

Two by two

Planning

Theme Following the footsteps

Seven weeks in which we explore who Mark's Jesus is, and ask what it means to become his apprentice.

Week 5 of 7

Two by two Mark 6.1-13

Jesus returns to his home town, where he does not find a favourable reception and cannot do the amazing deeds he has done elsewhere. He then sends his disciples out, two by two, to work in his name.

This week's reading provides an opportunity to:

- recognise that Jesus sends us out with realistic expectations
- understand that disciples are not required to work alone.

Other Bible readings for this week

RCL Proper 9 Year B, Ezekiel 2.1-5, Psalm 123, 2 Corinthians 12.2-10

ROOTS www.rootsontheweb.com

Week by week

Bible notes
Prayers
PostScript: up-to-the minute comment
Bible study worksheet
Children's Sheet
Templates for craft activities
Further resources
Links to other materials for this week

Prepare your session

Read **Mark 6.1-13** and the *Bible notes* on page 12. In this week's passage Jesus returns to his home town, but cannot do there the works he has done elsewhere. Just before he sends his disciples out to work in his name, he models failure to them. Discipleship isn't all glory: there are times when it is hard work and we have to deal with failure. Jesus tells his disciples that, if they are not welcome in a town, they should leave. The challenge to us as disciples is to know when we should persevere and when it is time to move on.

Choose from the materials to suit your group. Integrate prayers and singing at appropriate moments.

For shorter sessions, use the reading followed by *A way into prayer* on page 10 and *A pairs game* on page 13.

Prayers

Additional prayers can be found on pages 11 and 13. All prayer text is on the [WEB](#).

A way into prayer

Two by two,
Things are easier to do when it's two by two.

Sharing a problem,
carrying shopping,
playing with cars,
dancing to music,
crossing the road,
baking a cake,
helping at school,
believing in you,
it's easier to do when it's two by two.

Amen.

A prayer for young disciples

To the tune of 'The animals went in two by two'

The disciples went out two by two,
hurrah, hurrah. (x2)
The disciples went out two by two,
to tell the people all about you,
And they went out to the sick and made them well.

Amen.

A prayer of praise

Lord Jesus,
thank you that you understand
that sometimes we find it difficult

to talk to people about you,
to tell them how we feel about you
or to try to make them understand.
Thank you that we have our group
where we can be with others
who want to know more about you.
Amen.

Music

See p.1 for key to abbreviations.

Sing


Be bold, be strong (JP)
Christ, be our light (CG)
For I'm building a people of power
Go tell it on the mountain
I'm singing for my Lord everywhere
I go (JP)
One shall tell another
Shake a friend's hand (KS)
Stand up! Stand up for Jesus (JP)
We'll walk the land (SOF)
We wanna sing about your love (KS)
We're gonna tell the world (KS)

Listen

'Stick to the status quo' (*High School Musical*, Disney)

Further resources

Screen

Over the Hedge,  RJ the racoon and a bunch of timid animals have to venture over the hedge to scavenge food from the humans living on the other side. Clip 47:50-50:40 where RJ lays out the plan of attack, a seemingly impossible task.

Websites

www.scoutbase.org.uk/library/hqdocs/facts/pdfs/fs315082.pdf, Scout Skills Simple Knots, instructions for tying knots;
www.origami-fun.com/origami-for-kids.html, some simple origami instructions.

Gather

Prepare the space

You will need: sand in a tray, walking shoes, walking stick, rucksack, lunchbox and flask.

Set out a collection of things that you might take with you if you were going on an expedition. Let the children explore the items and talk about things they might take with them.

Gathering activity

Prepare some things that are easier for two people to do instead of one, for example, carrying a heavy shopping bag, singing a song, tidying up. Invite the children to try these things, first on their own, then in pairs. Ask the children if these things were easier to do in twos.

Gathering prayer

Thank you that we can gather here together, to help each other as we learn more about you, Lord, and to help each other live in a way that makes you happy.

Open the Word

Based on Mark 6.1-13
Bible notes are on page 12.

With very young children

A chance to play with things together.

You will need: soft balls, games, building sets.

Invite the children to play together and help each other, e.g. rolling balls to each other, building things or playing games together.

You might use this simple paraphrase and actions:

Jesus sent his friends on a journey.
(sweep arm into distance)

He told them to help each other.
(hold out hand and reach to take another's hand)

Repeat so the children can join in.

Guidance on exploring the Bible reading with young people is on the next page.

With children

■ As you tell the story, set out the things that Jesus tells the disciples to take with them (from Prepare the space), and take your group on a walk around the room, stopping to shake the dust off your feet.

Talk about

After reading the Bible story to your group, use these discussion points.

- What do you find easier to do with someone else?
- Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs?
- Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to shake the dust of their feet if they weren't welcomed?

The disciples go out two by two

based on Mark 6.1-13

Two by two, two by two...

The disciples could go two by two!

Jesus had arrived in the town where he grew up. In other towns, the people had loved to listen to his teaching and he had performed many miracles. It was different in his own town. The people remembered him as a small boy and found it difficult to believe that he was God's son. They thought he was just showing off!

Jesus took his disciples and went to the villages and towns nearby. He wanted his disciples to tell these people who he was, but he knew it would be difficult to make the people understand and believe. He didn't want his disciples to go on their own. Then he remembered Noah and the ark, and how the animals went in two by two. The disciples could go out two by two!

So, Jesus called his disciples together and told them,

'I am going to send you out two by two. Don't take anything with you, no food, no money, no change of clothes. I want you to trust in God.'

And so the disciples went out two by two.

They were welcomed into some people's homes and some people listened to them and believed in Jesus. The disciples made lots of people better because they trusted in God.

Some other people did not invite the disciples into their homes and they would not believe.



Bible study and response with young people

- Beforehand, read **Mark 6.1-13**. Read and print out a copy of the Bible study sheet for each group member. There are additional Bible notes on the **WEB**.
- In the session, read the Bible passage together, look at the *Bible notes* and *Make connections* sections. Use this conversation spark to provoke first reactions from the group: *'I am more confident in facing a new situation if I have someone with me.'* Do you agree?
- For the young people to work on the *Explore* section you will need to give them a copy of the reading and a pen so they can work in pairs to discover what it might reveal to them.
- Encourage people to respond to their discussion using the response activity below or the options on the next page.

Answer to the respond puzzle:

He takes the goat first, then returns alone. He then takes the wolf over and brings the goat back. He takes the cabbage over and returns alone for the goat.

Respond A puzzle

YP 10 MINS

A riddle conversation

Give the young people the following puzzle to work out. A farmer has to take a cabbage, a goat and a wolf across a river, but his boat will carry only himself plus, either the goat, wolf or cabbage. If left alone, the wolf will eat the goat and the goat will eat the cabbage. How can he do it? Give them time to work it out.

- How do you feel when you are faced with a difficult task?
- If we choose to be disciples, we are sent in the same way as the disciples in the passage.
- What does Jesus send us out to do? It's not an easy task. How do we feel in the face of it?

Live in faith

This week, encourage the young people to support each other in the task of being a disciple, by praying for each other and offering encouragement. This could be a good opportunity to set up a prayer partner scheme.

Two by two Mark 6.1-13

Bible notes

Jesus' family think that Jesus is insane (3.21). Those who have grown up with Jesus find it difficult to take him seriously. He is a carpenter's son, but from whom has he got all his knowledge and authority? Because people are sceptical, Jesus can do few works in his own town, and he is surprised at their lack of faith in him.

Time is urgent. Jesus calls his twelve disciples and sends them as apostles to go out in twos to continue his mission. He tells them to travel light, taking only a staff for support and protection, and to rely on the hospitality of those to whom they are travelling. This makes them vulnerable, as they need to accept the grace of receiving as well as giving. When they are not made welcome, Jesus tells them to shake the dust and move swiftly on. An important part of learning how to be a disciple is being an apprentice, learning to share the ministry of Jesus by trying it out. The apostles cast out demons, as they confront evil and heal many.

Make connections

We might think of the disciples being sent out to do something that they were ready for. They had followed Jesus, they had been commissioned and they had to go out and spread the news. Yet we know how difficult this can be. We face conflict and don't know what to do. Someone challenges our beliefs or understanding and we crumble. Jesus knew that his disciples would be challenged so he didn't leave them to struggle. He set up a model of interdependence and reliance on others, which is relevant for us today. So many people insist on 'doing their own thing', but working in partnership can be so much more effective and satisfying.

Explore

With a copy of the reading and a pen, work in pairs and read through it, using the following symbols to annotate it:

- ↑ a verse that tells us something about Jesus or God
- ↓ a verse that tells us something about people
- ? anything you don't understand, or would like explaining
- ! anything you find surprising
- ★ any verse you think is a key verse.

When you have finished, you can all share what you have found, and try to answer any questions that have been raised.

- Why do you think Jesus got the reaction he did in his home town?
- When Mark wrote his Gospel, he chose which stories to include and which to leave out. Why do you think he chose to include a report of Jesus failing?
- What do you make of Jesus' instruction to shake the dust off their feet if they are not welcomed in a place? Is he telling them to give up? Talk a bit about the importance of being able to discern whether to persevere or move on.

Respond to the Word

Based on Mark 6.1-13

See p.11 for ways of presenting the Bible reading.

Watch Impossible tasks



How do we respond when faced with difficult tasks?

You will need: the clip from *Over The Hedge* DVD (47:50-50:40).

- Watch the clip. RJ tells the animals the plan for getting into the house to get the food. The garden they have to cross is filled with traps. It seems like an impossible job.
- Ask the group: How do the animals react to the task they face? and How do we react when we face difficult tasks? Jesus knew that the job he was sending the disciples out to do would be difficult sometimes, but he sent them in pairs so that they wouldn't face it alone.

Play A pairs game



A game of two by two

You will need: a print-out of Bible pairs cards [WEB](#).

- Use the template [WEB](#) to create a set of small cards. If you have a large group, multiply the cards.
- Spread out the cards, face down on a table.
- Invite people to take turns to select one card and then find its partner, e.g. Mary and Joseph. Each card has a symbol to ease matching. If they find a pair, they keep them. If their selections don't match, the cards are placed back on the table, face down and the next person has a turn.
- You could add new pairs, asking the group for ideas.

Try Facing failure



How do we react when we fail?

You will need: string or rope; paper; instructions for knot tying, and origami (for both, see Further resources on p.10); jigsaws; needles and thread.

- Set up a range of tasks that are possible for your group, but which might challenge them. For example, tie a knot, do a jigsaw, thread a needle, make an origami model. You could set up more than one knot to tie or more than one origami model, if you need more tasks.
- Send each person to one activity to start with. Tell them that they need to finish one task before moving on to the next, and they need to do them all. After a few minutes, tell them that, if they really can't do the task, they can leave it and move on.
- Jesus told his disciples that, if they weren't welcome, as he wasn't in his home town, they should move on. It's ok if sometimes we fail – even Jesus failed sometimes.

Play Working together

C + YP 10 MINS

Work in pairs to win a three-legged race

You will need: scarves or ties.

- Have a three-legged race, using scarves to tie people's legs together at the ankles. Make sure that the area you are using is safe, and monitor the activity carefully to make sure no one gets hurt!
- Explain that a three-legged race is impossible on your own because you don't have enough legs! But to complete it successfully you have to work together and support each other.
- You might draw out some of the following points. You both have to be travelling in the same direction and aiming for the same thing. Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs, so that they could work together and support each other. On their own, the task he sent them to do would have seemed quite daunting. By working together, they were able to work miracles.

Make Welcome

C + YP 20 MINS

Make welcome mats

You will need: thick cotton fabric, or carpet off-cuts in light, plain colours; fabric paints.

- Cut squares from thick cotton fabric, or use carpet off-cuts, to make door mats, one per person.
- Using fabric paints, the youngsters can decorate their mats to welcome people into their home.
- Explain that in Gospel times people would be welcomed into someone's home with a bowl of water to wash the dust off their feet. Ask the group to consider what might be a modern-day ritual of welcome. Can they introduce this to the content of your future sessions?

Pray Partnership prayers



Pray for each other in pairs

- Divide the group into pairs, and give them a couple of minutes to talk to one another about what they will be doing in the coming week. Is there anything they are worried about? Then give them a few minutes to pray for each other.
- Encourage everyone to remember to pray for their partner over the coming week, so supporting their fellow disciples.

Send out

Live in faith

Remember to help one another this week. Try to work with someone else to do something two by two. You could set up prayer partners so that everyone has someone to pray for, and someone praying for them.

Pray

You have a job for us to do, to show people who you are. Send us out together, Lord, to show you to the world.

Amen.