

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Set the stage (1 minute). Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, and that must have been a stunning moment. Coming down the mountain, they encountered this...

Read Mark 9:14-29 aloud.

1. What was the situation when Jesus and his friends arrived?

Why do you think the disciples were arguing with the teachers?
The answer to verse 16 is not recorded, but it relates to this boy.

How would you imagine the mood in this situation?
High drama – everyone angry and frustrated.

When have you stumbled into a heated conflict? How did you respond?

2. What was the boy's condition?

How do you think these problems had affected the family?

If you had been the dad, what hopes would you have had in mind when you set out to find Jesus?

How do you think this dad felt when the disciples failed at healing?

3. Notice how Jesus responded in this tense situation. How would you describe his tone?

Look at the words of Jesus. What do you notice about the first seven sentences he speaks? *Six of them are questions.*

Why did Jesus use so many questions? Jesus had a lot to say, but he consistently started with questions. What can we learn?

4. How strong was this father's faith (22-24)?

How do you interpret verse 24? Was this man a believer or an unbeliever?

How common is it for believers to have doubts?
Every believer has doubts and questions, even moments when they wonder if they truly believe.

When you have doubts, who can you talk to? How often do you openly discuss your doubts?

How do you feel about expressing your doubts?

5. What is the meaning of verses 28-29? What had the nine disciples failed to do?
Like the dad, their faith was lacking in some way.

What situations have you faced that required “much prayer”?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

In what ways could you verbalize Mark 9:24?

In what ways do you believe?

In what ways do you struggle to believe?

Resources

Bible notes

- Mark 9 was not the disciples' finest hour. At the end of chapter 8, Peter makes the great confession that Jesus is the Messiah. Chapter 9 seems to be a collection of stories saying that they had no clue what messiah meant.
- Luke talks frequently about prayer, but Mark rarely mentions it. That makes Mark 8:29 even more significant.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Divide into teams of 3-5 and make a commercial. (Good video opportunity.)

Ask each team to make a commercial for your LIFE group...Or, Give each team a household item (food, tool, cleaning product, etc.) and ask them to make a commercial.

Give them no more than 10 minutes to plan their commercial, then ask each of the teams to perform. Give bonus points if they include phrases like "LIFE group," "multiply," "bring a friend," etc.

Why did you choose to make your commercial this way? How much did you believe the things your team said? How much do you trust commercials in general?

Mark 9 tells of a man who came to Jesus but struggled to follow through with his faith. Read Mark 9:17-29 aloud.

What was this boy's situation?

Why did this man struggle to believe? How would it affect your faith if your child had been sick his whole life?

With the father and with his disciples, Jesus emphasized the importance of deep faith. What do we mean when we talk about having faith in God?
How is it more than Bible facts?

Who or what has encouraged you to grow in faith?



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LIFE Group Guide

Mark 9 - Belief

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **Doubts are part of believing.**

Kevin is starting a new series on the words and deeds of Jesus. I am excited for our groups to discuss the core gospel message.

This week, we look at the familiar passage in Mark 9 where Jesus heals a boy after his father confesses his belief/unbelief. It is a great opportunity to talk about the doubts group members face.

Leadership tip:

Make your group a safe place for participants to express doubts. Confession your own doubts. When people share something a bit private or risky (but not risqué), invite them to share more. Pay attention to clues and ask questions between meetings. Lead the group to support people who share struggles.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ When I hear an NPR fund-raising appeal,
 - a. I give.
 - b. I change the station so I don't have to think about it.
 - c. I feel a touch of guilt for not giving but I keep on listening.
 - d. What's NPR?
- ❖ What time do you usually wake up? Is that your ideal time?
- ❖ What do you want to be or do when you grow up?