

LIVING A LIFE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE

A 75-minute immersive experience for small groups or large groups, centered around the *The Power of Calling* short documentary—flexible for in-person and online. Give each person in the gathering a Participant Handout, and pass out pens or pencils for those who don't have them.

INTRODUCTION (3 minutes—Give each person a participant handout): How would our lives be different—and the lives of those we influence—if more of us lived out of deep sense of our meaning and purpose in life? This is what would happen if we discovered and embraced God's "callings" in our life—but for many of us the concept of "callings" is foreign. That's for people who are pastors or missionaries or spiritual leaders...

But the Bible makes clear that God has embedded in us unique "drivers"—the reason that Jesus calls "members" of a Body—that, working together, represent His physical presence in the world. Our callings, tied to our God-given purposes in life, complement and serve the callings of others. And together we live out the heart of Jesus in the world.

This invitation to live out our meaning and purpose in life is for *everyone*, not just some. The Apostle Paul reminds us: "Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, 'I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,' that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,' would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?" (1 Corinthians 12:14-17).

We need every part of the Body—all of us—living out of deeper meaning and purpose. And that's what this short documentary, *The Power of Calling*, is about. It's the culmination of a four-year journey with everyday people in two-dozen churches, all of them discovering the power of calling in their life. The documentary focuses on people in three disparate churches—one near Baltimore in Maryland, one near Princeton in New Jersey, and one in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Let's watch, and then we'll talk about the experience...

Video (34 minutes): Watch *The Power of Calling* documentary

Play the downloaded file or stream it from this link: <https://vimeo.com/vibrantfaith/thepowerofcalling>

QUESTIONS (Whole Group - 7 minutes):

- First, what's something that stuck out to you about this documentary—something that resonated with you?
- What's something that surprised you?
- In what way could you relate to the stories of the people in this film, and why?

QUESTIONS (Pairs – 6 minutes): In Kisha's story, you see a person wrestling with how best to serve God with her life. She's torn between her responsibilities to herself and her family, and the persistent "tug" toward a risk that scares her. She is trying to understand how best to "steward" her life. To steward means to value a treasure and spend it wisely...

Turn to a partner and discuss:

- When you consider your life, in what specific ways have you "stewarded" the gifts you have to give? Explain.
- When have you felt a "tug" to respond to God's call, and what happened?

QUESTION (Whole Group - 4 minutes): Let's hear back from your conversations—what's something that stuck out to you about your partner's story, and why?

SAY (1 minute): Sometimes we are blind to our own story—I mean, we have passions and convictions that tap into our God-given purpose in life, but we don't recognize those as callings from God. In the St. Charles Borromeo church, ministry leaders decided to "inventory" the stories of the people in their congregation by inviting them to tell their story on a church podcast. They realized that the treasures represented in those stories had gone undiscovered, simply because they hadn't ever invited or highlighted them.

QUESTION (Whole Group – 6 minutes): Think about your conversation with your partner, and what you’ve heard from others today.

- What’s an example of a calling that was “hiding” in your story, or the story of someone you’ve heard about today?
- Why are we often blind to our own callings?
- What helps to reveal a calling that has remained hidden?

SAY (1 minute): The dental clinic at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is an obvious example of a person’s gifts and abilities finding a “match” with people who could deeply benefit from them. Callings were revealed when people encountered a need that “fit” what they had to give. Remember when Jesus called His first disciples? He invited Simon, Andrew, James, and John—all of them commercial fishermen—to re-invest their fishing expertise and skills to reach people with His good news.

QUESTION (Pairs – 4 minutes): With your partner, discuss:

- Consider the fishing skills of the early disciples—what did Jesus mean when He promised He’d make them “fishers of men”?
- How might their fishing skills “fit” with the mission of Jesus in the world?

QUESTION (Whole Group - 4 minutes): Let’s hear back from your conversations—what’s something that stuck out to you, and why?

CLOSING (5 minutes): Go to [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com) and sign up for a Free account. Mentimeter is an “audience engagement platform” that allows people in your gathering to all contribute answers to a question, then collects all those responses and allows you to drop them into a “Word Cloud” that represents the responses visually. Once you’ve signed up, you can create a “Word Cloud” slide and copy the “Voting Link” or download a QR code to display on a screen. Once people have that, they can use their smartphone to access the link and offer their input to the Word Cloud. You can do the same thing by asking participants to text you their responses, then copying those responses and pasting them into a free word-cloud generator—freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatewordcloud—that you display on a screen for everyone to see.

Consider what we’ve heard and experienced today—maybe it’s dawning on you that everyone is called no matter who you are. That’s certainly true in the story of Antoine, Chef Eric, and the boys Emmanuel and Gabby. Think of the life-changing difference that is set in motion when we discover, then live out of our callings. Let’s close by creating a community “cloud” of callings. Type the link you see on the screen into your phone’s browser, or use your camera app to scan the QR code on the screen. Once you’ve accessed the link, simply finish this sentence: “I believe one of my callings is....” Mentimeter will collect your answers and create a word cloud that represents them. (Pause as people input their callings, creating a Word Cloud that displays on the screen.) freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatewordcloud

SAY: What you see on the screen is our gift of worship to God—the gift of our great treasure to His mission in the world. Let’s close in prayer...