



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 1: Introduced

Suggested Week of Use: September 3, 2023

Core Passage: Mark 1:1-13

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### News Story Summary

Lisbon was ablaze recently with jubilation as it welcomed World Youth Day. In the midst of scorching heat that hovered around 100 degrees, the vibrant streets of the Portuguese capital were adorned with colorful banners and resonant cheers, as young Catholics from across the globe gathered for this momentous event. The city's rich history and captivating architecture provided a picturesque backdrop for the celebrations, amplifying the sense of excitement that filled the air.

The diverse array of cultures, languages, and backgrounds represented at World Youth Day created an atmosphere of unity and camaraderie, reminding people of the power of shared beliefs and goals. Lisbon's open-hearted embrace of this global gathering exemplified its role as a crossroads of cultures, a place where people can forge connections, deepen their faith, and create lasting memories.

For more about this story, search "Lisbon basks in joy as World Youth Day opens."

### Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *When have you experienced a different culture? How did that make you feel?* Share the information about Lisbon, Portugal, hosting the World Youth Day gathering for Catholic young people. Ask: *If you were in Lisbon during World Youth Day, what do you think you might be feeling or experiencing?* Briefly discuss the different cultures we can experience in our own country. As a group, identify ways we can share the gospel with people by plugging into their cultures. Share that in this opening session on Mark's Gospel, we'll see how John the Baptist used things familiar to his audience as he challenged them to repent and to embrace Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

### Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, point back to the story about World Youth Day in Lisbon. Emphasize the joy experienced by those who were present. Say: *Joy is a gift we receive from God. It has staying power, which makes it more substantive than plain happiness.* Briefly discuss how living with joy could help us introduce others to Jesus. Challenge adults to find ways to be joyful, even when they might feel stressed or sad. Close in prayer, asking God to help everyone in the group discover His joy and to be sensitive to opportunities to share Jesus—the Author of that joy—with others.