

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ spread the word of Christ's story with others (Mark 16:15).

## SCRIPTURE

LUKE 8:26-39

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Jesus had to endure a terrible storm (Luke 8:22-25) before arriving in the country of Gerasenes, a Gentile territory. It seems Christ's work began as soon as the boat docked, being met by demon-possessed man "when Jesus had stepped out on land" (v. 27). No time even to shake off the storm. Luke and Mark only mention one possessed man meeting Jesus, whereas Matthew mentions two (Matt. 8:28). Instead of seeing this as a contradiction, Luke and Mark likely write about the more outspoken man.

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/1064814125>



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

## OPENING

### PRAYER

1-2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

*OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.*

### OPENING QUESTIONS

3-5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- When have you been somewhere and couldn't see anything (too much rain on the windshield, too many people standing in front of you, etc.)?



## EXPLORE

### EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3-5 minutes

The demon-possessed man in today's passage lived life on the outside of everything and everyone — naked, alone, and chained up. There seemed to be no hope for him at all. Even when others tried to help, they couldn't reach him. When Jesus came and set him free, though, he became a changed man—the former outsider became an insider who went after other outsiders. We can also do this as Christ-followers, no matter what our story is (or isn't). God wants to reach the world, starting in us and continuing through us.

## Read Luke 8:26–30 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **What about your spiritual journey are you most thankful for?**  
Answers will vary. Come prepared to share your own thoughts to help start the conversation.
- **What about your spiritual journey do you wish you could have changed?**  
Answers will vary, but may include: meeting Jesus sooner, embracing his forgiveness more fully, following Christ more faithfully, etc.
- **If all we knew about Satan and demons was what we see in this passage, what would we know?**  
Answers might vary, but could include variations of his desire to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).
- **If all we knew about Jesus was what we see in this passage, what would we know?**  
Again, answers might vary, but notice how we see that Jesus cares for the state this man is in (and possibly went to this non-Jewish area specifically to seek him out). We also see that Jesus brings healing and freedom in ways no one else can; he has authority over all creation; he is willing to help anyone, even those everyone else gave up on, etc.



*Say something like:* Think about anyone you know who seems like they've been written off—whether they're stuck in a sin, a deep hurt, or maybe drifted away from church. Sometimes, this happens because something happened to them, and other times, they decided to no longer be on a life-giving journey with God. Instead of letting that be the end of their story, stop and ache for them, asking God to work on your heart to reach that person.

## Read Luke 8:31–33 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **Why do you think we, as Christ-followers, might put off going after those who are disconnected or lost?**  
Answers will vary, but might include: fear of what others might think, say, or do; fear of not knowing enough about the Bible or God; thinking of them as a lost cause, etc.
- **What do you imagine life was like for the man before and after he was set free by Jesus?**  
We can't know for sure, but the man was human like us. He probably felt the same as we would—scared, hopeless, broken, unlovable, chaotic, a lost cause, etc. But after Jesus' intervention, he probably felt free, new, loved, redeemed, changed, peaceful, joyful, grateful, etc.
- **If that man asked you what his next step should be, what advice would you give him?**  
Answers will vary, but may include: obeying Jesus' direction, continuing to grow closer to God, sharing his story of salvation with others, etc. The next step for this man is the same steps we must continue to take.



*Say something like:* Jesus has absolute authority over everything. Reading how he commanded the demons to leave the man gives us a glimpse into how he can set us free from sin in different ways.

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

## Read Luke 8:34–39 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **When was a time you experienced Jesus working in your life?**  
Answers will vary. Come prepared to share your own answer to help start the conversation.
- **What would it take for you to become more willing to share about Jesus with others, even if it was just you being open about your own experiences with him or what he's teaching you?**  
Answers will vary, but really invite them to be specific in their answer to take that next step.



*Say something like:* Giving your life to Jesus includes valuing what he values. Just like the man began telling everyone how he'd been set free, we are now called to tell others what God has done in our lives, inviting them into the journey.



## CONNECT & APPLY

### CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how someone reached out to you when you were “stuck” somehow in a feeling, thought, lifestyle, or habit.



*Example:* There are some things your generation will struggle with in ways that other generations haven't: mental health after the pandemic, addiction to technology, loneliness, climate change issues, and even a harsh political climate. Sometimes, we feel like we have no way out of whatever we or our friends are going through. Likewise, we might even misunderstand the situation others around us are in who struggle with things in ways we don't. It can be tempting to look at them and think, *Why don't they just change on their own... get out of that bad relationship... see food differently... or stop hurting themselves?* The truth is we all can get stuck in things others don't, even if it's simply our own mentality of judging others. Jesus wants to set us free and use our example to help others know how to be set free, too.

- In what ways do you sense people around you might seem “stuck” spiritually or in some other way, keeping them from seeing Jesus?

Answers will vary. Guide them to see how we've all been stuck in sin and can share with others how we've found Jesus and the freedom he brings.

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ spread the word of Christ's story with others (Mark 16:15).

Use the *Mark of a Disciple* to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

### APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

How can you be an example of Jesus this week to those at your school who most people think of as “outsiders”?



**Be specific:**

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



**CLOSING**

**PRAYER**

*2-3 minutes*

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Spend some time praying for your students to be bold in reaching out to people who others ignore.

*Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

**MEMORY VERSE**

*Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.*

“And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.’”

Mark 16:15 (ESV)

**NOTES**

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