Life of Jesus Christ

Diocese-Based Leadership Training Program
Mennonite Churches of East Africa (KMC/KMT)

Prepared by
Joseph & Gloria Bontrager
Theological Education Coordinators, 2014
## Contents

| Lesson 1: Birth and Childhood: Incarnation | Page 3 |
| Lesson 2: Preparing for ministry: Calling | Page 4 |
| Lesson 3: Beginning ministry in Galilee: Spiritual authority | Page 5 |
| Lesson 4: Ministry in Galilee: Jesus’ Pattern for ministry | Page 6 |
| Lesson 5: Ministry in Gentile areas: God accepts all people | Page 7 |
| Lesson 6: Ministry in Gentile areas: Rejection and acceptance | Page 8 |
| Lesson 7: Jesus is transfigured and teaches about his death: Death is not defeat | Page 9 |
| Lesson 8: Journey to Jerusalem: Kingdom of God, kingdoms of this world | Page 10 |
| Lesson 9: Trial and Crucifixion: Confrontation | Page 11 |
| Lesson 10: Death and Resurrection: Redemption and Victory | Page 12 |
| Map | Israel at the time of Jesus | Page 13 |
Lesson 1: Birth and Childhood

Read Matthew 1, 2; Luke 1, 2

**Incarnation**
- John 1:18. “the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made God known”
- Hebrews 1:1-4. God has spoken “through his Son” - a more complete revelation.
- Colossians 1:15. “He is the image of the invisible God.”
- Colossians 1:19. “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.”

**Preparing for Jesus’ birth.** Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38
1. What 2 names did the angel give the child before he was born? What do the names mean? (Matthew 1:20-22)
2. Read Mary’s song in Luke 1:46-55. What did Mary expect the Messiah to do for God’s people?

4. Why did the angels announce Jesus’ birth to shepherds instead of to the king? (Luke 2:8-12)
5. Why did Joseph take Mary and Jesus to Egypt? (Matthew 2:13-15)
7. How should parents today teach their children about the things of God?
8. Find Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Egypt on the map at the end of the book. Draw a line to show the journeys from Nazareth, to Bethlehem, to Egypt, and back to Nazareth.

**Jesus is superior to the prophets and angels.**
10. Read Hebrews 1:1-4. How is Jesus superior to the prophets and the angels? How is Jesus’ word superior to the words of prophets and angels?
11. How will knowing the life of Jesus help you know God better?
Lesson 2: Preparing for ministry.

Read Matthew 3:1-4:22; Mark 1:1-20; 3:13-19

**Calling**
Ministry requires preparation, even for Jesus.
- Jesus was affirmed at his baptism by a voice from heaven;
- he was tested in the wilderness;
- he called disciples;
- Jesus began his ministry of teaching and healing.

**John’s ministry.** Mark 1:1-8
1. What was the meaning of John’s baptism? (Mark 1:4)
2. How was Jesus’ ministry different from John’s ministry? (Mark 1:7-8)

**Jesus’ baptism.** Mark 1:9-11
3. How old was Jesus when he was baptized? (Luke 3:23)
4. Where was Jesus baptized? (Matthew 3:13)
5. What did the voice say as Jesus was coming out of the water? (Mark 1:11)
6. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be baptized, even though he is the Son of God?

**Jesus tested in the wilderness of Judea.** Matthew 4:1-11
7. Why did “the Spirit” lead Jesus “into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil”? (Matthew 4:1)
8. Describe the 3 temptations of Jesus. What do each of them mean?
9. What are the greatest temptations facing church leaders today?

**Calling the first disciples.** Mark 1:14-20
10. What did Jesus mean, “The Kingdom of God is come near”? (Mark 1:15)
11. What was Jesus’ invitation to Peter, Andrew, James and John? (Mark 1:16-20)
Lesson 3: Beginning ministry in Galilee.

Read Mark 1:21-3:12; Luke 4:14-44

**Spiritual authority**

Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God and demonstrated the power of God over evil and sickness. Many people followed him because of his healing power. But the Jewish leaders rejected him and tried to kill him because of his teachings. Even in his hometown, Jesus met opposition.

**Ministry of teaching, healing, casting out demons.** Mark 1:21-2:12

1. Jesus went into a synagogue. What day of the week was it? In which town was it? Find the town on the map. (Mark 1:21)

2. The people were amazed at Jesus’ authority in teaching, and in casting out the evil spirit. What was the source of Jesus’ authority? (Mark 1:22, 27)

3. What kinds of illnesses did Jesus heal in these verses?
   a. Mark 1:29-31
   b. Mark 1:40-42
   c. Mark 2:1-12
   d. Mark 3:1-5

4. What did Jesus do in Mark 1:35? Why was it important for his ministry?

**Sabbath controversy.** Mark 2:23-3:6

5. What did Jesus’ disciples do that offended the Pharisees? (Mark 2:23-24)


7. Who did Jesus heal in Mark 3:1? What did Jesus ask of the Jewish leaders who were watching him? (Mark 3:4)

8. What did the Pharisees want to do to Jesus? (Mark 3:6)

**Jesus explains his ministry in his hometown Nazareth.** Luke 4:14-30


10. What did Jesus mean, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing”? (Luke 4:21)


12. Jesus said, “No prophet is accepted in his hometown” (Luke 4:24). Do you think that is still true today?
Lesson 4: Ministry in Galilee

Read Mark 3:13-35; Mark 4:1-34

**Jesus’ Pattern for ministry**
Jesus’ ministry showed the importance of the following:
- To appoint and make disciples.
- To follow his call amid opposition.
- To announce the Kingdom of God.
- To bring the Kingdom of God by healing and teaching.

**Jesus appointed 12 to share his ministry.** Mark 3:13-19
1. Where did Jesus go when he wanted to call his 12 disciples? (Mark 3:13)
2. Jesus sent the 12 out to __________ and gave them authority to _______________. (Mark 3:14-15)
3. Does Jesus send us out with this authority today?

**Jesus faced opposition from family and Jewish leaders.** Mark 3:20-35
4. Where was Jesus when his family and teachers of the law criticized him? (Mark 3:20)
5. What did Jesus’ family say about him? What did they want to do? (Mark 3:21)
6. What did the Jewish teachers say about Jesus and his power? (Mark 3:22, 30)
7. When Jesus heard that his family was looking for him, what did he say? (Mark 3:31-15)
8. Are there times when we should give greater loyalty to our faith family than to our birth family?

**Jesus taught with parables.** Mark 4:1-34
9. Where did Jesus sit to teach the crowd? (Mark 4:1). What lake was he beside?
10. What was Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God in each of these parables:
   a. Mark 4:1-20
   b. Mark 4:21-23
   c. Mark 4:26-29
   d. Mark 4:30-32
11. Do you know any African proverbs that teach similar truths?
12. Why did Jesus teach in parables?
Lesson 5: Ministry in Gentile areas

Read Mark 4:35-41; Mark 5:1-43; Mark 6:1-13, 30-32

God accepts all people
Jesus left the Jewish areas and went to Gentile areas for two reasons:
1) To remove himself from Jewish leaders who wanted to kill him.
2) To announce the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles.
By going to Gentile areas, Jesus showed that God accepts all who come to him, not only Jews who follow the Old Testament law. The Gentile areas included the areas north of Galilee and east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River.

Crossing the Sea of Galilee. Mark 4:35-41
1. When Jesus said, “Let us go over to the other side,” where did he want to go? Find the places on the map. (Mark 4:35-36)
2. How was the faith of the 12 disciples tested when they crossed the sea? (Mark 4:37-41)

Jesus sends out unclean spirits. Mark 5:1-20
3. Who did Jesus meet when he came to the other side? (Mark 5:1-5)
4. Where did the unclean spirits go when they came out of the man? (Mark 5:11-13)
5. Why did the people of that town plead with Jesus to leave their region? (Mark 5:14-17)
6. The first missionary. The man who was delivered from demons was sent by Jesus to return to his people. What did Jesus send him to tell his people? (Mark 5:18-20)

Ministries of healing. Mark 5:21-43
7. Jesus again “crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake” (Mark 5:21). Where did Jesus go?
8. Describe the healing of the synagogue ruler’s daughter. (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43)
9. Describe the healing of the woman who was bleeding. (Mark 5:25-34)

Unbelief. Mark 6:1-6
10. Jesus came to teach in “his hometown” (Mark 6:1). Where was his hometown? (read Matthew 2:23).
11. Why did the people of Jesus’ hometown not believe in him? (Mark 6:3-6)

Sending out the 12. Mark 6:7-13, 30-32
12. What instructions did Jesus give the 12 when he sent them out? (Mark 6:8-11)
13. What ministries did the 12 do? (Mark 6:12-13)
14. Should we evangelists today follow these instructions from Jesus?
Lesson 6: Ministry in Gentile areas


Jesus is rejected by Jews, accepted by Gentiles

Jesus faced opposition from the Jewish leaders, but his ministry was accepted by common people and by the Gentiles. In his later ministry, Jesus spent more time in Gentile areas to avoid the Jews who wanted to kill him.

Crossing the Sea of Galilee to Decapolis – feeding 5,000. John 6:1-15

1. Why did a great crowd of people follow Jesus? (John 6:2)
2. How much food did the disciples find among the crowd? (John 6:9)
3. How much food was left after they fed 5,000? (John 6:13)
4. What did the people say about Jesus after they saw how he fed the 5,000? (John 6:14). What did they want to do with Jesus? What did Jesus do? (John 6:15)

Return to Galilee – accepted by the crowds, opposed by Pharisees. Mark 7:1-23

5. How did the crowds accept Jesus when he returned to Galilee? (Mark 6:54-56)
6. The Pharisees asked Jesus why his disciples did not wash hands before eating. Was hand washing a law of God or a tradition from the elders? (Mark 7:3-5)
7. What did Jesus mean when he said, “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him unclean? What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean” (Mark 7:14-23)

To Tyre, Sidon, and Decapolis – healing, feeding 4,000. Mark 7:24-37; 8:1-10

8. Tyre and Sidon are in the area of Syro-Phoenicia. Find the area on the map.
9. Why did the Greek woman come to Jesus? (Mark 7:25-26)
10. How do we know that the Greek woman had faith in Jesus’ ability to heal? (Mark 7:27-28)
11. After coming to Decapolis, the people brought a man to Jesus. What problem did the man have?
12. Why did Jesus decide to feed the large crowd that gathered? (Mark 8:2-3)
13. How much food did the disciples find among the crowd? (Mark 8:5-7)
14. How much food was left over after the people ate? (Mark 8:8)

Return to Galilee – opposition from Pharisees. Mark 8:11-21

15. Why did Jesus refuse to give the Pharisees a sign? (Mark 8:11-12). What did Jesus want from the Pharisees?
16. Are miracles and signs the best testimony to who Jesus is? What is needed for effective witness today?
Lesson 7: Jesus is transfigured and teaches about his death

Read Mark 8:27-38; 9:1-32

**Death is not defeat**

The disciples did not fully understand who Jesus was and how he will defeat evil. They thought the Christ will defeat evil through use of his political power as a king. They could not understand that evil is defeated only by God’s power, when we submit to God. So when Jesus announced his death, they did not understand. They understood only after they were filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. In Mark’s gospel, Jesus taught about his death 3 times: Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33.

**Jesus asks: Who do you say I am?** Mark 8:27-30

1. Where were they going when Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say I am?” (Mark 8:27). What did they answer? (Mark 8:28)
2. How did Peter answer the question, “Who do you say I am?”
3. What do you think, why did Jesus warn them not to tell anyone? (Mark 8:30)

**Jesus’ first teaching about his death.** Mark 8:31-38

4. What did Jesus teach the disciples will happen to him? (Mark 8:31)
5. How is Jesus’ suffering and death a pattern for anyone who would follow Jesus?
6. Jesus taught about suffering and dying, at the same time he taught about the kingdom of God coming with power (Mark 9:1). How can we connect these two teachings? (see also Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

**Jesus is transfigured.** Mark 9:2-13

7. How did Jesus’ appearance change when he was on the mountain with Peter, James, and John? (Mark 9:3)
8. Who also appeared talking with Jesus at that time? (Mark 9:4)
9. What did the voice from heaven say? (Mark 9:7). At what earlier time did a voice from heaven say words similar to these? (Mark 1:11)
10. Why did Jesus warn the disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen, until he is risen from the dead? (Mark 9:9)

**Jesus second teaching about his death.** Mark 9:30-32

11. Jesus repeated his teaching that he must suffer and die (Mark 9:31-32). Why were the disciples not able to understand what he meant? Do you understand?
Lesson 8: Journey to Jerusalem


Kingdom of God – Kingdoms of the world
The way of the Kingdom of God is different from the way of the kingdoms of the world. In Jesus’ time, and in our time, people struggle to understand 1) the meaning of true greatness, 2) the way to eternal life, and 3) why Jesus gave himself to die. Jesus’ teachings pointed people to the way of the Kingdom of God, and his life demonstrated the way of the Kingdom of God.

First teaching on greatness. Mark 9:33-37; 10:13-16
1. What were Jesus’ disciples arguing about on the road? (Mark 9:33-34)
2. What did Jesus say about the person who wants to be first? (Mark 9:35)
3. What did Jesus say is an example of true greatness? (Mark 9:36-37)
4. What does it mean to receive the Kingdom of God as a little child? (Mark 10:15)

The way to inherit eternal life. Mark 10:17-27
5. What was the request of the man who came to Jesus? (Mark 10:17)
6. Explain, what is treasure in heaven? (Mark 10:21). What did Jesus tell him to do to have treasure in heaven?
7. Does God ask everyone to give away their wealth, as Jesus did the young man?
8. Why is it difficult for people to use their wealth to do God’s will?

Jesus’ third teaching about his death. Mark 10:32-34; John 12:23-26
9. What did Jesus say will happen to him in Jerusalem? (Mark 10:33-34)
10. What did Jesus say is an example of his death and resurrection? (John 12:24)
11. What does it mean to love life, and lose it? Or to hate life and keep it? (John 12:25)

Second teaching on greatness. Mark 10:35-45
12. What was the request of James and John that angered the other disciples? (Mark 10:37, 41)
13. How is leadership by the rulers of the Gentiles different from leadership by the disciples of Jesus? (Mark 10:42-44)
14. How does the life and ministry of Jesus demonstrate true greatness? (Mark 10:45)
15. How can you demonstrate true greatness in your church leadership?
Lesson 9: Trial and Crucifixion


**Confrontation**
Jesus began his last week by entering Jerusalem with crowds praising him, then he faced growing opposition. He ended the week rejected by the Jews, judged by Pilate, forsaken by his own disciples, and executed as a criminal on a cross.

**Entry into Jerusalem.** Mark 11:1-11; Psalm 118:25-29.
1. The crowds shouted, Hosanna! (*O Lord save us*). These words from Psalm 118 were sung at the feast of the Passover. Compare the words of Mark 11:9-10 with Psalm 118:25-26.
2. What kind of Messiah were the crowds expecting Jesus to be?

**Clearing traders out of the temple.** Mark 11:15-18
3. How were the Jews using the temple area? (Mark 11:15)
4. What was the temple area intended to be used for? (Mark 11:17)
5. What did the Jewish priests and teachers want to do to Jesus after he drove out those who were buying and selling in the temple area? (Mark 11:18)

**Jesus faced growing opposition to his ministry.**
7. Why did the Jewish leaders oppose Jesus?

**Jesus eats the Passover with his disciples.** Mark 14:12-26
8. What Jewish feast did Jesus and his disciples observe? (Mark 14:12)
9. Why were the Jews commanded to celebrate Passover? What great act of God did it remind them of? (Exodus 12:1-13)

**Arrest and trial.** Mark 14:32-50; 15:1-47
11. Men were sent by Jewish leaders to arrest Jesus. How did they know which man was Jesus? (Mark 14:43-46)
12. Who called for Jesus to be crucified? (Mark 15:12-15)
13. What time of the day was Jesus crucified? What time did he die? (Mark 15:25-37)
14. If the sufferings of Jesus were caused by evil in the world, what can we expect if we proclaim the gospel faithfully?
15. How have you suffered because you faithfully proclaimed the gospel?
Lesson 10: Death and Resurrection

Read Mark 16:1-20; Matthew 28:16-20; Romans 5:6-11; 6:1-14

Redemption
Jesus’ death on the cross was not defeat, it was his greatest victory, because his death defeated the powers of evil and reconciled us to God.

Victory
The resurrection of Jesus proved his power over death and evil. The same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead gives us power to live a new life. Jesus sent his disciples to announce this victory to all people and to make them disciples of Jesus.

Jesus’ death. Mark 15:37-47; Romans 5:6-10
1. What happened in the temple when Jesus died? (Mark 15:38)
2. Who took Jesus’ body and placed it in a tomb? Who watched? (Mark 15:42-47)
4. What did Jesus death do for us? (Romans 5:9-10; 1 Peter 3:18)

Jesus appears to his followers. Mark 16:1-14
5. Who did Jesus appear to after he rose from the dead? (Mark 16:9-14)

Jesus sends his disciples. Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:16-20
6. What was Jesus’ command to the disciples? (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20)

Jesus ascends to heaven. Mark 16:19-20; Romans 8:34
7. Where did Jesus go when he ascended? (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:32-36)
8. What is Jesus doing for us since he ascended? (Romans 8:34)

The power of the resurrection. Romans 6:1-14; 8:9-11
9. What does it mean to “live a new life”? (Romans 6:4)
10. Describe the life of a person who is united with Jesus in his death and resurrection. (Romans 6:6,12-14)
11. What is the source of our power to live a holy life? (Romans 8:9-11)

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:10-11
Life of Jesus Christ