I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME

THE CHOSEN – SEASON 1 EPISODE 1 • **TIPS:** Start with initial thoughts about the episode. Feel free to spend more than one discussion on any episode as necessary. **NOTES:** Episode time markers and additional content are shown in **BLUE CAPS**.
Please be mindful that episode content is dramatized and at times not directly biblical.

LIFE AT THE TIME OF JESUS WHOLE EPISODE

Discuss what you learned about life in this part of the world in the early first century and touch on some of the topics below.

- **The Roman occupation** - Consider how the ever-present oppression influenced the Jewish people's hopes for the Messiah (ROUNDTABLE– PART 1).
- **The families and living situations of the main characters** - If they leave to follow Jesus, how might that impact the people around them?
- **Tax collecting** - The tax collector is a Jewish man collecting taxes from Jewish people for the Romans. Discuss how each group viewed him; the Roman guard, his ride to the market, and the people paying their taxes. How do you think he views himself?

CALLED BY NAME

Who really knows you? At some stage in our lives, many of us might feel misunderstood by our families, friends, teachers, coworkers, etc. If I feel that no one knows or understands who I really am, that puts me in a place of utter loneliness and isolation.

Mary knows what that feels like. At the beginning of the episode, she goes by the name Lilith, which in Jewish tradition means "female demon." At some point in her life, this name was either given to her and she accepted it, or she chose it for herself. While she has people who care about her, no one truly knows who she is inside, and she becomes hopeless, to the point of contemplating suicide (portrayed in the episode).

- Have you ever felt unknown? What names have you accepted? How did you cope? Where did you turn?
- **Read Isaiah 43:1 and Psalm 139:13-18.** What are these verses expressing? Are they comforting to you? Why?
- Watch ROUNDTABLE – PART 2 and discuss the interaction between Mary and Jesus in light of the video.
- Discuss how Simon and Matthew (the tax collector) might be struggling with who they are.

CLARITY OR CONFUSION 34:43–38:12

Nicodemus is a Pharisee, one of the many groups within first century Judaism, each with their own focus and beliefs. Pharisees interpreted the written and oral law for the people, to help them live and worship according to God's will under Roman oppression, for which they were highly respected.

In discussion with his wife, we see Nicodemus questioning his ability to know God's law, and therefore maybe even his identity as a Pharisee.

- Why is Nicodemus doubting himself after his encounter with Mary (Lilith)?
- *"You do not have questions. You have answers, and authority. You bring clarity, not confusion."* How do these words from his wife make you think about doubt and faith? Is it possible to always have clarity? What do you do when you have doubts?
- Nicodemus: *"I wonder if what we can know of Adonai [the LORD] and the law is just as blurred.. what if it's more beautiful and more strange that we could ever imagine."* **Read Isaiah 55:8-9.** Can we know God? How?
- Nicodemus bemoans the need to "perform" - have you ever felt like you were "performing" when it comes to your faith? Why?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU WHOLE EPISODE

Discuss the different characters and their situations; describe each in a few words.

- **Mary (Lilith):**
- **Nicodemus:**
- **Matthew:**
- **Simon:**

Who do you identify with? Why?

GO FURTHER: Why do you think the show is called THE CHOSEN? Who is chosen?