

Gathering@Home Guide: Jan. 18, 2026

1. Welcome

- Decide when during the meeting to eat and share communion together
- Links to ALL resources related to this meeting:
 - <https://www.knexionschurch.com/discussion-tools>

2. Start with Gratitude moment and prayer

- talk about importance of gratitude relating to joy and connection to God
- Ask people to reflect on a recent event this week that they're grateful for
- the leader and/or participants share a gratitude if they are comfortable
- pray, including any shared gratitudes and for peace, focus from distractions as you continue

3. Worship together

- live music if applicable
- Youtube videos otherwise
- Suggested playlist available on web page and Youtube

4. Announcements

- Home Church Next Week

5. Kids (If there are families with kids in group)

- play video for kids; link found in discussion tools on Knexions web site
- whole group participates in any activities suggested in video (support for families and kids)

Gathering@Home Guide: Jan. 18, 2026

6. Discovery Bible Study (DBS)

1. Overview of Reading Matthew 3 and 4

- In chapter 3, we are introduced to John the Baptist, who preaches repentance, proclaims that God's kingdom is near, and prophesies of a messiah, Jesus.
- We then see Jesus come to be baptized by John. John, however, recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah and can't understand why Jesus is coming to be baptized by him. However, Jesus says it is what God requires. After Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus, and God proclaims that Jesus is his Son.
- We then move to Chapter 4 and Jesus in the wilderness, which is what we will talk about today in a few minutes
- After the story in the wilderness, Jesus will begin his public ministry in Galilee.
- As he travels, he preaches and heals, and large crowds begin to follow him

2. **Pray** - for minds to be open to know God/Jesus better and to be transformed

3. **Read Matthew 4:1-11** — encourage everyone to read along on phone or tablet

- Try and imagine yourself in the story
- Think about what concerns, surprises or amazes you.
- Look for one of the three different reactions
- options
 - have one person read
 - have multiple people read
 - listen to the passage being read in Bible app

Gathering@Home Guide: Jan. 18, 2026

4. Re-tell highlights

- The Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness
- Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights
- The devil tempted Jesus
- First, by trying to get Jesus to turn stones into bread, Jesus counters by saying people do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God
- Second, the devil takes Jesus to the highest point of the temple and told him to jump off and the scripture says the angels will protect him. Jesus responds they you must not test the Lord
- Lastly, the devil took Jesus to a high mountain showing him all the kingdoms of the world and said that he would give them to Jesus if he worshiped the devil. Jesus responds by saying you must only worship and serve the Lord.
- The devil leaves and the angels come and care for Jesus

5. Share - what was amazing, concerning or surprising about the reading?

6. Context - things that might help understand the reading better

- This comes right after Jesus is baptized. He is announced as God's son, and the same spirit that came down on him like a dove leads Jesus into the wilderness.
- This moment sets the direction for everything that follows. It is important to note that wilderness in the Bible was seen as a place of formation and preparation.
- Scot McKnight writes that it is meant to be seen as intense, with the wilderness harsh and even isolating, and then the length of time and fasting on top of that.
- Both NT Wright and Scot McKnight compare this wilderness story to Israel's test of faithfulness, from the Red Sea, where God parted the sea, to the Jordan, where God again parted the sea as they were about to enter the Promised Land. It was forty years, and there is a connection to Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. NT Wright wrote that this is the way God wanted Israel to be.
- This is not so much a story about us; Scot McKnight says we can get there, but only through Jesus. It is speaking to the kind of Messiah Jesus is going to be.
- When we look at these temptations, we can see that they were, as the African Bible commentary puts it, "a public display of power in a self-gratifying way".
- Hebrews records in 4:15, "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all the same testings we do, yet he did not sin."

Gathering@Home Guide: Jan. 18, 2026

- This would speak to the humanity of Jesus; he could possibly have been tempted. The writer of Hebrews would allude to that, and the devil must have thought so because he tried.
- Jesus was fully human yet fully God is a tension we have, where does one begin and the other end, or vice versa. Scot McKnight adds that Jesus had some kind of agency.
- Why this story is important has a lot to do with speaking to the kind of messiah that Jesus is
- Anna Case-Winters wrote that it was an alternative vision of the Kingdom, speaking to the upside-down Kingdom of God. Jesus, the trusting, obedient son, was the humble Kingdom adjacent to the Roman Empire. Not using it for personal gain and power, nor flaunting the position. But the faithful servant. This is the kind of Messiah He is.
- For us, we can see how we can use the truths of God to combat temptations through this passage, but the bigger takeaway is to see the kind of Messiah that Jesus is, which gives character to God's Kingdom.

7. Answer questions

- (1) What does this chapter say about the character of God/Jesus?
- (2) What do we learn about Jesus from how he responds in the wilderness? What kind of Messiah does this show him to be?
- (3) Why do you think Jesus spent time being formed and tested before starting his public ministry? What does that say about preparation and trust in God?
- (4) In the temptations, Jesus refuses to use power for himself. What does that teach us about God's Kingdom and how it is different from other kingdoms?
- (5) How does knowing that Jesus was both fully human and fully God help us understand this story—and why does that matter for us today?

8. Reflection and Application

- Based on today's reading and discussion, what is one practical step that I can take this week to live this out?

9. Prayer

- Ask people to share needs if comfortable and then take turns praying for needs
- Leader wraps up in prayer for unity in our community and for opportunities to Bless and share with family, friends and neighbours

Gathering@Home Guide: Jan. 18, 2026

6. Ending the Meeting

- let the meeting end naturally
 - If the last thing is prayer after the DBS then that is a natural ending point. People may want to continue to talk or switch conversations to something else
 - if the last thing is eating together then let the conversation continue. Be mindful of the host home. Confer with them if the meeting needs to end at a specific time
- remind everyone of the next time we meet