



Your Kingdom Come | January 5

Matthew 4 Life Group Prayer Experience

This guide will help your group encounter Jesus through the stories and themes in his early days of ministry; it's designed to last about 90 minutes. As a group leader, you'll be responsible to help facilitate the experience; we suggest you read through the guide and make your plan ahead of time, including setting the atmosphere with soft worship music and a lit candle and prepping your group to come prepared with Bibles and journals. You can also print this guide for each group member if you choose.

Note: The Prayer Room is open and might be available for your group. [Use this link to see the calendar and reserve a spot.](#)

Opening: Preparing Our Hearts (10 minutes)

Welcome and Opening Thought:

Share this to set up the theme of the experience.

After his baptism, Jesus heard God proclaim who he is, entered the wilderness, was tested, and remained faithful. Then, he called his first disciples with these words: "Follow me."

This year, we will face challenges, so during this prayer time, we want to explore—with God's help—how will we cling to God and respond to Jesus' call to follow him into faithful ministry.

Worship:

Sing or play a song from [The Creek's Worship playlist](#) or another of your choosing about trusting and abiding in God.

Centering Prayer:

Invite your group to take two minutes of silence to invite and focus on God's presence. After the silence, pray this out loud on behalf of your group:

"Lord, as we reflect on your word, give us strength to trust you in testing and courage to follow you in faithfulness. Amen."

Scripture Reading: Encountering the Word (10 minutes)

You'll need three volunteers to read aloud one of the following passages. Before they read, ask the group to listen for a word, phrase, or moment that stands out to them.

Have the readers read, taking a moment of pause before moving on to the next scripture.

- *Reader 1: Matthew 3:13–17* (Jesus' baptism)
- *Reader 2: Matthew 4:1–11* (Jesus' testing in the wilderness)
- *Reader 3: Matthew 4:18–25* (Jesus calls the disciples to follow him)

Invite your group to reflect in silence on those things that stood out to them.

Praying About Your Identity (20 minutes)

Have Reader 1 read Matthew 3:13-17 out loud again.

Knowing You Are God's Beloved

Invite your group to pray this prayer silently:

"Father, help me to hear your voice speaking over me: 'You are my beloved child, and I delight in you.' Show me how to live in the confidence of being fully loved by You."

Reflect:

What holds you back from believing you are God's beloved? Share those doubts with him.

Rooting Your Identity in God's Affirmation

"Lord, just as Jesus submitted to baptism, anchoring his identity in your affirmation, teach me to root my life not in achievements, failures, or others' opinions, but in who you say I am."

Reflect:

In what ways have you sought identity in things other than God? Ask for his help to re-center your identity in him.

Living Out Your Identity as God's Child

"At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him." (Matthew 3:16)

Pray:

"Holy Spirit, as you rested on Jesus, come and fill my life. Help me to live as God's child, reflecting his love, grace, and truth in all I do."

Reflect:

How is God calling you to live out your identity as his child as you head into this new year? Pray for the courage and strength to follow his leading.

Testing, Trust, and Calling (20 minutes)

1. Clinging to God's Word in Testing:

Have the group focus on *Matthew 4:1–11* and ask:

"What do you notice about how Jesus responds to temptation? What Scriptures have sustained you in difficult times?"

Invite each person to share those scriptures with the group.

2. Jesus' Call to Follow Him:

Focusing on *Matthew 4:19*, read this invitation from Jesus: "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people."

Give your group time to pray silently over these questions:

"What does it mean for you to follow Jesus this year?"

"How do you sense Jesus calling you to serve him—at home, in your church, or in the world?"

3. Personal Reflection:

Invite people to write in their journals, using this prompt:

Where do you feel tested right now?

How is Jesus calling you to trust him and follow him more deeply this year?

How do you want to respond?

Responding to Jesus' Call (30 minutes)

1. Clinging to God's Word:

Read Matthew 4:4 out loud: *"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."*

Pray this prayer three times out loud, pausing for a couple minutes between each reading. During each pause, invite participants to reflect on how Jesus used Scripture as he was being tested.

"Lord, give us strength to trust your word in times of testing."

Invite each member to write one Scripture he or she will cling to this year.

2. Prayers of Calling:

Read Matthew 4:19 again: *"Come, follow me."*

Encourage silent prayer and listening, using this prompt:

"Jesus, where are you calling me to follow you? How are you inviting me to serve in your ministry this year?"

3. Praying Together:

Have people partner up in groups of 2 or 3 and pray for each other:

For faithfulness to trust God's Word.

For boldness to respond to Jesus' call to follow him into ministry.

Closing: Committing to Faithfulness (10 minutes)

1. Group Sharing:

Invite each group member to share:

"What Scripture will you cling to this year? How do you sense Jesus calling you to follow him?"

2. Closing Prayer:

Pray this prayer out loud:

"Lord, you are faithful in the wilderness and faithful to call us into your mission. Strengthen us to trust you, cling to your word, and follow you wherever you lead. Amen."

End by having everyone say the **Lord's Prayer** together.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory
 forever and ever. Amen.

Optional Next Step:

Memorize the Scripture verse you chose.
Spend time this week reflecting on Jesus' call to follow him. Write down one practical way you can respond to that call in your life.