

Group Discussion Guide

Season I Episode I

I Have Called You by Name

Big Questions

- What is *The Chosen*?
- Why does it make other changes to the Bible?
- What is it like to encounter Jesus?
- What can we learn from Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus?



The CHOSEN

Before Viewing Season I Episode I

What is *The Chosen*?

The Chosen is a multi-season streaming series that's adapting the four Gospels. Many characters and stories are based on events in the Gospels, but there are also characters and events that the creators made up to tie things together. There are also characters and stories from the Gospels that the creators have left out.

Discuss:

- What are some other popular adaptations of books into film or television?
- In these adaptations, can you think of some characters or stories that were added by the film? Why do you think the creators added them?
- Can you think of characters or stories that the film left out? Why do you think they were removed?

After Viewing Season I Episode I

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing?

After Viewing Season I Episode I *(continued)*

Mary Magdalene's Encounter with Jesus

Discuss:

- What did you notice about how the show portrayed Mary Magdalene (Lilith)?
- Did the depiction of Mary match your expectations? Why or why not?
- How did Mary's encounter with Jesus change her life?
- Have you or someone you know ever experienced a major life change as a result of encountering Jesus? What happened?

"I Have Called You by Name"

Read Isaiah 43:1-3

Discuss:

- In this passage, who is it that says "I have called you by name, you are mine"?
- In *The Chosen*, who quotes this verse to Mary?
- What is *The Chosen* suggesting about the identity of the person who quotes this verse?
- When have you needed a reminder that you belong to God?

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Read John 20:1-18

Discuss:

- After his resurrection, what helps Mary recognize Jesus?
- Do you see any similarities or parallels between the first encounter between Mary and Jesus in *The Chosen* and the encounter between them after the resurrection?
- Why would *The Chosen* want to connect these two encounters? What does it mean?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season 1 Episode 2

Shabbat



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Big Questions

- What is the Sabbath?
- How does the Sabbath point to Jesus?
- What does it look like to practice Sabbath like a Pharisee?
- What does it look like to practice Sabbath the way God intended?

The
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Before Viewing Season 1 Episode 2

What is the Sabbath?

Since the beginning, the practice of resting or taking a Sabbath (or "Shabbat") once a week has been a central spiritual discipline for God's people. Unfortunately, many Christians today view the practice of Sabbath as a form of legalism or works righteousness.

Watch the [Sabbath Theme Video](#) from the Bible Project

Discuss:

- When you hear the word Sabbath or Shabbat, what come to your mind?
- Do you mostly have positive or negative associations with Sabbath?
- What was God's purpose for creating the Sabbath and other festivals?
- How did the Sabbath point forward to Jesus?

After Viewing The Chosen Season 1 Episode 2

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

After Viewing The Chosen S1 Ep. 2 (continued)

3 Shabbats

Discuss

- Of the three different Shabbat meals depicted in Episode 2, which one do you think you would prefer to attend?
- What did Eden's Shabbat mean to her?
- What did Mary's Shabbat mean to her?
- What did the Shabbat of Nicodemus and the Pharisees mean to them?
- What are some of the other differences you noticed between the Shabbat of Mary and the Shabbat of the Pharisees?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to attend the Shabbat of Mary?

The Purpose of Sabbath (Shabbat)

Mary's Shabbat and the Shabbat of Nicodemus and the Pharisees embody two very different visions of Sabbath/Shabbat. Jesus highlights the differences between these two distinct visions of Sabbath elsewhere in his teaching.

Read Luke 14:1-24

Discuss:

- What does Jesus dislike about the way that the Pharisees practice Sabbath (Shabbat)?
- What does Jesus say Sabbath feasts are supposed to be about?
- Why is it that Jesus-style Sabbath feasts are filled with the outcasts of society? What keeps the wealthy and prosperous from enjoying Jesus-style Sabbath?
- What would it look like for you to engage in Sabbath (Shabbat) the way Jesus and his disciples did? Who would be invited? Why might it be difficult?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season 1 Episode 3

Jesus Loves the Little Children



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Big Questions

- *What was Jesus actually like?*
- *How has the depiction of Jesus varied throughout history?*
- *What attitude does Jesus want us to have toward children?*
- *What does the depiction of Jesus in The Chosen emphasize?*

The
CHOSEN

Before Viewing Season 1 Episode 3

What was Jesus like?

Even though Jesus represents all of us, he is also a unique individual. He was born with specific physical features and a distinct personality. And yet the Bible gives us very little description of what Jesus looked like - and obviously no photographs. As a result, artists and storytellers throughout history have tried to imagine and depict Jesus' appearance and personality.

Discuss:

- What do you think Jesus looked like? (hair length/color, beard, etc.)
- What type of personality do you think Jesus had? (e.g. Meyers Briggs, Enneagram)
- What influences have shaped how the way you imagine Jesus in your head?
- Do you think the way you picture Jesus in your head influences how you pray or interact with God?

Search online for some historic depictions of Jesus:

- Christ Pantocrator
- Lamentation over the Dead Christ
- The Good Shepherd Fresco

Discuss:

- What does each image emphasize about Jesus?
- What does each image fail to emphasize about Jesus?
- Which depiction of Jesus do you resonate with the most? Why?

After Viewing Season 1 Episode 3

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

Jesus & the Children

In the time of Jesus, children were mostly seen as a burden and not worth the time of an important teacher. The amount of care and attention that Jesus gave to them was considered surprising. This episode of The Chosen isn't depicting a specific scene from the Gospels, but it is trying to capture the Bible's general portrayal of Jesus as someone who cared about children.

Read Mark 10:13-14

Discuss:

- What do we learn about Jesus based on the way he relates to children?
- If Jesus still has this same attitude toward children, how should that influence the way we treat children?

The Depiction of Jesus in The Chosen

- Does the depiction of Jesus in The Chosen resonate with you? Why or why not?
- What do you think The Chosen is trying to emphasize through its depiction of Jesus?
- How does the depiction of Jesus in The Chosen compare to the images of Jesus we viewed earlier?
- Is there anything that you think The Chosen's depiction of Jesus is failing to emphasize?
- If this was how you viewed Jesus, how would it affect your prayer life?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season I Episode 4

The Rock on Which it is Built



Big Questions

- *Why does the Bible sometimes give us multiple different stories about the same event?*
- *How can Bible adaptations help us deal with these apparent contradictions?*
- *What does it look like for Jesus to meet us in our moments of need?*

The CHOSEN

Before Viewing Season I Episode 4

How did Jesus meet Simon?

When we hear multiple different stories about the same event, we sometimes assume that one must be true and the others must be false. In the Bible, however, we're often given multiple stories about the same event and invited to accept them all as true. In such cases, readers often create a head cannon or "harmonization" that explains how the different stories fit together. When Bible artists adapt a biblical story, they often engage in this same process.

Discuss:

- While reading the Bible, have you ever come across two different stories describing the same event?
- How did you respond to the apparent differences?

Read Mark 1:16-20 & Luke 5:3-11

Discuss:

- How do these stories describe the first meeting between Simon and Jesus?
- Does there appear to be any prior connection between Jesus and Simon?

Read John 1:35-42

Discuss

- What are some differences between this story and the story in Mark or Luke?
- What gets uniquely emphasized in each story as a result of these differences?

After Viewing Season 1 Episode 4

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

Harmonization

*Sometimes people talk about the Bible contradicting itself. If we think about what each Gospel is doing, however, we can begin to understand why the writers might have included different details. Still, Bible adaptations like *The Chosen* can help us by presenting a compelling picture of how seemingly contradictory stories can be harmonized.*

Re-read Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:3-11, & John 1:35-42

Discuss:

- Did the way that *The Chosen* harmonized these stories make sense to you?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?

Encountering Jesus

*Season 1 of *The Chosen* provides us with a few different pictures of what it looks like the encounter Jesus for the first time. Each character has unique needs and experiences Jesus in a unique way.*

Discuss:

- What did Simon need when he encountered Jesus?
- How did Jesus meet Simon's need?
- Have you (or someone you know) experienced Jesus in a similar way? How?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season 1 Episode 5

The Wedding Gift



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Big Questions

- *What would it be like to raise a child that you believed was the Messiah?*
- *Why is the relationship between Jesus and Mary significant?*
- *What role did Mary play in guiding Jesus on his way toward the cross?*

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Before Viewing Season 1 Episode 5

What was it like to raise Jesus?

Jesus' mother, Mary, didn't just give birth to Jesus; she also nurtured and raised him for over thirty years. We don't get many stories about those thirty years because Mary's life raising Jesus was pretty ordinary.

Discuss:

- Throughout life, what are some ways that parents need to care for their children?
- Have you ever thought about how Jesus needed his mother to care for him in these ways? What does that show us about Jesus?
- What would it have felt like to care for a child that you believed was the Messiah?

Mary, Mother of Jesus

Ancient Christians used to think a lot about Mary. Painters, sculptors, and poets loved to imagine and depict her role in Jesus' life. Today, however, Evangelical Protestants tend to pay less attention to Mary. Because Protestants question several Catholic beliefs about Mary, they can sometimes underappreciate her significance in the Bible.

Discuss:

- Have you thought much before about Jesus' mother Mary?
- Why do you think that is?

After Viewing Season 1 Episode 5

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

The Mother-Son Bond

Discuss:

- What did you notice about how Mary talked about and treated her son, Jesus?
- What did you notice about how Jesus talked about and treated his mother, Mary?

Cana & the Cross

Read John 2:1-5 and John 19:26-30

Discuss:

- What are some similarities between Jesus' interaction with Mary at the wedding in John 2 and his interaction with her at the cross in John 19?
- What's the significance of these similarities? How do they inform the way we understand what happened at Cana?
- Why is it significant that Mary was the one who asked Jesus to begin his public ministry?
- What do these events show us about Jesus and his relationship to his mother?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season I Episode 6

Indescribable Compassion



THE
BIBLE
ARTIST

Big Questions

- *What was it like to be a Pharisee?*
- *What are the similarities and differences between the School of Jesus and the School of the Pharisees?*
- *What was wrong with the Pharisees?*
- *How can Christians today fall into the same errors?*

The CHOSEN

Before Viewing Season I Episode 6

What was it like to be a Pharisee?

None of us have ever met a literal Pharisee before. When we read the harsh words Jesus speaks against them, it's easy to assume that they're all religious bullies. But in Jesus' day the average person respected the Pharisees as wise and devoted servants of Gods.

Discuss:

- When you hear the word "Pharisee," what comes to your mind?
- What would it be like to be a student of the Pharisees? What would your focus be?
- What would it be like to be a Pharisee teacher? What would your focus be?
- How do you think Pharisees and common people related to one another?

After Viewing Season I Episode 6

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

After Viewing Season I Episode 6 (continued)

Two Schools

This episode of The Chosen gives us a picture of what life was like for two “schools” – the School of the Pharisees and the School of Jesus. On the one hand, we see what life is like for Rabbi Jesus and his students Mary Magdalene, Peter, Andrew, James, and John. On the other hand, we see what life is like for Rabbi Nicodemus, his student Shmuel, and their fellow Pharisees.

Discuss:

- What concerns are most important in the School of the Pharisees? What about in the School of Jesus?
- How do teachers and students relate to one another in the School of the Pharisees? What about in the School of Jesus?
- How is disagreement dealt with in the School of the Pharisees? What about in the School of Jesus?
- How does the School of the Pharisees relate to common people? What about the School of Jesus?

You Brood of Vipers!

Read Matthew 23

Discuss:

- What is Jesus’ criticism of the Pharisees based on?
- Which of the Pharisees’ behaviors did Jesus criticize?
- Did we see any of these behaviors on display in Episode 6?
- What are some ways in which modern Christians can fall into these same behaviors?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What’s your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season 1 Episode 7

Invitations

Big Questions

- *Why is it sometimes hard to judge whether someone has faith?*
- *What can we learn from Nicodemus' story about the journey from unbelief to faith in Jesus?*
- *How should we respond to friends who have spiritual questions and struggles?*



The CHOSEN

Before Viewing Season 1 Episode 7

The Journey to Faith

Sometimes we act as if people fit into just two boxes, the box for people who believe in Jesus and the box for people who don't believe in Jesus. In real life, we know that it's not quite so easy to categorize people.

Discuss:

- Have you ever had a hard time telling if someone really believed in Jesus?
- What are some factors that can make it difficult to judge a person's faith?

Was Nicodemus a Believer?

Read John 3:1-21

You might notice how the narrative cuts away in the middle of the conversation. We don't know how Nicodemus responded to Jesus. That's because John wants us to be unsure about Nicodemus, just like how we're often unsure about the faith of our friends.

Discuss:

- Going into this conversation, what do you think Nicodemus believes about Jesus?
- What is Nicodemus' tone? Curious? Defensive? Confused? Frustrated?
- What do you think Nicodemus believes about Jesus by the end of the conversation? Has his faith increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Before Viewing Season 1 Episode 7 (*continued*)

The Journey to Faith

Nicodemus only shows up a couple more times in the Bible. His next appearance is at a meeting of the chief priests and Pharisees, most of whom hate Jesus.

Read John 7:45-52

Discuss:

- On a scale of 1-10, where is Nicodemus on his journey toward faith?
- What seems to be the biggest obstacle in Nicodemus' path?

Read John 19:38-42

Discuss

- On a scale of 1-10, where is Nicodemus on his journey toward faith at this point?
- What parts of Nicodemus' journey can you relate to?

After Viewing Season 1 Episode 7

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

The Born Again Conversation

Discuss:

- How did the portrayal of Nicodemus & Jesus compare to what we read?
- Why do you think the show made the changes it did?
- What can we learn from how Jesus responds to Nicodemus' questions and struggles?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?

Group Discussion Guide

Season I Episode 8

I Am He



Big Questions

- *How should we think about the way women are treated in the Old Testament?*
- *How did Jesus treat the wives of the men he called to follow him?*
- *How did Jesus treat women who were struggling with shame?*

The CHOSEN

Before Viewing Season I Episode 8

The Treatment of Women in the Bible

In the beginning of the biblical story, men and women are created to be in a loving and respectful relationship to one another. After sin enters the world, this relational intimacy is broken and replaced by conflict and mistrust. When the Bible goes on to depict unhealthy and unfair relationships (e.g. polygamy), it's not saying these things are okay. We're meant to see these dynamics as consequences of sin.

Discuss:

- Can you think of examples of women being treated unfairly in the Old Testament?
- When you come across passages like this, how do you make sense of it?

Some laws in the Old Testament might sound unfair for women – and they might not be as fair as modern laws. But compared to the practices of the surrounding nations (e.g., temple prostitution) biblical laws were a big improvement. Jesus acknowledges that God gave some laws as an accommodation to where his people were at (Matthew 19:1-9). With the coming of Jesus, however, we see a return to how God intended men and women to relate to each other.

Discuss:

- Can you think of some stories about Jesus' interactions with women?
- How would you describe the way that Jesus treated women?
- Can you think of any instances where it brought Jesus into conflict with other men who were in power?

After Viewing Season I Episode 8

Initial Impressions

Discuss:

- What stuck out to you about the show? What could you connect with personally?
- Did you have any questions about what happened? Was anything confusing for you?

Spiritual Calling & Marriage

Eden (Simon's wife) and Zohara (Nicodemus' wife) both have husbands who are called to follow Jesus. In a patriarchal culture, this would be a particularly significant sacrifice for a wife. While Peter ultimately accepts the call and follows Jesus, Nicodemus struggles with the call but ultimately has cold feet and refuses his call.

Discuss:

- How does Eden respond when she hears about Simon's call?
- What would have made Simon's departure particularly difficult for Eden?
- How are Eden and her mother affected by their encounter with Jesus?
- Although Nicodemus doesn't directly tell Zohara about his call, he does offer her hints about his spiritual wrestling. How does she respond?
- How do you think Zohara might have been affected by an encounter with Jesus?

The Woman at the Well

In biblical times, it was taboo to get remarried or to live with someone when you weren't married. That's why Photina had to get water in the hot afternoon - the other women looked down on her. Photina was also a Samaritan - a group of Israelites who mixed with their pagan neighbors and adopted different worship practices.

Discuss:

- What did you notice about how Jesus interacted with Photina?
- Why do you think Photina sometimes responded a little harshly to Jesus?
- Did you notice how Jesus responded back when that happened?
- What do we learn about Jesus' heart for women struggling with shame?

Conclusion

Discuss:

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What questions do you still have?