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| **Strands** | The Story of the Church; The Bible and Christian Belief; Philosophy of Religion | | | |
| **Stage of Development** | Secondary (Year 9-10) | **Created** May 2021 | | **Review** 2025 |
| **Aim** | This unit explores the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. It considers his identity as presented in the Gospel of Mark and a selection of historical non-biblical sources from a similar time period. The focus is on critical engagement with these documents. The unit finishes with a film study of part of an extract from the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe. | | | |
| **Content Descriptions** | **Knowledge and Understanding**   * The story of Jesus contained in the Gospel of Mark * The source and content of some of the non-biblical historical documents relevant to the Gospel of Mark * The impact of the story of Jesus on aspects of popular culture | | **Religious Studies Skills**   * Critical thinking * Faith | |
| **Resources** | [www.bible.com](http://www.bible.com) | | This website contains videos of all the Gospels. The Lumo videos on Mark are used in this unit. | | |
|  | [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com) | | This website allows you to look up any Bible passage from a variety of translations. This can be used by students instead of a hard copy of the Bible. | | |
|  | The Best News Ever by Chris Morphew | | This book is written for tweens and teens by a school chaplain and contains 100 devotions and prayers based on the Gospel of Mark. It would be a great resource for a teacher or students who wanted to explore Mark’s account in more detail. It could also be used to inspire a concurrent Chapel/devotional series on the Gospel of Mark. | | |
|  | Centre for Public Christianity  [www.publicchristianity.org](http://www.publicchristianity.org) | | This website hosts the documentary For the Love of God as well as other short videos and articles that consider the Christian story from a historical perspective. | | |

| **Lesson** | | **Key Questions** | **Time Activity Ideas** | | **Resources** |
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| **1** | Introduction | Why study the Gospels?  What do we know about the Gospel of Mark?  What do we know about the impact of Jesus on our culture? | 15min  15min  15min | PowerPoint: Get to Know You. Ask for a volunteer. Ask students to share their answers to the questions on the PowerPoint. If they pause or say ‘um’ or ‘like’ they must sit down. Play several rounds and see who can make it to the last question. Discuss how we get to know people.  Activity: Place the piece of paper that says agree at one end of the room and the piece that says disagree at the other end. Ask the students each of the questions below. Get the students to stand next to the bit of paper that best represents their response. Discuss why.   * I know what a ‘gospel’ is * I know the basic story of the gospel of Mark * Mark’s gospel is mostly history * Mark’s gospel is mostly fiction * Jesus never existed * Jesus existed * I like some of the things Jesus taught * Most of Jesus’ teachings were commands telling us what to do * Mark’s gospel was written within 40 years of Jesus’ death * Mark’s gospel was written hundreds of years after Jesus’ death * Knowing the gospels helps you to better understand Western culture and literature   Watch: The clip on the Good Samaritan (<https://www.publicchristianity.org/youth-resource/the-good-samaritan-how-a-story-shaped-our-world/> 5min). This clip considers how this parable has shaped Western culture. Brainstorm other examples of the impact of Jesus on Western culture. | Printouts: Agree and Disagree  Video: <https://www.publicchristianity.org/youth-resource/the-good-samaritan-how-a-story-shaped-our-world/> |
| **2** | What is a Gospel? | What is a Gospel?  How is Jesus presented in the Gospel of Mark?  Why might some people be inspired and influenced by Jesus? | 5 min  15min  5 min  20min | Think, Pair, Share:   * What questions do I have about Jesus? * What do I know about Jesus already? * What reasons might there be for studying Jesus and the gospels?   PowerPoint: Tombstone. This PowerPoint contains some photos of ‘funny’ tombstones and ask the students to write their own tombstone (serious or funny). Explain that tombstones summarise someone’s life. Mark’s Gospel is meant to summarise Jesus’ life.  Explain: that in this unit we are seeking to answer several questions including:   * Why study Jesus? Especially if you’re not religious? * How Jesus is presented in Mark’s Gospel, chapters 1-2 * What kind of story is Mark’s Gospel? * Why are some people inspired and influenced by Jesus?   Watch: Mark 1-2 <https://www.bible.com/videos/2006/series> (15min). Stop at points for questions/comments.  Some possible questions to consider with the students   1. What is a prophet? 2. Where is Judea/Jerusalem? 3. What is baptism? 4. What do we know about John the Baptist? 5. Why was it significant that Jesus was in the desert for 40 days? 6. What do we know about Satan? 7. What is the Sabbath? 8. What is leprosy? 9. What does it mean to blaspheme? 10. What is fasting? 11. Why did people dislike tax collectors? | PowerPoint: Tombstone  Lumo Project Mark 1-2 (<https://www.bible.com/videos/2006/series>). |
| 3 | The Beginning of Mark’s Gospel | Where can the Gospel of Mark be found?  How do verse and chapter numbers help us navigate the Gospel of Mark?  What are the first two chapters of the Gospel of Mark about? | 10min  5min  25min | Activity: Hand out a class set of Bibles. Ask the students to find Mark. Check students understand the big numbers are chapter numbers and the small numbers are verse numbers. Set the students a challenge to see who can find the following verses and read them out to the class first. Exact wording will depend on translation.   * Mark 1:15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” * Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. * Mark 6:25 At once the girl hurried into the king with the request: “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”   Revise the structure of the Bible. The Bible is broken into two parts. The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before Jesus’ birth and the New Testament records Jesus birth, death, resurrection, and the work of the early church. If you have time you could play some games of hangman with books from the Bible or there is a word search of both Old and New Testament books.  Revise: Give students some time to revise Mark 1-2 in their Bibles. They watched these chapters at the end of the last lesson.  Worksheet: Mark 1-2. Ask the students to write answers to the following questions based on Mark 1-2.   * Which story did you like best and why? * In one sentence describe Jesus (based on Mark’s presentation) * Imagine you are someone who has read the gospel and been struck by it. How would it change your life? How would affect how you live?   Discuss the students’ answers as a class. | Student Bibles  Extra resources: Word search for the OT and NT |
| **4** | Is Jesus a historical figure? | Did Jesus exist? | 5min  25min  15min | Game: Two truths and one lie. Ask for volunteers to share two truths and one lie about themselves. Get the rest of the class to guess what statement is a lie. Discuss how we determine if something happened.  PowerPoint: Socrates activity. Break the students into small groups to answer the questions listed on the slide. Discuss student answers as a class group. Point out that all mainstream historians believe Socrates existed. For comparison the students may be interested to know that there are far more historical sources that establish Jesus’ existence.  Activity: Break the students into small groups and give each group one cut up segment from the Jesus in History Cut and Paste sheet (you will need to pre-cut before the lesson). Ask each group to explain the meaning of their passage. Provide each student with a copy of the sheet “Ancient Sources About Jesus” for them to write the meaning of each extract as each group shares with the class. | PowerPoint: Studying Ancient Figures  Worksheet: Ancient Sources about Jesus  Printout: Jesus in History Cut and Paste (1 copy cut into segments) |
| **5** | What did Jesus teach in his stories? | What is a parable?  What are the parables in Mark 4 about? | 5min  10min  5min  2min  25min | Share: Ask the students share the name or a description of their favorite plant or flower. Why is it their favorite?  Watch: Mark 4:1-9 <https://www.bible.com/videos/3176-mark-4-1-34-from-lumoproject-dot-com>. STOP the clip at 1:30min before Jesus explains the meaning of the parable. Discuss with the students what a parable is (story used to make a spiritual point/lesson) and what this parable might mean.  Watch Mark 4:10-30 (from 1:30-3:10min) <https://www.bible.com/videos/3176-mark-4-1-34-from-lumoproject-dot-com>. Ask the students what they think the ‘word’ is in this story. Ask the students to reflect on who Jesus would say they were and why. Students may or may not feel comfortable sharing their answer to this question.  Watch: Mark 4:21-34 (from 3:10min) <https://www.bible.com/videos/3176-mark-4-1-34-from-lumoproject-dot-com>.  Worksheet: Mark 4:21-34. Ask students to complete the activities on the worksheet including underlining things they don’t understand, dot point summary and explaining the meaning of the stories. | Bible or Lumo video  Bible or Lumo video  Bibles or Lumo video  Worksheet: Mark 4 |
| **6** | The Parables of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel | What types of truths do the parables contain? | 20min  5min  20min | Watch: Mark 4:35-6:56 (just under 20min). <https://www.bible.com/videos/2006/series>. Stop at the end of each section and give students the chance to ask questions about the stories. Expect questions about Jesus’ miracles and what these might mean. There are some helpful articles on the Centre for Public Christianity web page if you would like to do some background reading. <https://www.publicchristianity.org/search/?_sf_s=miracles>  Think, Pair, Share: Ask the students to share a brief description of the story that they were most interested in and why.  Activity: break students into pairs and ask them to select one event or miracle and determine its meaning or the reason why the author included it in the text. Discuss as a class. | Bible or Lumo video |
| **7** | Historical Context and information about Mark’s Gospel | Who wrote Mark’s Gospel?  When was Mark’s Gospel written? | 10min  10min  5min  20min | Watch or read: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/man-accidentally-discovers-perfectly-preserved-roman-villa-in-his-backyard-a6987901.html>  Share: Ask students to share their thoughts on the following scenario. One day you’re digging in your garden because you are bored and find an old letter in a small box. There is no date or obvious indications of date. How would you go about finding out who the author was and when it was written?  Discuss: You’re a historian studying the life of Jesus. You go to Mark’s gospel because it is the earliest biography we have of Jesus. Apply the tests you used above to the gospel. Which ones do you think the gospel passes? Why/Why not? The first complete copy we have of Mark is from 360AD, but it could have been in circulation much earlier. How would we go about finding out more?  PowerPoint: When and Who?  Extension: think of a figure from ancient history. Find out when the first biography of their life was written. How far after their death was it? | Article  PowerPoint: When and Who? |
| **8** | Is Mark’s Gospel reliable? | What are the arguments for the Gospel of Mark being reliable?  What are the arguments against the Gospel of Mark being reliable? | 30min  25min | Activity: Split the class into four groups. Ask two groups to research the case for the reliability of Mark and two groups to research the case against the reliability of Mark. Get each group to share their research and discuss. What can we conclude based on these arguments and the content in the previous lesson?  Watch: The Bible Project video on Mark <https://bibleproject.com/videos/gospel-mark/> (5:34min). Ask the students to write a list of the key themes in the book. Discuss what aspects of the story are easy to believe and what aspects the students still have questions about. | Internet, devices for students.  Bible Project Video on Mark |
| **9** | Jesus in context: Opposition to Jesus | Why were the leaders opposed to Jesus?  What does Jesus hate about the way the leaders of the time were living? | 5min  20min  20min | Share: Ask the students to share something they are strongly opposed to and why e.g. live animal exports, discrimination, eating green vegetables etc. Explain that in today’s stories you’d like the students to focus on who opposes Jesus and why.  Watch or read: Stop to explain as you go or ask students to reflect on the following questions after each section.  -What you found interesting  -What you found confusing  -What it was trying to say about Jesus   * Mark 11:1-11 * Mark 11:12-33 * Mark 12:1-27 * Mark 12:28-44   Activity: The opposition to the religious leaders is strong. Ask the students to explain why based on the stories above. What does Jesus hate about their way of living? Get the students to write their answers and refer to the relevant verses in their response. Discuss student answers as a class. | Bibles or Lumo clips  (<https://www.bible.com/videos/collections/4-the-gospel-of-mark-lumo-project>)  If you would like to read rather than view, go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and type in e.g. 'Mark 11:1-11'. Do this for each section. |
| **10** | The symbol of the cross | What do different religious symbols mean?  What does the symbol of the cross mean to Christians? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Ask the students to research three different religious symbols from three different religions on Google. Ask the students. What did you discover about them? What makes the symbol of the cross different? (it’s a symbol of execution – like wearing an electric chair around your neck).  Activity: Ask the students to research the crucifixion, its history, how people who were crucified died and methods of crucifixion. Discuss why the cross is so important to Christians.  Watch or read: Mark 14-15 (approx. 20min) | Internet, devices for students  Internet, devices for students  Bibles or Lumo clips  (<https://www.bible.com/videos/collections/4-the-gospel-of-mark-lumo-project>)  If you would like to read rather than view, go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and type in e.g. 'Mark 11:1-11'. Do this for each section. |
| **11** | The Resurrection | What is the resurrection?  What is so unbelievable about resurrection? | 5min  10min  10min  20min | Share: Ask students if they have ever been told something that they thought was unbelievable but was true e.g. that schools in Australia would be online in 2020 due to a pandemic.  Read: Mark 16 in class Bibles or on BibleGateway. Looks like someone tried to add an ending onto Mark’s gospel. Why would they do this? Why do you think people struggle to believe Jesus was resurrected? What questions do you have about the resurrection?  Watch: This clip on the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus <https://www.publicchristianity.org/an-historian-examines-the-resurrection/> (4min). What evidence does it present in favour of the resurrection?  Read: Paul's accounts of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Gal 1:11-16 on BibleGateway or in class Bibles.  Ask students to come up with a theory or some thoughts about:  a. What they think might have happened to the body of Jesus.  b. How different people might explain the sudden change in Paul’s life  Discuss. | Bibles or BibleGateway.  Clip: <https://www.publicchristianity.org/an-historian-examines-the-resurrection/>  BibleGateway or class Bibles |
| **12** | Jesus and popular culture | How has Jesus of Nazareth influenced popular culture? | 30min  15min | Watch: ‘The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe’. Watch from 2:08:25 through to 2:39:23 (30min).  Worksheet: Narnia | Film: The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe  Worksheet: Narnia |