

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Jesus Encounters Varying Responses
Mark 3:7-35

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

A good, brief description of the Sea of Galilee can be found on the website: www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/galileeseaof

It also has links to other sites for further information. Please use Christian insight and mature judgement in choosing internet website information to share with your home church.

Gathering Time Leader:

Bring a large piece of poster board or other backdrop.

Write the following names in letters large enough for the group to see on pieces of paper or cards. During the actual activity, roll small pieces of masking tape on the backs of the cards as you stick them on the poster board.

Stephen, Nicodemus, Paul, Luke, Timothy, Zacchaeus, Bartimaeus, Ananias, Barnabas, Joseph of Arimathea. Also, look up the list of the 12 apostles in Mark 3:16-19 and write each of their names. Mix up the list.

Bible Study Leader:

Write "Who is Jesus?" in large letters on a piece of poster board or newsprint. You will begin the Bible Study with this question.

(Note: For those of us who cannot print neat and straight, fingerpaints applied sparingly to butcher paper with a ½ inch brush will easily create interesting and colourful teaching aids. The paint will keep well in jars for a long time).

Worship Time Leader:

Write the words to the old hymn "Blest Be the Tie that Binds" on a sheet of paper. Separate the four verses and cut the paper with a verse on each strip. You will hand these out to 4 participants at the opening of the Worship Time.

Music Sources:

"We Are One in the Bond of Love"

"The Family of God"

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Jesus Encounters Varying Responses

Focal Text

Mark 3:7-35

Background Text

Mark 3:7-35

Main Idea

People responded to Jesus on the basis of their willingness to do the will of God.

Question to Explore

Why do people respond in varying ways to Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To help the class evaluate the depth and nature of their response to Jesus

Gathering together:

Note to leader: The suggestion for the following activity should have been prepared in advance. Check the “Prior to the Session” box at the beginning of the printed session for this week.

Place the names of the possible disciples on the floor and have the group choose those whom they think were among the twelve that Jesus choose. Stick the group’s selection on the large poster board or newsprint. Correct the list when you read Mark 3:13-19 below.

First thoughts:

Choosing the Twelve

Mark 3:13-19

Introduction

Most every pastor started their ministry with the desire to preach to a great crowd of people. Not many ever see that desire fulfilled. Perhaps that is not the most important part of a person's ministry—to see the great crowds of people coming to hear them speak or preach.

As we read the third chapter of Mark, we can surely see that a multitude of people did respond to Jesus. In fact, the response was so great that he and his disciples had difficulty finding time to eat. But an interesting thing is noted. Jesus almost seemed to avoid the crowds.

Why Jesus Chose the Twelve

The crowds pressed around Jesus to touch him, to be touched by him, to hear him and probably a good many crowded around him out of curiosity. Right when Jesus seemed to be most successful and certainly when he was attracting a lot of attention, "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those He wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve...." (3:13-14). Why did he choose so few from among so many?

Mark answers that question, partially at least, in the rest of verse 14 and verse 15. Read these two verses. Jesus came "proclaiming the good news of God" (1:14). He appointed the 12 ***"that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons"*** (3:14-16).

But again ask yourself the question, "Why so few?" Think back through history and recall some of the great leaders. Most of them were able to preach or speak to great crowds of people. However, the ones we usually remember the most are those who selected a few from among the many and did as Jesus did. And what was that? Look again at verse 14, ***"He appointed twelve—designating them apostles." He did this that "they might be with Him."*** Great leaders select from among their followers a few people they can give themselves to by spending time with them, training them, encouraging them and giving them responsible assignments. This is done to help them lead, to help them carry on the ministry of the leader.

Jesus was and is the greatest of all leaders. He knew he had a very short period of time to see the results of his ministry continue beyond his life time. Do you realize Jesus is still "appointing" followers to "be with him" and "to send them out" – to be his witnesses? How are you responding to his appointment?

Conclusion

Jesus appointed the 12. He named them apostles. Their names were also recorded. Remember, Jesus calls each one of his sheep, his followers, by name. He knows each one personally. His ministry continues through you, his ***"brothers and his sisters"*** (3:35). If none of his followers were obedient to him, is it possible that his ministry would cease?

Ask this question: “Have I ever written someone off because they didn’t seem to have what it takes?” Jesus did not write Judas off though he knew that Judas would betray him.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

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Introduction to your personal study:

In 1956 a young man from Tupelo Mississippi recorded for the pop music charts a jumpy new tune called Heartbreak Hotel. The success of that hit made Elvis Presley an instant celebrity and practically a household name in the United States. He went on to record countless songs in his country rock style and star in thirty-some movies. Teenaged girls swooned at his concerts, crowds of young people adopted his hair style and characteristic movements, and his loyal fan club numbered in the thousands very quickly. However, not everyone was equally impressed with this young singer with the new brand of music called rock and roll. A large contingent of the establishment thought that Presley was corrupting the moral values of the nations' young people and ruining the next generation. They said his music was an abomination and lobbied to have it banned from the radio waves. 'Religious' people in particular were offended by his style of performance. Many hated him, but many more loved him and followed his every movement. Why such a different response to the same person?

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Jesus came on the Galilean scene teaching, preaching, and healing. Thousands followed him looking for miracles. Many loved and obeyed him because of who he was. Some misunderstood him. Still others hated him and accused him of being satanic! Study Mark 3 to discover the varying responses to Christ on the part of the crowds, the disciples, his family, and the religious establishment.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Crushing Crowds (3:7-12)

3:7-10 The time came for Jesus to leave the synagogues and the potential conflict there, and go out into the open air by the lakeshore. His preaching attracted people from all around that area and well beyond. Not only country folks came, but the citizens of Jerusalem as well. People from as far away as one hundred miles came, even from foreign territories of Tyre and Sidon. Jews and Gentiles alike swarmed to see and hear in person the one they had heard incredible stories about. They knew very little of Jesus’ mission or what he stood for – they knew just that he was able to miraculously heal the sick and demon possessed.

Many people were so anxious to be touched by Jesus they were actually pushing and shoving themselves or their loved ones toward him. They felt that if they could just come in contact with this miracle worker they might be healed. Jesus was genuinely in danger of being crushed by the crowds, so he had the disciples ready a boat he could step into. There he could continue preaching from the relative safety of the water.

3:11-12 It seems that the evil spirits Jesus cast out were the only ones who recognized who Jesus really was. “Whenever they caught sight of him, they would fall down before him, shrieking out ‘*You are the Son of God!*’” (Living Bible). But Jesus ordered them to be quiet. He had his own timetable for revelation. There was still much teaching to do about what kind of messiah he would be. And beyond that, Jesus did not want the testimony of Satan’s demons. His own disciples would be the ones who would openly declare that Jesus was the Son of God, come to bring salvation to his people.

Choosing a Few Good Men (3:13-19)

3:13-15 After the excitement of the lakeside experience, Jesus went up into the hill country and asked certain followers to join him there. From among these disciples, he chose twelve men to be his special companions. They would spend time with him

constantly, learning his ways and preparing to go out to preach his message. Perhaps the number twelve was a parallel to the twelve tribes in Israel. Now Jesus was building a New Kingdom. These twelve men would be crucial to the continued spread of the gospel once Jesus was gone. He chose the twelve for two reasons: (1) to be disciples – learners of his ways, his teachings, and his attitudes by spending much time with him. A modern equivalent of this word might be apprentice. He chose them also (2) to be apostles – those who would be sent out on preaching missions as his ambassadors with his authority.

3:16-19 That day Jesus chose a varied group of men to be his special companions. Although we do not know a great deal about all these men, we know that among them were fishermen, a tax collector, and a religious nationalist (zealot). None were wealthy; none had great social positions, special education, or even training. It is interesting to see that Jesus nicknamed James and John ‘sons of thunder’. Apparently, John didn’t start out with the reputation of ‘apostle of love’. It is encouraging to see what Christ was able to do with such a diverse, unseemly group. The disciples accepted Jesus’ identity and message – they responded with obedience out of love for Christ. Jesus saw the potential among them. Not all became what Jesus intended, but the potential was there. Today the potential for excellence as disciples of Christ lies within each one of us also.

Misunderstanding and Slander (3:20-35)

3:20-21 Jesus and his disciples returned from the hillside to a home in town in order to refresh themselves, but again the crowds surged in on them. The chaos was so great they could not even get themselves something to eat. The crowds were completely insensitive to Jesus’ needs – they just clamoured for more time with him. In all the busy confusion, friends (possibly family) came to take Jesus home to Nazareth. They thought he was behaving irrationally. He had left the security of home and his work in the carpentry shop. Now he was in direct conflict with the religious authorities, and besides that, he was not getting the food and rest he needed. They were mistaken in their thinking, but they probably acted out of right motives of concern for Jesus’ well being.

3:22-30 At this point the Jewish teachers of the law (scribes) accused Jesus of being in league with Beelzebub, another word for Satan. The teachers seemed to be fairly familiar with the practice of exorcism (casting out demons). They declared that it was by Satan’s power Jesus was able to drive out demons. Jesus pointed out to them through a parable story that their accusations were illogical, and, even worse, blasphemous. Satan and his demons obviously worked together. If it was by Satan’s power that the demons were cast out, then Satan was actually fighting against himself. He went on to say that if you intend to rob a strong man’s house, you had better first overpower and tie up the strong man. Christ was able to cast out demons – he was stronger than the strong man (Satan). He overpowered Satan and took control by divine power.

Then Jesus warned the religious leaders that they were in danger of committing an unforgivable sin—blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. 1 John 1:9 tells us that God is willing to forgive any sin that we repent of. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit reveals a spiritual condition that is incapable of forgiveness—lack of repentance. That comes about by repeatedly refusing to hear the prompting of the Spirit to recognize sinfulness. Unless we recognize our sin, we cannot feel repentance and be forgiven. No repentance = no forgiveness. The scribes had looked at the love of God in Jesus and labelled it the power of Satan. They could not discern between good and evil.

Only those who have never come to know Jesus as Lord can commit this unforgivable sin. Coming to know the saving grace of God through Jesus is the way to be assured of never committing the unpardonable sin. Do not despair of those loved ones you think are guilty of this – only God is able to determine the condition of a person's heart. Keep praying that they will recognize their need for forgiveness.

3:31-35 It is not clear whether this is a second incident with Jesus' family (vs.21), or whether the situation with the scribes had interrupted the flow of the story. At any rate, Jesus' mother and brothers enter the picture. John 17:5 tells us that his brothers were not, at this time, believers. Because the family misunderstood Jesus' mission, they felt it best to take him home before he got hurt. Jesus was not unkind in his response. He saw the situation as another teachable moment. He used family symbols to teach us that spiritual kinship is far more important than biological kinship. Those who do the will of God are our spiritual family—those who share a common experience in Christ, a common obedience to him, and a common goal of winning the lost to him. Jesus was not suggesting that we ignore or abandon our biological families. He was saying that our devotion to God must come first. Jesus was not persuaded by his family to give up his mission and return home with them. Neither must we permit well-intentioned loved ones to steer us away from doing God's will in our lives.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

People responded to Jesus in a variety of ways. His family misunderstood him and did not accept his true identity. The crowds were in it for what they could get—food, miracles, or sensationalism. They were willing to use Jesus to meet their own needs. The disciples, although they didn't understand clearly all that Christ was leading them into, were willing to follow out of love for Jesus. The religious leaders vilified Christ, afraid for their own positions, blinded by Satan. Our own response to Christ will depend on our willingness to do what God is asking of us. We have the privilege of allowing God to shape our lives into something useful in his kingdom.

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**

2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Jesus Encounters Varying Responses

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Mark 3:7-35

Background Text

Mark 3:7-35

Main Idea

People responded to Jesus on the basis of their willingness to do the will of God.

Questions to Explore

Why do people respond in varying ways to Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To help the class evaluate the depth and nature of their response to Jesus

Connect with Life:

1. Set out on the table a large piece of bristol board or poster paper along with several marking pens. Write "Who Is Jesus?" across the sign. As members arrive, invite them to jot down responses to that question that they might have encountered along the way.

Ask: "What are some beliefs about him?"

Ask: "Why is there such a variety of responses to Christ?"

Tell the group: In this study, we'll see that even when Jesus was here on earth, there were a variety of responses to him.

Guide the Study:

2. Have someone read the entire passage. Be listening to discover four different responses to Christ in this text (refer to notes – acceptance, misunderstanding, use, rejection.)

3. Ask the group to imagine what the scene at the lakeside might have looked like.

Ask: "What were some of the possible responses of the crowd and why?"

4. Remind participants of the reason Christ did not allow the demons to proclaim him as messiah. Ask: "Is knowing about Jesus enough to save someone?"

5. Have the group brainstorm what they know of the disciples and what their qualifications were. Mention the 'sons of thunder'.

Say: Isn't it encouraging knowing the progress that can be made when there is genuine commitment to Christ?

Ask group members, "How do you think the disciples were affected by the time they spent with Jesus?"

Ask: "How does the time you spend with Jesus affect your activities?"

6. Ask: "What is the unpardonable sin?" Refer to Teacher Preparation notes for details. Use the analogy of human muscles.

Suggest: If you stay in bed long enough, you lose your ability to walk. If you completely reject the wooing of the Holy Spirit repeatedly, a time will come when you are no longer able to discern truth or recognize goodness. Remember that it is the Holy Spirit that does the convicting of sin in our lives. Assure the group that only non-Christians are able to commit this sin. Worrying about having committed the unforgivable sin is evidence that you haven't—the Holy Spirit is still being heard in your heart.

7. Discuss why Jesus' family thought he was unbalanced. (See John 7:2-5 regarding the unbelief of Jesus' brothers early in the ministry of Jesus). Possible answers are:

- (1) He left the security of home and occupation.
- (2) He ignored religious conformity.
- (3) He chose the company of ignorant and sinful men.

- (4) He took risks that were not sensible.
- (5) He didn't care what others thought of him.
- (6) He wasn't getting the food and rest he needed.

Ask: "Was Jesus persuaded by his family to turn aside from the course God had set out for him?"

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the Youth!!! Take Ten page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

8. Ask: How would you answer someone who asked you these questions: "What is it like to be in the family of God?"

Ask: How does it affect your brain, emotions, and senses?

Ask: In God's family, what do you know, feel, see, or hear that is different from persons not in the family of God."

9. Ask: "What was Jesus trying to teach us about commitment in these verses?"

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Jesus Encounters Varying Responses **Mark 3:7-35**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

How Would You Choose Disciples?

Pretend for the moment that you, as a team, have the responsibility of choosing a group of 12 other youths. They are going to be your disciples for three years. At the end of that time, you will send them out to share the message of Jesus and begin churches around the world.

What **information, attitudes, and hands-on experiences** will you share with your group before they begin that task?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Jesus Encounters Varying Responses***
Mark 3:7-35**Beginning the Service:**

Hand out the verses of the hymn “Blest Be the Tie that Binds” to four youth or adults. Ask each one to think for a moment about the meaning of their stanza and briefly share with the congregation. Complete this exercise by singing together the hymn.

Offering:**Praying for the world:**

Remind the group of ministries being undertaken by other churches in your area. Summer ministries may include Vacation Bible Schools, children and youth camps, sports ministries, etc. Winter ministries may include Christmas cantatas, care for the homeless, and other. Pray for those churches and their ministries.

Sing together “We Are One in the Bond of Love”.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

The Most Important Relationship in Life
Mark 3:7-35**Introduction**

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***Jesus Encounters Varying Responses* – 02-04-03-en**

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What is the most important relationship in your life? Is it with your family? Is it with those with whom you work or go to school? What are your priority relationships? Jesus makes a very important and key statement regarding relationships. Does your relationship to God have priority? Read 3:33, 35. Doing the will of God is what qualifies you to have a family relationship with him.

To have this family relationship means you cannot be divided in your thinking or in your relationship with God. To be divided is to be destroyed (3:24). This family relationship must have priority. There will be many great blessings come to you when you are his completely. You will be free to do his will. You will be free to enjoy everything God has for you.

What did Jesus teach about family relationships?

Read 3:31-35 to see what Jesus taught about family ties. You will also see what the qualifications are for a person to be a member of Jesus' family. He said that spiritual union with him is the all important relationship. It becomes real the very moment a person receives Jesus Christ through faith. The moment a person is born into the family of God is the very moment that person becomes a brother or sister with Jesus and with one another.

The family relationship with Jesus is affirmed when the Christian does what the Father wants them to do (3:35). What are some characteristics of members of the same family? Family members often have some of the same physical features. Each of my four children is unique, but it is easy to see similar features, mannerisms, habits and looks that are alike. The same is true with the family of God.

Several common features affirm true kinship. All the members of God's spiritual family had a common experience through faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. They have similar interests. Obedience to the same Father and the common relationship with the same Father indicates family ties. All members of God's spiritual family have the same eternal destiny.

What are some ways that a family can be divided against itself?

It seems that when Jesus began his public ministry his siblings did not agree with him. They thought he was out of his mind (3:21). Misunderstanding will divide a family. Perhaps they were jealous because of his growing popularity. Maybe they didn't like it because he was no longer contributing to the family income. They may have even thought their mother, Mary, was showing favoritism to Jesus.

Have any of these issues been a problem in your family? Read how Jesus handled all the encounters he had (3:20-21, 31-35). He would always help each person to see the solution to their difficulty by giving it to himself or his heavenly Father to resolve the problem and find the true answers. It seems Jesus did not do much counselling. He

did not help people try to understand who they were nor to improve their self-image. Jesus simply pointed people to himself as the truth and as the answer.

If a Christian sins, if a Christian is disobedient, that person is divided and will therefore miss the things of God. There cannot be sin in a Christian's heart and at the same time enjoy the things God has for him or her (3:24-25).

Call to Commitment:

To do the will of the Father is to be his friend, his brother, his family. During this week, and as you spend time with those you love, talk about some ways there may be hurtful divisions in your family. Discuss answers to these issues. Read Mark, chapter three again. Think about this most important relationship with the Father through Jesus. Are you family?

Concluding the Service:

Sing together: "The Family of God".

Say: Please take the slip of paper given you before the service and let's read the verse together as God's blessing on our church this week:

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Copy for each person to read together as the concluding benediction to the service:
Cut into strips

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

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