

Semicontinuous

2 Sam. 5:1–5, 9–10

Ps. 48

Complementary

Ezek. 2:1–5

Ps. 123

2 Cor. 12:2–10

Mark 6:1–13

More than Believing

Goal for the Session

Youth will explore the relationship between faith, authority, and responsibility in following Jesus as they move toward a deeper acceptance of his authority in their lives.

■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

Focus on Mark 6:1–13

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Efraín Agosto

When they come to one place, they are to stay in the first home that receives them (v. 10). There should be no appearance of looking for the best meals or the most comfortable bed in town! However, should their message be rejected at a home or by an entire town, they should exercise the practice of “shaking the dust from one’s feet” (v. 11). Rabbis in later traditions talked of this symbolic way of returning from Gentile lands to one’s sacred spaces. Followers of Jesus perhaps used the practice to symbolize judgment on unrepentant places. However, the shaking off of dust could be a hopeful sign if such people and places would thereby see the seriousness of the matter and mend their ways.

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Mark D. W. Edington

That Jesus cannot give authority he does not already possess is meant to make plain the *nature* of his kingship. But his commissioning of the disciples also makes a further claim about the *exercise* of his authority: Jesus *delegates kingly authority to those who come in faith*. Christology here is a case study in servant leadership. Jesus, deriving his authority (the “what”) from absolute and obedient faith in God (the “why”), shares his authority willingly (the “how”) with those who share in his faith.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Michael L. Lindvall

These stories might raise our anxiety about evangelism and the potential for rejection that sharing the gospel risks. Such discomfort is widespread, especially among “mainline” Christians, who may be justifiably concerned about coercive or emotionally manipulative methods of proclaiming the Good News. Many Christians would sooner talk about *anything* else: sex, their salary, anything but what they believe about God. But evangelism is not “to get them on our side” or even “to grow the church,” but simply to tell others about the God who has come to mean so much to us. This is an action performed out of love, not competition or anxiety.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Beverly Zink-Sawyer

Mark continues to raise in this text the question he repeatedly raises in his Gospel: who is this Jesus? In this story it is not those who are encountering Jesus for the first time but those who have known him for years who are asking questions about Jesus’ identity and responding to his teaching with amazement. The word for us in this text is that we are not held responsible for the response to our ministries in Christ’s name, but only for our own faithfulness. With such assurance, we can witness boldly and faithfully.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Mark 6:1–13

Focus on Your Teaching

The older teenagers get, the more responsibility they have over their own lives. Often they can choose their own classes, set their own bedtimes, and drive themselves to school, church, and social activities. However, they exercise responsibility under someone else's authority; their parents and other adults set limits on the choices they can make. As today's story demonstrates, Jesus gives not only responsibility, but also authority to the disciples. Help the youth exercise authority in their faith decisions and call them to the appropriate responsibility.

God of power and might, fill me with your spirit that I might inspire all those I encounter this week. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- newsprint
- markers
- Bibles
- pens
- copies of Resource Sheet 1
- paper
- offering basket

For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2, pencils
- option 3: unscented square pillar candles, paint markers or liquid wax markers, contemplative music, music player

For Film Connection

- computer with Internet access

Today's passage is a sort of bookend to the section that begins in Mark 3:13-19, where Jesus appoints the twelve. In between, Jesus sets an example for them by teaching and healing, the hallmarks of his earthly ministry.

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, write "What does it mean to be responsible?" on a sheet of newsprint. On another, write "What does it mean to be given authority?"

If you choose option 2 in Responding, invite someone from a social service agency or a church member who has served on a mission team to another country to speak with the group.

As youth arrive, greet them warmly. Chat with them about the past week and about their plans for the rest of the summer. When most have arrived, invite them to write responses to each question on the sheets. When everyone has had time to write responses, discuss what they've noted about responsibility and authority.

After the list is complete, explain that this week's lesson will explore how following Jesus sometimes means going where he sends us—even if we have to leave our baggage at home.

Pray:

Open our eyes, loving God, so we can see Christ in our midst. Amen.

EXPLORING

Introduce Mark 6:1–13 with the following information. In the first five chapters of Mark, Jesus puts his closest followers through an intense disciple training camp. After choosing them, he takes them on a mission trip through Galilee, to the Gentile-dominated Decapolis, and back. Mark 6 finds the group in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. Soon the disciples will be off again, this time without Jesus.

Distribute Bibles, pens, and copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Action and Reactions). Form two groups. Assign one group Mark 6:1–6a and the other Mark 6:6b–13. Have each group read its assigned passage and respond to the questions on the resource sheet. When both groups have finished their work, have them report. Discuss any surprising or confusing language they noted.

In Mark 6:3, Jesus is called a “carpenter” from the Greek word *tekton*. A related word, *architekton*, means something like “master builder” and is the source of the English word *architect*.

Discuss:

- ✪ Why did the people at the synagogue and the twelve react so differently?
- ✪ Do you agree that a prophet is without honor only in his hometown? Why or why not?
- ✪ What responsibility did Jesus have for his hometown?
- ✪ What authority did he have?

Read Mark 6:6b–11 aloud. Discuss:

- ✪ Why do you imagine Jesus sent out the disciples in pairs?
- ✪ Why do you imagine Jesus told the twelve to carry nothing on their journeys?
- ✪ What kinds of responsibility did the disciples have to take on to do what Jesus asked of them?
- ✪ What kind of authority did Jesus give the disciples?

Invite youth to name persons or institutions that hold authority over them. Push them to also name more subtle or implicit agents of authority like the media and forces of consumption. Ask:

- ✪ Are you powerless in the face of outside authorities? Why?
- ✪ What strategies do you use to get your way at home, at school, or with your friends?
- ✪ Are some ways of exercising authority better or worse than others? Why?

Tell the youth the following: *Faith brings authority and authority brings responsibility.* (adapted from the “So What?” excerpt on p. 1). Discuss:

- ✪ If faith brings authority, what authority do you have as a disciple of Jesus? In what ways you live a faithful life? Who holds you accountable?
- ✪ If authority brings responsibility, what responsibility do you have as a disciple of Jesus? In what ways are you responsible for your own faithfulness? Who holds you accountable?

Encourage the youth to explore more deeply the relationship between faith, authority, and responsibility in following Jesus.

RESPONDING

Choose one or more of the following learning activities:

- 1. Authority to Decide** Youth will explore the relationship between authority and responsibility in following Jesus. Hand out copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Authority to Decide) and pencils. Ask youth to read the instructions then fill out the survey. After all have finished, ask:

- ✪ What did you discover about how much authority you have to make your own decisions?
- ✪ When you are an adult, will you have complete authority to make all your own decisions? Why or why not?

Offer the perspective that complete autonomy is a myth. In the real world, authority and responsibility depend on negotiation, compromise, and give and take. Note the relationship between *author* and *authority*, and *response* and *responsibility*. Suggest that Jesus gives his disciples authority to author their own stories of faith.

EASY
PREP

Invite volunteers to name areas where they would like to have more authority to decide. Discuss how accepting Jesus' authority in their lives could free them to make decisions in those areas.

- 2. Christian Witness Role Play** Youth will explore the relationship between faith and responsibility in following Jesus by acting out Mark 6:12–13 in modern-day settings. Form groups of four participants, where two play the role of the apostles and two play the role of those being witnessed to. After a few minutes, have the participants swap roles. When all have finished, discuss:

- ✪ Were you comfortable sharing your faith? Why or why not?
- ✪ What made your witnessing effective?
- ✪ What made it ineffective?
- ✪ How could you apply what you've learned in real life?

- 3. Commitment Candles** Distribute square pillar candles and paint markers (or liquid wax markers). Have participants write on the sides of the candle areas of their lives where they are willing to submit to Jesus' authority. Play contemplative music while they work. When all are finished, invite volunteers to share what they wrote on their candles.

Consider displaying the candles in your congregation's worship space and using them in a service of commitment.

CLOSING

Say that as disciples or followers of Jesus, we have the authority and responsibility to influence at least one other person.

Give each person a small piece of paper and a pen. Ask each person to write one thing he or she can say or do that would show people that he or she is a Christian. Or participants can write the name of one person to whom they can tell what it is like to be a follower of Jesus. Place the pieces of paper in the offering basket. Pray:

God, you call each of us to be true disciples. Help us this week to keep our commitment that we have placed before you. Give us the strength to follow in the way of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

■ ENHANCEMENT

FILM CONNECTION

Watch "Pastor Joel's Testimony" from the documentary *58: The Film* (www.wingclips.com). In the clip, a pastor talks about his background and about his calling to return to the Mathare Valley, one of Kenya's most impoverished areas, to work with children. Discuss:

- ✪ What or who was authoritative for Pastor Joel before he accepted Christ?
- ✪ How is he able to use his story to share the gospel?
- ✪ How could you use your own story to share the gospel?

Action and Reactions

Directions: Read your assigned passage twice. Circle anything that surprises you or that you have questions about. Then answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

Mark 6:1–6a (CEB)

Jesus left that place and came to his hometown. His disciples followed him. On the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were surprised. “Where did this man get all this? What’s this wisdom he’s been given? What about the powerful acts accomplished through him? Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t he Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” They were repulsed by him and fell into sin.

Jesus said to them, “Prophets are honored everywhere except in their own hometowns, among their relatives, and in their own households.” He was unable to do any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. He was appalled by their disbelief.

Mark 6:6b–13 (CEB)

Then Jesus traveled through the surrounding villages teaching.

He called for the Twelve and sent them out in pairs. He gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a walking stick—no bread, no bags, and no money in their belts. He told them to wear sandals but not to put on two shirts. He said, “Whatever house you enter, remain there until you leave that place. If a place doesn’t welcome you or listen to you, as you leave, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them.” So they went out and proclaimed that people should change their hearts and lives. They cast out many demons, and they anointed many sick people with olive oil and healed them.



- Who is Jesus’ audience in your passage?
- How does Jesus demonstrate his authority?
- How would you describe Jesus’ responsibility to the audience?
- How does his audience respond?

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Authority to Decide



Directions: Below is a list of items in your life that require decisions. Decide who has the power to make these decisions, then write “M” for myself, “O” for some other, or “B” for both myself and some other. Be sure to complete all three columns, age five, the present, and age twenty-five.

	Age 5	Present	Age 25
1. The clothes I wear			
2. Where my family lives			
3. My bedtime			
4. How I spend my day			
5. What chores I do			
6. Who my friends are			
7. Whether my country will fight a war			
8. What meals I eat			
9. How much tax I pay			
10. If the earth will be saved from pollution			
11. Whether the sun will rise tomorrow			
12. What kind of car our family owns			
13. What I should be afraid of			
14. Who or what I devote my life to			