

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of January 26, 2025

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.

LEADER NOTES

MEETING NOTES

⇒ LEADER TIP

Your goal each night is to lead your group in such a way that you hear from everyone and use the Bible as your guide. Know that if you do this each week the people in your group will grow! Remember you don't need to cover all questions. Great conversation is far more important than covering all the questions.

⇒ PRAYER NOTE

Check out the Tips on Group Prayer at the end of this Leader's Guide. And NEVER make someone pray. Group prayer is similar to public speaking, which is the #1 fear people have. More than once we've had people tell us they quit Life Groups because a well-intentioned person required everyone to pray.

⇒ ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online through the Planning Center Groups. If you are still having trouble with taking attendance online, please read this article:

<https://pcogroups.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360016180273-take-attendance>.

Find all of our leader resources online: <https://www.springfieldfaithcenter.org/leader-resources>

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

February 9th, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM at SFC

Join us as we review the previous year's financial status, talk about our main accomplishments, and ratify our new council members. Afterwards, join us for some light refreshments! Childcare will be provided.

⇒ NEWCOMER'S GATHERING

February 9th, in the Green Room after each service

Are you new to Springfield Faith Center, or just want to take the first step in getting connected? This is the place to start! Our Newcomer's Gathering is a brief meet and greet designed to help those who are just starting out at SFC to get connected. Join us to meet some of our pastors and staff, enjoy some light refreshments, and discover your next steps. **This will follow both services in the Green Room.**

DISCUSSION REMINDER: Remember, every night you want to hear from everyone in your group.

Think through how you're going to ask questions so this happens. Ask various individuals what they think, go around the circle, set time limits on answers so you have time to hear from everyone.

LIFE GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

For the week of January 26th, 2025

LIFE GROUP STUDY
For the week of January 26, 2025

*This week is a **CIRCLE / HIGHLIGHT / UNDERLINE Study**. This weekend, Pierce Westfall, from *A Jesus Mission*, shared with us. Take some time to read the passage below, and use the circle/highlight/underline method to identify sections that seem meaningful (or mysterious) to you.*

CIRCLE / HIGHLIGHT / UNDERLINE: *Grab your pen and highlighter and dig in to the passages below!*

1. **Circle** / **HIGHLIGHT** any words or phrases that catch your attention.
2. **Underline** the verse you see as most important to remember.
3. **Put an X** next to anything that confuses you.
4. **Identify** where the story connects with the sermon points.

Matthew 28:16-20 – (New International Version, NIV)
¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

NOTES AND THOUGHTS

1. What stood out to you in this week’s passage?
2. Was there anything confusing or troubling?

Mark 2:13-17 – (New International Version, NIV)

13Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. **14**As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

15While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. **16**When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

17On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

3. Why is it important that "all authority in heaven and on earth" has been given to Jesus? Why does he remind the disciples of that, as part of his final words to them?
4. Jesus was willing to go to the people who needed to be near him, and he was willing to help them experience God's way of doing life. Is God asking you to go and spend time with someone in your life this week? Is there someone close to you who needs to know that God loves them?

The circle/highlight/underline exercises are great ways to get your group directly interacting with the biblical text. The goal isn't to be experts in reading the Bible, but to engage with it. We know that the Holy Spirit will speak to people through the pages of scripture, if only we will invite him to and if we will spend time there.

Circling — Is for individual words that seem to stand out to you for some reason. Encourage people that they don't even have to know why a word seems important; the act of circling a word is often enough to get them thinking about it, and that creates space for the Holy Spirit to begin speaking.

Additionally, use the discussion time to talk about the words that people have circled. It's very common for someone to find a word interesting, even if they don't know why, and then for the group to spend some really profitable time talking about that word. It can be extremely encouraging for a person to circle a word that really gets other people engaging in discussion; it's an affirmation that they really did see something of value in the scripture.

Highlighting — is the same as circling, but for longer phrases or sections. The same thoughts all apply here: they don't have to know why they're highlighting something, and be sure to discuss the sections that people thought were worth highlighting.

Take note that it's always worth asking the person why they circled or highlighted something, even if they didn't understand it. Often, they will start to talk about their process out loud, and the act of speaking will give them some insight into what they found interesting.

Underlining — is for the verse that you think is most important to remember. Again, encourage people to remember that they don't have to have a specific reason to underline something right away. The Holy Spirit often speaks to us through nudges and instincts, to direct us toward something in scripture that we need to see. It's frequently best to underline the first verse that strikes us, and then spend time thinking about why we underlined it.

Put an X — next to anything that confuses you. It's always worth discussing the parts of scripture that people find confusing. Maybe it will be the use of a specific word that seems mystifying, or maybe it will be a whole idea that someone is struggling with. Take time to ask if anyone had any Xs, and then take time to really think through them. Be sure to ask the person if the discussion helped to resolve their confusion at all. If they still have questions, or if the group didn't really know

what to say about the word/idea, then that's a great opportunity to reach out to Pastor Daniel and get him involved.

We want people to know that it's ok to be confused, and that it's ok to ask questions; God is not bothered by honest seekers.

PLEASE NOTE: This is a guide for how to use these marks in order to get people engaging with the text, but it's not the only way to do it. If people want to underline instead of highlight, let them. There's no need to be dogmatic about the way that we've defined things here. As long as people are reading scripture, looking for the parts that seem to stand out to them, and then discussing things with their Life Group, then God is going to work through our times together and we can all grow together.

PRAYER REQUESTS

(Commit to pray for at least 3 prayer requests from your Life Group)



TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in Life Group. Over the years we've found that group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.