Matthew 6:33.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "Each one of us has planted something: a tree, maize, beans, etc. We know that seeds come in all sizes."

Pick up the seeds you brought. Let them fall slowly on the table. Point out the smallest and the largest.

Say: "Today we will learn what Jesus taught about the kingdom of God. He used stories which we call parables. Jesus' stories were about common items of daily life, like seeds and light. Parables use earthly matters to tell us about God's work in people's lives."

Ask the group to bow in prayer. You (teacher) pray for open minds to understand Jesus' parables.

INTERPRETATION

Read Mark 4:4-9. Explain Jesus' story using your Background Study.

Ask: "Which kind of heart (soil) do you have?" Wait a bit for people to think about your question.

Ask: "Do you think weeds and thorns of the world are choking your Christian growth? What kind of fruit comes from your Christian life?"

Be prepared to let the class discuss these questions. Also, teacher, be

ready to give a short example of some part of the story about the soils and seeds. Make it personal if you can.

Read Matthew 6:33 together. Ask: "What does it mean 'seek first the kingdom of God?'" (to put Christ first in every area of your life. He is to be first every day we live.)

Read Mark 4:21-24. Say: "We must have light in our houses. All of us have some kind of lamp or light. It may be only the cooking fire, but it is light. Jesus knew that people need light." Light the lamp or candle which you brought. Put it under a chair or cover it with your hand or a book. Show that the light does not help if it is not placed openly.

Continue: "The good news of Jesus brings light into the life of one who believes. This story means that we are to be like a light in dark places. People notice a Christian's life. Do we light the way to Jesus?" Discuss how difficult it is to see if the lamp is dirty. Then say: "Is your light dull because of sin?"

Read Mark 4:26-29. Say: "Plants grow quietly." Pick up the seeds again, and let them fall slowly to the table.

Say: "A seed breaks through the ground, and we do not hear it. It grows, and we see it getting bigger. It blooms and produces a harvest. A seed is strong. So is the kingdom of God. Faith grows in the life of a Christian. That person's faith grows and brings people to Jesus. That life produces a harvest, more Christians and a bigger, better church."

Tell someone to read Mark 4:30-32. Say: "It is a miracle! A tiny seed can become a tree! A tiny seed can become a large plant giving help to many people. That is what Jesus meant in this story. Jesus' kingdom was in the lives of a few people at first. It grew and spread until today his kingdom is large."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "We Christians must plant the seed - the Word of God. This means we will tell people about Jesus' love and his death for our sins. We will be like light. Some people will reject Jesus. The story of the seed and the soil reminds us that there are different kinds of people who hear. Some will accept and grow strong. Others will

turn away from Jesus and the church. Let us not grow weary. Let us keep sowing the seed."

Repeat together Matthew 6:33. Ask: "Is Christ first in your life? Do you love him more than anyone else? Which comes first: your job or Jesus? Your family or Jesus? Money or Jesus? Customs or Jesus' kingdom?"

Say: "Each one must answer for himself. Do not judge another person. Think about your own life."

Tell the class to bow in prayer and think about the questions. You may repeat them softly. Then, lead a prayer asking God's help to put his kingdom first.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MIGHTY POWER OF JESUS

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 4-6

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 4:35-41; 5:21-43; 6:1-6

MEMORY VERSE: "And all were astonished at the majesty of God..." (Luke 9:43a).

TEACHING AIM: This lesson will help each student have greater faith that Jesus' power can help him/her.

TEACHING AIDS: Write on a paper in large letters the word, **MIRACLES**.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 4:35-41. The book of Mark records 18 miracles of Jesus. Jesus did not do miracles for himself. These mighty works of power helped hundreds of people. He did these great acts to show God's power. Jesus felt the pain people suffered. He felt great mercy for them. Sometimes people did not have faith, but Jesus' power was always present.

In chapter five, we learned some of Jesus' special stories (parables) about the kingdom of God. He taught in a

boat on Lake Galilee. Jesus decided to cross the lake with his disciples when evening came. He fell asleep because he was very tired. A big storm arose quickly on the lake. The boat began to fill with water. The men were afraid! They woke Jesus and accused him of not caring. Jesus, who created the wind and water, had power over the storm. Peace and calm came as Jesus spoke.

Then, Jesus turned to his helpers. He saw their fear. He saw their lack of faith. The men were amazed! They knew Jesus could heal. They had seen him cast out unclean spirits. But they were surprised that he had this kind of power.

Read Mark 5:25-34. Great crowds kept on following Jesus. People always pushed to get closer and closer to Jesus. On this day a very sick woman was in the crowd. She had been ill 12 years and no doctor could cure her. Her blood flowed all the time. Her illness meant that she could not attend Jewish religious rites. She was like an outcast. She suffered shame and was lonely. So, she made a great effort to get to Jesus. She pushed and pushed! Finally, she touched Jesus' long coat. Her bleeding stopped at once. She was well!

Jesus knew that someone with faith had touched him. The woman knelt before him. She told him what she had done. Jesus was pleased to know of such faith. He declared her healed and clean. She was a normal woman again.

Read Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. An important man joined the crowd around Jesus. Jairus was the man in charge of the synagogue. He knew about Jesus. No doubt he had heard Jesus teach. He must have known Jesus healed in the synagogue. He also knew that the religious leaders opposed Jesus.

But Jairus had a great need! His 12 year old daughter was very ill. She was near death. Jairus was an honoured man, but he bowed before Jesus. He believed Jesus could heal his daughter. Jesus agreed to go to Jairus' house. On the way the crowds delayed him, so he went slowly. He healed the sick woman. Someone came with bad news from Jairus' house, "...Your daughter is dead..." (Mark 5:35). Jesus told Jairus not to fear. Jesus went on to Jairus' house.

Loud music was playing as in Jewish funeral customs. Crowds of people cried loudly, yelling and tearing their cloths. In their minds death was the end. They laughed at Jesus when he went to the little girl. There in that little room Jesus called her back to life. He took her hand, and she got up at once. Jesus has power over death. Through him we have eternal life.

Read Mark 6:1-6. Faith releases power. In Nazareth they did not believe in Jesus. They scorned him. Perhaps they were jealous of Jesus. They refused to believe his teachings. They doubted his miracles. So, Jesus did no great miracles in his own town. It was a sad day for Jesus! He saw his

own neighbours living without faith. Jesus went to Nazareth to do mighty works. He left because of their lack of faith. He went to other villages to help and to teach people who would listen.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "In chapter five we learned a lot from Jesus' stories. We know the kingdom of God is growing in the hearts of all Christians. Today we learn amazing facts about Jesus' mighty power."

Tell someone to lead in prayer. Say: "Open your Bibles to Mark 4 and 5."

Hold up the sign **MIRACLES**. Ask: "What is a miracle?" Wait for answers. Say: "A miracle is an unusual and mighty work of God. It is an amazing act done only through God's power." (Put the sign where all can see it.)

Say: "Jesus had all of God's power for he was God. In those days Jesus used miracles to prove he was God's Son. Today we will study about three miracles which Jesus did."

INTERPRETATION

Divide your class into three (or more) small groups. Tell each to read a passage and report to the group. You will lead in the questioning. Ask one group to read Mark 4:35-41; one Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 and the other to read Mark 5:25-34. When all are done reading and reviewing the events in their passages (allow 5-10 minutes), say: "Lake Galilee could be calm one

minute and the next minute, a fierce storm would arise." Ask: "What happened to Jesus and his helpers in the boat?" Ask: "What did the men do?" Say: "Jesus saw their fear. He saw how little their faith really was. Jesus was there, but they were still afraid."

Ask: "What did Jesus say to the wind and the sea?" Ask: "Why are we so often afraid?" Teacher, let the class answer as they wish. Say: "Thank you, group!"

Ask: "Is Jesus with us today?" (Yes!) "Then, why are we afraid? Are we like the men in the boat?" Let the class discuss this if they wish.

Say: "Jesus is with us today to give us peace. Storms of life will come. Sorrow and sickness will come. We need to be aware of Jesus' presence."

Ask: "Does Jesus care about our needs today?"

Say: "Jesus cares about our pain. He loves us and wants us to face life with peace in our hearts. His mighty power can still help us face our fears."

Ask the group or groups reporting on Mark 5:25-34: "What happened as Jesus walked along?" "What healed the woman?" "Was Jesus angry?" "Why did Jesus make her admit what she had done?" (He wanted everyone to hear. He wanted them to know that she was healed and normal. She could go home clean and whole.)

Ask the group reporting on Mark 5:21-23 and 35-43: "Who was Jairus?"

"Why do you think he came to Jesus?"

"What did he ask of Jesus?"

"What happened on the way to his house?" Let the group tell what happened when Jesus arrived at the house. Read Luke 9:43a Repeat the verse together.

Ask: "When we die, will we live again?" (Teacher, read John 11:25 to the class.)

Say: "Power is always present in Jesus. There was one place where Jesus did not use his great power." Read Mark 6:1-6.

Say: "People scorned Jesus in his home town. He went to other villages and did his mighty work. Lack of faith keeps Jesus from working in our lives, too."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "Jesus loves us all. His power is for us all. In today's lesson we saw Jesus bring peace, healing and life to people."

Ask: "Is it possible for us to have peace, healing and eternal life?" Discuss this together.

Ask: "If we do not have peace in our lives, what is wrong?"

"If we are weak in faith, what is wrong?"

"If we are afraid of life and death, what is wrong?"

Say: "One answer will do for all. We do not give Jesus a chance to do his work in our lives. We try to solve our problems. In fear some people turn to witch-doctors again. They limit Jesus' power in their lives."

Ask: "Do these Christians have life worth living? Let us look closely at our own faith. Do we trust in Jesus' power?" Say: "Jesus' mighty power is for us today. His miracles helped people when he lived on earth as a man. He will help us today if we let him." Pray a closing prayer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HELPERS IN JESUS' MINISTRY

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 6; Romans 12:6-21

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 6:7-13, 30-44, 53-56

MEMORY VERSE: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

TEACHING AIM: This lesson will help each student decide to work for Jesus.

TEACHING AIDS: Ordinary clothing and a Bible

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 6:7-13. Jesus' 12 helpers had learned a lot from him.

They received special training by watching Jesus' work. At first they were called disciples (learners). Now it was time for them to go out to work on their own. Jesus sent them out, so we call them apostles (sent ones).

Jesus gave them special orders. Two men were to go together (6 teams). They were to go in common clothes without taking extra clothing or supplies. They were to carry a staff as all travellers did and get food and shelter in the villages where they would go. They were not to return to people who insulted them. They were to preach and heal.

Those orders were to make it easier for the men. They would not be burdened with a lot of supplies. They would be like other people. They would not waste time on people who refused to listen.

Their message was Jesus' message, not theirs. They would tell people to repent of sin. People needed to confess sin. Sometimes people do not want to hear that they are sinners. They get angry and turn against the preacher. Jesus told the men to shake off the dust of that place and leave. This was a Jewish custom, so people knew what it meant.

The apostles obeyed Jesus. In Jesus' mighty power they healed and cast out demons. Jesus gave them work to do. He gave them power to do it.

Read Mark 6:30-34. The 12 apostles returned to Jesus to give a report. Jesus knew they were very

tired. People kept on coming and going. Jesus' fame had now spread over all Galilee. He and his helpers had no time to eat. They all needed to rest.

They got into a boat to go to a quiet place to rest. The people knew where they were going. They ran all the way around the lake. They greeted Jesus as he arrived. There was no time to rest at all!

Jesus was not angry. He looked on those people with mercy and love. They were like lost sheep. They had no leader or guide except Jesus. They followed Jesus because he helped them. They loved to hear Jesus teach. Jesus kept on teaching and healing.

Read Mark 6:35-44. The apostles were hungry and so were the people. His helpers told Jesus to send the crowd away, but Jesus told them to feed the people. This time the helpers failed in their work. They made excuses. They did not seem to think about Jesus' power. Jesus took charge of the problem. He had pity on the people. He sent his helpers to look for food. They found only a little bread and 2 small fish, but in Jesus' hands it became a lot of food. Jesus asked the people to sit in groups. This helped the disciples to walk among the people and give out the food. Jesus blessed the food and divided it. It was enough for thousands of people. Every person had enough to eat! His helpers gathered up 12 baskets of remaining food. Jesus provides for our needs.

Read Mark 6:53-56. Jesus' disciples were amazed to see Jesus' power to heal. He never grew tired of helping people who believed in him. They knew that they were unable to do such miracles. They were still weak in many ways. They were amazed as they remembered how he fed so many people. They learned more from Jesus every day. They helped Jesus and served the people.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "Every Christian has work to do for Jesus. Jesus trained 12 men and sent them out to do his work. We are also told to work for Jesus."

Read James 1:22. Say: "God's Word says clearly that we are to work for him. We are not just to hear the word. We work with him and in his power. Let us pray now that each of us will decide to work for Jesus." (Lead a prayer.)

Pick up the clothes, and show them to the class.

Say: "These are common clothes for daily wear. Jesus' helpers wore their ordinary clothes as they went out to work for Jesus. They wore clothes like all Jewish men wore. Jesus' helpers were to look like other men looked. Jesus did not want his helpers to travel with many things. They were to live like all the people lived. We must be like that. We do not need special supplies to work for Jesus. In our common daily life we can be Jesus' workers. (Pick up the bible.)

The Bible will be our guide and our message."

INTERPRETATION

Read Mark 6:7-13. Say: "Jesus gave them their orders." Teacher, read these things from your Background Study.

Ask: "Did they do what Jesus said?" (Yes)

Read Mark 6:13. Say: "Yes, they obeyed Jesus. they went out to do his work. They were able to do it because they went in Jesus' power. They spread Jesus' message all over Galilee. They left those who rejected Jesus. They shook the dust off their feet as they left such people. This was a Jewish custom. The people knew they would not return to that village."

Ask someone to read Mark 6:30-32. Say: "Jesus' helpers came back to report to Jesus. They were very tired. The crowds were even bigger. Their work increased as more people heard of Jesus. There was no time even to eat. Jesus decided to take them away to rest. They went in a boat to a quiet place." Ask: "What happened to the plan?"

Read Mark 6:33-34. Say: "The plan failed! The crowds were waiting! Jesus was not angry or upset. He looked on the people with great pity. They were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus, though tired, kept on working."

Ask: "What are sheep like?" Let the class answer.

Say: "People without a leader are like sheep without a shepherd. People,

like sheep, need someone to look after them. They get lost easily. Jesus knows we are lost, like sheep. He is our shepherd. He is our leader and takes care of us."

Read Mark 6:35-38. Say: "Jesus worked until late in the day. Everyone was hungry. The disciples told Jesus to send the people away. They did not think of helping them, but Jesus did. He tested the disciples' faith. He said, "You give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37).

Ask: "Did the disciples do that?"

Say: "No, they made excuses. They seemed to forget that Jesus could do all things. Jesus gave them more work to do. He sent them to look for food."

Tell the class to read silently Mark 6:39-44.

Let someone tell about Jesus feeding the people.

Say: "Jesus' great power helped many people. The disciples helped Jesus as he fed the people. Jesus let them be a part of this miracle. They were learning to depend on Jesus' power."

Read Mark 6:53-56. Say: "Jesus' work was never finished. His disciples were with him as they reached Gennesaret. They helped him take care of the needs of the crowds. Their work was to do as Jesus taught them."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Ask: "Do you work for Jesus? What work do you do for Jesus?"

Say: "Let us each look at our daily lives. Do you use your time wisely? How can you help in Jesus' work?"

Teacher, here are some suggestions: We can witness for Jesus at our jobs. Women can tell neighbours of Jesus' love as they fetch water and wood. Families could help orphans. Crippled people in body and mind need love and help. Readers can read the Scriptures to non-readers.

Ask: "Does our church need workers?" (Yes) "In what ways can we help at our church?" Let the class discuss this. Teacher, be prepared to name some work like: teaching Sunday School, helping in youth meetings and women's meetings, visiting and witnessing to lost people, cleaning the church, repairing benches, helping the pastors' family.

Read James 1:22. Let the class repeat it with you.

Say: "It is clear. God's Word says: work! It is not enough to sit and hear the preacher every Sunday. It is not enough to sit in the Bible study class. God's Word says: don't just listen, work. Decide today to look for new ways to serve Jesus. He will help you."

Say: "Let us bow in prayer. Pray silently asking Jesus to show you work to do for him."

Wait while people pray then, Teacher, pray asking for Jesus' power in all the work done for him.

Say: "The next time we meet we will take time to hear your plans about work for Jesus."

CHAPTER EIGHT

JESUS CALLS FOR TRUE RELIGION

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 7; 12:28-34; Matthew 5:17;
22:34-40

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 7:1-23; Matthew 22:34-40

MEMORY VERSE: "...This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6b).

TEACHING AIM: I will help each student examine his/her faith to see what is real and what is false.

TEACHING AIDS: Bring a small bottle of water, a glass a spoon and some tea leaves mixed with dirt.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 7:1-5. The Pharisees and scribes now faced Jesus openly. These religious leaders were experts in the rules of the Jewish religion. Jews were slaves to thousands of rules. These were called the traditions of the elders. These were not God's laws like the Ten Commandments. These were rules made by legal experts through the years. They forced people to live by these harsh rules. They could not change them in any way.

Some of the rules told them how to wash their hands and pans in a certain way. The washing was not to get clean. It was to make a person clean before the Jewish leaders. Those who

failed broke the rules of the elders. The religious leaders called it sin.

Rules were at the centre of the Jewish religion. The religious experts no longer thought about pleasing God. People were bound by these laws. It was not possible to follow all of them. People were burdened by these rules. They felt no joy in their faith. Life was hard and religion brought no relief.

The religious lawyers saw Jesus and his disciples breaking these rules. Jesus fed more than 5,000 people, and not one had washed according to the rules. Jesus served people and not rules. He never broke God's laws. Jesus never sinned.

Read Mark 7:6-8. Jesus knew all of God's laws. More than any other person, Jesus knew the Old Testament. He, too, was an expert. He never set aside God's laws. Read Matthew 5:17. Jesus came to give meaning to the law.

Jesus also knew the endless rules made by men. He saw they had no real meaning. They were like the heavy yoke used to bind the oxen. These rules did not produce true worship. These rules did not even produce good people.

Jesus called these religious leaders hypocrites. That word means: one who acts a part or, one who lives a lie. The Pharisees and scribes were not

holy. They tried to act holy. People thought they were holy, but it was all a lie. Their hearts were evil. True religion does not come from obeying rules. True religion is loving God and obeying his laws.

Read Mark 7:9-13. Jesus pointed out the real problem. These men broke God's laws in order to keep the rules of their elders. One of these rules made a way for a person to break the 5th commandment. (Exodus 20:12) The word "corban" means a gift for God. A person could declare anything "corban." It was then set aside for God's use. However, there was no set time to lay the gift on the altar. A person could use it for himself. He could avoid helping his parents by declaring things "corban." This practice of "corban" shows how wicked these men had become.

Read Mark 7:14-23. Jewish religious customs declared many things unclean. To touch or eat certain foods made a person unclean. Jesus said that sin in our hearts makes us unclean. Sin comes from inside. Jesus named these sins:

evil thoughts - lead to evil action

fornication - every kind of sexual sin

theft - taking that which belongs to someone else

murder - killing a person

adultery - sexual sin with someone other than your husband or wife.

coveting - wanting that which belongs to another

wickedness - evil desire, lust and intent to harm

deceit - lying, tricking people to get your way

licentiousness - breaking moral and social laws

envy - jealousy, greed

slander - insulting God and mankind

pride - putting oneself above others

foolishness - not caring about the results of actions and words

This list shows us that Jesus knows people's hearts. We may fool people, but we can never fool God.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "First, let us hear if anyone has a new work for Jesus. Tell us what you are doing." Teacher, wait for answers. Give time for discussion.

Say: "In our past lessons we have seen that Jesus had enemies. Today's lesson will show us why. We will study about true religion. We will look at false religion."

Tell someone to pray the opening prayer.

Put the tea leaves (with the dirt) into the glass. Pour in the water and stir. Hold the glass so people can see the tea.

Ask: "What does this look like to you?" Wait for answers.

Say: "Yes, it looks like tea, but it is not real tea. It would not be good for us to drink it. There was dirt in the tea leaves. So, it is a trick."

"Jesus saw the ways the Pharisees and scribes tricked people. They followed man's rules but broke God's laws. They were not holy, but they acted holy. This looks like tea, but it is not good tea. Are we true Christians, or do we just follow church rules? Let us think of ourselves as we study this lesson."

INTERPRETATION

Read Mark 7:1-5. Say: "Jesus gave examples of the thousands of Jewish rules. Some these concerned washing hands and pans. These rules did not concern being clean and healthy. The washing was only a ceremony. In chapter seven Jesus fed more than 5,000 hungry people."

Ask: "Could those people keep such rules?" (No)

Say: "Jesus cared about the needs of people. So he fed them."

Tell someone to read Mark 7:6. Repeat together this quote from Isaiah.

Say: "The religious leaders washed their hands, but their hearts were not clean. Jesus called them 'hypocrites.' This word means: one who lives a lie, or one who acts a role."

Ask: "Do we say words that make people think we are Christians? Are our hearts right with God? Do people call Christians hypocrites? Why?"

Take some time to discuss this problem.

Say: "Jesus knew man's rules, and he knew God's laws. He did not come to change God's laws. He came to give meaning to the laws of the Old Testament."

Read Mark 7:9-13. Say: "Jesus gives another example of false religion. The word 'corban' meant: a gift for God. Anything called 'corban' was to become an offering to God. The religious leaders called many things 'corban.' Later they used them as profits for themselves. They even tricked their parents in this way. They would not help their parents."

Ask: "Was that true religion?" Wait for answers.

Say: "Of course, we all agree that this was a bad way to act. They seemed to forget that God knows all. God knows our every thought."

Have someone read Mark 7:14-20. Say: "Many Jewish rules concern clean and unclean food. This did not mean washed or dirty food. This meant food declared clean by men's rules. People felt holy if they ate the right food. Jesus told them how wrong they were. Sinful acts come from evil thoughts. Satan tempts us with bad thoughts. Then, we sin."

Teacher, describe these sins by using your Background Study. (Mark 7:21-23)

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "From this list each of us can find sins which we have done. All of

us are guilty. We must be careful about what we read. We must not listen to dirty jokes. We must be careful about what we look at. Satan uses all of these ways to corrupt our hearts.

"Also, we want to guard our children's minds. They listen to our words. They see the way we treat our parents. They know if we are true Christians. Our children need to know the way to life in Jesus.

"Today many people believe in religious rules. They believe that keeping these rules will take them to heaven. Some of these rules are: be baptized, go to church on special days and give money to help people and the church."

Ask: "Can you name some more rules?" Give time for answers.

Say: "Not one of these rules will save us from our sins. They are all good, but they will not save us. But Jesus said, '...Repent, and believe in the gospel' (Mark 1:15). The gospel is that Jesus died to save us from our sins. We must repent of our sins and believe in Jesus."

Let us bow our heads in prayer.

Say: "Each of you consider your own heart. Only you and God know if you are truly saved."

Pray a prayer asking God to make us examples of true religion.

CHAPTER NINE

JESUS, THE CHRIST, GOD'S BELOVED SON

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 8; 9:1-13; Titus 3:4-8; John 4:25-26, 42

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 8:27-38; 9:2-8

MEMORY VERSE: "Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:16).

TEACHING AIM: This lesson will strengthen each student's faith in Christ so that he/she can be a better witness.

TEACHING AIDS: Take an over-ripe (or rotten) piece of fruit or vegetable to class.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 8:27-30. Jesus and his disciples finished their work in Galilee. They went to another area called Caesarea Philippi. There Jesus gave his helpers special training. There were many pagan temples in this area. Jesus made it a holy place of the true God. It was there that Jesus decided to give some tests. The first big question was, "...Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27).

There were many opinions. Some people said he was John the Baptist, who had come back to life. Some people thought Jesus was the prophet

Elijah or another prophet. His enemies called him bad names.

The next big question was the biggest one, "...But who do you say that I am?..." (Mark 8:29). At first they thought Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed one. They had been with Jesus many months. Jesus wanted to know what they believed now. Each one had to decide. Each one had to look within his heart.

Peter answered for them when he said, "...You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). At this point, they passed the tests. Peter's answer meant that he believed Jesus was the Messiah God had promised to send. Jesus was pleased with his disciples. He would leave his work in their hands.

Read Mark 8:31-33. It was time for Jesus to prepare his disciples for his death. Jesus told them that he would be killed. This came as a big shock to Jesus' helpers. They loved Jesus. They believed in him. They thought his power was enough to save him from his enemies. They had never thought of such a death.

Peter often talked without thinking. This time he said the wrong thing. He rebuked his Lord! Peter was only a learner. Jesus was the Messiah, but Satan used Peter to tempt Jesus again. It was the kind of temptation Jesus faced in the desert. Satan tempted Jesus to avoid death on the cross.

Jesus knew that Satan was using Peter. Peter was thinking of earthly kingdoms. Peter still thought Jesus would be a powerful king on earth.

Jesus came to set up God's kingdom in men's hearts.

Read Mark 8:34-38. Look at each verse carefully.

Verse 34: Jesus asks us to do what he did, forget ourselves. It means to say no to an easy way of service, say no to pride and honour and say no to our own way of doing things. The cross means putting Christ first without thinking of the cost.

Verse 35: Jesus must have control of our lives. In this way we find meaning in living. To protect and save one's own life means life is ruined. It is like fruit kept too long. It is no good at all. Life can have meaning when it is used by Jesus.

Verse 36-37: God gave us life. He expects us to use it for him and others. Some people work all day every day to gain worldly things. What is their gain when they die? It is nothing without Jesus.

Verse 38: At the end of life it only matters what God thinks of us. It does not matter what people think. Do you live to honour Jesus? If so, he will claim you as his own when you die.

Read Mark 9:2-8. Jesus was getting ready to face death on the cross. He needed a special time with his father in heaven. On the mountain a great miracle occurred. Jesus' whole being became like a shining, brilliant light. God's presence made it a most holy event. In three ways Jesus was assured that death on the cross was the only way.

1. God approved of him and said so. Read Mark 9:7 again.

2. Moses was there with Jesus. This showed that Jesus' death would fulfil the law of God.

3. Elijah was there. This showed that Jesus' death would fulfil prophecy.

The disciples saw Jesus' glory. This great event would help them when Jesus died.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "Today's lesson will show us how important it is to know who Jesus is. Each of us must answer the question, 'Who is Jesus?' Also we must answer the question, 'Am I living my life for Jesus?'"

Lead in prayer. Pray that God will open every heart to these great verses.

INTERPRETATION

Say: "Jesus and his disciples left Galilee. They went to a lovely, quiet place. It was named for the Roman ruler, Caesar. It was called Caesarea Philippi.

"Jesus knew his days were few on earth. He must give his helpers more training. One day he decided to give them a test."

Read Mark 8:27-30. Ask: "What was the first question?" (See verse 27.)

Say: "People had a lot of ideas about Jesus. Some thought he was John the Baptist, risen from the dead. Other people thought he was a

prophet. Today people have ideas about Jesus. Some people say he is only a prophet. Some people say he is only a teacher. Some people say he is only one of many gods."

Ask: "Who do you say Jesus is? Can you answer like Peter?" Let each one say who Jesus is to them.

Say: "Peter gave the correct answer, '...You are the Christ' (Mark 8:29). The word Christ is the same as the word Messiah. They mean the anointed one (like a king). Jews believed the Messiah would be a great king. The Messiah and the Jews would rule the world. They would defeat all enemies, even Rome."

Ask: "Did Jesus come to be an earthly king?"

Say: "No, we know Jesus came as a servant. He came as the Saviour to die for our sins. He came to be the Christ (king) of our hearts."

Read Mark 8:29 again. Repeat it together.

Let someone read Mark 8:31-33. Say: "Now Jesus had a hard lesson to teach his helpers. He told them his enemies would kill him. The disciples were shocked! They had just declared Jesus the Messiah, and then he said he would die. Men were going to kill Jesus!"

"Peter often spoke in haste. Satan used Peter to tempt Jesus. This was like Jesus' test in the desert. Satan wanted Jesus to work for him. Jesus knew Peter was still a weak disciple. He scolded Peter. He told him to get

on God's side. We see that Jesus' closest friends still did not really understand him."

Read Mark 8:34. Ask: "What does it mean to bear a cross?" Let your class discuss this.

Say: "Many people think to bear a cross is to have sorrow or trouble in life. This is not what Jesus meant. To bear a cross means to deny oneself. It means to put Christ first. Jesus did not deserve to die. Jesus' cross meant he would suffer pain, suffering, insults and sacrifice for us. He gave up life. He gave up self. To bear the cross as Jesus did is not easy. Perhaps we have never done it."

Read Mark 8:35. Show the class the rotten fruit or vegetable.

Say: "This fruit was kept too long. It is now worthless. It is no good to anyone. Jesus told us not to save and protect ourselves. We should not spend our lives thinking of ourselves. If we do, our lives become worthless. They will have no meaning for we will do nothing for Jesus. They will be fit for nothing but to be tossed out."

Put the fruit in a garbage can.

Say: "We will have peace with God if we use our lives for Jesus. Using our lives, even at risk, is what Jesus expects of us."

Read Mark 8:36-37. Say: "Serving Jesus can be hard. It may bring discouragement. We may get very tired. But we know the full meaning of being a Christian. It is far better than working only for money or earthly

honours. Those can be lost in an instant. Only what is done for Christ will last."

Read Mark 8:38. Say: "Some day Jesus is coming again. Will he welcome you? He will if you have confessed him here on earth."

Ask: "Are you ever ashamed to say, 'I am a Christian?' Do your actions and words cause people to think you are not a Christian? This brings shame to Christ and his church." Give time for discussion here.

Read Mark 9:2-8. Say: "Jesus needed a time of close contact with God, his heavenly Father. He needed God's approval as he went toward the cross. Peter, James and John were there."

Let the class describe this event. Be prepared to help and lead the discussion.

Say: "Jesus received three important messages: God declared his love and approval of his Son, Moses talked to him (This showed that Jesus fulfilled the law.) and Elijah was there. Jesus' life and death fulfilled prophecy from the Old Testament."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "Jesus asked to hear the witness of his disciples about himself. What we say about Jesus has meaning. Each Christian has a story to tell about Jesus in his/her life. The way Jesus came into your life is not the same way he came into mine. Jesus

told us to tell others his story in our lives."

Ask: "What do you think of Jesus? Would one of you tell us now about Jesus' saving you?" Teacher, wait to see if one will give a witness. If not, you give a brief witness for Jesus.

Say: "Jesus asks us to help him bear his cross. We must put Christ first

every day. The goals for family must be second. Look for ways to witness for Jesus this week. Tell us next week how God blessed your witness."

Pray a closing prayer. Ask for Christ's strength for each one to witness for Jesus this week.

CHAPTER TEN

THE WAY OF THE SERVANT

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 9:33-37; 10; Matthew 20:20-21

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 10:13-16, 32-45

MEMORY VERSE: "For the son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

TEACHING AIM: I will help students become willing to follow Jesus' example of service.

TEACHING AIDS: Write on a large piece of paper (or chalk board) the words: **FIRST - LAST. Also, SERVANT - MASTER.**

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 10:13-16. Jewish mothers wanted Jesus to bless their children. Jesus was on his sad journey to the cross. He knew pain and suffering lay ahead. But Jesus took time to serve mothers and little children. The disciples tried to keep the mothers away. Jesus would not

allow that. Jesus, the great teacher, sat down and took the children in his arms.

Jesus did this because he loved children. Also, he wanted to teach his disciples some lessons. He showed them how to serve people, even children. He taught them again about the kingdom of God. Jesus showed them the meaning of humility. He said that a person enters his kingdom as a child. That means a person fully trusts Jesus. He obeys him. A child believes and obeys his earthly father. A person who enters God's kingdom is humble, trusting and obeying. In this way the child of God begins a new life. He begins a life of service to Jesus, his Lord.

Read Mark 10:32-34. Jesus walked alone on this journey to Jerusalem. He knew his enemies waited for him there. He knew death on the cross was just ahead.

Jesus had announced his death earlier. His disciples dropped behind to discuss these matters. They were

afraid to go to Jerusalem. They were amazed that Jesus kept on going.

Once again Jesus taught them about his death. This time he made it more clear. His words told of pain and insults. His disciples heard that terrible things would happen to Jesus. They became confused. They thought Jesus would defeat the Gentiles (Romans). Jesus told them the Gentiles would kill him. They could not believe the Messiah would really die.

Jesus kept going toward Jerusalem to face his death. He faced this alone. The disciples were afraid. Jesus, the Christ, had courage. He came to earth to die. This was the way of the Suffering Servant.

Read Mark 10:35-40. Jesus taught his helpers about suffering. They thought of honour for themselves. They still believed that Jesus would set up an earthly kingdom. James and John wanted the two top places in Jesus' government. They wanted to be chiefs. They wanted to rule and control people.

Jesus warned them that being with him meant suffering, shame and service. He spoke of the 'cup' and 'baptism.' These refer to the biblical picture of suffering and death. The 'cup' meant to be filled with suffering. The 'baptism' meant being immersed in deep trouble. (See Mark 14:36.)

Jesus knew James and John would later have to suffer for him. The way of the servant is not easy. God judges

our lives. He will give the rewards for service.

Read Mark 10:41-45. The other disciples were angry with James and John. They also wanted honour and glory. They did not want James and John to be first in Jesus' kingdom.

Jesus' heart must have hurt as he saw this weakness. He knew that the disciples did not yet understand. Jesus explained that his followers could not act like earthly rulers. Roman power was power without mercy. Jesus' followers would not rule over people. Jesus said that a truly great person serves even as a slave. That is true greatness. A person must give up anything that stands in the way of serving God. It may be money, power, pride, envy, hate or habits. Being a Christian is not a matter of gaining honour. It is a matter of serving.

Jesus pointed out his own life. With his great power he could be a great ruler. He himself could have servants. But Jesus chose to be a servant.

Jesus told them he would pay a price (a ransom) for the people. A ransom was a fee paid in order to free a slave. Jesus' life was to be the ransom paid to free mankind from slavery to sin. It was a very big price to pay. He is the example of the true servant.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

First, let the class share how they witnessed in the past week. Let two or three tell briefly.

Say: "Today's lesson begins the final days of Jesus' life. He was on his way to Jerusalem to die. On the way he taught some great lessons. These show the importance of being a servant."

Tell someone to pray asking for guidance as you study.

INTERPRETATION

Read Mark 10:13-16. Say: "There is no doubt that Jesus loved children. On this sad journey Jesus took time for the children. His disciples tried to stop the mothers. They did not want them to disturb Jesus. Children can be noisy. They did not bother Jesus. He used them as an example of his kingdom. He said that we enter the kingdom of God in a child-like way."

Ask: "What would that be like?"
Let them discuss.

Point out that children must obey. Children trust in their parents. Children are humble. These are the ways a person comes to Jesus. Jesus humbled himself to serve little children. This is the way the servant acts.

Read Mark 10:32-34. Say: "Jesus walked alone. He probably talked to the Father as he walked. He needed courage to face a cruel death. His disciples were behind him. They were confused and afraid."

"Jesus called them to him again. This time he gave details about his death. His enemies would condemn him to death. Gentiles (Romans) would insult him, beat him, spit on

him and kill him. He also told them he would rise again after three days."

Ask: "What do you think the disciples thought of these words?" Let the class discuss this. Be prepared to give your views of the disciples.

Say: "They were not ready nor able to receive this teaching. To them, Jesus was to be an earthly king. They did not understand Jesus' words about his death."

Tell someone to read Mark 10:35-40. Say: "While Jesus faced death, his helpers planned to be great in an earthly kingdom. They wanted to be chiefs. They wanted people to honour them. They wanted power. Jesus reminded James and John that those who follow him will also suffer. Honour and reward are for those who serve."

Read Mark 10:41-43. Ask: "What did the disciples think of James' and John's request?" (They were angry and upset.)

Say: "Jesus explained the way of earthly rule. It is power and control of people. An earthly king or ruler has many servants. Then Jesus explained about his kingdom. He said that his followers must not be like earthly rulers. Let us read how Jesus described those who follow him."

Read Mark 10:43-45. Say: "Let us name the points Jesus made: 1. Christians must be servants; 2. Christians must be like slaves. Greatness comes from serving others. In Mark 10:45 Jesus points to himself as the example. He came to serve. He

gave up life in heaven to die for our sins. This is the greatest service of all, to give up your life for another person. Jesus did that for us. Therefore, we can obey him and serve each other."

Tell the class to read Mark 10:45 aloud with you.

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Point to the signs you brought.

Say: "These words are opposites. But they describe Jesus' teaching about position in his kingdom. Those who would be first must be last. Those who would be master (ruler) must be the one who serves. It is opposite in our world today. Do we have the mind of Christ?"

Ask: "What do people in your area think of a servant?" Let the class discuss this.

Say: "Most of us do not want to be servants. They have to work long hours. Their pay is on the wage scale. They often live in poor housing. Many

servants (like children) have no pay at all. They are little better than slaves. Serving is not easy. Serving is not much desired."

Ask: "Why do you think Jesus asks us to serve others? Why did he ask us to have the mind of a slave?"

Teacher, some answers you can expect or give are: Jesus expects us to deny ourselves. Jesus wants us to put him first, others second, self last. Jesus wants his kingdom ruled by love. Jesus knew that there can only be one master. Jesus is our Lord (Master), and we are his servants.

Ask: "Are there those who serve like servants in our church? Who are they? Do we serve Jesus by helping others?"

Say: "Let us bow in prayer. Consider the questions just asked. Ask God to show you ways to be a servant as Jesus was."

Pray a closing prayer.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 11; 12; Isaiah 56:6-7

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 11:15-19, 27-33; 12:13-17, 28-34

MEMORY VERSE: "...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18).

TEACHING AIM: This lesson will help students recognize Jesus' authority in their lives.

TEACHING AIDS: Bring to class a symbol of authority used by leaders in your area, for example, a flag or something used by leaders.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 11:15-19. Today we study the last week in Jesus' life. He reached Jerusalem and went to the temple. The temple in Jerusalem was the most holy place for all Jews. The inner area was sacred. One section was called the holy of holies. Only the high priest could enter there to talk to God. Only Jews entered inside the temple.

The outer area was open to all people. It was called the court of the Gentiles. A Gentile is any person who is not a Jew. God's plan was that this area would be a place of prayer. (Read Isaiah 56:6-7.) But this outer area was no longer used for prayer. It was a market.

The Passover was the most holy season for all Jews. They came from many lands to worship God in Jerusalem. They had to make an animal sacrifice. So, merchants brought animals into the outer area to sell them. People paid their temple tax there. There was much arguing over prices. People shouted at each other as merchants cheated them. There was much corruption in the buying and selling.

Jesus saw the holy temple of God turned into a market. The priests and the religious leaders earned a profit. No one could pray in the outer court-yard.

Jesus used the authority God gave him to clean up the place of prayer. He drove out the cattle and the

merchants. He forbade traffic of goods through the temple. Jesus cleared the area so people from all nations could pray there.

Jesus' enemies, the religious leaders, joined together to destroy Jesus. They feared Jesus and hated him. The crowds still followed Jesus, but the religious leaders plotted to kill him.

Another day Jesus returned to the temple. His enemies decided to trick him with questions. In this way they hoped to trap him and arrest him.

1. The first question: Read Mark 11:27-33.

"...Who gave you this authority...?" (Mark 11:28). Authority means a legal right to command or act. Jesus knew it was not a sincere question. He saw their trap. So he answered by asking a question they could not answer. He would not answer theirs.

2. The second question: Read Mark 12:13-17.

"...Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (Mark 12:14). This question was a trap to get Jesus to disobey the government. These men were hypocrites. They praised Jesus, but their hearts were full of hate. Jesus answered in a clever way. He told them to obey the laws of the land and to obey God's laws.

3. Another question: Read Mark 12:28-34.

"...Which commandment is the first of all?" (Mark 12:28). This question came from a lawyer. He knew all the

laws and rules. Jesus answered using Scripture as he often did. The first commandment is from Deuteronomy 6:4. The second one is from Leviticus 19:18. Read these now.

Jesus did not limit these laws just to Jews. He included all people. He filled old laws with new meaning. Jesus put these two great laws together. True religion must include love for God and love for mankind. A person cannot have one without the other.

The scribe saw the truth in Jesus' statement. He accepted it as far better than rites with no meaning. This man was nearly ready to follow Jesus. We do not know whether he did or not, but Jesus' enemies were near. There was danger for those with Jesus.

There were no more questions! No one else dared to challenge Jesus' authority. His authority was from God. His enemies knew it. Envy, fear and love of power caused them to plan Jesus' death.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "In chapter ten we talked about serving the Lord. Do any of you have a new plan of how to serve the Lord?" Discuss their ideas (or yours).

INTERPRETATION

Say: "Today's lesson takes place on Monday and Tuesday before Jesus' death on Friday. These were the last days of his public work. Jesus came face to face with his enemies in the

temple. They challenged Jesus' authority."

Have someone lead in prayer for the study.

Hold up the object of authority you brought.

Say: "This is a sign of authority among us. We honour and obey the person who carries this (or wears this). We accept his right to rule us. We do not scorn such authority." (Put down the symbol.)

Say: "Jesus' authority came from God. God, himself, spoke to show that Jesus was his Son. Jesus used that authority to do mighty works. He healed the sick, raised the dead, calmed the storm and fed thousands of people. His enemies refused to accept his authority."

Read Mark 11:15-19. Say: "Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a lowly donkey. People praised him. Then, Jesus went to the temple. He saw God's holy place of worship turned into a market. He heard the noise. He smelled the stench of animals and birds. He saw anger on people's faces. That part of the temple was called the court of the Gentiles. Non-Jews could enter there to pray. Now no one could pray there."

Ask: "What did Jesus do?" Let the class describe Jesus' actions.

Say: "Yes, Jesus used his authority to clean up the place of worship. That place was like our church. Our church is to be a place of worship and prayer. Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah."

Read Isaiah 56:6-7. Say: "The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus at once. They feared him. But the crowds with Jesus prevented the arrest."

"The next day Jesus returned to the temple. There his enemies faced him with tricky questions.

"Let us divide into 3 groups and read these questions. When you report, tell us: What is the question? Who asked it? What was Jesus' answer? What did the askers do then?" Teachers, write these questions on the board or paper so the class can refer to them. Ask one group to read Mark 11:27-33; another to read Mark 12:13-17; another to read Mark 12:28-34. After 10 minutes ask the groups to report.

After group one's report say: "Jesus knew this question was not a sincere one. He answered by asking them a question about John, the baptizer. They could not answer it! They were afraid. Jesus won this debate. But they were not finished yet with Jesus."

After group two's report, ask: "Who was Caesar?" Teacher, be prepared to help explain. Caesar was the Roman king. Jesus used a coin to show that taxes were due the government. There was no problem between Jesus and the government.

Then say: "This time the enemies first praised Jesus. It was false praise. Jesus knew they were hypocrites. Their question was a trick. They wanted Jesus to betray the

government. They wanted the Romans to arrest Jesus."

Say: "Jesus' words meant we are to obey our country's laws. We must also obey God's laws. Life is better when we do this. Jesus' enemies failed to trap him again."

After group 3 reports, say: "This was a big question for all religious leaders. There were many laws and rules. This scribe had an honest question. He saw that Jesus knew all the Scripture. He really wanted to know which one was the first commandment.

"Jesus put the two greatest laws together: love God and show love to other people. Jesus said we must love God with heart, soul, mind and strength. This is the whole person. Jesus must be first in every area of our lives. One way we show our love for God is to show love to people. Love brings a desire to help. Love causes us to want to do good."

Ask: "Do you think the scribe followed Jesus?" Let the class discuss this briefly. (The Bible gives no answer.) "If he did not follow Jesus, why not?"

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "Jesus' enemies failed to trap him. No one could control Jesus. No one could remove Jesus' authority. Jesus finished his public work."

Say: "What is authority? It is legal power. It is the right to command or act. It is power by right of election. God gave Jesus, his Son, authority to

rule over all of heaven and all earthly matters. That authority includes us. Jesus should control the life of every Christian." Read Matthew 28:18. Have the class repeat it with you.

Say: "Jesus has all authority. This means that he has authority over all matters in heaven and earth. Jesus' way of life is best for us. The Christian way of life is a healthy life. Jesus has authority over our bodies. He has authority over our money. He controls time: days, weeks, months and years. All earthly powers will one day cease. All people will accept Jesus' authority. The question today is: Do you really accept Jesus' authority in your life?"

"Some Christians let old customs or habits control them. Sometimes bad habits control a person, like drinking, drugs, lying and sexual sins." Read 1 Corinthians 6:13, 20. Also read James 4:7-8. Think seriously about your daily

life. Ask God to take control of your habits.

"Jesus had authority over the temple. What is your church like? Is it a true place of worship and prayer? Is everyone welcome? Would Jesus like to worship in your church. Are there some customs in your church which Jesus would not like? Would Jesus want to clean up your church as he did the temple? Let us read about a church which was a good example." (Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10.) Pray for your church and your pastor.

"The Bible teaches that the government has authority over us. We must obey the laws of our land. Read Romans 13:1-2, 6-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17. We must pray for our nation and its leaders."

Tell the group to bow their heads in prayer. Pray that each person will give Jesus control over his/her life.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS DEATH

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 14; Exodus 12:11-14

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 14

MEMORY VERSE: "...Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).

TEACHING AIM: I will help each student want to be like Jesus, willing to do God's will.

TEACHING AIDS: Bring a cup with fruit juice in it and a few pieces of bread (as you would for the Lord's Supper). Bring the questions written on pieces of paper as in the teaching plan.

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 14:3-9. Jesus knew his trial and death were coming soon. He spent some of his last moments with his friends. While Jesus ate, a woman

came and poured rich perfume over his feet. Some scolded her for wasting it. Jesus blessed her. She showed her love for him when he was in great need. She helped prepare him for burial.

The scolders said the perfume could have been sold. Then the money would be used to feed the poor. Jesus' need was greater. He needed the comfort this act gave him. So few understood what was going to happen to him. In Jesus' last hours, this woman served him. She helped him face the cross which was to come.

Read Mark 14:10-11, 17-21. Our last lesson was about Jesus' enemies. They tried but failed to trap Jesus in order to arrest him. In this lesson Jesus is with his disciples. These are the last days of Jesus' life. These are the last free hours Jesus had. He continued to prepare to die. He continued to prepare his disciples for his death.

Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of the holy days of Passover. Jews from many lands came there to observe the Passover feast. Jesus wanted to share this special meal with his closest friends. He loved these 12 men whom he had trained. This meal was a fare-well dinner. It was a time of sweet but sad fellowship. It was the last time he would be with them before his death. Jesus gave them some very bad news.

One of the 12 disciples would betray him. Jesus knew that it was Judas. Judas loved money more than he loved Jesus. He sold his Lord for

30 pieces of silver. Jesus pitied Judas, but he would not force him to remain true to him. Jesus loved Judas to the end. The disciples felt deep sorrow and shame. There was a traitor among them. They doubted themselves. They doubted each other.

Read Mark 14:22-25. The Passover feast was the most important of all Jewish holy days. Jews recalled how God spared their lives in Egypt. Read Exodus 12:11-14. Blood on the doorposts of Jews caused death to passover them. They got their freedom and left Egypt. God delivered them from death and slavery.

Jesus ate this Passover meal with his disciples. It was the last Passover meal his disciples ate. Jesus set up a new meal to replace the old one. Jesus' blood, soon to be shed, would cause death to pass-over all who believe. In this way Jesus taught his disciples about his death. The cup of wine stood for Jesus' shed blood. The bread stood for Jesus' broken body.

Christians now observe the Lord's Supper instead of Passover. It is a time to recall Jesus' death. God gave a new promise to his people. Jesus' death would deliver us from sin. Jesus would come again.

Read Mark 14:32-42. Judas left the meal and went to betray Jesus. Jesus and the other 11 disciples went to a garden to pray. Jesus was full of sorrow as he thought of the cross. Jesus was God, but he had a human body. He knew he faced pain and shame. He also faced the great sorrow

of bearing all man's sin. He knew his disciples were weak and afraid. He asked them to wait for him while he prayed. He asked some to "watch and pray." Instead, his disciples slept. They were tired and their strength was gone. They did not prepare well for what lay ahead.

Jesus went alone to pray in agony. He prayed to his father in heaven. He bowed to God's will. He prayed, "...not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36). Jesus accepted the cross as his Father's plan. He agreed to bear all of man's sin. He chose to be God's sacrifice. The Father gave him strength to bear the pain.

Suddenly, the time was over. There was no more time to pray or sleep. Judas and the crowds arrived to arrest Jesus. The time had come for Jesus to do his final work for us.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Say: "This lesson begins the hardest days in Jesus' life. He chose to spend his last free hours with his disciples. Jesus knew the end of his life was near."

Let us bow in prayer. Teacher, pray that each student will see more clearly that Jesus suffered for him/her.

INTERPRETATION

Say: "Let's look at two people who planned to do things to Jesus in the last days before his death." Divide the class into 2 groups. Ask one to read Mark 14:3-9. The other should read Mark 14:10-11, 17-21. Ask them to

read the passage and discuss these questions which you have written on paper.

Who planned to do something for/to Jesus?

What was done?

Why do you think he/she did it?

How did the people there react to this?

How did Jesus react?

Also tell each group to prepare a short drama if they want to to show the class what happened in their Scripture passage. Let each do their drama and then answer the questions. Allow 15 minutes to prepare and 5 minutes for each group to do the drama and report.

Teacher, at this point, discuss the event and meaning of Passover as the Jews knew it. (Use the material in your Background Study.)

Say: "This was a special holy week in Jerusalem. It was Passover. There were thousands and thousands of guests in Jerusalem. Jews came from many lands to the great temple. The Passover meal reminded the Jews of their freedom from slavery. It reminded them that death passed over Jewish homes long ago in Egypt."

Tell someone to read Exodus 12:11-14. Say: "Blood, any blood, had meaning to Jews. Most religious rites included animal sacrifice. Blood on the doorposts of Jews in Egypt saved them from death. Jesus ate the Passover meal with those he knew

best, the disciples. Jesus used this time to explain his death further. He said that his shed blood was to free people from the slavery of sin. He would become the new sacrifice. This was God's new promise to us.

"Jesus set up a new kind of meal. It replaced the Passover meal."

Read Mark 14:22-25. Pick up the cup of juice. Say: "From early Christian days, Christians observed the Lord's supper. The cup of juice reminds us of Jesus' blood shed for our sins."

Put down the cup and pick up the bread. Break off a small piece.

Say: "The broken bread reminds us of Jesus' broken body. At the Lord's Supper, we think of Jesus' willing sacrifice for us. We recall his promise of eternal life. We think of Jesus' return to earth some day."

Have someone read Mark 14:32-36. Say: "Jesus often prayed in a garden called Gethsemane. He went there after the supper to pray. His disciples had just promised him they would never deny him. They claimed they would die with him, if necessary. But when Jesus asked them to keep watch for his enemies, they could not do it! They fell asleep! They could not even help Jesus in this difficult time."

Have someone read Mark 14:37-41a. Say: "Jesus prayed alone. He was in great pain as he faced death. He had done no wrong. He had not sinned. He had to die because of our sins. No one knows what pain

that caused him. He also felt pain because of his human body."

"Jesus was human, but he was also God's Son. He prayed to his Father, and he gave him strength. God can give us strength in difficult times, too."

Read Mark 14:36 again. Say: "He accepted God's will. He accepted the cross. He agreed to die a painful death for us."

Have the class say Mark 14:36 together. Say: "The disciples had promised to be faithful to Jesus. While he prayed, they slept." Read verse 38 again. Say: "Jesus warned them that, without preparation, they would not be strong. Jesus was ready for the cross. The disciples were not ready for theirs."

Have someone read Mark 14:41b-42. Say: "Time was finished. There was no more time to pray and prepare. There was no more time to sleep. Jesus' betrayer had arrived."

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Say: "Jesus faced his death alone. His friends slept while he suffered. But Jesus had prepared well for this hour. He had obeyed God each step of the way. Now he called on God to give him strength for the last, most difficult step.

"In today's lesson, we saw how three people or groups of people treated Jesus as he neared his death. One served him, one betrayed him, others slept while he suffered. Who are you like? The woman? Judas? The disciples? We all need to be more

faithful to Jesus. We may be weak like the disciples. We may turn and run when asked to work for him. We may deny him when we are with non-Christians. Or we may be servants, like the woman. If we are, we will please him as she did."

Ask: "Can you pray like Jesus? Are you willing to give up your plans and do things God's way? Can you pray, 'thy will be done, oh God?'"

Close in prayer. Pray for each one to be able to pray that God's will be done in his/her life.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JESUS REJECTED AND CRUCIFIED

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 14:43; 15

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 15:24-34, 37-38

MEMORY VERSE: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness..." (1 Peter 2:24).

TEACHING AIM: I will help each student realize that Jesus died for him.

TEACHING AIDS: Chalk board and chalk

PREPARING TO TEACH

BACKGROUND STUDY

Read Mark 14:43-45 and 66-72. After Jesus' prayer in the garden, Judas and the soldiers came. Judas greeted Jesus in the usual way with a kiss. After his betrayal, the soldiers seized Jesus. His disciples tried to defend him with weapons. When Jesus would not allow this, they all ran away.

Peter followed the soldiers who took Jesus to the yard of the High Priest. He watched and waited there.

Someone saw him. They said, "We saw you with Jesus. You are one of his followers." Peter denied this, three times. When Peter heard the cock crow, he remembered what Jesus had told him. (see Verse 72) He wept. He was sorry he was not strong enough to die with Jesus as he had promised.

Although Jesus had many followers, he faced death alone.

Read Mark 14:55-64 and 15:1-15. Jesus was charged with blasphemy, a religious crime. The Jewish council of priests said Jesus committed blasphemy when he called himself the Son of God. The punishment for this crime was death.

The Jewish nation was under Roman rule. They could not kill Jesus without the Romans' permission. So, they took Jesus to Pilate, the governor. They tried to make him believe that Jesus was dangerous. He was trying to become a King! Pilate did not believe this. He did not think Jesus should be killed.

During this season of Passover, the Romans released one prisoner in honour of the holiday. Pilate offered

to free Jesus or a murderer named Barabbas. The crowd asked for Barabbas. When they yelled for Jesus to be crucified, Pilate had him beaten and gave him to them.

Read Mark 14:65 and 15:16-20. Jesus' prophecy that he would be beaten and mocked was coming true. People spat on him and hit him. Soldiers put a robe and a crown of thorns on him. They knelt down to him and laughed as they called him "King." Jesus did not do or say anything, though he could have freed himself. He accepted punishment he did not deserve so we could be saved from our sins.

Read Mark 15:24-33. Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his cross to Golgotha, a hill shaped like a skull. Golgotha was the place where the worst criminals were put to death. It was near a main road where many people would see and be warned not to commit crimes.

Here, Jesus was nailed to the cross between two robbers. It was 9 a.m. On his cross they placed a sign which told his crime: "The King of the Jews."

People made fun of Jesus and dared him to come down. His followers must have wondered why he did not save himself. He knew that unless he died, man would still be lost in sin. He had to die for us to live.

About noon the sky became very dark and stayed dark until Jesus died. During this time, all the sin of all mankind was put on Jesus. He suffered under this great load.

Read Mark 15:34, 37-38. Death by crucifixion was very slow. As criminals died, they were thirsty and hungry. They could not breathe well. They had no protection from heat and cold or insects. Sometimes it took days to die.

Jesus died quickly. His severe beating undoubtedly was part of the cause. But more, the burden of man's sin lay on him. God could not look on sin, so Jesus knew the sorrow of life without God. When he died his lonely death, his work was finished. He had paid the price for sin.

At the moment he died, the heavy curtain in the temple split from top to bottom. The curtain covered the door to the most holy part of the temple. Only the High Priest could enter this place to talk to God.

The torn curtain showed that Jesus' death opened the way to God. It showed that anyone can be saved. Anyone can talk to God. There were no more closed doors. Jesus' death opened the door to life for all who would believe.

TEACHING THIS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Write "Success" and Failure" on the board. Let your class name things which make a person a "success" or a "failure." (Suggestions: Success: happy marriage, children, house, farm, good job, friends, etc. Failure: no job or money, no friends, etc.) Add others you think of. Ask: "Would being tried for a crime be a 'success' or 'failure?'" Let them respond. Ask: "What about being beaten for a crime?" Let them

respond. Then say: "Today we will study about Jesus' trial and death. To many who watched, Jesus was a failure. We will see how Jesus gave 'success' new meaning."

Lead the class in prayer.

INTERPRETATION

You will read Scripture to your students. They will listen for answers to questions you will ask before you read.

Ask: "Who deserted Jesus during his arrest and trial?" Read Mark 14:43-54 and 66-72. Let your members answer.

Say: "Jesus' disciples thought he had failed. He had been captured by his enemies."

Ask one group, "Who tried Jesus?" Ask another, "Of what did they accuse him?" Ask a third group, "What was Jesus' response?" Read Mark 14:55-64. Let them answer. Say: "The chief priests and others present thought Jesus was a failure. He was found guilty of a crime and would die for it."

Explain why Jesus was taken to Pilate. Tell the events in Mark 15:1-15. (Use your Background Study.)

Say: "Pilate thought Jesus was a failure. The people chose Barabbas to be set free. Jesus would die. Wasn't that failure?"

Tell your students to listen for ways Jesus was hurt and mocked. Read

Mark 14:65 and 15:15-20. Let them answer.

Say: "The soldiers thought Jesus was a failure. They did anything they wanted to him. He was powerless. Surely he was a failure!"

Tell a student to read Mark 15:24-27. Ask: "What time was he put on the cross?" (The third hour, 9 a.m.) "What was his crime?" (He was the King of the Jews.) "Was he crucified alone?" (No, two robbers were on either side of him.)

Have a student read Mark 15:29-32. Ask: "Who mocked Jesus as he hung on the cross?" (passers-by, chief priests, scribes, and robbers)

Ask: "Why did Jesus not come down from the cross? Were the chief priests right when they said, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself?' Discuss this. (Jesus gave his life freely because he knew it was the only way for man to be free from sin and death. He could have come down off the cross, but he did not, so we could have salvation.)

Say: "The passers-by, the robbers, the soldiers all thought Jesus had failed. He hung on the cross, didn't he? He wouldn't come down or save himself, would he? Of course, he was a failure!"

Tell a student to read Mark 15:33-34. Ask: "Why was there darkness over the earth? (It was a terrible and holy time. All man's sin was on Jesus as he hung on the cross.)

Ask: "Do you think God forsook Jesus at this time?" Encourage your class to discuss this. (Holy God cannot relate to sin. Since Jesus bore the sin of all mankind, God could not have fellowship with him.) **Ask:** "Was that hard for Jesus?" Discuss.

Say: "It must have been very painful and horrible for Jesus to be deserted by God. He was totally alone--even without the comfort of God. If we are deserted by friends, we still have God's presence in our lives. Jesus gave up the Presence for our sakes."

Tell a student to read Mark 15:37-39. Explain crucifixion. **Ask:** "Why do you think Jesus died so soon?" Discuss this. (He had been beaten. Most believe that bearing the sin of all men and being separated from God caused his early death.)

APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES

Explain verse 38. Then say: "Jesus lived a sinless life and died as a sacrifice to pay for my sins and yours. His death gave us life. If we accept him as Saviour and Lord we will receive his gift of life."

"All who watched that day thought Jesus had failed. Had he failed? His last words (John 19:30) were, '...It is finished....' Jesus knew he had succeeded. He obeyed God. He willingly died for us so we could live. Jesus did not fail by dying. He succeeded! His success brings us abundant and eternal life through faith in him."

Close in prayer, thanking God for sending his Son to die for us.