



Imagining Freedom

Small Group Discussion Guide

Week of October 4, 2026

Primary scripture text: Deuteronomy 12:1-14

Secondary scripture texts: Ps 72; Heb 12:18-29; Matt 6:9-13

Learning outcome: Participants will be able to understand and articulate how the Kingdom of God is embodied through worship. God calls his people to worship to shape their hearts, minds and bodies to allegiance to Him and to the community called by His name. Allegiance to the Kingdom of God requires that we dethrone all other gods and kingdoms that demand our primary allegiance.

Questions that are marked with an asterisk () are priorities. If you are worried about having enough time, focus on these questions and skip those that are unmarked.*

LOOKING BACK (5 MINUTES)

Last week's discussion was focused on the ways that our loving Father frees us from slavery and captivity and enables us, by His Spirit, to live in the freedom of his love and to love one another.

Invite any willing participants to share briefly about how they received "daily bread" from their Father in Heaven this week.

DISCUSSING DEUTERONOMY (15 MINUTES)

Ask one or two group members to read Deuteronomy 12:1-14 aloud.

Invite listeners to notice: Deuteronomy 12 begins with a cleansing of false worship; tearing down of altars, dashing to pieces the pillars, burning idols with fire, chopping down carved images (v.2-3). Why is this purging an important pre-requisite for true worship? How do your personal prayers follow this pattern? Our corporate worship?

1. *What key elements of true worship are listed in these passages? What parallels do you notice between these commands and our worship services at Incarnation?
2. *In Deuteronomy 12: v. 5-7 and 11-12; calling, blessing, offerings, sacrifice, eating and rejoicing are all connected? What does this tell us about what God intends for Kingdom life?
3. Have you heard God's invitation to remove idols from your life (sins that you return to that challenge your allegiance to God and his good commands)?

OPENING THE CATECHISM (10 MINUTES)

The assigned reading for this week was Qs. 172-187. These are attached at the end of this document.

1. Did anything in the assigned catechism questions strike you as encouraging, challenging, or confusing?
2. *How are we to "hallow God's name?" What connections might we make between this phrase and the commandment "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain..." (Deut. 5:11)?
3. *With Deuteronomy 12 in mind as well as Qs 178-182, how are we to live when God's kingdom is both present and coming? How does this reality inform your prayer life?
4. Qs. 184 states that "God's will is to reconcile all things to himself in Jesus Christ and to establish his kingdom on earth. His will is revealed in the whole of scripture and especially in Jesus Christ, whom I am called to serve and imitate with my whole life." What postures or practices help align you to God's will?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

Read this excerpt from *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard (HarperCollins, 1997)

So when Jesus directs us to pray "thy kingdom come," he does not mean that we should pray for it to come into existence. Rather, we pray for it to take over at all points in the personal, social and political order where it is now excluded: "On earth as it is in heaven." With this prayer we are invoking it, as in faith we are acting it, into the real world of our daily existence.

Within his overarching dominion God has created us and has given each of us, like him, a range of will - beginning from our minds and bodies and extending outward, ultimately to a

point not wholly predetermined but open to the measure of our faith. His intent is for us to learn to mesh our kingdom with the kingdom of others. Love of neighbor, rightly understood, will make this happen. But we can only love adequately by taking as our primary aim the integration of our rule with God's. That is why love of neighbor is the second, not the first, commandment and why we are told to seek first the kingdom, or rule, of God.

*Only as we find that kingdom and settle into it can we human beings **all** reign, or rule, together with God. We will then enjoy individualized "reigns" with neither isolation nor conflict. This is the ideal of human existence for which secular idealism vainly strives. Small wonder that, as Paul says, "Creation eagerly awaits the revealing of God's children" (Rom. 8:19). (26-27)*

Discussion questions

1. Willard outlines the two dimensions of kingdom alignment: Aligning our kingdom with the kingdom of God and with the kingdoms of others. Which area of alignment takes most of your focus and effort?
2. *In what ways have you served God and his kingdom above all else this week? When have you felt tension with competing kingdoms (including your own)?
3. *How does worship help us to align more fully with God's kingdom?

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

Spend a few minutes in prayerful silence asking God to reveal an area of your life where you are mis-aligned with his Kingdom as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to align your kingdom with His this week. Share with the group as you are comfortable doing so.

Close by standing together to recite the following collect from the *Book of Common Prayer* (Anglican Liturgy Press, 2019)

115. For the Coming of God's Kingdom

Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen

and corrects us when we go astray. (*Psalm 103:12–14; Luke 11:11–13; Hebrews 12:5–10*)

169. How is God unlike earthly fathers?

Unlike our natural fathers, our heavenly Father loves us perfectly, is almighty in his care, makes no errors in judgment, and disciplines us only for our good. (*1 Samuel 2:12–17, 22–36; Psalm 145:8–21; Luke 11:11–13; 15:11–32; Hebrews 12:9–11*)

170. What is heaven?

Heaven is the realm of God's presence, power, and glory, which exists invisibly alongside this visible realm, and from which God hears the prayers of his children. (*1 Kings 8:27–30; Psalm 11:4; Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 18:10; John 3:31; Ephesians 4:10; Hebrews 9:24; Revelation 21:1–2*)

171. How does your Father in heaven help you here on earth?

Because God is in all places and knows all things, he hears and answers my prayers, directs my paths, and strengthens me in times of trouble. (*2 Samuel 22; Psalms 23; 46; Matthew 6:6–8, 25–34; 7:9–11; James 1:5*)

**THE FIRST PETITION:
“HALLOWED BE THY NAME”**

172. What is the first petition?

The first petition is “Hallowed be thy Name.” (*Matthew 6:9; see also Psalms 99:3; 105:1–3; John 12:27–28; see questions 283–89*)

173. What is God's Name?

God's Name reveals who he is—his nature, his character, his power, and his purposes. The Name God reveals to Moses is “I AM WHO I AM” or simply “I AM” (*Exodus 3:6, 14*). This Name means that he

alone is truly God, he is the source of his own Being, he is holy and just, and he cannot be defined by his creatures. (*Exodus 3:6, 14; 15:11; Psalm 99; Isaiah 5:16; 42:8; 47:4; John 8:58; Revelation 1:8*)

174. What are some other names for God given in Scripture?

Throughout the Scriptures, God is known as “Lord.” Through the Person and ministry of Jesus Christ, God is also revealed to be one God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (*Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:24*)

175. What does “hallowed” mean?

“Hallowed” means to be treated as holy—set apart, sacred, and glorified. (*Exodus 13:1–12; Leviticus 22:31–33; Deuteronomy 6:7–8; Psalm 11:4–7; Isaiah 6:1–8; Luke 2:22–35; 2 Timothy 2:19–22*)

176. How does God hallow his Name?

God’s Name is holy in itself, and God glorifies his Name by saving fallen humanity, by building his Church, and by establishing his kingdom in this world and in the age to come. (*Nehemiah 9:9–10; Psalm 111:9; Ezekiel 36:22–32; Luke 1:49; John 12:23–28; Acts 4:24–31; Ephesians 5:25–27; 1 Peter 2:4–9*)

177. How can you hallow God’s Name?

I can honor God’s Name as holy by worshiping him, serving others, and living in loving obedience as his child and a citizen of his kingdom. (*Deuteronomy 4:6–8; Psalm 105:1–6; Ezekiel 36:16–32; Matthew 5:16; Hebrews 13:15–16*)

**THE SECOND PETITION:
“THY KINGDOM COME”**

178. What is the second petition?

The second petition is “Thy kingdom come.” (*Matthew 6:10*)

179. What is God's kingdom?

The kingdom of God is the just and peaceful reign of Jesus Christ over all the world, especially in the lives of his faithful people, through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit. (*Psalms 103:19; 145:11-13; Isaiah 11:1-9; Daniel 4:28-37; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 17:20-21; Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 1:9-14*)

180. When you pray for God's kingdom to come, what are you asking?

I pray that the whole creation may be renewed and restored under its rightful Lord, now in part and fully in the age to come. (*Psalm 72; Daniel 7:27; Mark 14:25; Romans 8:19-25; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 11:15-18; 21:5*)

181. How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom is announced to the people of Israel, arrives in Jesus Christ, and advances through the Church's mission. It will appear in its fullness once Christ returns in glory. (*Psalm 102:12-22; Daniel 2:31-45; Matthew 10:5-8; Mark 4:26-32; Acts 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:19-28*)

182. How do you live in God's kingdom?

As a citizen of God's kingdom, I am called to live in obedience to God's Word and will, in loving witness and service to others, and in joyful hope of Christ's return. (*Psalm 15; Ezekiel 37:20-28; Mark 4:1-25; Romans 14:17; Philippians 3:17-21; 1 Peter 2:9-12*)

THE THIRD PETITION: "THY
WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"

183. What is the third petition?

The third petition is "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
(*Matthew 6:10*)

184. What is God's will?

God's will is to reconcile all things to himself in Jesus Christ and to establish his kingdom on the earth. His will is revealed in the whole of Scripture and especially in Jesus Christ, whom I am called to serve and imitate with my whole life. (*Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 119:1-16, 104-5; Proverbs 4:1-9; Matthew 22:36-40; John 6:39-40; Romans 8:28-30; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19*)

185. What do you pray for as you seek God's will?

I pray for God to break the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the devil; to establish justice and thwart the plans of the wicked; to strengthen and direct his Church; and to extend the kingdom of his grace. (*Psalm 10:17-18; Matthew 16:17-18; Luke 18:7-8; Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:1-4*)

186. How can you do God's will?

I can walk in God's will by loving him and my neighbor, and by taking my part in the Church's mission to extend his kingdom in the world. (*Deuteronomy 30:11-16; Psalm 15; Micah 6:8; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:28-34; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 John 2:15-17*)

187. Why do you pray, "on earth as it is in heaven"?

In heaven, God's Name is perfectly hallowed, and his will is perfectly obeyed and fulfilled. I pray for his kingdom to be established fully and his will to be accomplished on earth, that his Name may be perfectly hallowed in all creation. (*Psalm 103:19-22; Isaiah 11:1-9; Daniel 4:34-35; Ephesians 1:15-23; Revelation 4:8-11*)