

Saint Elizabeth Roman Catholic Church
Adult Faith Formation Presentation: September 9, 2014
An Introduction to the Gospel of Mark
A Guided Exercise in Attentive Reading

Note: *Attentive Reading* is an approach that starts with reading a scriptural passage aloud, paying close attention to the details in each verse of the passage; if possible, read the passage in two different translations. After reading the passage at least twice, then ask yourself the following questions in order to enter into the passage more fully:

- What exactly does the passage say? [Retell the basic storyline in your own words]
- What does the passage not say? What information would you like that is not given?
- Who are the characters in the scene and how do they interact with one another?
- What are the stylistic features (repetition of words or phrases; use of images or symbols)?
- From what point of view is the story told? Whose perspective on the events is shown to the reader? [the gospels often present an “omniscient narrator” point of view]
- What is the main point of the passage? What is the evangelist telling us in this passage?
- How is Jesus portrayed in this scene? How does this fit in with other portrayals of Jesus in the gospels?
- What can you learn about Jesus by reflecting on this scene? How does this passage help deepen your understanding of Jesus?

Example One: *Mark 7/31-37* (The Healing of a Deaf Man)

(31) Again he left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. (32) And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. (33) He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man’s ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; (34) then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, “*Ephphatha!*” (that is, “Be opened!”).

(35) And [immediately] the man’s ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. (36) He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. (37) They were exceedingly astonished and they said, “He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and [the] mute speak.”

Example Two: *Mark 3/1-6* (A Man with a Withered Hand)

(1) Again he entered the synagogue. There was a man there who had a withered hand. (2) They watched him closely to see if he would cure him on the sabbath so that they might accuse him. (3) He said to the man with the withered hand, “Come up here before us.” (4) Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?” But they remained silent.

(5) Looking around at them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart, he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out and his hand was restored. (6) The Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him to put him to death.