

AFTERNOONS IN THE NEST

Good afternoons! That's what we seek to deliver. In an effort to ration our on-screen content delivery, we have developed afternoons in the nest. These sessions will help us to engage in the entirety of the book of Mark and also to provide some needed rest, new study skills and fun times! We hope you find them engaging and meaningful. We also hope you feel equipped with some new ideas and activities you can take with you when you leave MARKnest.

The MCs and the MARKnest webpage will keep you updated with any scheduled events or changing information.

Have fun! Participate in scripture and our creative challenges! Get off your devices! And enjoy your nest!

AFTERNOON ONE

PREPARE

Turn off your phone and laptop (if you have been using) and put them in a different room or hide them in a drawer. Anticipate spending the next 1 hour or so without them.

Find a comfortable place to read.

Take 1-2 minutes to be still. Take deep breaths.

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 1:16-45 out loud.

Context that might be helpful:

Sabbath - derived from verb "sabat" meaning to stop, to cease, or to keep. The Hebrew weekly day of rest and worship. In Jesus' time, besides ceasing from work and activity, it involved religious gathering. People would gather in the local temple/synagogue to hear the scriptures read and explained. (from Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Leprosy - "Leprosy was an unattractive skin disease for which the Bible had prescribed quarantine from the rest of society...Leperers were thus outcasts...Touching a leper was forbidden" (IVP Commentary)

Go back to Mark 1:16-20

Read it through twice.

What phrase or image stands out to you? Write it down.

Simon, Andrew, James and John drop their nets and follow Jesus. Why would they leave their livelihoods to follow Jesus?

Read Mark 1:21-34 twice.

What phrase or image stands out to you? Write it down.

Imagine being one of the crowd either in the temple or at Simon and Andrew's home, what is your impression of Jesus as you watch him cast out evil spirits and heal people of diseases?

Read Mark 1:35-45 twice.

What phrase or image stands out to you?

Instructions:

Put on your jacket and shoes, take this piece of paper and walk out the door (leave your phone at home, bring your umbrella/rain jacket if its raining).*

Walk to the nearest park or trail, somewhere you can be away from most people. Doesn't have to be fancy, just a reasonably isolated place. As you walk, think about

AFTERNOON ONE

your phone filling up with notifications and texts from people urgently wanting to talk to you. How does Jesus remain calm in the midst of “everyone looking for (him)”?

Find a spot to sit or stand comfortably.

Questions:

Once arriving at your spot, practice being present. What are 5 things you see? 5 things you hear? 5 things you feel?

Think of Jesus leaving to an isolated place early in the morning, leaving the crowd of people behind. What compels him to leave people who are looking for him?

These disciples have left everything to follow Jesus. How do you think they feel about their decision after witnessing casting out evil spirits, the healing of their family and others, and chasing Jesus down in an isolated place?

Drawing from this morning’s study and this afternoon’s reading, what is one thing you admire about Jesus so far?

If you are comfortable, take some time to pray in this place. Tell Jesus what you admire about him. Thank him for the beauty you notice in your isolated place.

If you are uncomfortable praying, take some time to appreciate the beauty around you.

Walk home, but take your time.

*If you are able to follow current restrictions in your area and do this exercise, do so at your own comfort. If you are not allowed or not comfortable do your best to sit on a balcony or even position yourself looking out a window.

PLAY

SHOW AND TELL: To help your small group get to know you, here’s a mini scavenger hunt. You’ll begin your evening session with some show and tell before listening to the podcast.

1. Childhood. Find one of your favorite stuffies, security blankets, family photo or something that you associate with childhood joy. If you aren’t at home, feel free to draw it out.

2. Hobbies. Bring an item that shows a hobby you’re into! Not nearby? Scroll through your camera roll or facebook profile pics and find one photo that gives some insight into one of your hobbies.

3. Last book/movie. Bring the last book you read (or are reading) or tell us the latest movie you’ve watched.

AFTERNOON TWO

PREPARE

Welcome. Jesus is inviting you to spend some time together. As you enter this time turn your laptop screen off and get away from all other screens. Ask for generosity to be as fully present as possible to Jesus. Hear Jesus' words to you in today's passage.

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 3:7-4:34 as you walk walk in a nearby park or garden with Jesus (or if it is raining, read the passage before you go out). If no park/garden nearby, find a place with greenery inside or outside your home. Using all your senses, notice the different soil types and plants and how they grow and are affected by their environments.

challenge if you see a bird nest take a picture of it with your hand and post on facebook page.

Questions:

What do you see?

What do you smell?

What do you hear?

What do you taste?

What do you feel?

Take note of the different soil types you see (path, rocky, thorns, good soil) and how plants are flourishing or floundering around you. Ask Jesus to show you what could be flourishing in your life this season as you walk together noticing His creation.

Ask Jesus to show you the current state of your heart as you walk together. What soil type do you identify with the most right now?

Why does the kingdom of God have a secret? What is the secret? Why does he share in parables that might be hard for people "outside" to understand?

(Feel free to share or not share the answers to these questions during check-in with your zoom room)

PLAY

CREATIVE RESPONSE: Exercise your brain and be creative! This is not a matter of artistic ability. Lean into trying something new if art is not something that comes to you naturally.

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Respond to the passage by picking up some art utensils and expressing your interpretation of the text on paper, cardboard, or even a milk carton! How does this passage make you feel? What images are being provoked? What is a phrase or image that stuck out to you in this text?

Choose one feeling/image/or phrase from the passage and make some art.

AFTERNOON THREE

PREPARE

Find a comfortable place to read, listen, and look.
Take 1-2 minutes to be still. Take deep breaths.

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 6:1-29 out loud.

Go back to Mark 6:1-6a (and Mark 3:20-21)
Read it through again.
What phrase or image stands out to you? Write it down.

Read Mark 6:6b-13 again.
What phrase or image stands out to you? Write it down.

Read Mark 6:14-29 again.
What phrase or image stands out to you? Write it down.

Go to Bible gateway and listen to Mark 6:1-29 in a different translation. [Click this link](#) to listen to the Message translation.

Write down any additional phrases or images that stand out to you.

AFTERNOON THREE

Jesus Reject at Nazareth – Alexandra Bida



This sketch is based on Jesus rejection at Nazareth; **look** closely at the details. What do you think it was like for Jesus to experience these responses from his former neighbors? Bring these thoughts, and your reflections from reading and listening to the passage, to God in prayer.

AFTERNOON THREE

Jesus sending out the disciples - James Tissot



This painting is based on Jesus sending out the 12; **look** closely at the details. What difference do you think it made for the disciples to be commissioned by Jesus? To what work could Jesus be commissioning you to in this season? Bring these thoughts, and your reflections from reading and listening to the passage, to God in prayer.

AFTERNOON THREE

The Beheading of St John the Baptist - Caravaggio



This [painting](#) is based on the execution of John the Baptist; **look** closely at the details. The artist chose to include himself in the painting by signing his name in the blood from John's neck; look at facial responses of the other characters in the scene, which of them most closely connects to your response to this part of Mark 6? Bring these thoughts, and your reflections from reading and listening to the passage, to God in prayer.

AFTERNOON THREE

PLAY

In case you haven't quite managed to put on your quarantine 15, today we're going to broadcasting a live baking show! James, and if all goes to plan his 4-year-old son, will be teaching you how to bake ginger cardamom muffins. They'll be broadcasting from their home from 3-3:30pm (watching details will be given during the week).

Feel free to just watch but we'd love for you to join in. You'll need the following:

12-15 cup muffin tray and a working oven

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cardamom

- 2 tbsp of syrup (corn, maple – whatever you have)
- 100g butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk

SABBATH (DAY FOUR)

SABBATH INTRODUCTION:

In the middle of your MARKnest week, you are invited to celebrate a day of Sabbath! The intent of this handout is to guide you into your day of rest. Consider this Sabbath day as an experiment with God where you'll learn new patterns to consider adding into your weekly life schedule. Sabbath keeping is meant to guide us into God's rest so that we can see ourselves and God rightly. It is not meant to be a legalistic law, enforced by the Pharisees to look pious. It is a gift from God who intends for us to flourish as we live fully human.

Sabbath involves two things:

1. *Putting down our work* to acknowledge that we are not defined by our work. As we put it down we trust that God is still working on our behalf.
2. *Picking up practices of worship and communion with God.* These practices remind us who we really are. We become refreshed in our true identity in God's presence.

STRUCTURING YOUR SABBATH:

Self-Examination: Many of us will be new to the practice of keeping the Sabbath. For those of us that already keep the Sabbath, in this season of life at home where our work/school responsibilities look different, we all need to examine the ways our Sabbath practices may need to change.

Practices: We are asking you to try 2-3 primary practices today that will draw you closer to God both individually and in community. Before deciding on any other activities in the day ask yourself: will this be life giving or draining? Will this bring me closer to God or further away?

Rethinking Work: As many of us are either are trying to work at home, are done school and bored out of our minds, or stressed because we've been laid off from our part-time jobs, rest seems difficult or impossible. But we believe God is able to give you the rest you need in Him in any and all circumstances. The primary "work" that is common for us, is navigating the online world as our primary source of connection. Our suggestion for you today is to take a break from this "work". Be unplugged: one hour a day, one day a week, one week a year (Andy Crouch suggests this in his book, *The Tech-wise Family*). Today's focus will be a day offline in our week.

Application: After MARKnest plan for 1 day/week offline (e.g. Saturday, so you can attend your online churches and do your school work Monday to Friday). Keep your lists of life giving and draining activities to refer to for a daily 1 hour off technology throughout the rest of your week and after MARKnest.

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Online Sunday Church Services: It is good to be involved in your online church services and if you would like to attend your online regular church community or “visit” a friends church you are welcome to. Pay attention to how you are doing considering the amount of video calling we are engaged in and consider whether it is best for you to join or take a day off from your church’s online services and fellowship groups for *this week only*. If you choose to not attend, be released from shame and engage in good rest offline! Communicate with your church communities if you need to about not being present.

INTRODUCTORY SABBATH SCHEDULE

*adjust as appropriate to your needs

Morning	Sleep in, have a restful morning. Eat breakfast.
12: 00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 1:30 pm	Reflection: life giving and draining activities
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Scripture Reflection: Mark 6:53 – 8:21
2:30 – 6: 00 pm	Do your one life giving activity and whatever else you will find restful.
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Dinner
7:00 – 9: 30 pm	Life giving free time

EXPANDED SABBATH SCHEDULE

*adjust as appropriate to your needs

Morning	Sleep in, have a restful morning. Eat breakfast.
11:30 am	Centering Prayer (20 min)
12: 00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 1:30 pm	Reflection: life giving and draining activities
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Scripture Reflection: Mark 6:53 – 8:21
2:30 – 6: 00 pm	Do your one life giving activity and whatever else you will find restful.
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Dinner
7:00 – 7:30 pm	Worship
7:30 – 9: 30 pm	Life giving free time
9:30 pm	Examen

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THREE SABBATH PRACTICES:

1. Centering Prayer

*optional for Introductory Sabbath Schedule

Centering Prayer: a historic prayer exercise that helps us step away from our worries and anxious thoughts for a little while and focus on God who loves us.

Step 1: Set apart about 20 minutes and

Step 2: Sit comfortably with eyes closed.

Step 3: Choose a word or phrase that reminds you of God's presence like Jesus, Emmanuel (God is with us), Maranatha (come Lord Jesus), Peace . . . If an image of Jesus feels more appropriate for you, focus on that. Images could be Jesus in a boat calming the storm, Jesus healing the man with the deformed hand or speaking with the bleeding woman.

Step 4: With God's help, repeat the word gently in your mind in time with your breathing. Let all other thoughts go.

To help with distractions, imagine a river and that God is the river bed. You are with God there. When you become aware of thoughts wandering, return gently to the sacred word or image. It can be helpful to imagine letting your distracting thoughts float away on a river as you return to your sacred word or image. Distractions may happen often in a minute. Do not judge yourself. With God's help continue to practice noticing the distraction, releasing it and returning to God. How wonderful to be welcomed back by God every time. Gradually you will notice that you are separate from your worries and with God's help can release them even for a few minutes.

Step 5: End the prayer by remaining in silence with eyes closed for a couple minutes. Perhaps recite a simple prayer. (e.g. "Your faith has made you well" "Go in peace" Mark 5: 34 or "Be still and know that I am God"). Allow your mind and body to readjust to the external senses. Remember this feeling of silence and connection throughout your active day.

2. Reflection & Activity:

What gives you life, what drains your life?

- a. **Life Giving:** Write a list about what activities and priorities energize you. These are things that make you feel fully alive as God created you. You feel like your true self and you feel close to God. When you do these things you tend to forget about time and enjoy each moment. These could be active things, things with others, these could be quiet things alone.

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- b. **Life Draining:** Write a list about what activities and priorities drain you and ultimately lead you away from your best self. These are things you might do out of compulsion, or as a way to avoid tension. However you don't feel more rested, and you likely feel farther from God and from your true self.
1. Spend 20-30 min only on list making (Don't make this into work)
 2. Do at least one lifegiving activity during your day today (keep your list for your 1 hour off technology per day throughout the rest of your week and after MARKnest)

3. Scripture Reflection:

Scripture Reading Mark 6: 53 – 8: 21:

Read your passage once. Don't rush! This is *God's Word!*

Dwelling in Scripture and God's Presence:

Slowly read the passage again, out loud. Reflect on what this passage tells you about God. Spend some time talking to God about what stood out to you.

Application:

The Disciples have hard hearts following the feeding of the 5000 (Mark 6:52). In this passage Jesus notes people's hearts being far from God (Mark 7:6), that it is what is within that defiles a person (Mark 7:20), and asks if the disciples hearts are hardened (Mark 8:17).

Take some time in silence with Jesus, examining the state of your heart. Talk to God about what you have heard or what comes to mind. Then journal about what you have learned about yourself/heard from God. If you are having trouble, reread the parable of the soils (Mark 4:1-20). What soil type are you currently?

Further Reflection on Sabbath:

In Mark 8: 14-21 Jesus tells his disciples to beware of the leaven (rising agent in bread = influence) of the Pharisees and of Herod. What are the influences in your own life, either pious religious or worldly influences (e.g. politicians, social media, advertisements, culture). On a day unplugged from technology, how do we notice the absence of those influences affecting our thoughts and actions?

Debrief your experience of Sabbath with a family member or housemate, and talk about it with your Zoom group tomorrow.

SABBATH (DAY FOUR)

Additional Resources/Suggestions:

Exceptions for people who live alone:

If you are in need of a human connection or prayer, turn your phone on and give someone a call. Turn off and avoid the temptation to scroll, watch Netflix etc. after.

Lunch/Dinner:

Eat with your family, housemates, or consciously in the presence of God.

Life Giving Activity ideas:

Nap, be in nature, exercise, sit on your balcony and breathe fresh air, create, read a book, recreational time with family, housemates, by yourself, call a friend (if you live alone) or talk to a family member/housemate about what you are learning about yourself and/or God in this day or during MARKnest so far. Pray together.

Worship ideas:

Sabbath is a day unto the Lord. All we do can be worship and express our gratitude to him. Some ideas: Make a list of 30 things you are grateful for. Sing a worship song(s) with your family, housemates, or by yourself. Without technology, see if there is a line of a song you can remember. It's ok if you don't know all the words. Write a poem. Sing/read a psalm aloud. E.g. Psalm 23.

Examen:

Examen is a practice of reviewing our recent past to find God and God's blessings in life. Adapted from Mark Thibodeaux, SJ <https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/ignatian-spirituality/examen-and-ignatian-prayer/how-can-i-pray-try-the-daily-examen/>

Follow these 5 steps based on St. Ignatius Examen prayer.

Step 1: Give thanksgiving. Review my day and thank God for all the things I'm grateful for today.

Step 2: Ask for the Spirit. Ask God to fill you with his Spirit so that the Spirit can lead you through this soul-searching. Otherwise, I'm liable to hide in denial, wallow in self-pity, or seethe in self-loathing.

Step 3: Discernment. Ask God to reveal moments when you did not think or act well or when you felt distant from God. Then look at moments in your day when you were close to God and lived well.

Step 4: Ask for forgiveness and healing. If I have sinned, I ask God to forgive me and set me straight again. If I have not sinned but simply made a mistake, I ask for healing of any harm that might have been done. I ask for help to get over it and move on. I

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also ask for wisdom to discern how I might better handle such tricky moments in the future.

Step 5: Pray about the next day. Imagine tomorrow and ask for God's wisdom on how to handle the day. Look forward to tomorrow with hopeful and joyful anticipation knowing God is with you at all times.

AFTERNOON FIVE

PREPARE

Welcome to this time set apart to be with Jesus. As you enter the afternoon give thanks to Jesus who has invited you to be with Him here and has provided for this space. Acknowledge His presence with you. He has been with you throughout the whole school year and knows all that you have poured out in this year. Spring is a time of transition.

Consider what you need today from Jesus. During this day I invite you to take time to let Jesus speak to your heart, soul, mind and body. The following exercise may help you enter into Jesus presence and reflect on your journey. May Jesus meet you uniquely as you are today. Peace be with you!

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 9:2-10:31 and notice what stands out to you. Where something stands out, take time to ponder what is being said. Think or write all that comes to your mind about that part of the passage – then ask – why is Jesus helping me notice this? How does this speak to my life today? Journal, doodle, or make a word map of your experience of Jesus in the text. Note your feelings, challenges, and any invitations you feel Jesus giving you.

PLAY

RECREATE A SCENE FROM MARK *there are prizes to be won!*

- 1) Take a photo of a re-created scene in Mark and post it on the MARKnest 2020 group wall, along with a brief sentence describing which scene you are recreating
- 2) Deadline to submit is before dinner! (5:30pm PST, 8:30pm EST)
- 3) The InterVarsity staff team will review all the photos and announce the winners the following day. Prizes will be following shortly after.

Here are some of ideas for scenes you could recreate. Feel free to be creative and do something not on this list, but still within the book of Mark.

- Feeding of the 5000
- Disciples dropping nets to follow Jesus
- Healing of the paralytic (dont put a hole in your roof...)
- Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:2-13)
- Jesus healing a boy with an unclean spirit (Mark 9:14-29)
- The rich young man – camel going through the eye of a needle (Mark 10:17-31)

AFTERNOON SIX

PREPARE

Turn off your phone and laptop (if you have been using) and put them in a different room or hide them in a drawer. Anticipate spending the next 1 hour or so without them.

Find a comfortable place to read.

Take 2-3 minutes to be still. Take deep breaths.

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 11:27-12:44 out loud.

After reading through it, revisit the passages below and reflect on the table and questions provided.

Jesus is approached and questioned 4 times during these scenes in the temple. For each of these passages, fill out this table.

Passage in Mark	Who approaching Jesus?	What is their question or challenge?	How does Jesus respond?
11:27-33			
12:13-17			
12:18-27			

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Passage in Mark	Who approaching Jesus?	What is their question or challenge?	How does Jesus respond?
12:28-34			

Mark 11:32 and Mark 12:12 highlight fear as the motivating factor for the religious leaders. What should their motivation be?

What are situations or times when fear has been a motivating factor for you?

In Mark 12:28-34, Jesus says the most important commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." This is quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18.

In what scenes in this afternoons readings do you see this love for God and neighbours being exemplified?

What comes to mind as the ways Jesus exemplifies loving God and loving neighbours from what we have read in Mark?

How would your actions and decisions change if love for God and neighbours became the motivating factor?

Close your afternoon praying against fear and towards love as the motivator for your decisions and actions. Thank Jesus for his example.

PLAY

SkipTheDishes! (or Doordash or Uber Eats or whatever you want to use).

If you have filled out the online form to participate in today's skipthedishes circle, **be home between 2-3PM** so that you can be present for your order. You hopefully will have already ordered for your person. Keep your phone on in case your skip-giver needs to get a hold of you for pickup orders!

Tomorrow is the online art show. If you would like to submit a work of art spend time starting or finishing that up today! Refer to instructions from Kim Nguyen-Stone.

AFTERNOON SEVEN

PREPARE

Anticipate spending the next 1 hour or so without your devices and turn them off. Take your Bible, a notebook and pen. Find a place where you can be comfortable and quiet. Talk with God about your deep desires. What do you long for in your relationship with God? Take a few deep breaths. Place your concerns before God as you begin this time of scripture reading and prayer.

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 14: 26 – 15: 41 once through.

Then choose 3 of the sections to go through the Gospel Imagination method. If you choose to do all 9 sections, take a break every 3 passages.

1. Mark 14: 26 – 31 (imagine yourself as Peter or yourself)
2. Read Mark 14: 32 – 42 (imagine yourself as a disciple or yourself)
3. Read Mark 14: 43 – 52 (imagine yourself as Judas, the crowd or a disciple or yourself)
4. Read Mark 14: 53 – 65 (imagine yourself as a religious leader or yourself)
5. Read Mark 14: 66 – 72 (imagine yourself as Peter or yourself)
6. Read Mark 15: 1 – 15 (imagine yourself as Pilate, a religious leader, the crowd or yourself)
7. Read Mark 15: 16 – 20 (imagine yourself as a soldier or yourself)
8. Read Mark 15: 21 – 32 (imagine yourself as Simon, a soldier, a passerby, religious leader or yourself)
9. Read Mark 15: 33 – 41 (imagine yourself as a bystander, the Roman officer, Mary Magdalene or Mary the mother of James or yourself)

Gospel Imagination – using the imagination, our senses, and repetition to internalize and personalize a scripture passage

Gospel Imagination Steps:

- A. Read** using all your senses to imagine the scene.
- B. Notice** what words or phrases stand out for you? What do they mean to you? Repeat the words softly to yourself. Let them speak to your heart. Return to the word or phrase when you notice your mind starting to wander
- C. Imagine** that you are there with the Jesus and Peter/the disciples/religious leaders/Pilate/soldiers/passersby/Simon/bystanders/The Roman soldier/Mary or Mary? Close your eyes and replay in your mind, watching Jesus interact with each of them. Imagine Jesus interacting with you in the scene. How do you feel? What do you say to Jesus? How does Jesus respond to you? What does

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this say about Jesus' character? Wait and see what ideas God brings to your mind.

- D. Enjoy** Jesus' presence with you in whatever shape that may take. Take time to let the grace Jesus offers you sink in. Rest quietly with Him.
- E. Write** down something of your experience, feelings, insights (both comforting and difficult). What did you notice about God? about yourself? What is Jesus inviting you to think about or do because of this prayer time?

PLAY

Participate in and/or watch the virtual art show.