Who Do You Say I Am?

MARK 8:27-31 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

The Shepherd walked through the valley of death first, and rose.

Open with it, bring it back after every section, close with it. By the end they should be able to finish the sentence for you.

- Before this passage (day 7): Mark 6:45-52, Take Courage! It Is I. Its big idea: No fear, because he is with me: “It is I.”
- After this passage (day 9): Psalm 23:5, A Table Before My Enemies. Its big idea: The Shepherd is also the host who welcomes, protects and fills his guests.

Open

Recall last time (Mark 6:45-52): “It is I. Do not be afraid.” Today: the first half of Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” Ask: Is it easier to face something hard when someone has been through it before you? Read Mark 8:31. Big idea: The Shepherd walked through the valley of death first, and rose. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. Through the Valley (Psalm 23:4, about 8 min)

The one thing: Psalm 23:4 does not promise a way around the valley; it promises company in it, and Jesus shows the valley has a far side.

Ask: The psalm does not promise a way around the valley. What does Jesus’ “after three days rise again” add to it?

2. Who Do You Say I Am? (Mark 8:27-30, about 10 min)

The one thing: Respectful opinions about Jesus fall short; Peter names him as God’s anointed King.

Ask: Why do you think Jesus asked what other people were saying before he asked the disciples?

3. The Son of Man Must Suffer (Mark 8:31, about 12 min)

The one thing: The Christ must walk the valley of death himself, and come out after three days.

Ask: Why does it matter that Jesus told them about his death, and his rising, before it happened?

Close (never cut it)

Read Mark 8:31, then Psalm 23:4. The Shepherd named the valley and its far side. Say together: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.”

PROTECT THE ENDING

If the last section starts late, read v29-31 and go to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 5, 2, 1, 4, 3 (top to bottom) · Feelings: Peter giving his answer happy, The disciples hearing Jesus will be killed sad, The disciples wondering what will happen worried, The disciples hearing he will rise again happy · Code: THROUGH THE VALLEY

Act it out: The children walk around the room as Jesus and his disciples. Jesus asks, “Who do people say I am?” and the children call out “A prophet!” “Elijah!” Then Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” and one child, Peter, says, “You are the Christ.”

1. Through the Valley

PSALM 23:4 · ABOUT 8 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- The psalm names the darkest place honestly.
- “Walk” means you keep moving, and the Shepherd who walked the valley rose on the far side (Mark 8:31).
- The same verb is in Isaiah 43:2: “When you walk through the fire.”

“On the WAY, He questioned His disciples.” (Mark 8:27) Psalm 23:4 is a walk too: “Even though I walk through the valley.”

“After three days RISE again.” (Mark 8:31)

Discuss: The psalm does not promise a way around the valley. What does Jesus’ “after three days rise again” add to it?

Psalm 23:4 does not promise a way around the valley; it promises company in it, and Jesus shows the valley has a far side.

MUST COVER

- Psalm 23:4: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”
- Isaiah 43:2: “When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched,” with the same Hebrew verb.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Psalm 138:7: “If I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve me.”

Illustration idea: A guide who has crossed a mountain pass before and goes first through the dark tunnel.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: You don't get stuck there.
- Listen for: Someone goes with you.

If it drifts: If the talk turns to why valleys happen, admit the psalm does not say. It says who walks with you.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

There is a far side to the valley, and the Shepherd has been there.

Short on time? Drop Psalm 138:7. Keep Mark 8:31.

Bridge → On the road north of Galilee, the Shepherd says he will walk the valley himself.

2. Who Do You Say I Am?

MARK 8:27-30 · ABOUT 10 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Jesus takes his disciples north to the villages around Caesarea Philippi.
- People say he is John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets.
- Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” and Peter says, “You are the Christ.”

“But what about YOU?” Jesus asked.

Peter answered, “You are the CHRIST.”

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus asked what other people were saying before he asked the disciples?

Respectful opinions about Jesus fall short; Peter names him as God’s anointed King.

MUST COVER

- v27-28: the crowd’s answers all give Jesus honor as a prophet.
- v29: “Christ” means “Anointed One,” the promised King from David’s line.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Caesarea Philippi had a shrine to Pan and a temple to the emperor Augustus.
- Malachi promised Elijah would come before the Day of the LORD (Malachi 4:5).

Illustration idea: A survey of what your neighbors think about Jesus, followed by a single blank line headed “You.”

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: Each of us has to answer for ourselves.
- Listen for: Being right about Jesus matters more than being polite about him.

If it drifts: If it turns into a debate about other religions, return to v29: Jesus’ question is to the people in front of him.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Peter named him the Christ, God's anointed King.

Short on time? Drop the Caesarea Philippi background. Keep v29.

Bridge → Then Jesus tells them what kind of Christ he is.

3. The Son of Man Must Suffer

MARK 8:31 · ABOUT 12 MIN · SECTION 3 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Jesus warns them not to tell anyone yet.
- He teaches that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected and be killed.
- He says that after three days he will rise again.

“The Son of Man MUST suffer many things.”

“And after three days RISE again.”

Discuss: Why does it matter that Jesus told them about his death, and his rising, before it happened?

The Christ must walk the valley of death himself, and come out after three days.

MUST COVER

- v31: “must” points to God’s plan.
- v31: the elders, chief priests and scribes were Israel’s ruling council; he names who will reject him.

IF THERE'S TIME

- “Rejected” is the verb in the Greek of Psalm 118:22, “The stone the builders rejected.”
- Jesus foretells his death and rising three times in Mark (8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34).

Illustration idea: A guide who tells a hiking group plainly about the hardest stretch of the trail before they reach it, and promises to lead them through.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: He knew where he was going and went anyway.
- Listen for: The death and the rising belong together.

If it drifts: If the discussion jumps to the details of the crucifixion, keep it on v31: he told them in advance, and he named the rising.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

The Shepherd walked through the valley of death first, and rose.

Short on time? Drop the Psalm 118 note. Keep v31.

Bridge → So hear the psalm line again next to v31.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

ABOUT 30 MINUTES · FOR A FRIEND WHO IS CURIOUS, OR NOT SURE

1. Start with opinions. Ask: What do people you know say about Jesus?
2. Read it. Read Mark 8:27-31 together.
3. The question. Jesus asks, “But what about you?” and “Who do you say I am?”
4. The answer. Peter says, “You are the Christ,” and Jesus says the Christ must suffer, die and rise.
5. Leave the question. Ask: Who do you say he is? Leave it with them.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

“What does “Christ” mean?”

“Anointed One,” the Greek form of “Messiah.” It was the title for the King God promised from David’s line.

“Why did Jesus tell them to keep quiet?”

“Christ” could easily be heard as a call to fight Rome. Jesus first had to teach them what kind of Christ he is.

“Why must he suffer?”

Jesus later said he came “to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

“What does this mean for me?”

He asks each person the same question, and he went through death so that his people could have life.

Evergreen Principles

Four standards every week. The rest rotate: each lesson brings the few that fit its passage best.

EVERY LESSON

1. Pray before you prepare

Teaching the Bible is spiritual work first (John 15:5).

If you're new: Pray for your class by name during the week.

If you've taught for years: Pray for the one person you find hardest to reach.

2. Study the text first

Understand the passage yourself before any help.

If you're new: Read it in two translations; write your own questions first.

If you've taught for years: Don’t lean on old notes. What did you miss last time?

3. Teach one big idea

People remember one sentence, not four points.

If you're new: Write it in 12 words or fewer before anything else.

If you've taught for years: Test every story against it. If it doesn’t serve it, cut it.

4. Point to Christ

All of Scripture points to him (Luke 24:27).

If you're new: Ask: what does this show about Jesus?

If you've taught for years: Show grace as the reason for obedience, not just the rule.

FOR THIS LESSON

1. Make it concrete

Mark names a real place and real people.

If you're new: Show Caesarea Philippi on a map, north of the Sea of Galilee.

If you've taught for years: Mention the shrine to Pan and the temple to Augustus.

2. Let the Bible do the talking

Jesus’ own words carry the passage.

If you're new: Read v29 and v31 slowly, twice.

If you've taught for years: Let the class hear “must” and “rise again.”

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

Jesus ends with a question to his followers.

If you're new: End on his question, not on a task.

If you've taught for years: Leave a moment of silence after v29.

BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Read the passage three times
- ☐ Big idea in one sentence
- ☐ Opening and close chosen
- ☐ Know what you’ll cut
- ☐ Handouts, pens, extra Bibles
- ☐ Prayed for the class by name

Openings, Closings & Hard Moments

Pick one opening and one close; rotate so class doesn't get predictable.

OPENINGS

- ask a real-life question: What are some of the things people say about Jesus today?

- use an object: Hold up a crown and a nail and ask which one belongs to the Christ.
- raise a problem: If the promised King had finally come, what would you expect him to do first?

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: The Shepherd walked through the valley of death first, and rose.
- call back to the opening: Return to the list of opinions about Jesus and read Peter's answer beside it.
- pray the text: Let people say Peter's words back to Jesus in prayer: "You are the Christ."

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone is not sure who Jesus is.: Welcome the honesty. Jesus asked the question because it needs a real answer; invite them to keep reading Mark with that question in mind.
- Someone is facing suffering of their own and finds the passage heavy.: Point to the end of v31: after three days he rises. The Shepherd who went through death is with them in their valley.
- Silence after a question: Wait. Then rephrase simpler, or ask them to talk to a neighbor first.
- One person dominates: "Thanks. Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet." Talk privately if it continues.
- A question you can't answer: Say so, write it down, bring an answer next week.
- A tangent takes over: "Great question. Let's catch it after class so we can finish the passage."

READ THIS WEEK

- Mark 10:32-34
- John 10:11-18
- Hebrews 2:9-10

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/mark/8-27-31/lesson

Who Do You Say I Am?

MARK 8:27-31 (BSB) · THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death” Psalm 23:4

THE BIG IDEA

The Shepherd walked through the valley of death first, and rose.

1. THROUGH THE VALLEY · PSALM 23:4

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“On the _____, He questioned His disciples.” (Mark 8:27) Psalm 23:4 is a walk too: “Even though I walk through the valley.”

“After three days _____ again.” (Mark 8:31)

Discuss: The psalm does not promise a way around the valley. What does Jesus’ “after three days rise again” add to it?

2. WHO DO YOU SAY I AM? · MARK 8:27-30

- Jesus takes his disciples north to the villages around Caesarea Philippi.
- People say he is John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets.
- Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” and Peter says, “You are the Christ.”

“But what about _____?” Jesus asked.

Peter answered, “You are the _____.”

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus asked what other people were saying before he asked the disciples?

3. THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER · MARK 8:31

- Jesus warns them not to tell anyone yet.
- He teaches that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected and be killed.
- He says that after three days he will rise again.

“The Son of Man _____ suffer many things.”

“And after three days _____ again.”

Discuss: Why does it matter that Jesus told them about his death, and his rising, before it happened?

Read this week: Mark 10:32-34 · John 10:11-18 · Hebrews 2:9-10

For Kids: Who Do You Say I Am?

MARK 8:27-31 · NAME: _____

Big idea: Jesus went through the darkest valley first, and came back.

1. PUT THE STORY IN ORDER! NUMBER THE BOXES.

☐ Jesus says he will die and rise.

☐ He asks who people say he is.

☐ Jesus walks with his friends.

☐ Peter says, “You are the Christ.”

☐ Then he asks, “Who do you say?”

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

Peter giving his answer: happy · sad · worried

The disciples hearing Jesus will be killed: happy · sad · worried

The disciples wondering what will happen: happy · sad · worried

The disciples hearing he will rise again: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

C O B R P K O Y N
K H T H R E E F D
I S C H R I S T O
N P R O P H E T H
G R I S E U Y Y V
P E T E R Y Y P O
H O S V R R N B B
P Y O J E S U S G
G R R O A D O G R

JESUS · PETER · CHRIST · KING · ROAD · PROPHET · RISE · THREE

4. SECRET CODE

1=A 2=E 3=G 4=H 5=L 6=O 7=R 8=T 9=U 10=V 11=Y

___	___	___	___	___	___	___		___	___	___		___	___	___	___	___	___
8	**4**	**7**	**6**	**9**	**3**	**4**		**8**	**4**	**2**		**10**	**1**	**5**	**5**	**2**	**11**

5. DRAW IT!

Draw Jesus and his friends walking on a road, with a speech bubble from Peter: “You are the Christ.”

6. MEMORY VERSE

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death” Psalm 23:4 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

Jesus is _____. _____