

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

SERMON SERIES

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Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, Biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series is exactly what you're looking for.

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete sermon outlines and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

SERIES OVERVIEW FOR BIG QUESTIONS

Questions leave a mark on our lives. The questions we ask and answer help to determine who we are and who we become. Our questions answered or unanswered, lay the foundation for the life we live. Questions are good, but we have to know what questions to ask, and where to find the answers. Students will learn how to courageously ask hard questions and how to wrestle with the answers that Jesus gives.

In this study, students will explore the following four elements of questions in life and faith:

- **SESSION 1:** Let the Questions In: You'll show students that questions are not a sign of immaturity, but a way that our faith grows.
- **SESSION 2:** Live the Answers Out: You'll help students understand that answers need feet, and how answers are a starting point, not the end goal.
- **SESSION 3:** Trust the Truth: To teach students that we can trust how Jesus answers our big questions because His way is the truth.
- **SESSION 4:** Go All In: You'll help students understand that when we ask big questions and get trusted answers, we can pour out our lives to the fullest in service and worship to Jesus.

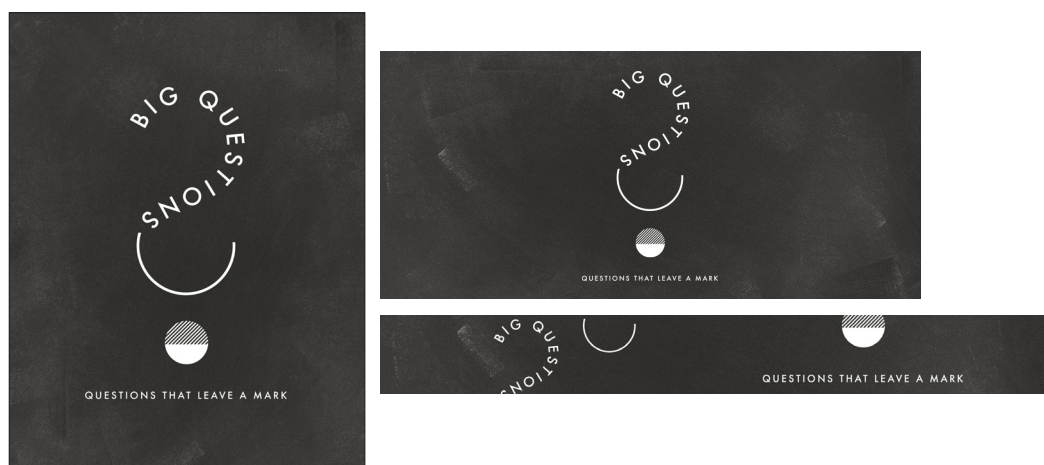
BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments. Here is what to expect.

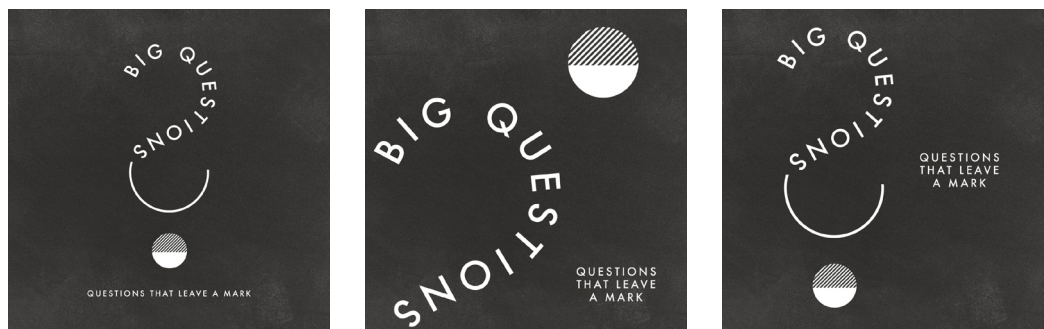
BACKGROUND AND TITLE SLIDES



PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK



INSTAGRAM IMAGES



LOGO TREATMENT



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

Big Questions Sermon Series Overview

The Sermon Series Overview is a one-page glimpse of the stuff you need to know to begin preparing to preach.

- **Session 1 Purpose:** To show students that questions are not a sign of immaturity, but a way that our faith grows.
- **Scripture Passage(s):** Mark 9:30-32
- **Session Snapshot:** It can sometimes feel embarrassing or vulnerable to admit you don't know all the answers. But the big questions of faith are worth asking because they allow our faith to grow and mature. We'll take a look at the instructions Jesus gives about how to ceaselessly ask, seek, and knock when we're looking for answers.
- **What You May Need:** Four student or adult volunteers to play a game, or a video of the game.

Details on *Big Questions* Sermon Series Outlines

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How To Use the *Big Questions* Sermon Series

This sermon series outline is designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. It provides various elements such as suggestions on illustrations or images, Scripture passages, background information, and application points that you will need to prepare your lesson. It also includes discussion questions that could be used in a small group following the message, and artwork for promotion or message support.

These sermons are designed to be useful for all types of groups and churches, and you should feel free to make adjustments that benefit your particular circumstance.

I. Optional Intro: Dear God...

They say there are no stupid questions, but the fact is that there are certainly plenty of silly ones. Children are famous for their funny questions (if you have a younger sibling or a niece or nephew, you know exactly what I'm talking about), and their questions to God are no exception. Let's look at a few.

[TIP: You can either read some of the examples below or type them out and drop them in to your favorite presentation software.]

"Dear God, can you please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter? There's nothing good in there now."

"Dear God, why is everything you say in red?"

"Dear God, is it true my father won't get into heaven if he uses his golf words around the house?"

"Dear God, did you mean for giraffes to look like that, or was it an accident?"

"Dear God, in Bible times, did they really talk that fancy?"

Kids are allowed to ask funny questions, even to God. But for some reason, when we grow up, we tend to grow out of asking questions. Somewhere along the way, we got the message that questions are silly or stupid or a sign of weakness.

This attitude is especially prevalent when it comes to our relationship with God. It's easy to feel as though everyone already knows the answers to some of the basic (and not so basic) questions about God and life, and as a result, we keep our questions to ourselves, not wanting to look vulnerable.

But here's a secret: questions are a big part of our faith. The Bible is full of people asking questions and trying to get answers. In the Old Testament, God's people (even the people who knew Him best) asked loads of questions. Then in the New Testament, God showed up as human being, and guess what? People had a lot of questions for Him too. There is nothing wrong with asking questions: it's encouraged.

Whenever you see a question mark in the Bible, pay close attention, because it is a prime opportunity to learn more about God and yourself. In this series, we're going to take an unflinching approach to some of the questions people asked Jesus, and examine what they mean for us today. So let's get started.

II. Background

We're going to be in Mark 9:30-32 today. Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and even though a vast majority of the material is also covered in Matthew and Luke, Mark gives us some great, vivid details. The gospel is a fast and furious account of Jesus as God's son in action. In Mark, Jesus moves and teaches at such a blistering pace that many people, including His followers, are often left with more questions than answers.

Mark was the scribe for the apostle Peter, and it is believed that Peter gave Mark this account to record. In Mark 9, some of the disciples (including Peter) had just seen the Transfiguration, where Jesus revealed a glimpse of His divinity. The three disciples who saw the Transfiguration (Peter, James, and John), also saw Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah. It was a miraculous event and one that made Peter ask if they should stay there, just like that, forever!

That wasn't in Jesus's plan, so Peter didn't get his wish. But after the Transfiguration, and after Jesus heals a young boy with an unclean spirit, we have this very small interaction between Jesus and his disciples. That's where we'll jump into today's passage.

III. Explanation

[Read Mark 9:30-32.]

Did you catch the question that the followers of Jesus asked Him in this passage? Look closely. Jesus had just plainly revealed the biggest mystery of what God had been planning since the beginning of time. His followers were right next to Jesus, God in the flesh. They were able to ask Him anything they wanted. And what did they ask?

Nothing.

The disciples didn't understand what Jesus meant when He talked about being betrayed and killed and rising again, but they were too afraid to say, "Can I ask you a question?" Maybe they forgot what it was like to be a child and ask whatever questions came to mind. Jesus pointed His followers to a childlike attitude in just a couple of verses (37).

Voltaire, the French philosopher, once wrote that God is a comedian playing to an audience too afraid to laugh. If that's true, then perhaps we can say that Jesus is a teacher playing to students too scared to ask. The great tragedy of this text was not that Jesus had followers who didn't understand everything He said. The tragedy was that Jesus had followers who didn't understand everything He said yet were too afraid to ask their questions. That's not going to be us, is it?

IV. Optional Illustration: The Question Only Game

[Instructions: There is a game that made the rounds years ago on the variety show "Whose Line Is It Anyway." The nature of the game is that participants have to carry on a conversation using only questions; if they fail to ask a question they are out. Invite four students or adult volunteers to play the game. Have one volunteer start by asking a question. Explain that the other volunteer can only respond with a question, and so on. Play the game until there is a winner. If you have time, call for another pair of volunteers and play again.]

It seems simple, but this game reminds us that asking questions can be difficult. Asking good questions can be even more of a challenge. Good questions require that we listen carefully and speak thoughtfully. And the most important good questions are the ones that everyone else thinks but is afraid to ask.

Let's see how we can become people who ask these kinds of good questions.

V. Application

There is a Chinese proverb says, "One who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; one who does not ask a question remains a fool forever." We've already seen today the wisdom of this proverb.

Now that we have confronted our fear of asking questions and the possibility of looking silly head-on, we still might have a couple questions about our questions. For example, how many questions are too many? How often should we ask these questions? Which questions are off-limits? Should we have more questions than answers or more answers than questions? Will all of our questions be answered, or will they lead to more questions? As we think about these questions, it's reassuring to hear what Jesus taught His disciples in Luke 11.

[Read Luke 11:9-11.]

Ask, and you will receive.

Seek, and you will find.

Knock, and the door will be opened.

In this passage, Jesus did not ask us to ask – He told us to ask. He commanded us to ask. And in the original Greek language, these verbs – ask, seek, knock – were not only commands; they were ongoing commands. That means that Jesus did not put a limit on how many questions we get to ask; instead, He commanded us to live a life that continually asks questions, continually seeks after the kingdom, and continually knocks on any and every door of opportunity that brings His kingdom to earth. Jesus wants us to let the questions in.

VI. Optional Illustration: Miss Manners

[Ask students if they have ever heard of Miss Manners. Tell them that Judith Martin, aka Miss Manners, has published over a dozen books on manners and etiquette.]

Miss Manners is THE authority on manners and etiquette. And did you know that there are rules and regulations for almost every single moment of modern life? For instance: when a waiter places a bread basket on your table, you're supposed to offer to the person on the right, then the person on the left, and then you may take a piece for yourself. Never BCC someone on an email. Handbags should always be carried on your left arm or shoulder. Don't use emojis when responding to news of a tragedy. Never look at someone in the eyes while you drink a beverage. It's still important to write thank you notes with paper and pen. And of course, keep your phone off the table during dinner. In her book, *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior*, she says that when knocking on your teacher's door, you should only knock once.

With all due respect to Miss Manners, Jesus is our teacher, and He tells us to knock more than once. He puts no limit on how often we knock or how many questions we ask.

Jesus isn't afraid of persistent questions and obnoxious knocking, because He isn't afraid of the answers. Thankfully, Jesus is more concerned about us knowing how to find Him than with us observing good manners. There is courageous desperation that comes with being willing to knock more than is acceptable, to seek longer than is prudent, and ask more than most. The only ones who are eager to do this are the ones who are more afraid of what will happen to them if they live a life that does not ask, seek, and knock. These askers and seekers and knockers are the ones who are brave enough to let the questions in.

VII. Closing

We know that questions are the best way to learn about a new person, place, or idea. When we ask good questions, ones that go deeper and maybe into places where we feel uncomfortable, our faith is strengthened, because we know the answers hold up to the truth. Jesus promised that when we ask, we will receive.

When we seek, we will find. When we knock, the doors will be opened to us.

So let's not be afraid to let the hard questions in. Jesus can stand up to all of them.

Small Group Discussion Questions

You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your sermon, or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to help students think critically about the sermon and what it means to them.

1. What questions did the disciples have in this passage?
2. Why didn't the disciples ask their questions?
3. What keeps us from asking questions?
4. Why does Jesus want us to ask, seek, and knock?
5. What kind of people ask, seek, and knock? How do we become these kinds of people?
6. What does God do when we ask, seek, and knock?
7. What happens to us when we ask, seek, and knock?