



Session 4: Loving God Like Jesus Does

Core Theme: God – Jesus had an intimate, trusting relationship with God, his “Abba” (father) God, fostered through praying and turning again and again to God. We practice loving God by learning how God loves us and how God loves Jesus.

Core Scripture: Matthew 26:36-39

Suggested Session 4 Schedule

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer (3 minutes)

2. Meal (30 minutes, including Check-in described under #3)

Enjoy a meal together, following earlier guidance around the meal. About 15 minutes in, welcome people to shift gears and gather round for the check-in. Continue to notice who builds relationships quickly and who might need a nudge to connect. Continue to see if anyone seems disengaged, acutely quiet, or alone during the meal, and check in with them.

3. Check-in (15-20 minutes – if sharing meal, occurs during mealtime)

Following a brief review and reaffirmation of the covenant, offer one of the following questions for check-in:

- Since our last session, where have you seen Jesus in the context of community?
- How did the scripture from the last session show up in your life?
- How did you feel about your My Way of Love spiritual inventory results?
- How do you feel as you arrive here?
- What do you need to acknowledge before you can fully be present today?
- *Create your own check-in question.*

Heed earlier guidance around check-in, including using the talking piece, listening respectfully, and honoring each person’s time to speak. If you notice check-ins running long, offer a time limit (split the allotted time between the number present) and begin by modeling a check-in within that time frame. You may also gently remind people to return to the covenant to honor the time and others’ opportunities to speak.

4. Content Engagement (45 minutes)

Once everyone has checked in, it’s time to move into the next part of your small group meeting: content engagement. For the fourth session, we seek to know more about life with Jesus.

Show: Session 4: Part A Video

Note: To save time, participants can watch this video on their own before your gathering.

Discuss the following questions as a group, inspired by the Session 4: Part A Video. Remember: You need not cover all the questions in this relatively short time. If it would be helpful, break into pairs or trios for about 5 minutes to facilitate giving everyone a chance to speak. Then, come back to the larger group and share for the remaining 10 minutes. Use these questions or others, as appropriate:

Wondering Questions

- How do you love God?
- How can you more intentionally nurture that love and connection for and with God? Will it be through prayer? Community? Confession? Scripture reflection?
- What brings you closer to God, and God closer to you?
- What in this video resonated with or challenged you?

Show: Session 4: Part B Video

Watch the video as a group, then discuss the following questions together:

Wondering Questions

In the second video, we hear three leaders exploring what they have learned from Jesus about loving God.

- As you listened to their conversation, what came up for you?
- How does your answer to that same question align or diverge from their experiences?
- What makes it hard to have intimacy with God?
- What helps you to form a close, vulnerable, and authentic relationship with God?

5. Check-out and Closing Prayer (7 min)

Follow earlier suggestions for check-out (confirm time and location for next session, share Make It Yours opportunities), especially inviting group members to share **one word** about the time they've spent together today.

If time permits, offer this question for check-out: *How has the group blessed you today?*

Close with prayer, welcoming prayer requests from each person, which the group leader or a volunteer gathers and offers up. Close with spontaneous prayer, choose your favorite prayer, or try the prayer below, which is a modified version of *For the Answering of Prayer* from the Book of Common Prayer.

God, you promised to hear the prayers of those who ask in your Son's name. We pray that you hear our prayers and supplications and answer us according to your will. Help us remember that your answer might not sound like the answer we want. Give us listening hearts to hear you more clearly. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

6. Make It Yours: At-Home Engagement Opportunities

- Encourage your group to review and reflect on Session 4 in the Participant Guidebook before your next gathering.
- Invite participants to practice Learn and Pray from the Way of Love between now and Session 5 by engaging in daily prayer and scripture reading. Find the readings for each day at <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/daily-readings>. Many people do this in the morning, but it can be done at any time that is convenient.