1. There is nothing mentioned in Mark about Jesus’ birth or early childhood.
2. Jesus’ first act of ministry is to ask for forgiveness of his sins.
3. Pilate is portrayed as a weak, indecisive leader – contrary to the historical evidence we know about him as a ruler.
4. A third of the gospel is devoted to the Passion.
5. There are no weeping family members at the foot of the cross – Jesus is totally abandoned.
6. Mark’s gospel is the shortest gospel in the canon.
7. Mark’s gospel was the first of its kind. All earlier Christian writings were just sayings of Jesus – one liners out of context. Mark put these Christian writings into a ‘gospel’ form to tell the story of Jesus’ ministry.
8. Mark’s gospel is meant to be read aloud, and as a whole story, rather than read quietly.
9. The oldest manuscript of Mark has his story ending at 16:8. This is a very abrupt ending. Later editors of the gospel added the final verses to help close the story.
10. Mark’s original version does NOT include an account of the resurrection.
1. **Focus on the meaning:** As Catholics, we take a contextual understanding of scripture. I always say to the students, “Don’t ask me did it happen, BUT, ask me what does it mean?”

2. **Read the text:** Really read the story with the students, don’t just rely on your own past knowledge or children’s versions of the story, but really read the text directly from the bible.

3. **Don’t teach something that will have to be untaught when the students are older.** Stay true to the text.

### Teaching Suggestions for The Passion According to Mark

**S1.1 S2.1**

- list characters and characteristics of those within the Passion
- sequence the events of the Passion within Mark’s gospel (NB. Differences to the other gospel stories)
- highlight key words/phrases
- create a plot profile
- complete a character map
- familiarise the students with the biblical referencing system

**S3.1**

- retell the Passion narrative from different points of view

**S2.2/S3.2/S4.2**

- Study the historical/political background of the Passion narrative
- Study the story of the woman anointing Jesus’ feet Mk 14:3 – 10 – discuss/research cultural codes, gender codes of the time and why this was so unconventional for period of Jesus. What impact does this story have?
- Discover the audience of Mark and how Mark’s gospel is written with particular bias’