

# Contents

Introducing the Living in Christ Series . . . . .	7
Unit 1: Introduction to the New Testament . . . . .	16
Overview . . . . .	16
Learning Experiences . . . . .	21
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 2: A Catholic Approach to Scripture: Exegetical and Interpretive Methods . . . . .	44
Overview . . . . .	44
Learning Experiences . . . . .	48
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 3: The Development of the Gospels and the Writing of Mark . . . . .	62
Overview . . . . .	62
Learning Experiences . . . . .	66
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 4: The Gospels of Matthew and Luke . . . . .	84
Overview . . . . .	84
Learning Experiences . . . . .	89
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 5: The Gospel of John . . . . .	102
Overview . . . . .	102
Learning Experiences . . . . .	106
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 6: The Acts of the Apostles . . . . .	128
Overview . . . . .	128
Learning Experiences . . . . .	132
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 7: The Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Letters . . . . .	150
Overview . . . . .	150
Learning Experiences . . . . .	154
Handouts . . . . .	
Unit 8: Late First-Century Writings . . . . .	170
Overview . . . . .	170
Learning Experiences . . . . .	174
Handouts . . . . .	
Appendix: Additional Resources . . . . .	190
Acknowledgments . . . . .	191

# Unit 3

## The Development of the Gospels and the Writing of Mark

### Overview

Now that the students possess a basic understanding of a Catholic approach to Scripture, including a firm foundation in exegetical methods, this unit offers them a general overview of the development of the four Gospels before focusing their study on Mark, the first Gospel written.

### Key Understandings and Questions

Upon completing this unit, the students will have a deeper understanding of the following key concepts:

- The canon of the New Testament was formed over a period of nearly two centuries in a process that began with the life and teaching of Jesus and proceeded through oral tradition to written tradition and finally the inclusion of inspired texts.
- Mark, Matthew, and Luke are called synoptic Gospels because they share much in common; John differs in form and content.
- Mark portrays Jesus as a suffering Messiah who experiences all the joys and sorrows of human life.
- In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus proclaims the Reign of God in parables and miracles.

Upon completing the unit, the students will have answered the following questions:


- Through what process was the canon of the New Testament formed?
- Why are Mark, Matthew, and Luke called synoptic Gospels?
- What is Mark's Christology?
- In the Gospel of Mark, how does Jesus proclaim the Reign of God?

### How Will You Know the Students Understand?

The following resources will help you to assess the students' understanding of the key concepts covered in this unit:

- handout "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 3" (Document #: TX002241)
- handout "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 3" (Document #: TX002242)
- handout "Unit 3 Test" (Document #: TX002248)

## Student Book Articles

This unit draws on articles from *The New Testament: The Good News of Jesus Christ* student book and incorporates them into the unit instruction. Whenever the teaching steps for the unit require the students to refer to or read an article from the student book, the following symbol appears in the margin: . The articles covered in the unit are from "Section 1: The Word of God" and "Section 2: The Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles," and are as follows:

- "Covenants Old and New" (article 2)
- "The Formation of the Gospels" (article 11)
- "An Overview of the Synoptic Gospels" (article 12)
- "The Miracles in Mark's Gospel" (article 13)
- "The Parables in Mark's Gospel" (article 14)
- "Mark's Passion Narrative" (article 15)
- "The Suffering Messiah" (article 16)

## The Suggested Path to Understanding

This unit in the teacher guide provides you with one learning path to take with the students, to enable them to begin their study of the Gospels in general and Mark's Gospel in particular. It is not necessary to use all the learning experiences, but if you substitute other material from this course or your own material for some of the material offered here, check to see that you have covered all relevant facets of understanding and that you have not missed knowledge or skills required in later units.

**Explain**

**Step 1:** Preassess what the students already know about the Gospels in general and Mark's Gospel in particular by having them complete a timeline learning experience.

**Understand**

**Step 2:** Follow this assessment by presenting to the students the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 3" (Document #: TX002241) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 3" (Document #: TX002242).

**Perceive****Interpret**

**Step 3:** Introduce Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), a practice in which students will engage throughout the remainder of the course.

**Explain**

**Step 4:** Explain the process through which the New Testament developed.

**Explain****Perceive**

**Step 5:** Guide the students in a critical examination of selections from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, a noncanonical text.

Explain

**Step 6:** Introduce a chart of the four Gospels, which students will begin to work on in this unit and will complete in subsequent units.

Understand

**Step 7:** Facilitate the students' creation of a section of a "Synoptic Parallels" resource.

Understand

**Step 8:** Use Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and passages from the Gospel of Mark to lead students in exploring the concept of the Reign of God.

Understand

**Step 9:** Present information to the students regarding four key aspects of Mark's Christology, and then guide the students in creating a documentary film or a series of skits to present and explore this information.

Understand

**Step 10:** Make sure the students are all on track with their final performance tasks, if you have assigned them.

Reflect

**Step 11:** Provide the students with a tool to use for reflecting on what they learned in the unit and how they learned.

## Background for Teaching This Unit

Visit [smp.org/LivinginChrist](http://smp.org/LivinginChrist) for additional information about these and other theological concepts taught in this unit:

- "Formation of the Canon" (Document #: TX002233)
- "New Testament Christologies" (Document #: TX002234)
- "Non-canonical Gospels" (Document #: TX002235)
- "Oral Tradition" (Document #: TX002236)
- "Canons and Their Development" (Document #: TX001001)
- "Gospel Comparison Chart" (Document #: TX001175)

The Web site also includes information on these and other teaching methods used in the unit:

- "Using the Jigsaw Process" (Document #: TX001020)
- "Sustained Silent Reading" (Document #: TX002237)

## Scripture Passages

Scripture is an important part of the Living in Christ series and is frequently used in the learning experiences for each unit. The Scripture passages featured in this unit are as follows:

- Mark, chapters 1–3
- Matthew, chapters 3, 4, and 8
- Luke, chapters 3–5
- Mark 4:26–29 (Parable of the Seed Growing of Itself, or Secretly)
- Mark 4:30–32 (Parable of the Mustard Seed)
- Mark 10:13–16 (blessing of the children)
- Mark 10:23–27 (the wealthy and the Kingdom of God)
- Mark 12:28–34 (the Greatest Commandment)

## Vocabulary

The student book and the teacher guide include the following key terms for this unit. To provide the students with a list of these terms and their definitions, download and print the handout “Vocabulary for Unit 3” (Document #: TX002243), one for each student.

.....

allegory  
apocrypha  
canonical  
centurion  
didache  
kerygma  
Messiah  
oral tradition

parable  
parousia  
Q Source  
Reign of God  
Sanhedrin  
scribes  
Son of Man  
synoptic Gospels



# Learning Experiences

## Explain

### Step 1

*Preassess what the students already know about the Gospels in general and Mark's Gospel in particular by having them complete a timeline learning experience.*

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handout "New Testament Timeline" (Document #: TX002240), one for each student plus three extras. Copy the three extras on three different colors of paper. Cut the colored copies apart into strips.
2. **Tell** the students that because they now have a firm foundation in a Catholic approach to Scripture, including various exegetical methods, they are ready in this new unit to begin an intensive study of the New Testament, beginning with the Gospels. To give them an overview of the process through which the New Testament developed, they will complete a timeline of major events that occurred during this process. Explain that the timeline will not have dates on it yet, because it is more important for the students at this point to familiarize themselves with the order of events rather than specific dates.
3. **Give** each student one strip of paper from the colored copies of the timeline you have cut apart. If you have fewer than thirty-six students, give some students two strips, but make sure they are the same color. Explain that each student has one or two items from the timeline of events in the development of the New Testament. The strips the students have received make up three complete timelines, which are color-coded. Ask the students to first find their color-coded group members and then, within those groups, to place themselves in the order in which they believe these events to have occurred.
4. **Give** the students 10 to 15 minutes to complete this task. Circulate among the groups but do not offer them assistance right away, because you are trying to ascertain the extent and depth of their prior knowledge.
5. **Instruct** the groups to let you know when they have finished so you can check their work. At that point, you may wish to offer hints as feedback, such as "Items 1 through 5 are correct, but not the remaining ones," or "You have only two out of order; see if you can figure out which ones." Once all groups have completed the timeline with a reasonable degree of accuracy, reconvene the class in the large group.

**6. Distribute** a new, whole copy of the handout “New Testament Timeline” (Document #: TX002240), one for each student. Direct the students to look this over briefly, and then engage them in a brief conversation using these or similar questions:

- What events did your group find easy to place on the timeline?
- What events were more difficult to place?
- What new information did you learn simply from this preassessment learning experience?
- What questions do you have as we begin this new unit?

**7. Answer** simple factual questions at this time, but defer lengthy discussions to future class sessions. Affirm the students’ prior knowledge about the development of the New Testament, as well as their intellectual curiosity in posing questions. You may also wish to clarify that because Mark was the first Gospel written, this introductory unit on the Gospels will include close study of Mark.

**8. Direct** the students to keep the handout “New Testament Timeline” (Document #: TX002240) in their binders so they can refer to it throughout the unit. In a later learning experience, they will fill in the approximate years in which these events occurred.

### Understand

## Step 2

Follow this assessment by presenting to the students the handouts “Final Performance Task Options for Unit 3” (Document #: TX002241) and “Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 3” (Document #: TX002242).

This unit provides you with three ways to assess that the students have a deep understanding of the most important concepts in the unit: writing an exegetical paper, creating an artistic portrait of Jesus with a written explanation, or developing a museum display with an accompanying audio guide. Refer to “Using Final Performance Tasks to Assess Understanding” (Document #: TX001011) and “Using Rubrics to Assess Work” (Document #: TX001012) at [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist) for background information.

### Teacher Note

See the appendix for resources describing a semester-long project option in which students can create a portfolio of exegetical papers written as their final performance task for at least four units. You can give students the option to create this portfolio, including a reflective meta-analysis, in place of part or all of their final exam.

### Teacher Note

Remind the students to choose their final performance task in accordance with any course requirements you may have established. In addition, if you are offering the semester-long portfolio project to your students (perhaps as part or all of their final exam), explain that the students who wish to begin assembling a portfolio must choose option 1.

### Teacher Note

You will want to assign due dates for the performance tasks.

If you have done these performance tasks, or very similar ones, with students before, place examples of this work in the classroom. During this introduction explain how each is a good example of what you are looking for, for different reasons. This allows the students to concretely understand what you are looking for and to understand that there is not only one way to succeed.

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 3" (Document #: TX002241) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 3" (Document #: TX002242), one of each for each student.
2. **Distribute** the handouts. Give the students a choice as to which performance task to work on and add more options if you so choose.
3. **Review** the directions, expectations, and rubric in class, allowing the students to ask questions. You may want to say something to this effect:
  - If you wish to work alone, you may choose any of the three options. If you wish to work with a partner or as part of a group of three, you may choose option 3 only.
  - Near the end of the unit, you will have one full class period to work on the final performance task. However, keep in mind that you should be working on, or at least thinking about, your chosen task throughout the unit, not just at the end.
4. **Explain** the types of tools and knowledge the students will gain throughout the unit so that they can successfully complete the final performance task.
5. **Answer** questions to clarify the end point toward which the unit is headed. Remind the students as the unit progresses that each learning experience builds the knowledge and skills they will need in order to show you that they understand the development of the Gospels, especially the first Gospel, Mark.



## Perceive

## Interpret

## Step 3

*Introduce Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), a practice in which students will engage throughout the remainder of the course.*

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handout “Sustained Silent Reading Log Instructions” (Document #: TX002244), one for each student. Read or review the method article “Sustained Silent Reading” (Document #: TX002237), available at [smp.org/LivinginChrist](http://smp.org/LivinginChrist).
2. **Tell** the students that although they will read about the New Testament in their student books, it is far more important for them to read the New Testament itself throughout this course. Although various learning experiences during the course will focus on particular New Testament passages, the bulk of the students’ reading will occur during the first 15 minutes of class, using a practice called Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).
3. **Distribute** the handout “Sustained Silent Reading Log Instructions” (Document #: TX002244) and read it aloud with the students. Explain that starting today, most class sessions will follow prayer with an SSR period of about 15 minutes, during which the students will read a designated book of the New Testament at their own pace and then write a brief entry in their reading log. This will provide them with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a particular book of the New Testament as they read it through from beginning to end. Acknowledge that reading Scripture in this way—reading straight through one book, rather than examining selected passages—may be a new experience for many students.
4. **Share** with the students your expectations regarding the SSR log (for example, keeping it in a separate section of their binder or notebook), including your procedure for collecting and assessing this work. Answer any other questions, and then have the students begin reading the Gospel of Mark for this first SSR session. Allow about 15 minutes for this reading.
5. **Remind** the students to write their first SSR log entry when the 15 minutes are almost up if they have not already done so. Advise them to be sure to record the chapters and verses they read, both for their future reference and as a reminder of where to begin reading next time.
6. **Provide** the students with a brief stretch break after SSR before continuing with the day’s lesson.

**Teacher Note**

As you continue the SSR sessions in this unit, have the students continue reading the Gospel of Mark. Those who finish Mark can continue on to Matthew, which will be the first Gospel studied during the next unit.

**Explain****Step 4**

Explain the process through which the New Testament developed.

- 1. Prepare** by downloading the PowerPoint "The Development of the New Testament" (Document #: TX002238). Make four signs to place in the four corners of your classroom. The signs should read as follows:
  - Travel around the world to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.
  - Go home and write down everything you can remember about Jesus.
  - Go to the desert for time and space to think and reflect.
  - Serve those in need, such as the poor, the sick, orphans, and widows.
- 2. Assign** the students to read article 11, "The Formation of the Gospels," in the student book as preparation for this learning experience.

**Teacher Note**

This learning experience can easily be divided in half, depending on the length of your class sessions.

**Teacher Note**

Article 11 in the student book ("The Formation of the Gospels"), which the students have read as homework, outlines a three-stage process of the development of the Gospels and the New Testament canon. Note that this unit, including the PowerPoint "The Development of the New Testament" (Document #: TX002238), clarifies a fourth stage: the Church's discernment of texts for inclusion in the canon. You may wish to explain to the students that this fourth stage was an important step in the long process by which the early Christians struggled to figure out who they were and what they believed.

- 3. Begin** by referring back to the preassessment learning experience and the handout "New Testament Timeline" (Document #: TX002240). Tell the students that the timeline covers a period of approximately 200 years: the length of time it took for the New Testament to take shape. Today's learning experience will explore this process of New Testament development in depth. Direct the students to take notes during the PowerPoint presentation and to write an approximate date, or range of dates, next to each item on their copies of the handout "New Testament Timeline" (Document #: TX002240).
- 4. Present** the PowerPoint "The Development of the New Testament" (Document #: TX002238). Be sure to share with the students the information in the "notes" section of each slide. In the notes are further instructions for student learning experiences and sharing to take place during the presentation.
- 5. Provide** the students with an opportunity to look back at the material from the PowerPoint presentation and to focus on what was new to them. Direct them to list three pieces of information they learned from this presentation and discussion that they did not know before. Instruct the students to share these items with a partner seated near them. After the partners finish discussing their lists, invite volunteers to share one of their items with the whole class. Affirm the students' growing understanding of the New Testament and their intellectual curiosity.

## Explain

## Perceive

## Step 5

Guide the students in a critical examination of selections from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, a noncanonical text.

## Teacher Note

Further prepare for this learning experience by referring to the handout “Using the Jigsaw Process” (Document #: TX001020) as background information for this learning experience.

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing excerpts from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (chapters 2, 4, 9, and 14). Links to online versions of the text are available at [smp.org/LivinginChrist](http://smp.org/LivinginChrist). Make sure you are using the First Greek Form of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. Make enough copies so that each student will have one excerpt.
2. **Assign** the students to review article 2, “Covenants Old and New,” in the student book as preparation for this learning experience.
3. **Begin** by reviewing with the students the four stages in the development of the New Testament that the class covered in the previous learning experience. Remind them that at the fourth stage, the leaders of the early Church faced the task of discerning which of the many texts circulating about Jesus were inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore should be included in the New Testament canon. Review the criteria that the early Church leaders used to determine which writings were inspired and which were not. The identification of inspired writings—those to be included in the New Testament canon—had to be based on the following four criteria:
  - *apostolic*: based on the preaching and teaching of the Apostles and their closest companions and disciples
  - *community acceptance*: accepted by the Christian communities of the Mediterranean world as being valid and consistent with their beliefs and practices
  - *liturgical*: used in early Christian liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist
  - *consistent*: consistent with, not contradicting, other Christian and Hebrew writings that had already been accepted as inspired

Tell the students that in today's learning experience, they will examine excerpts from one of the Gospels that was not included in the canon: the Infancy Gospel of Thomas.



**4. Organize** the students into four groups. Give each group one of the excerpts from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. Instruct the groups to read their assigned excerpt aloud and then to discuss the following question:

- Why was this text not included in the canon? In other words, why did early Church leaders determine that this text was *not* inspired by the Holy Spirit?

Direct the students to write their group's responses on the back of the excerpt or in their notebooks.

**5. Use** the jigsaw process to reorganize the students into new groups of four people each, so each new group has one representative from each of the original groups. Students should share their findings from their original group with these new groups. Direct the students to take note of similarities among the excerpts they read—especially in the excerpts' depiction of Jesus—which will help them to understand better why these texts were categorized as noncanonical.

**6. Draw** the class back together, and invite the students to share their findings in the large group. In the course of this conversation, be sure to mention the following points:

- The Christology of these excerpts is not consistent with what the early Church had come to believe about Jesus—for example, in chapter 4, he uses his power to harm rather than to heal.
- Some of these excerpts (for example, chapter 2) portray Jesus as a magician, which the early Church firmly denied. Unlike a magician, whose power does not depend on people's faith, Jesus' miracles work in cooperation with a person's faith and desire to be healed or saved.
- In these texts Jesus seems less concerned with service to others and more concerned with protecting his own reputation. Moreover, Jesus does not use his words and deeds to proclaim the Reign of God; rather, he uses them to show off or even to wreak havoc.
- Because some scholars believe that the Infancy Gospel of Thomas was written in the late second century—by AD 185—it does not meet the criterion of apostolicity. All of the Apostles, and even the second generation of disciples, would have been dead by then.
- For all of the above reasons, these texts were not proclaimed in the liturgical prayer of the early Christian communities.
- Because these texts do not satisfy the four criteria for inclusion in the canon, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas was rejected as not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**7. Conclude** by reminding the students of the following points:

- The process of discerning which early Christian writings were inspired and which were not took about 100 years (AD 100 to 200, approximately).



- It was not a hasty process. Early Church leaders worked carefully and prayerfully to preserve only inspired writings in the canon.
- Many of those writings that were not included are still available to us, and they may be interesting reading for historical purposes. However, these noncanonical writings cannot help us to grow in faith, or in relationship with the living Christ, in the way that the inspired writings of the New Testament can.

**Explain****Step 6**

*Introduce a chart of the four Gospels, which students will begin to work on in this unit and will complete in subsequent units.*

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handout “Chart of the Gospels” (Document #: TX002245), one for each student.
2. **Assign** the students to read article 12, “An Overview of the Synoptic Gospels,” in the student book as preparation for this learning experience.
3. **Begin** by telling the students that one of the key understandings of this course is the idea that each of the four Gospels is unique. It is important to develop an appreciation for and understanding of this uniqueness so that we do not blur the distinctions among the Gospels. Also it is essential to be able to compare and contrast the four Gospels on significant points. Filling out a chart will help the students to accomplish these objectives.
4. **Distribute** the handout “Chart of the Gospels” (Document #: TX002245). Explain that the students will be expected to complete the “Mark” column of the chart during this unit, the “Matthew” and “Luke” columns during unit 4, and the “John” column during unit 5.
5. **Emphasize** that the students are not simply to copy this information from the student book. Rather, they are expected to begin with the student book and to supplement with other information they learn in class and through research on their own. Help them to understand that in creating a personalized chart for themselves, they are building a valuable reference that they may use throughout this course.
6. **Organize** the students into pairs on the day designated as the due date for the “Mark” column. Instruct the students to compare their work with that of their partners, checking for agreement on the more objective items (such as date and authorship) and noting similarities or differences in their responses to the more subjective items (such as the

**Teacher Note**

You can provide class time for the students to work on the “Mark” column now, or you may wish to assign this as homework.



personal reaction). Circulate among the pairs, offering feedback and correcting misinformation as needed.

- 7. Remind** the students to keep the chart in their binders so they can refer to it throughout this unit and continue completing it in subsequent units.

### Understand

## Step 7

Facilitate the students' creation of a section of a "Synoptic Parallels" resource.

- 1. Prepare** by downloading and printing the handout "Synoptic Parallels Questions" (Document #: TX002246), one for each student. Familiarize yourself with the teacher answer key that accompanies this handout, "Synoptic Parallels Questions Teacher Answer Key" (Document #: TX002247). Distribute one piece of newsprint to every three students in your class and have markers available. Ask the students to bring their Bibles for this class session. Examine a copy of a Gospel parallels book if you are not familiar with this resource or explore an online version. Links to various Gospel parallels resources are available at [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist).
- 2. Begin** by reviewing some background information about the synoptic Gospels from article 12, "An Overview of the Synoptic Gospels," in the student book.
  - The word *synoptic*, which means "seen together," is used to describe the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, because they are so similar to one another and contain common points of view.
  - A close examination of these Gospels reveals that Matthew and Luke incorporated almost all of Mark into their respective Gospels.
  - In addition, Biblical scholars have surmised that Matthew and Luke had access to a second common source, known as the *Quelle*, or Q source. *Quelle* is a German word that means "source." This theoretical source is hypothesized to have contained all material that is found in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark.
  - Finally, Matthew and Luke each appear to have used at least one other source to which no other Evangelist had access, which explains the content that is unique to Matthew's Gospel or to Luke's Gospel.
- 3. Tell** the students that although common sources (e.g., Mark and Q) explain why the synoptic Gospels are so similar, the uniqueness of each is also important. The synoptic Gospels differ in their organization, use, and presentation of material, and each has elements not found in the other two synoptics. Explain that in this learning experience, the students will create part of a "Synoptic Parallels" resource to help them understand the ways in which the synoptic Gospels are similar to and different from one another.

4. **Organize** the class into three to six groups, assigning one or two groups to each synoptic Gospel. Groups should have no more than six people.

Distribute the handout "Synoptic Parallels Questions" (Document #:

TX002246), and direct the students to circle on the handout the Gospel that has been assigned to their group. Explain that the students are to search for the answers to the handout questions *only* in their assigned Gospel and *only* in the designated chapters of that Gospel. Reassure them that they will not be able to answer every question. Allow at least 10 minutes for the groups to work.

5. **Use** the jigsaw method to reorganize the students into new groups of three to six students, with each group composed of one or two Mark students, one or two Matthew students, and one or two Luke students. In these new groups, the students should share their responses to the questions on the handout, with fellow group members filling in the answers to the questions they could not answer in their original groups. Circulate among the groups, pointing out circumstances in which the answer to a question may vary depending on the Gospel being consulted: for example, Luke's unique identification of John the Baptist as Zechariah's son (question 1), or the more detailed account of Jesus' temptation offered by Matthew and Luke (question 3).

6. **Facilitate** a brief conversation, using these or similar questions, before proceeding to the next part of this group learning experience:

- Why could you not answer all of the questions in your original groups? (*Answer: Not every synoptic Gospel contains the same information.*)
- What are some examples of questions that had slightly different answers, depending on which Gospel you were reading? (*Answer: Questions 1, 3, and 7 are good examples of this.*)

7. **Explain** that the students will now use the information they have discovered to create part of a "Synoptic Parallels" resource. Such resources, which are available in books or online, present the synoptic Gospels side by side in columns to facilitate comparison and contrast. Illustrate on the board as you provide the following further directions:

- Each group will create one "Synoptic Parallels" poster. Your poster must have three columns, one for each synoptic Gospel, which present the chapters that you read to complete the handout.
- If two or three Gospels contain the same story, list those stories side by side in the respective columns. This helps us to spot similarities, as well as slight variations, easily.
- If a Gospel does not contain a story, leave the area in that Gospel's column blank. This helps us to spot information that one or more Evangelists did not include at all or included in a different section.

### Teacher Note

If the students inquire about John's Gospel, you may simply wish to mention that John differs significantly from the synoptics in both form and content. John's Gospel will be studied in depth in a future unit.

- On the posters, designate passages using chapter and verses, as well as brief descriptions (such as “the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law”).
  - You must account for all three chapters read for each Gospel. The poster must not omit any verses.
8. **Distribute** newsprint and markers to each group. Allow at least 15 minutes for the groups to work.
  9. **Post** the students’ work in the classroom as the groups finish. Draw the students’ attention to the usefulness of the “Synoptic Parallels” posters as a visual aid. They make it easier to notice similarities, such as the prominence of John the Baptist in all three synoptics, and differences, such as Luke’s unique presentation of Jesus’ preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth.
  10. **Conclude** by telling the students that their posters represent only a small part of an actual “Synoptic Parallels” resource because they worked with only three chapters from each Gospel. There are books and online resources that present the entire text of the synoptic Gospels (and sometimes of John, as well) in parallel columns, providing an invaluable research tool. If possible, show the students one or more examples of these printed or online resources.

### Understand

## Step 8

Use Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech and passages from the Gospel of Mark to lead students in exploring the concept of the Reign of God.

### Teacher Note

Consider finding audio or video of the speech to present to your students. A link to a video of the speech is provided at [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist).

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the text of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, one for each student. Links to online versions of the speech are available at [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist).
2. **Begin** by introducing the concept of the Reign of God, using these or similar words:
  - The Reign of God is also known as the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven. For our purposes, we will consider all of these terms to be synonymous.
  - The Reign of God is the defining focus of Jesus’ ministry in the synoptic Gospels. It is a vision of how the world will be when God reigns completely. When we pray, in the Lord’s Prayer, “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” we are praying for the coming of God’s Reign.

- The Reign of God is both “now and not yet.” In more theological terms, it is both “realized and unrealized.”
- On the one hand, Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming “the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15). This means that Jesus, in his earthly life, ushered in the Reign of God: in this sense, the Reign of God is “now” and “realized.” It has already begun, and we have access to the blessings and salvation it promises.
- On the other hand, we know that the Reign of God is not yet fully here, not fully realized. It takes only a glance at a newspaper or online news site to see that not everyone has embraced the Gospel message of peace, healing, reconciliation, unity, and forgiveness. In this sense, we humans have not yet allowed God to reign fully in our hearts or in our world.
- Although the Reign of God is sometimes called the Kingdom of Heaven, it is not only about our life with God in Heaven. It is about our life on earth, as well. When the Reign of God comes fully, the vision of the Lord’s Prayer will be realized: God’s will, or desire for the world, will be lived out both on earth and in Heaven.

3. **Tell** the students that eventually they will investigate Jesus’ proclamation of the Reign of God in all three synoptic Gospels. However, they will begin their exploration of this important concept by studying a famous speech by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—his “I Have a Dream” speech, given on August 28, 1963, during the March on Washington. Both the structure and content of this speech can help us to better understand the Reign of God, especially how it is both “now” and “not yet.”

4. **Distribute** copies of the speech. Have the students take turns reading the speech aloud. (Or play either the audio MP3 file or the video of the speech, if you are using that option, and then have the students follow along silently while listening to or watching the speech.) Invite the students to consider the following questions as they listen, jotting down brief notes:

- What is Dr. King’s vision of how the world should be?
- How is this vision similar to the Reign of God? How is it different?
- At the time King gave this speech (August 28, 1963), what aspects of his vision had already been attained? What did he identify as goals still to be achieved?

Note that the speech, in its entirety, is approximately 16 minutes in length.

5. **Direct** the students to meet with a partner to discuss their responses to the above questions at the conclusion of the speech. Encourage them to share not vague, overall impressions but rather specific observations rooted in the text of the speech. Allow about 10 minutes for this conversation.