

A Focus on the Action Gospel | Mark

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The gospel of Mark, with its repeated use of the word “immediately,” is known for its fast and urgent action as Jesus bursts in fully adult, gets baptized, preaches, and calls followers within the first few verses. It offers a great opportunity for a Bible study series that *time-crunched* people could do. Here’s a roundup of resources for a study. People can do some of these on their own or in a small group. If you want more people to engage in a focus on Mark (and why wouldn’t you if it’s Year A!) offer people choices so they can decide *how* they’re going to participate



rather than *whether* they will. That one in-person study on Tuesday afternoon (although great) is going to be a miss for the majority of folks.

GOT AN HOUR
Watch the *Bible Project* animated video overview of the Gospel and reflect on the questions below it. (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/mark>)

GOT AN EVENING OR TWO
Use the guide from the Bible Society UK. The whole gospel can be read in an hour and a half. A small group could read the intro material, read the whole thing aloud, and then take breaks using the discussion questions. (<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/bible-book-club/mark>)

NEED AN ADVENT SERIES
The Gospel of Mark has no baby Jesus but it sure is rife with Advent themes. Pastor Tracy Daub from PCUSA has published an Advent study called *Holy Disruption: Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark*. It’s a five-week book study with a free accompanying video series on YouTube. (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLszf6YoVdFLg6sxFnf7C5BRThg1wcj4Hj>).

LOOKING FOR MORE
These three books are especially designed for small group study and a deeper dive. They come from a variety of perspectives and could be used over 6–8 weeks.

1. THE GOSPEL OF MARK: A BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO THE GOOD NEWS | The popular Jewish scholar of the New Testament, Amy Jill-Levine, has written a brand-new introduction to Mark.
 2. BOOKS OF FAITH: MARK | This eight-session book study comes from Augsburg Press and has a fascinating Lutheran perspective. (<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9780806697789/Mark-Learner-Guide-Books-of-Faith>)
 3. CONVERSATIONS WITH SCRIPTURE: GOSPEL OF MARK | This book’s a bit older (2009), but by a well-known name in the Anglican church, Marcus Borg. Borg focuses on the “Way” of Jesus and an interpretation that is historical and metaphorical. This book also comes with a free study guide, which could almost be used on its own. (<https://www.churchpublishing.org/gospelofmark>)
- COLLEGE LEVEL COURSE (FREE, ONLINE, SELF-PACED)**
Yale Bible Studies are great for the motivated, self-starter learners who are needing something they can do on their own time. This course offers a mix of video, articles, discussion questions, and further reading recommendations. (<https://yalebiblestudy.org/courses/the-gospel-of-mark>)

St. Michael’s Multicultural Anglican Church Women 2023 Retreat #1 at Camp Artaban

MICHIKO TATCHELL, ODNW; ROSE TOYOKEN & GRACE WANDAG
St. Michael’s Multicultural ACW Camp Artaban Retreat Committee

Just prior to the beginning of the Canada Day weekend, Friday, June 30, 2023, under a warm summer sky in West Vancouver, a water taxi took 19 Anglican Church Women (ACW) members from St. Michael’s Multicultural (SMM), plus Bishop Alex Wandag, a retired Filipino bishop, to Camp Artaban.

After receiving a warm welcome from all the staff at the dock, the 19 settled down in assigned cabins, and proceeded to the first activity which was going to the dining room for dinner. After sharing expectations about the retreat and attending Compline at 9pm, all retired to their cabins for the night.

On Day Two, most woke early to enjoy the nature on Gambier Island: tall trees, crowded ferns, a nice breeze, water, a drop of golden sun, and big oysters! A topic for discussion that morning was the unfamiliar quietness and the pitch-dark night.

A rich and deep spiritual session led by Bishop Alex in the morning was all about *God’s World and Life’s Journey*. He started the session with:

“Life on earth is a continued journey that keeps going on until we fall and go back to the dust and join the great retreat to our creator and maker.”

He explained how human beings are deeply connected to nature and offered examples. The seven pages of material the bishop distributed were comprehensive, prompting the suggestion that it be used as a year(s)-long study. Even a squirrel came into the meeting room to listen. Bishop Alex emphasized how important it is to have Retreats, because a “Retreat is like a ‘Viewpoint’ on a road. You stop to look back, rest and refresh yourself before moving forward.” It’s so true. It is often more difficult for the women of SMM’s busy ACW to find the time and space to do this. Continuing to attend annual Retreats was a strong recommendation from the 19 at Camp Artaban.

After the tasty pasta and garlic bread dinner, Camp Artaban kitchen staff served a big cake with a red maple leaf on it to celebrate Canada Day.



LEFT Canada Day flag. RIGHT Camp Artaban’s Nancy Ferris with Michiko Tatchell, ODNW and the Canada cake. ALL PHOTOS Betha Kollin



*“It’s the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
It’s the stillness that fills me with peace.”*

Robert Service



The plenary gathered around Bishop Alex at “The Cathedral.”

Following Compline, reflections, and evaluations on the ACW’s very first retreat since its formation at SMM over ten years ago were shared. One of the First Nation traditions, the *Sacred Circle* was respectfully adopted by the group. This tradition ensures that everyone gets to speak without interruption, at their own pace, for as long as they need. During the planning of this retreat there were concerns about how the event would unfold. Worries proved to be unfounded. The reflections were nothing but positive. It felt as Spirit-filled as the Feast of Pentecost. The response was so positive that all agreed to come back again next summer!

The third day was Sunday, with Eucharist celebrated at the outdoor chapel which the group dubbed “The Cathedral.” Another animal guest, a deer, showed up during worship.

Being filled with the Spirit by the Word of God and God’s World the 19 said goodbye to the staff who had accommodated all requests on the spot and gathered on the wharf to wave goodbye — thanks to all of you. In parting, Nancy Ferris expressed the wish that the group could have stayed longer. All heartily agreed, and pledged to see her again, next summer, at SMM ACW Retreat #2. ✦