

This first week of Bible study will look a little different than the following weeks as we want to get a broad overview of the book of Mark, helping us to put into context where this gospel account fits into the larger story of Scripture and the history of God's people. To do that, we will spend time this week learning about the book's author and will also watch an overview video that will help us understand the movement and themes of the book itself.

Some recommendations for your first meeting are:

- Bring nametags and sharpies; have each group member print their first name on a tag and wear it. Repeat this for the first four weeks.
- Give details on day/time/place of the study. Include an ending time and stick to it.
- Have members each say their name and one reason they are in this Bible study.
- Pass around a sheet for names, email address, and phone numbers.

Each week there will be four sections to your time together: 1. Context, 2. Content, 3. Application, 4. Prayer

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The author is anonymous, but the book is traditionally attributed to John Mark, who was a companion of both Peter and Paul, the most prominent leaders of the early church.

Take a few minutes to look up these Scripture passages, which help to reveal Mark's history and relationship with both Peter and Paul. If you prefer not to look up each individual passage, you can walk your group through this history using the notes provided.

### **Companion of Peter**

The beginning of this passage describes Peter's miraculous escape from prison. Verses 11-12 describe how Peter went to the home of John Mark's mother after his escape, which seems to be a hub for members of the early church.

Peter describes John Mark as his "son", suggesting an intimate relationship between the two church leaders.

### **Companion of Paul**

Paul and Barnabas take John Mark to their home in Antioch after delivering financial gifts to the church in Jerusalem.

Barnabas and Paul take John Mark on their first missionary journey, but he leaves early in that mission to return to Jerusalem.

Barnabas and Paul have a disagreement. Barnabas takes John Mark with him to Cyprus.

Paul and John Mark seem to repair their relationship after the earlier split, as Paul asks the church in Colossae to welcome John Mark into their fellowship.

As Paul is languishing in prison in Rome, he asks for John Mark to come to him, saying that "he is helpful to me in my ministry."

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