

Leader Preparation Guide

Go Home to Your Friends

Movement Five: Sending · Mark 5:1-20; Luke 10:1-20

SESSION OVERVIEW

Discovery Aim

Discover that the first person in St. Mark's Gospel commissioned to proclaim what the Lord has done for him is a man Jesus refused to let follow him, that the man asked in Greek for exactly what the Twelve had been given, and that he was sent instead to the hardest possible audience: the people who knew him before.

Catholic Touchstone

The lay faithful are sent into the ordinary places where they already live, and the mission is specific to each person rather than interchangeable. Anyone who has truly met Christ does not need lengthy training before speaking about him.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A pastoral safety note, before anything else

Mark 5:1-5 describes a man living among the tombs, uncontrollable, crying out night and day and bruising himself with stones. Some in your room will hear that as a description of severe mental illness or self harm, and some will hear it because they have lived near it.

Handle it cleanly and once. The Gospel presents this as possession. The Church distinguishes possession from illness, and requires medical and psychological evaluation before a solemn or major exorcism precisely because the two are not to be confused (see CCC 1673 and the applicable diocesan norms). Nothing in this session licenses anyone to diagnose anybody.

Say it briefly, do not make a topic of it, and move to the part of the passage the session is actually about. If someone in the room is carrying self harm or a family member in crisis, notice and do not pursue it publicly. Where there is any sign of present risk, do not leave it for the week: speak with them privately before they leave, follow your diocesan safeguarding policy, and involve emergency or clinical help where warranted.

The town asks him to leave

Verse 15: they come out and find the man sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, "and they were afraid."

Verse 17: they begin to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood.

St. Mark gives fear as the reason and reports the economic loss without commenting on the connection. Do not overclaim their motive. What the text does say is that a town looked at a healed man, was afraid, and asked the healer to leave.

This is worth one honest minute with your group. St. Mark gives fear as the reason and reports the loss of the herd without telling us how the two connect, so do not assign the town a motive. As an application only, ask

whether some of the people they are praying for are inside arrangements where a real change would cost other people something.

The phrase that closes Thread A

Verse 18: "the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him."

Look at the Greek against Mark 3:14. In 3:14 Jesus appointed twelve *hina ōsin met' autou*, that they might be with him. In 5:18 the man begs *hina met' autou ē*, that he might be with him. The same construction, singular instead of plural. St. Mark gives this man the same construction the Twelve were appointed with, adjusted from plural to singular.

And Jesus refuses. This is tonight's live discovery and it is the payoff of a thread planted in the first session, so protect it and let the group find it themselves.

What he gets instead

Verse 19: "But he refused, and said to him, Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

It is not a lesser assignment. It is a different one, and personally a hard one; St. Mark makes no comparison with the apostolic mission, and neither should we. The Twelve got to stay near him. This man got sent to the people who had watched him live among the graves.

Note also what the content of the message is: how much the Lord has done for **you**, and the mercy shown to **you**. Jesus centres this man's proclamation on what the Lord has done and the mercy shown him. That is not a prohibition on doctrine, argument or invitation, and the message itself makes real claims about the Lord. What it is, is the before and after of one life.

And verse 20: he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much **Jesus** had done for him. Jesus said "the Lord." The man said "Jesus." St. Mark lets that stand without comment, and it is not nothing.

Luke 10, and where they are sent

Verse 1: he sent them two by two "into every town and place where he himself was about to come." They go ahead of him, to places he is coming to anyway. That single clause is most of the theology of evangelization: you are not delivering Christ to a place he has not reached, you are going ahead of someone already on his way.

Verse 2: the harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few, so **pray** the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. The first command in the sending is a command to pray for more senders, not to go.

Verses 4 to 9: no purse, no bag, no sandals; say "Peace be to this house"; stay in one house rather than shopping for a better one; eat what is set before you; heal the sick; and say that the kingdom of God has come near.

Verses 10 and 11: if a town will not receive them, they wipe the dust off their feet, **and say it anyway**: nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near. The last word they are told to say to a town that refuses is still the announcement, though verse 12 follows with a warning of judgment.

And the redirect at the end

Verse 17: they return with joy, saying even the demons are subject to us in your name. Verse 20: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

They came back from a successful mission and Jesus redirected their joy away from the results. Not "do not be glad," but "be glad about the right thing."

This is the sentence to end the study's twelfth session on, because in one week these people finish thirteen weeks of practice and some of them will have visible fruit and some will have none, and the verse is addressed to both.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Peace to this house

The greeting in Luke 10:5 is the Greek greeting of peace, standing behind which the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 is a possible biblical background. The disciples are not being polite; they are pronouncing something over a household before they have said anything else.

Shaking off the dust

A recognized gesture on leaving territory considered unclean, and the apostles use it at Acts 13:51 when they are driven out of Antioch in Pisidia. What is striking in Luke 10:11 is that the gesture does not end the message; the announcement is repeated after it.

Names written in a book

Exodus 32:32-33, where Moses asks to be blotted out of God's book in place of the people. Psalm 69:28. Daniel 12:1, everyone whose name is found written in the book. Malachi 3:16, a book of remembrance written before the Lord. Luke 10:20 is standing on all of it, and Revelation 21:27 closes it.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH | The Second Vatican Council on where the laity are sent

The Council taught that the laity live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very fabric of their existence is woven, that they are called there by God, and that by exercising their own proper function, led by the spirit of the Gospel, they work for the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven.

From within. The Council is describing the distinctive secular character of the lay vocation: they are called in the ordinary circumstances where they already live. It does not thereby exclude other legitimate forms of lay apostolate. That is Mark 5:19 in conciliar language.

Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium 31 (1964).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH | Pope Francis on how much training this requires

Pope Francis wrote that every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that we should no longer speak of ourselves as disciples and missionaries as though these were two stages, but as missionary disciples.

And then the line that describes the man in the tombs exactly: anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim it. The man in Mark 5 had known Jesus for perhaps an hour.

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 120 (2013).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH | St. John Henry Newman on a mission that is yours

God has created me, wrote St. John Henry Newman, to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission.

He goes on to say that he may never know what it is in this life, but that he will be told it in the next, and that he is a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. This is for anyone who has spent twelve weeks quietly suspecting that the real work belongs to somebody else.

St. John Henry Newman, Meditations and Devotions, from the meditation on hope in God the Creator. Work-level citation.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

The Church is unusually concrete about the fact that ordinary Christians are sent, and sent where they already are.

- **CCC 851.** The source of the Church's missionary zeal is God's love for all people.
- **CCC 863.** The whole Church is apostolic, and every member shares in her mission in their own way.
- **CCC 899.** The initiative of lay Christians is necessary, and they are on the front lines of the Church's life.
- **CCC 900.** The laity have the obligation and the right, individually or in groups, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted.
- **CCC 1816.** The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, bear witness to it, and spread it. The Catechism uses all four verbs.
- Applying CCC 1816 to the specific relatives at your own table is our extension of the paragraph, not its wording.

THREAD WATCH

THREAD WATCH | leader only

Thread A, "With him, and sent," RESOLVES TONIGHT. It was planted in Session 1 on Mark 3:14 and it closes on Mark 5:18, in St. Mark's own Greek. The man asks for the first half and is given the second. Get this out of the group through the live discovery; do not announce it. If the room does not see it, give them Mark 3:14 and read it beside 5:18 and wait.

Thread B. Resolved in Session 9. Tonight it recurs quietly in Luke 10:1, where they are sent ahead to places Christ is already coming to, and in Luke 10:2, where the first command is to pray. You may name it now.

Thread C. Resolved in Session 8. Tonight's steelman touches it again, and the honest answer points at the module on the people closest to you rather than resolving it here.

One week left. Session 13 is a commissioning. Tell the group at the end of tonight that next week is the last session and ask them to bring their three names, written down again from memory if the sealed page is lost.

SESSION GOALS

1. Give the pastoral note on possession and illness cleanly, once, and move on.

2. Have the group report only what St. Mark reports: they saw the healed man, they were afraid, and they asked Jesus to leave.
3. Have the group find, from the Greek in translation, that the healed man asked for precisely what the Twelve were given, and that he was refused.
4. Establish that he was given a different assignment rather than a lesser one, and that its content was the before and after of his own life.
5. Land Luke 10:1: they are sent ahead of Christ to places he is already coming to.
6. Land Luke 10:20: the joy is redirected off the results, one week before the study ends.
7. Work the objection that you cannot evangelize the people who knew you before.

TIMED PLAN

Minutes	Movement
0:00-0:04	Opening prayer.
0:04-0:11	Field report on rung eleven, handing someone over.
0:11-0:17	Win questions.
0:17-0:23	Read Mark 5:1-20 aloud. Give the pastoral note in two sentences before you start.
0:23-0:33	Build 1 and 2, the man and the town's reaction.
0:33-0:45	Build 3 and the live discovery. This is the payoff of the whole study; protect the time.
0:45-0:55	Build 4 and 5, the assignment and what he actually did.
0:55-1:00	Read Luke 10:1-20 aloud.
1:00-1:12	Build 6 and 7, where they are sent, and what is said even to a town that refuses.
1:12-1:18	Build 8, the redirect of joy.
1:18-1:26	Build 9, the build-then-press on the hometown.
1:26-1:30	Send questions, Live It This Week, take-homes, note about next week, closing prayer.

If you only have 75 minutes, cut these first

- Read only Luke 10:1-11 and 17-20 aloud rather than the whole passage. Saves four minutes.
- Fold Build 7 into Build 6. Saves six minutes.
- Cut Build 2 (the town's reaction); the take-home recap already carries it. Saves eight minutes.
- **Do not cut Build 3 or the live discovery under any circumstances.** If you are badly over, cut Build 9 and carry the hometown objection into the module on the people closest to you, where it belongs anyway.

IF IT GOES SIDEWAYS

IF IT GOES SIDEWAYS | leader only

If the room starts diagnosing the Gerasene, stop it in one sentence with the note above and redirect to verse 18. Do not debate it.

If someone is unsettled that Jesus said no to a sincere and grateful request, do not smooth it over. Sit in it. He said no to a good request in order to give a better assignment, and that is worth being unsettled by for a minute.

Somebody in your group has a sibling or a parent who remembers exactly who they were at nineteen, and tonight's steelman is their session. Do not resolve their situation in the room; point them at the module.

If someone reports visible fruit from the last eleven weeks and the room starts congratulating them, let it run for thirty seconds and then read Luke 10:20 aloud. That is what the verse is for and this is the week it is needed.

Discussion Guide

Go Home to Your Friends

Mark 5:1-20; Luke 10:1-20

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you healed a man nobody could bind, and when he asked to come with you, you told him to go home. Give us that obedience. Send us to the people who knew us before, who remember exactly who we were, and let the change in us say what our words cannot. Amen.

FIELD REPORT

FIELD REPORT | five minutes, no fixing

Six minutes. Two or three people.

Last week you introduced one of the three to another believer and then left it alone for a week. What did it cost you to leave it alone?

Leader: if somebody could not resist checking in, that is the most honest report available and should be received warmly. Say so.

WIN

- ▶ Who knew you before? Name the category, not the person: the people who remember a version of you that you would rather they forgot.
- ▶ When has somebody's change been so visible that you had to ask about it?

BUILD

Before you read: this passage describes a man who is possessed, and the Church has always distinguished possession from mental illness, which is why she requires medical and psychological evaluation before a solemn or major exorcism (CCC 1673 and diocesan norms). Nothing here licenses diagnosing anybody. Now read Mark 5:1-20 aloud.

1. Verses 1 to 5. Describe the man's situation before the encounter. What had been tried?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

He lived among the tombs. No one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. He had wrenched apart chains and broken fetters, no one had the strength to subdue him, and night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was crying out and bruising himself with stones.

What had been tried was restraint, repeatedly, and it had failed. The community had done the only thing it

knew how to do and had run out of options.

Keep the leader note in mind and do not let the group turn this into a discussion of mental illness. Give the distinction once, plainly, and move to verse 15.

2. Verses 15 to 17. What do the townspeople find, and what do they ask for?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

They find him sitting there, clothed and in his right mind. And St. Mark says they were afraid, and they began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood.

A town looked at a healed man and asked the healer to leave. St. Mark gives fear as the reason and mentions the loss of the herd without telling us how the two are connected, so do not overclaim their motive.

Then ask the honest question. As an application rather than as the text's stated motive: are some of the people your group is praying for inside arrangements where a real change would cost other people something? Who, in their case?

3. Verse 18. The man makes one request. What is it, in the exact words St. Mark uses?

Leader: get the wording precise before moving to the discovery. It matters that they hear the phrase.

ANSWER | share after the discussion

He begged him "that he might be with him."

Not that he might be healed, or protected, or given anything. He asked to be near Jesus. It is the most natural request in the passage and by any human measure the right one.

Now go to the discovery below before you say anything else.

LIVE DISCOVERY | let the group find it

This is the payoff of a thread planted in the first session. Do not announce it. Let them find it.

Have someone read Mark 5:18 aloud again, slowly.

Then have a second person turn back and read Mark 3:14 aloud.

Then ask one question and wait: what did the Twelve get appointed for, and what did this man ask for?

What they should find: the construction is the same, adjusted from plural to singular. In 3:14 Jesus appointed twelve that they might be with him, and to be sent out to preach. In 5:18 this man begs that he might be with him. St. Mark gives him the same substantive construction, adjusted from plural to singular: he asks for the first half of what the Twelve were given.

And Jesus refuses him. Let the room sit with that for a moment before anyone rescues it. The man asked for the thing this whole study said comes first, and he was told no.

Then, and only then, read verse 19 aloud.

4. Verse 19. What does Jesus give him instead? Is it a smaller assignment or a different one?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

"Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

It is not smaller. It is different, and personally hard. The Twelve got to stay near him and travel with him. This man was sent alone to the people who had watched him live among the graves.

And look at what he is told to say. How much the Lord has done for you. The mercy shown to you. He centres it on what the Lord has done and the mercy shown him. That is not a ban on doctrine or invitation, and the message makes real claims. What it is, is the before and after of one life, which is exactly the sentence your group wrote in Session 6.

Ask them what it means that the study's first six weeks and this man's entire training amount to roughly the same thing.

5. Verse 20. What does he actually do, and what one word does he change?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

He went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much **Jesus** had done for him, and all men marveled.

Jesus told him to say what the Lord had done. He said what Jesus had done. St. Mark records the substitution and does not comment on it.

And notice the territory. The Decapolis was largely Hellenistic territory. He proclaims it through the largely Gentile Decapolis, with no training, no companions, and about an hour of acquaintance with Christ. St. Mark does not identify every hearer, so speak of the region rather than of a demonstrably Gentile mission.

6. Now read Luke 10:1-11. Verse 1 says where they are sent. Read that clause slowly. And what is the very first command in verse 2?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

They are sent two by two into every town and place "where he himself was about to come." They go ahead of him, to places he is already on his way to.

Say what that settles. You are not carrying Christ into a place his grace has not preceded you; you are going ahead of someone already on his way. You are going ahead of someone already coming, which is a completely different job and a much lighter one.

And the first command is not go. It is pray: the harvest is plentiful and the laborers few, so pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. The sending begins with a request for more senders.

Then note the instructions themselves: no purse, no bag, no sandals. Say peace to the house before anything else. Stay in one house rather than looking for a better offer. Eat what is set in front of you. The whole posture is one of dependence on the people being visited.

7. Verses 10 and 11. What are they told to do in a town that refuses them, and what do they say on the way out?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

They wipe the dust of the town off their feet, a recognized gesture, used again by the apostles at Acts 13:51.

And then they say it anyway: "Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near."

The last word to a town that has rejected them is still the announcement. The gesture does not cancel the message, and the refusal does not make the kingdom less near. Ask the group what that changes about how a failed conversation ends.

8. Verses 17 to 20. What do the seventy come back rejoicing about, and what does Jesus do with their joy?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

They come back with joy: even the demons are subject to us in your name. It is a real result and Jesus does not deny it.

And he redirects it: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Not "do not be glad." Be glad about the right thing. Results are real, and they are the wrong foundation, because results vary and belonging to Christ is a surer ground. Say it that way; the Church does not grant certainty of final perseverance apart from special revelation.

Read this one twice. In one week this group finishes thirteen weeks of practice. Some of them will have something visible to show and some will have nothing, and this verse is addressed to both of them in exactly the same words.

9. Someone says: you cannot evangelize the people who knew you before. Jesus himself could do no mighty work in his hometown. Send me anywhere but home. Are they right?

ANSWER | share after the discussion

Work the build-then-press below, and note where it ends: this objection has a whole module of its own, and tonight is not where it gets fully answered.

DIG DEEPER

Did it last? In Mark 7:31 Jesus returns through the region of the Decapolis, and in Mark 8:1-9 a great crowd is with him there, in Gentile territory, with nothing to eat. Many readers connect those crowds to the man's preaching. St. Mark does not say so, and it cannot be proved. It is a connection worth noticing and not worth asserting.

Seventy, or seventy-two? The manuscripts are divided here, and RSV2CE reads seventy, which is the number this study uses throughout. One scholarly proposal links the variant to the differing totals of the nations in the Hebrew and Greek forms of Genesis 10; treat that as a proposal, since the counts and the manuscript traditions both need care. Either way the point is the same: the mission is aimed at all the nations.

Names written in heaven. Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69:28, Daniel 12:1, and Malachi 3:16 all have a book

with names in it. Luke 10:20 stands on that whole tradition, and Revelation 21:27 closes it.

BUILD THEN PRESS

Build the objection at full strength:

Build it at full strength. This is the most personally felt objection in the study.

The Lord's own experience supports it. Mark 6:1-6: a prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own kin, and in his own house. And St. Mark says plainly that he could do no mighty work there, and that he marveled because of their unbelief.

John 7:5 is worse: even his own brothers did not believe in him. If the sinless Son of God could not get traction with his relatives, the odds for the rest of us are not encouraging.

And everyone in this room has the specific version of it. A sibling who remembers who you were at nineteen. A parent who thinks this is a phase. A friend from before who finds the new you slightly ridiculous. Familiarity does produce a real deafness, and pushing against it has broken relationships that never recovered.

Then press, from the text:

Now press, from the text.

First: read Mark 5:19 again. The first person in this Gospel commissioned to proclaim what the Lord has done for him is sent home. "Go home to your friends." Note the precise claim: Jesus also sends the cleansed leper to the priest back in 1:44, so this is the first commission to proclaim, not the first sending of any kind. He sent a man to the exact audience this objection says is impossible, and he did it deliberately, in preference to letting the man come with him.

Second: verse 20 says he obeyed, proclaimed throughout the Decapolis, and all men marvelled. Note precisely what that reports and what it does not: amazement, not conversion. It is still a wider hearing than most of what happens in this Gospel.

Third: notice the difference between the two cases. In Nazareth, St. Mark tells us what the obstacle was: they were offended at his wisdom and his mighty works because they knew his family and his trade, and he marvelled at their unbelief. In the Decapolis, the man's before and after was the entire message, and everyone had seen both halves. So the hometown is not automatically closed. Familiarity and unbelief are a real obstacle, and a change that people can actually see is a different thing from an argument.

Fourth: verse 19 tells him what to say, and it is not an argument. It is what the Lord did for him and the mercy shown to him. That is precisely the one thing his neighbors could not dispute, because they had watched the first half of it.

And give the objection its due, because it has earned more than one session can give it. The people closest to you are the hardest room in Christianity, and the failure modes there are specific: holiday ambushes, the weaponized text message, the parent who cannot stop. This study has a standalone module on exactly that, and if this is your situation, that is the session to ask your leader for. Tonight settles only this much: home is where the first missionary in St. Mark's Gospel was sent.

SEND

- ▶ Who are "your friends" in the sense of Mark 5:19? Not your best friends. The people among whom you already live.
- ▶ What is your before and after? If someone who knew you five years ago asked what changed, what is the true answer?

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

Rung 12 of the ladder. Go home. Tell somebody who knew you before.

- Keep praying for the three by name, daily.
- Tell one person who knew you before what the Lord has done for you. Not doctrine, not an invitation, and not an argument. The before and the after.
- Keep it to what they can verify. They watched the first half; that is your credential.
- If they laugh, or change the subject, or bring up something you did at twenty, let it go and stay in the room. Do not defend yourself.
- **Next week is the last session.** Bring your three names, written out again from memory if you have lost the sealed page.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, a man asked to come with you and you sent him home instead, and he went. Give us the grace to want the assignment we were given rather than the one we would have chosen. Send us to the people who remember us, and let what you have done in us be plain enough that we do not have to argue for it. And keep our joy where you put it: not in what we accomplish, but in the fact that you know our names. Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

Mark 5:19

Leader Reference Card

Go Home to Your Friends

Every passage used in this session, in the order it appears.

Passage	Where and why
Mark 5:1-20	Primary text. Read the pastoral note before reading it aloud.
Mark 3:14	Live discovery. That they might be with him, from Session 1.
Mark 6:1-6	Build 9, the objection at full strength. A prophet in his own country.
John 7:5	Build 9, the objection. His brothers did not believe in him.
Mark 7:31; Mark 8:1-9	Dig Deeper. Crowds in the Decapolis later, not asserted as a consequence.
Luke 10:1-20	Primary text. Read verses 1 to 11 and 17 to 20 aloud at minimum.
Acts 13:51	Build 7. The apostles shake the dust from their feet.
Numbers 6:24-26	Old Testament Roots. The priestly blessing behind "peace to this house."
Genesis 10	Dig Deeper. The table of nations, seventy or seventy.
Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28	Old Testament Roots. Names written in God's book.
Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16	Old Testament Roots. The book of remembrance.
Revelation 21:27	Dig Deeper. Where the book of names ends.