

**Isa. 40:21–31**  
**Ps. 147:1–11, 20c**  
**1 Cor. 9:16–23**  
**Mark 1:29–39**

## Pass It On

### Goal for the Session

*Tweens will be helped by the story of Simon's mother-in-law to recognize that we can pass on God's grace through loving service.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Mark 1:29–39

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Gary W. Charles

Early on in this Gospel, we learn that Jesus will not shy from broken bodies or demonic spirits. In fact, in typical Markan hyperbole “all” the city comes knocking on Simon's mother-in-law's door looking for exorcism and/or healing. In addition, in these opening verses from Mark, we are introduced to a most important character in his story—“the crowd.” “The crowd” grows in fascination over Jesus, a theme that will take a traitorous twist in chapter 15. In these early scenes in Mark, Jesus doesn't try to draw a crowd; in fact, he tries to escape them.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Ofelia Ortega

Jesus grabs her hand firmly, to raise her up. The expression of healing is surprising because it uses the same Greek verb for “to get up” that is used to report Jesus' resurrection in Mark 16:6. As important as Jesus' expression is the response of the mother-in-law; she began to serve them. Service is a key topic in the call of Jesus. This woman gets up and turns the Sabbath into a day of service to others. Jesus does not command her. She is the one that assumes the initiative. Her service cannot be understood as a woman's menial work, but as a true messianic ministry. This woman is Jesus' first servant and joins him in the radical announcement, in action, of the kingdom of God.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” P. C. Enniss

Jesus “came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her.” The power of touch, of intimacy, of nearness, to make whole: Jesus must have understood that which we are too often too slow to comprehend. Love not expressed, love not felt, is difficult to trust. Theologically speaking, that is the reason for incarnation. God knew the human need for nearness. Jesus is the incarnation of God's love, which makes it all the more demanding (if frightening) to realize that for some people, we are the only Jesus they will ever meet.

#### NOW WHAT is God's word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Mike Graves

As the summary in verse 39 notes, Jesus goes forth “proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.” Preaching and healing. This represents the ministry of Jesus in a nutshell, and it represents still the ministry of those who follow him. After Simon's mother-in-law is restored to health, she serves. This is how Jesus himself will live and what all of his followers will be called to do (Mark 10:45).

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Mark 1:29–39**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Most tweens know what it means to give and receive care. This understanding provides a natural entry point for today's passage about reciprocal care and love. Although young people this age can often seem quite self-centered, they do care about others and want to help. Sometimes, though, they may wonder if they have the skills to do anything meaningful for others. The focus scripture provides an opportunity to affirm that everyday acts of love and service can have a powerful impact in the world.

*God of love, move in my heart and the hearts and minds of the tweens in my group. May we find powerful examples of loving service in this story of Jesus and Simon's mother-in-law. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ☐ Color Pack 10, 21, 24, 25, 32
- ☐ Resource Sheet 1 from December 31, materials listed there
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ copies of Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024; CD player
- ☐ colorful fine-tipped markers

**For Responding**

- ☐ option 1: small foam ball
- ☐ option 2: copies of Resource Sheet 2 on white card stock; materials listed there
- ☐ option 3: items for project chosen

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

Welcome tweens as they arrive, asking about their weekend.

Gather the group and lead the opening ritual as described on Resource Sheet 1 from December 31. This week's "Star Stuff" trivia question is:

What is a star in the final stage of its life cycle called?

- a. red dwarf
- b. red giant
- c. white dwarf (*correct answer*)

Display Color Pack 24, and read aloud the caption. Offer this prayer or one of your own:

*Life-giving God, as we explore the Scriptures today, shine the light of your Spirit into our hearts, so that we may see how to follow in your ways. Amen.*

Introduce the session focus by inviting tweens to talk about acts of love and service they witnessed in the previous week. Then encourage them to tell about times they helped others during the past week. Challenge tweens to look for examples of caring service in the Bible passage today.

Some tweens may be fascinated or troubled by the notion of demons. If the subject is raised, explain that in Jesus' time it was thought that demons—spirits who were working against God—caused illness. Mark wanted to show that Jesus had power over evil, death, and illness.

### **Reporters' Questions**

Who are you, and why are you here today?  
What happened?  
How did you feel as the story unfolded?  
What did you do afterward?  
How do you feel about what happened?

## **EXPLORING**

Distribute Bibles and ask tweens to find the first page of the Gospel of Mark. Ask them to recall what they remember about this Gospel. Briefly review the story of the call of the disciples and explain that as today's story opens, Jesus and his followers have traveled to another town, where Jesus has been teaching in the synagogue and healing the sick. The news of Jesus has spread everywhere.

Form small groups and distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Mark 1:29–39). With the entire class, read today's Bible passage aloud from Resource Sheet 1, pausing at the end of each section. Say the command "Begin" and have each group work together to position their bodies to create a "picture" depicting the scene. After one minute, call, "Freeze" and have the tweens hold their positions. Let them hold for about ten seconds and then say, "Relax." Continue until you have read the whole story. Invite learners to express their thoughts and observations about the story:

- ✂ Where do you see good news in this passage?
- ✂ What evidence is presented that Jesus is the Son of God?
- ✂ If you could ask the writer of Mark's Gospel a question about this story, what would it be?

Imagining themselves as reporters helps tweens appreciate the action in Mark's Gospel. On newsprint, write questions like the ones in the sidebar. Form pairs to review Mark 1:29–39, using Resource Sheet 1 if desired. Have each pair determine who will choose a person in the story to portray and who will be the reporter. Reporters can look at the questions on the newsprint and find an item to use as an impromptu microphone, while actors decide which character in the story to portray. Reporters ask the questions, and the actors answer the questions in character, being as descriptive as possible. Reverse roles, encouraging actors to choose new characters to keep things fresh. Take a moment with the whole group to exchange new insights about following Jesus that they gained by this exercise.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Mark 1:32–33. Ask tweens to imagine what it might have been like to be part of that crowd. Show Color Pack 25. Ask:

- ✂ If these hands belonged to someone in the story, whose hands might they be?
- ✂ In what way did Jesus' hands serve and help Simon's mother-in-law?
- ✂ In what way did Simon's mother-in-law's hands serve and help Jesus?
- ✂ Whom else did Jesus serve?
- ✂ Why do you think the Gospel of Mark includes this story?

Point out that acts of service and kindness are one way of passing on God's love to others. Discuss:

- ✂ What are some ways that we, as followers of Jesus, can serve and help others?

Have tweens use fine-tipped markers to print their responses on the arms and hands of Color Pack 25.

EASY  
PREP

## RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **“Pass It On” Game** Gather tweens in a circle, seated on the floor. Recall that in the Bible story for today, Jesus heals Simon’s mother-in-law. What was her response? Comment that one way Jesus and the disciples passed on God’s love was by serving others. We can do the same. Choose a leader, and give that person a small foam ball. The leader begins the game by tossing the ball to one of the other players and then closing his or her eyes. The other players pass the ball within the circle at random as quickly as possible. After a short period, the leader calls out “Stop!” The player left holding the ball names one way that he or she might pass on God’s love this week. He or she then becomes the leader of the game.
2. **Hand Plaques** The story of Jesus and Simon’s mother-in-law calls us to love and serve others. Make copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Hand Plaques) on white card stock and give one to each learner. Follow the instructions on the resource sheet. Encourage tweens to display their plaques at home as a reminder to be ready to lend a hand.
3. **Serving Project** Like Jesus and Simon’s mother-in-law, we can pass on God’s grace through loving service. Select a way for learners to participate in a serving ministry together. This may be a short-term project, such as washing the toys in the church nursery, sorting craft supplies in the Sunday school closet, or making a snack to serve to another group. If you have more time, you might do something a little more involved, such as collecting funds or supplies for an agency that helps others.

### You Are My Beloved Child

You are my beloved child,  
hallelujah,  
You are my beloved child,  
hallelujah.

And my face has smiled on  
you, hallelujah,  
And my face has smiled on  
you, hallelujah.

Then says God to everyone,  
hallelujah,  
Then says God to everyone,  
hallelujah.

You’re God’s daughter,  
you’re God’s son,  
hallelujah!  
You’re God’s daughter,  
you’re God’s son,  
hallelujah!

## CLOSING

Gather the group and take another look at Color Pack 24, recalling that these stars have used up all of their thermonuclear material and are fading away. Simon Peter’s mother-in-law was very sick, but Jesus saved her from a lingering illness, “reigniting” her for a life of loving service. Introduce this session’s “Star of the Week”: the Fruit of the Spirit Star. Cut the pattern for the nine-pointed star from Color Pack 21 and have learners trace it to make their stars, as described on Resource Sheet 1 from December 31. As they work, explain that this star symbolizes the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit named in Galatians 5:22. These gifts from the Spirit help us serve others in love.

Lead the closing ritual as described on Resource Sheet 1 from December 31. Sing “You Are My Beloved Child” (Color Pack 32; track 26 on *Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024). Extend signs and words of peace to one another as you depart. Remind the group that you will be praying for them throughout the coming week, and invite them to pray for you as well.

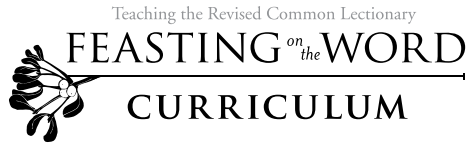
## Mark 1:29–39 (CEV)

1. As soon as Jesus left the meeting place with James and John, they went home with Simon and Andrew. When they got there, Jesus was told that Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever.
2. Jesus went to her. He took hold of her hand and helped her up. The fever left her, and she served them a meal.
3. That evening after sunset, all who were sick or had demons in them were brought to Jesus. In fact, the whole town gathered around the door of the house. Jesus healed all kinds of terrible diseases and forced out a lot of demons. But the demons knew who he was, and he did not let them speak.
4. Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray. Simon and the others started looking for him. And when they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you!"
5. Jesus replied, "We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people. This is why I have come." Then Jesus went to Jewish meeting places everywhere in Galilee, where he preached and forced out demons.

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February 4, 2024  
Pass It On



Tweens  
Resource Sheet 2

## Hand Plaques

**Materials:** Card stock in colors, glitter glue, scissors, fine-tipped markers, tape, yarn

**Instructions:**

1. Trace one of your hands on a piece of card stock.
2. Cut out your handprint and decorate it.
3. Cut out the plaque on this page. Add a colorful border, if you like.
4. Fold a ½" x 3" strip of card stock accordion-style to make a "spring." Tape one end of the folded strip to the back of your handprint and one end to the plaque.
5. Tape a loop of yarn to the top of the plaque for hanging.
6. Take your plaque home and hang it in a place where it can be a reminder for you and your family.

Jesus showed God's love by serving others.  
Are you ready to lend a hand today?