



MIND
session page

No Bait and Switch

Matthew 4:12-23 | Session 18.4

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

As you begin the session, ask the group to consider the question:

- What's the most important thing you'd put on your resume or CV? Why is that important to you, and why do you think it would be important to someone considering you for a job?

Now ask:

- Outside those things, what's something you feel you're really good at? How does it make you feel when you do that? Is it a "marketable" skill? Explain.
- Do you think God could use this particular skill? Why or why not?

Content

Read together Matthew 4:12-23, then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What do we see Jesus doing in verses 12-17? Why might he have chosen to relocate as he begins his ministry?
- Examine the quote from Isaiah in verses 15-16. What might this “light” be that Matthew is associating with Jesus?
- Jesus’ message is simple in verse 17...or is it? How do you understand the word “repent?”
- What might Jesus have meant by saying the kingdom “has come near” (NIV)? What might be the “good news of the kingdom” mentioned in verse 23?
- Read verses 18-22 aloud again and imagine the scene. Have you heard this story before? Does anything new come to mind as you hear it this time?
- Do you find it surprising that these men would leave behind their livelihood and families to follow Jesus with just a couple of words? What might they have seen in Jesus that would make them make such a sudden but momentous decision?
- Why do you think Jesus use the image of fishing with these men? How might this have appealed to them in a way other invitations might not?
- What is the “good news of the kingdom” for these fishermen and others who choose to follow Jesus? Is it possible it can be more than one thing?

Closure

Close the session by leading a conversation using prompts like these:

- Think of some effective advertising plans. What makes them effective? At their heart, what are most advertisements telling us about ourselves?
- If the world is telling us we are somehow not enough, what might Jesus' message be?
- Imagine Jesus were to come to your workplace today. How might his invitation be different? What could your profession contribute to the kingdom of God?
- Refer to this quote from this week's Faithelement Conversations podcast: "There's nothing more powerful or beautiful, frankly, than a person who is being themselves." Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Why do you think we sometimes struggle to believe that God accepts us as we are?

Close with a prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

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Matthew 4:12-23 | Session 18.4

Before the Session

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- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Watch [this video from New England](#). Then lead a conversation using prompts like these:

- What is some kind of skill you were taught as a kid and who taught it to you?
- How do remember the person who taught you this skill?
- Do you still use what you were taught?
- Why did the person take it upon themselves to teach you this particular skill?
- Is it important to teach others what you do well?

Content

Read together [Matthew 4:12-23](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What do you think of Jesus' action after the first verse?
- Does it seem odd how the passage starts?
- How have you always been taught what the significance of picking fishermen means?
- What do you think the disciples thought fishers of men meant?
- How do you think the disciples reacted to the happenings right after they accept the call?

Closure

Say: We often say following Jesus requires a high cost, which it does. But what if we are making it too difficult?

Then ask questions like these:

- What if Jesus says "fishers of men" because he knew this was something they would understand and using their talent.
- Think back to the video we earlier, would the man be doing something considered "fishers of men"?
- In the accompanying podcast with this lesson, the leaders suggest asking if Jesus was to ask us to use our talents to follow him, what could we be doing ?
- Has the church made the phrase "fishers of men" scary and that we have to talk to bring others to Christ?
- If we were to use our talents, does that make it less scary?

Close with a prayer that we will use our talents to be "fishers of men."

Writer: Steve McClain



CONVERSATIONS

session page

No Bait and Switch

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

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- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Say: The podcast begins with the hosts discussing something that they are good at that others might not be aware. Some described a skill at cooking and another around painting art. Lead a conversation with prompts like these:

- What is something that you are good at that others might not know about?
- How did you learn that skill?
- How did you discover you have that skill?
- Do you still practice this skill? Why or why not?

Content

Read together [Matthew 4:12-23](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What does fishing have to do with bringing people to Christ?
- What does Jesus want from us when he calls us? What does it look like to be ourselves as we follow Him?
- How can we use the gifts we have to serve Jesus?
- What would it look like if we recognize that God has already equipped us with what we need to follow God?
- Why do we underestimate our value in ministry because our gifts do not fit our definition of ministry?
- How can we learn to be our authentic selves?

Closure

Watch this clip from the film, the [Dead Poets Society](#). Then lead a conversation using prompts like these:

- What is the teacher trying to get his students to understand?
- Why did the group who was walking around at first fall into the same step?
- What is the danger of conformity?
- How might the wisdom expressed in this video clip relate to today's text?

Close with a prayer.

Writer: Sara McClain



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Context

Begin the session by sharing [this clip](#) from *Mary Poppins*, then ask the following questions:

- How does Mary's interaction with Jane and Michael challenge the children's expectations? What are they most surprised by?
- What does Mary's calm, confident entrance communicate about her role in the household? What does she see as her mission?
- What values does Mary have? How are they demonstrated through her words and actions?
- What do the children's reactions to her magic suggest about their openness to change and imagination? What hesitations or hopes do they have?
- How does Mary's refusal to explain her magic shape the power dynamic between her and the children? What role do delight and surprise play in this scene?

Content

Read together [Matthew 4:12-23](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- How might Jesus have been affected by John the Baptist's arrest? Why could this have spurred on his earthly ministry?
- Why does Matthew describe the region of Galilee "the people who sat in darkness"? What does this insinuate about the people Jesus wants to minister to?
- How might people have responded to Jesus' message of repentance? How does this message echo the imagery of darkness and light?
- Why do you think Jesus chose ordinary laborers as his first disciples? What impact would this have on the religious community of the day?
- What did the fishermen risk in following Jesus? What emotions might they have expressed when hearing Jesus' call?
- How do teaching, proclaiming, and healing coincide with God's coming kingdom? What do these activities reveal about Jesus' identity?

Closure

Say: In the movie, *The King's Speech*, Prince Albert, Duke of York, struggles with a debilitating stammer that threatens his ability to lead. With the help of unconventional speech therapist Lionel Logue, he confronts fear, trauma, and self-doubt, ultimately finding his voice to inspire Britain during the looming crisis of World War II as king George VI.

Show [this clip](#) from *The King's Speech*, then ask the following questions:

- Why does Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter) visit Lionel (Geoffrey Rush) during this scene? What is she seeking from him?
- What assumptions does Lionel have about the situation at the beginning of this scene? How do those assumptions change when hearing that Elizabeth's husband is the Duke of York?
- What is the power dynamic between these characters? How does it change throughout the scene?
- Why does Lionel stand out as the only one who can help in this situation? How might his "unorthodox and controversial" methods be helpful?
- What impact could Lionel have when helping the Duke improve his speech? How does this scene demonstrate using unique skills and gifts to impact the lives of others?

Close with a prayer.

Writer: Devin Harris-Davis



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- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.

Context

Share [this scene](#) from the movie *Monsters Inc.* then ask the following questions:

- How do Mike and Sulley rethink how to get energy for the energy company? In what ways does this shift the previous expectations they had?
- What qualities does Mike have that make him naturally gifted at making others laugh? How do these qualities become valuable in the company's new direction?
- What risks does Sulley take in suggesting a new, untested method of generating power? How does he connect Mike's talent with this opportunity?
- What does the child expect of Mike? In what ways is the child surprised by Mike's actions?
- How does Mike respond to his success? How do others around him show their support?

Content

Read together Matthew 4:12-23, then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What made Jesus retreat to Galilee? What significance does it have that it is “of the Gentiles”?
- Why might the people be described as sitting “in darkness”? What is the light the author refers to?
- How do you think people responded when they heard Jesus’ message to repent? What does Jesus mean when he says “the kingdom of heaven has come near”?
- Why did Jesus approach fishermen to leave their nets to follow him? Who would people have expected Jesus to call as followers?
- What do you imagine Simon and Andrew thought when Jesus told them to follow him? What concerns or feelings might they have had?
- How is the “good news” connected to curing disease and sickness? What impact did these miracles have on Jesus’ reputation?

Closure

Watch [this video about Ella Baker, mother of the Civil Rights Movement](#), then ask the following questions:

- Why was Ella Baker considered the “mother of the Civil Rights movement”? What was unique about her role in speaking out for justice?
- How was her role different from other leaders in the movement? What character traits are most visible through her impact?
- What events influenced the beginning of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)? In what ways did Ella’s influence impact students through this organization?
- In what ways did Ella support and mentor other young activists? How do they recount her impact on them?
- How does Ella’s work inspire you to become involved in justice movements? What contributions can you make using your unique gifts and skills?

Close with a prayer.

Writer: Devin Harris-Davis



MIX
session page

No Bait and Switch

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Context (from the Current session page)

Watch [this video from New England](#). Then lead a conversation using prompts like these:

- What is some kind of skill you were taught as a kid and who taught it to you?
- How do remember the person who taught you this skill?
- Do you still use what you were taught?
- Why did the person take it upon themselves to teach you this particular skill?
- Is it important to teach others what you do well?

Content (from the Mind session page)

Read together Matthew 4:12-23, then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What do we see Jesus doing in verses 12-17? Why might he have chosen to relocate as he begins his ministry?
- Examine the quote from Isaiah in verses 15-16. What might this “light” be that Matthew is associating with Jesus?
- Jesus’ message is simple in verse 17...or is it? How do you understand the word “repent?”
- What might Jesus have meant by saying the kingdom “has come near” (NIV)? What might be the “good news of the kingdom” mentioned in verse 23?
- Read verses 18-22 aloud again and imagine the scene. Have you heard this story before? Does anything new come to mind as you hear it this time?
- Do you find it surprising that these men would leave behind their livelihood and families to follow Jesus with just a couple of words? What might they have seen in Jesus that would make them make such a sudden but momentous decision?
- Why do you think Jesus use the image of fishing with these men? How might this have appealed to them in a way other invitations might not?
- What is the “good news of the kingdom” for these fishermen and others who choose to follow Jesus? Is it possible it can be more than one thing?

Closure (from the Youth session page)

Watch [this video about Ella Baker, mother of the Civil Rights Movement](#), then ask the following questions:

- Why was Ella Baker considered the “mother of the Civil Rights movement”? What was unique about her role in speaking out for justice?
- How was her role different from other leaders in the movement? What character traits are most visible through her impact?
- What events influenced the beginning of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)? In what ways did Ella’s influence impact students through this organization?
- In what ways did Ella support and mentor other young activists? How do they recount her impact on them?
- How does Ella’s work inspire you to become involved in justice movements? What contributions can you make using your unique gifts and skills?

Close with a prayer.