

# The CHOSEN

The Story of Jesus For Us



## INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Victory Lutheran Church, Mesa, AZ

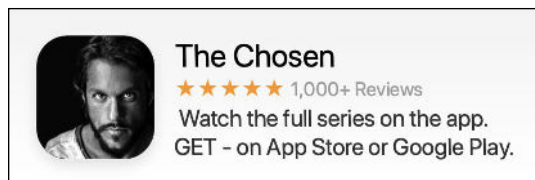
*But now, this is what the Lord says —  
He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel:  
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have summoned you by name; you are Mine.”  
Isaiah 43:1*

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NAME

## SUGGESTED GROUP FORMAT

- Greet as you gather
- Open with prayer
- Show DVD
- Discuss using the following pages
- Close with prayer
- Thank everyone for coming!



# Welcome

April 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Victory:

The Growth Ministry leadership team of Victory has been prepping and praying over what you hold in your hand for more than a year. Prepping and praying for what? For you, for one thing: that your life will be changed by watching *The Chosen* television series and engaging with this individual and small group study. Specifically, that you will know Jesus more intimately, understand the dramatic change He can and will make in your life; that you will know in deeper ways the joy, peace and abundance that He has promised. And we've been prepping and praying for our congregation or any others that join in our study: that our walk with and witness to Jesus Christ will be more alive, vibrant and effective as we worship Almighty God and be the hands and feet of Jesus to our spouses, family, friends, and neighbors near and far.

To say that we're excited about this study is a gross understatement! We're elated, joyously anticipating what God will do in each of our lives. *The Chosen* is the largest crowd-funded media project in history, raising more than twenty million dollars from rank and file people like you and me who have paid it forward. It's been translated into dozens of different languages and viewed by over 96 million people! This is a multi-season series that, without Hollywood or commercial influence has managed to portray Jesus' life and the life of his followers in three-dimensional depth that makes all of them so real-life relatable!

With current restrictions due to the COVID pandemic, *The Chosen* is as flexible as humanly possible. You can download the free app and all eight Season One episodes to your smart phone, log-on online, buy a DVD from Victory, Walmart.com, or Amazon.com. Or, you can come to church at 10:00 a.m. on Monday during the series to watch and discuss each episode.

We're hoping and praying that dozens of small groups of 2-12 people will spring up wherever and whenever people are willing to open their door, push play on a DVD player, and watch what the Spirit will do.

If you're interested, there is amazing additional material available on the DVD and app which provides great background on the series, directors, actors, the Jewish, Catholic and Evangelical scholar consultants, and lots of fascinating back-story about *The Chosen*.

A small but important caveat: the first episode depicts how Jesus cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. The episode is rather dark and difficult to watch, but the last five minutes are powerfully redemptive. We hope and pray that you will push through the first three episodes in order to get a true feeling for what the series can and will do.

So open your heart, pray that God's Spirit will come alive in new ways in your soul, then keep reading, watching, studying and discussing. Sol Deo Gloria (To God alone be the glory)!

Pastor Steve Lien and our Growth Ministry Leadership Team



## GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

## EPISODE 1

*I Have Called You By Name*

### KEY VERSE

Isaiah 43:1

*But now, this is what the Lord says —  
He who created you, Jacob, He who  
formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I  
have redeemed you; I have summoned  
you by name; you are Mine.”*



## EPISODE 1

### Scriptural References

Isaiah 43:1

John 3:1

1 Corinthians 9:5

### Characters

Nicodemus, Matthew, Mary Magdalene,  
Peter and Andrew

### Memorable Quotes

Nicodemus: “What do you see in the mirror?”

Zohara: “That it is a cheap glass, I can barely  
make anything at all.”

Nicodemus: “Sometimes, I wonder if what  
we can know of Adonai in the law is just as  
blurred. What if we’re not seeing the whole  
picture. What if it’s more beautiful and —  
and more strange than we can ever  
imagine?”

Zohara: “You have dedicated your life’s work  
to serve God, not to become Him.”

### Individual or Group Questions

1. Which characters stood out to you most? Which were most interesting? Most moving?
2. With which character do you most closely identify — Nicodemus? Mary Magdalene? Why?
3. Did Peter’s marriage surprise you? Why?
4. What did you think about the timing of the appearance of Jesus? What were the filmmakers saying about Jesus’ intentionality and timing?
5. We are seeing each character’s “before Jesus” life. What did the encounters with Jesus do to people? Still happen today? To you?
6. What parts of your “before” has God redeemed, and for which are you most grateful?
7. How does “I have called you by name, you are mine” impact you today?
8. Who is someone in your life who needs to “come and see” Jesus? Pray for that person, then go make the introduction. Trust Jesus to do the convincing.

**Adonai** (plural), the Lord. The Jews did not allow themselves to say the name of God out loud. The 4 letter name (tetragrammaton) had only consonants and no vowels. Writers would eventually take the vowels from the Hebrew Adonai and apply them to the four letter name YHWH and it was then pronounced JAHWE, or as English says today, Jehovah.

### **Closing Prayer**

Every follower of Jesus has a not-so-great "before." But every follower of Jesus also has an "after."

Heavenly Father, thank you for redeeming us from our before. You have called us by name. What we see when we look in the mirror doesn't determine what You see or who we'll be by Your hand. Our brokenness doesn't alter Your plans. Our value is assigned by the One we belong to. Help us through our remaining challenges. Give us strength and courage to proudly proclaim the Good News to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **KEY PEOPLE, PLACES & SCRIPTURE**

#### **Mary Magdalene** (a.k.a. Lilith)

Other Biblical reference about Mary Magdalene

Luke 8:1-3 - Seven demons

Matthew 27:56 At the Cross

Mark 15:40

John 19:25

Matthew 27:61 At the burial

Mark 15:47

Matthew 28:1-10 Angel at the Resurrection

Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:1-12

Mark 16:9 Jesus at the tomb

John 20:1-18 Jesus said to her, "Mary"

John 3 Visited Jesus at night

#### **Nicodemus**

John 7:50-52 Wanted fair treatment for Jesus

John 19:38-42 Prepared Jesus for burial, with Joseph of Arimathea

**Quintas**, Praetor (magistrate ranking below consul) Dominus (lord)

**Matthew** - a.k.a. Levi, tax collector (publican), disciple Matthew 9:9, Gospel writer according to historian Eusebius 260-340 A.D.

**Gauis** - a centurion (officer over 100 soldiers) escort for Matthew collecting taxes

**Shmuel** - a student Pharisee learning from Nicodemus

**Simon Peter** - occurs 19 times in New Testament Acts 15:14, 2 Peter 1:1 Peter from Latin and Cephas from Hebrew, both meaning Rock, occurs 156 times

**Eden** - Simon's wife

**Jehosophat** - Eden's brother

**Andrew** - Simon's brother

**Sol** - Eunuch, bartender

**Jesus** - calls Lilith by her given name, Mary of Magdala and quotes Isaiah 43:1, "I have called you by name, you are mine!"

# GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

# EPISODE 2

Shabbat

## KEY VERSE

Genesis 2:2-3

*By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.*



## EPISODE 2

### Scriptural References

Mark 3:16-18                      Revelation 3:20  
Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2          John 1:46  
Proverbs 31:10-31              Genesis 2:1-3

### Characters

Quintus, Gaius, Nicodemus, Matthew, Mary Magdalene, Peter and Andrew, James and John, sons of Zebedee

### Memorable Movie Quotes

A grandmother, answering her grandson's questions about Shabbat, concludes, "Most important of all, we honor God and all His workS . . . We rest to refresh our souls to know Him better."

A grandfather begins Shabbat with the Eshet Chayil, an ode to women of valor from Proverbs 31: "A woman of valor, who can find her? Far beyond jewels is her value. Her husband's heart trusts in her and he shall lack no fortune . . . Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe!"

Mary Magdalene says to Nicodemus, "who is inquiring with wonder about her healing: I was one way and now I'm completely different. And the thing that happened in between — was Him. So yes, I will know Him for the rest of my life!"

### Individual or Group Questions

1. How has your understanding of the role of tax collectors been enhanced?
2. Why was Nicodemus so shocked about the news about Mary Magdalene being seen in her right mind?
3. Matthew said that his father said he has no son. How did this impact your view of him?
4. Simon (Peter) said to his wife, Eden, "I've got this." Recall a time in your life that you thought you could control your circumstances only to see them spin out of your control.
5. What was your response to seeing Mary host her first Shabbat (Sabbath) meal?
6. Who is the last person you invited into your life/home for the purpose of telling them about what God has done in your life?

### **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank you for your unconditional love. Help us understand how deep, how wide, how high, how long your love is. Help us rest in your love when we feel unloved and forgotten.

Forgive us when we fail to take care of our body and giving it the rest it needs. Help us to handle life wisely and stay balanced. Help us set aside distracting tasks of the day in exchange for more of Your presence. Forgive us when we have prioritized other things over Your presence. Give us eyes to see You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **A Common Sabbath Greeting**

***Shabat Shalom*** – A peaceful rest



## GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

## EPISODE 3

*Jesus Loves the Little Children*

### KEY VERSE

Mark 10:13-16

*He said to them,*

*"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*



## EPISODE 3

### Scriptural References

Mark 10:14, Matt 18:3-5     Matthew 5-7  
Deuteronomy 6:4-5     Isaiah 61:1-2  
Matthew 6:9-15     Luke 4:18-19  
John 12:28, 17:1

### Characters

Jesus, Children

### Memorable Quotes

A child asks, "Are you dangerous?"  
Jesus answers, "Maybe to some but not to you, and I won't harm anyone."

Jesus says to them, "I have loved spending this time with you—you are all very special. I hope that My next students ask the same questions you do and that they listen to My answers."

One child asks Him,  
"Why don't You have a home?"  
Jesus responds, "My home is many places. Another asks why and hears, Because I have a much larger job than just being a craftsman or a teacher."  
Another remarks, "You're a teacher too?"  
Jesus says, "I will be soon. Everyone has a much larger job than just a trade."

### Group or Individual Questions

1. What do you think of Jesus' treatment of the children?
2. Jesus was both playful and purposeful as He related to the children. What does that say about how we are to relate to others?
3. In this episode, Jesus is seen praying routinely (meal times, bed time) and passionately. What is your prayer life like? How does this portrayal of Jesus' prayers encourage you?
4. Jesus' responses to some of the children's questions seemed evasive or incomplete. Why do you think that is? And how does that relate to His responses to our questions?
5. Jesus' gift reminded Abigail that He did not come only for the wealthy. How does that make you feel about Jesus? What does that mean about how we as His disciples treat people?
6. Why do you think Jesus welcomed these children? What does this say about how much He desires to welcome you?
7. What would it take for you trust Jesus afresh — with the absolute faith of a child?



### **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we are in a season of learning. Give us hearts that are hungry for Your wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Forgive us for the times we didn't listen to you. Help us to listen.

Help us be imitators of You, as beloved children. Remove all stubbornness of heart. Remove anything that's resisting You. Help us love who You love, hate what You hate, honor who You honor, and bless who You have blessed. Help us side with you, and come into perfect alignment with You. As your children, we choose to imitate you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Common Prayer**

***Shema Yisrael*** - A most important morning and evening prayer for Jews, emphasizing the one true God.

#### **Isaiah 61**

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the  
brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom  
for the captives and release from  
darkness for the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God, to  
comfort all who mourn.

#### **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is  
one. Love the Lord your God with all your  
heart and with all your soul and with all  
your strength.*

## GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

## EPISODE 4

*The Rock on Which It Is Built*

### KEY VERSE

Matthew 16:16, 18

*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God . . . And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*



## EPISODE 4

### Scriptural References

Matthew 13:47-52     Matthew 4:18-22  
Luke 8:10             Luke 5:1-11  
Matthew 3:1-7

### Characters

Jesus, Matthew, James & John, Andrew & Peter, Nicodemus, John the Baptist, Joseph of Arimathea, Zebedee

### Memorable Quotes

Eden to Peter: "Where is your faith?"  
Peter: "Faith isn't going to get me more fish."  
Eden: "You have not pursued the Lord lately. You're off to try to fix it again. No more talking . . . maybe God can get your attention now. "

Andrew, after Peter sees Jesus, says to him, "I told you!"

Peter kneels before Jesus and says humbly, "You are the Lamb of God, yes?"

Jesus answers, "I am. Did you understand that parable I told earlier? Fish are nothing. From now on, I will make you fishers of men. And you are to gather as many as possible — all kinds. I will sort them out later."

### Individual or Group Questions

1. How did the weaving of Peter's backstory (all creative license) make you feel about the development of Peter's character?
2. The night on the Sea of Galilee amplified the encounter with Jesus in the morning. Have you ever experienced Jesus coming to you after a "dark night" in your life?
3. Andrew met Jesus through John the Baptist and is confident He is the Messiah. What do you think about his longing for his brother, Peter, to know Jesus?
4. Why did Nicodemus want to know if John the Baptist had performed miracles? What did he suspect?
5. What was the role of John the Baptist (Luke 1:8-17, Luke 3:1-9)? How is this also our role as the church?
6. What did you think about how Zebedee encouraged his sons to follow Jesus? Who has encouraged you?

## **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, the same power that transformed unruly fishermen is at work in all who believe. You accept us as we are, but love us too much to leave us where we are at. Thank You that You call each one of us to serve You according to the gifts and talents You have given to each one of us. Give us courage to step out of our comfort zone and say yes to You today.

We praise you, Lord because you are our rock, refuge, and hiding place. No matter what is going on outside of us, there is a place within that the storm can't reach. Thank you for the peace your truth brings. We will trust you as we ride out the storms of life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

## EPISODE 5

*The Wedding Gift*

### KEY VERSE

John 2:11

*What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which He revealed His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*



## EPISODE 5

### Scriptural References

Luke 2:41-52                      Jeremiah 33:10-16  
1 Kings 19:19-21                John 2:1-12  
Proverbs 30:4

### Characters

Jesus, Mary the mother of Jesus,  
John the Baptist, Nicodemus, Simon,  
Thomas, Ramah

### Memorable Quotes

Nicodemus to John the Baptist: "I am looking in places I would never go because I am searching for an explanation for something I cannot unsee."

John the Baptist to Nicodemus:  
"He is here to awaken the earth, but some will not want to waken. They are in love with the dark. I wonder which one you'll be."

Thomas: "From the instructions you have provided I see no logical solution to the problem."

Jesus: "It's going to be like that sometimes, Thomas."

### Individual or Group Questions

1. What do you think it was like for Jesus' parents to raise Him?
2. Instead of condemning John the Baptist, Nicodemus sat down and said, "Tell me about your ministry." When was the last time you sat down and talked to someone you might not agree with and simply said, "Tell me more?"
3. What did you think of Eden's response to Peter's calling?
4. Just as the servants had to draw the water before they saw the miracle, what are ways you can step out in faith because of God's promises?
5. Jesus reassures Thomas that while it's good to ask questions, we won't always understand the answers, or even get answers. How do you handle this?
6. What do you think it means to be chosen?

We did not choose Him, He chose us:

- You Are Called
- You Rest
- You Are Cherished
- You Change Course
- You Are a Witness
- You Are Made New
- You Are Established
- You Are Carried

## **Closing Prayer**

Jesus, You turned water into wine at that wedding feast in Cana. You “saved the best wine for last.” There is that assurance, that the best wine is yet to come. There is a glory that is beyond earthly glory, and it is waiting for us.

Father, thank You for choosing us. We are appointed to go out and to bear fruit. May we be generous in passing on these treasures to a new generation. May the wine of our lives outpoured be your love as gift to all. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

## GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

## EPISODE 6

*Indescribable Compassion*

### KEY VERSE

Matthew 8:2-4

*A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."*

*Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said.*

*"Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.*



## EPISODE 6

### Scriptural References

Matthew 8:1-4      Luke 18:1-14  
Luke 12: 36-48      Mark 2:1-12  
Matthew 6: 1-18

### Characters

Jesus, Mary Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, Simon, Andrew, Tamar, The Leper, James, John, The Paralytic

### Memorable Quotes

The Leper: "Please don't turn away from me."

Jesus: "I won't."

Nicodemus: "If God did something that you felt contradicted the Torah, would you tell him to get back in that box you have carved for Him, or would you question your interpretation of the Torah?"

Mary Magdalene: "I don't want to interrupt the Teacher by causing a scene."

The Paralytic: "What if you were me?"

### Individual or Group Questions

1. There was a lot of compassion emphasized in this episode. How did Jesus preach about and show compassion?
2. Leprosy is one of the major diseases in the time of Jesus. It was the sickness that renders a person no longer worthy of dignity, love or community. Are there any similar situations in our society today that would cause a person to no longer have dignity? How do you think Jesus would treat them?
3. What's holding you back from the kind of bold faith the leper had?
4. How can you connect with people in your life who aren't part of the "in" crowd, as Jesus did?
5. In order to take such extreme measures, what must the four men, who carried their friend, believed about Jesus?



### **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, give us a soft heart toward the sick as Christ modeled. Completely rid us of any prejudice toward anyone so that we see them as Christ saw the leper. Each and every day, help us to see, through Your eyes, the truth of what is, what has been and what will one day come. Help us value living water over physical needs.

Create in us a clean heart, O Lord, and renew in us a right spirit. Help us to remove all the doubts and unclean thoughts that are inside our mind, heart, and soul now. You've begun a good work, and you will complete it. Thank You for Your love and guidance. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

# EPISODE 7

*Invitations*

## KEY VERSE

John 3:3-4

*Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*

*"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"*



## EPISODE 7

### Scriptural References

Numbers 21:4-9      Luke 18:1-14

John 3:1-21      Mark 2:1-12

### Characters

Jesus, Nicodemus, Matthew, Mary Magdalene

### Memorable Quotes

Jesus to Mary after healing the lame man: "With their faith, they would have found a way whether you brought them to the roof or not."

Matthew (to his mother): "My whole world, everything I thought I knew, what if it's wrong?"

Jesus to Nicodemus: "If I have told you of earthly things, and you do not believe, how can I tell you heavenly things?"

Nicodemus: "My whole life I have wondered if I would see this day."

Peter (about Matthew): "Do you have any idea what this guy has done? Do you even know him?"

Jesus: "Yes."

Jesus to Simon Peter - "Get used to different!"

### Individual or Group Questions

1. Reflect on Nicodemus' journey to Jesus. How did he go from being a devout Pharisee to sitting in front of Jesus? What character qualities did he exhibit?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing - how have you experienced being "born again?"
3. How do you recognize the effect of the Spirit in your life?
4. Did it surprise you how quickly Matthew agreed to follow Jesus? Especially in comparison to Nicodemus' hesitation?
5. What daily habits can you cultivate so that you obey as quickly as Matthew did?
6. What did you think of Peter's reaction to Jesus calling Matthew? How can you have the same reaction today?

## **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time of drawing near to you in prayer together. Help us to be focused on the truth of the Gospel and your desire that everyone hears about your Son.

Thank You for Your mercy and compassion. We declare by faith that because of the sacrifice of Jesus, we are dead to sin and alive to righteousness. May we pursue you with the same intensity that you pursue us. Cause us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of You Lord. In Jesus Name, Amen.

# GROUP GUIDE

For listening, discussion & reflection

# EPISODE 8

*I Am He*

## KEY VERSE

John 4:23-26

*"The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth . . ."*

*The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."*



## EPISODE 8

### Scriptural References

Genesis 33:18-20      Genesis 16 (Story of Hagar)  
Matthew 9:9-13      Daniel 7:13-14  
Hosea 6:6      John 4:1-42  
Luke 4:38-39

### Characters

Jesus, Nicodemus, Simon, Mary Magdalene, Andrew, Eden, Simon's mother-in-law, Samaritan Woman

### Memorable Quotes

Jacob: "We didn't choose Him, He chose us."

Eden to Peter: "Thank you."

Peter: "Me? For what?"

Eden: "For obeying and following Him."

Jesus: "Listen, if we are going to have a question and answer session every time we do something you are not used to, this is going to be a very annoying time together for all of us."

Samaritan Woman: "I am rejected by others."

Jesus: "I know, but not by the Messiah."

Jesus about Nicodemus - "You came so close."

### Individual or Group Questions

1. Discuss the different ways people (Simon, Eden, Matthew, Nicodemus, etc.) reacted to Jesus' directions, the directions of family and from peers.
2. Jesus mentions several times that He's not trying to make His followers lives "easy," nor is He here to deliver them from their oppressive government. What is Jesus' purpose in coming and in bringing His disciples to follow Him?
3. Who were the first people told about Jesus' birth? Who did He first tell about His ministry? What were their social statuses?
4. What was significant about Jesus choosing to talk to a Samaritan woman? How can you model that today?
5. Do some self reflection. Has there ever been a time in your life where you were as excited about Jesus as the woman at the well was? How can we bring back some of that excitement?

### **Closing Prayer**

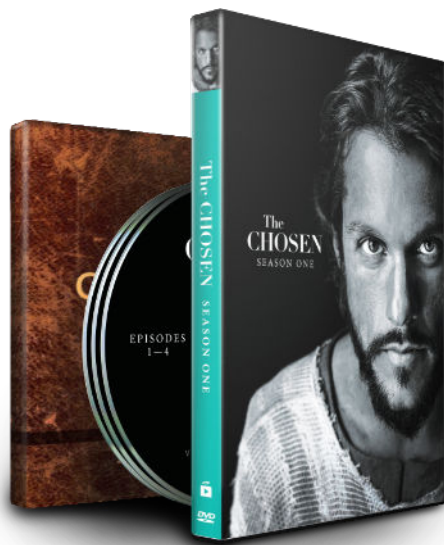
Heavenly Father, we come to the well. Unlike the Samaritan women, we already know you are there waiting. You already know everything about us — better than we know ourselves. We come with eager longing, so absolutely thirsty to be filled with your living water. You are the Divine Well of compassion, extravagant love and understanding that we so desperately need. Give us the grace to be your healing presence in a world of hatred, racism, grief, injustice and violence. Restore the beauty of your creation. In Jesus Name, Amen.

### **KEY DATES**

Capernaum, 1952 B.C.

Jacobs Well, 26 A.D. - The Samaritan woman

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” - Hosea 6:6



### VICTORY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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