

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of April 12, 2026

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

LEADER NOTES

GETTING READY FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING

EACH WEEK IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL FIND THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR GROUP.

GOALS OF THE FIRST MEETING

- MEET NEW MEMBERS, REKINDLE OLD RELATIONSHIPS
- CAST VISION FOR THE SESSION WITH YOUR GROUP
- CLARIFY YOUR GROUP'S DIRECTION / EXPECTATIONS / COMMITMENTS USING THE LIFE GROUP COMMITMENT FORM
- BRIEFLY DISCUSS THE SERMON TOPIC (IF THERE IS TIME)
- PRAY FOR THE BUILDING OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF THE GROUP

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FIRST MEETING

- LIFE GROUP COMMITMENT FORM— REVIEW THIS WITH YOUR GROUP. A PRINTED VERSION IS AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE, OR ONLINE.
- NAMETAGS FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS (PRINT OR WRITE THEM OUT AHEAD OF TIME).

CONTACT YOUR GROUP IN ADVANCE

- CONTACT ALL MEMBERS BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING TO WELCOME THEM TO THE GROUP. YOU CAN CHECK YOUR ROSTER ONLINE ON PLANNING CENTER GROUPS TO SEE ALL THE MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP AND THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION.

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

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ MEN'S BREAKFAST

April 25th, 9 – 11 AM, in the Family Room

This won't just be a meal—it's a chance to be in a room full of men who are pursuing something greater. Expect great food, strong coffee, and real connection. We're going to talk about where we're

headed as a ministry—and how each of us has a role to play. You matter in this, and we'd love to see you there. Register online!

⇒ **SFC LEADERSHIP NIGHT**

June 10th, 6 PM – 8 PM at SFC

Calling All SFC Leaders/Volunteers! We're bringing *everyone* together on **June 10th** for a night of vision, encouragement, a little training, tasty food—and of course, FUN! This night is all about getting aligned and inspired and growing in how we love and serve people in our church, city, and around the world! Bring your team and come ready to connect and be refreshed—**we really want you there!**

Just a friendly “heads up” for the future! The goal is to gather as an entire SFC Leadership Team 2 times this year, once this Spring and once in the Fall (at our annual volunteer appreciation night). These moments matter for building unity and momentum, and I'd love for you to be part of it!

AGENDA for your first meeting

Looking for more guidance on your first meeting? You can find the “First Night Agenda” on how to make your first night great on the Leader Resources page of our website. (<https://cpmfiles1.com/springfieldfaithcenter.org/first-night-agenda.pdf>)

How We Measure Success Week to Week: Hearing from everyone at every meeting and keeping God's Word at the center.

Make sure you leave plenty of time to go over the Life Group Commitment Form with your group.

- Welcome & Eat – Potluck is a great option.
- Group Sharing – Discussion Note: You can transition from the “Be Friendly” section to the “Looking Ahead” section.
- Study Questions Discussion as time allows. Be sure to take time for the Life Group Commitment Form.
- Go over the Life Group Commitment Form – Use the last question in the Leader Guide to Study Questions below to transition into reviewing the Commitment Form.
- Close in prayer.
- Mingle afterward.

WEEKEND NOTES

LIFE GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

For the week of April 12, 2026

Welcome to the Spring Session of Life Groups

This week we kick off our Spring Session of Life Groups. Your first gathering is designed to give you time to get acquainted, possibly enjoy a meal together and connect with each other, as well as time to discuss how to make your Life Group meetings great! The study questions have been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish all of this. To prepare for your first meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group.

As we start the first session of Life Groups, please help us continue to keep group members safe by staying home from group if you are not feeling well. We hope you have a great time together as you connect, encourage one another to grow and see how God might work!

BE FRIENDLY

Discussion Note: Use these questions especially if you have new people in your group or if you are a completely new group. If it hasn't come up in conversation before the meeting officially starts, have everyone in the group share how long they have been attending Springfield Faith Center, if they have ever been in a Life Group (small group) before and their favorite hobby.

Discussion Tips: Remember to set time limits to ensure everyone has an opportunity to answer the questions. Possibly use the "Tag—You're It" method to ensure everyone can share. Once one person is finished sharing, they select the next person to share.

Tell us a little about yourself... *Have fun with this question.*

- If you were taking a boat trip to a location, and you could only invite one person (living or dead), who are you taking, where are you going, and why?
- As we kick off this Spring session, what is one hobby, project, or habit you are hoping to 'bring to life' or start fresh this season (e.g., gardening, a new fitness goal, finally cleaning out the garage, or learning a new skill)?
- What is your most random 'claim to fame'? This could be anything from winning a 3rd-grade spelling bee, to meeting a celebrity in a grocery store, or having a secret talent that no one here knows about yet.

As we continue the year, what are one or two things you're grateful for from 2026 so far?

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Encourage people to lean into this final question. It will be repeated in the notes each week, but it will take some effort for people to bring thoughts and questions to the group. Remind people that it's not just allowed to have questions, but it's encouraged. Also, if your group doesn't feel like they know the

answers, that's great! Get in touch with Pastor Daniel. He loves discussing difficult questions.

BE OPEN

The sermon highlighted that miracle stories are primarily about Jesus' identity. When you face a storm in life (stress, loss, uncertainty), is your first instinct to ask Jesus to **change the situation**, or to ask Him to **reveal more of who He is** through it? Why do you think that is?

Medium Risk. Some may not be comfortable to share in a larger setting.

Leader Tip: The assumption is that most people's first instinct will be to ask God to change the situation. That may not be true of your group, but it's safe to start by assuming it will be. The goal, obviously, is to move toward a place where seeking to see more of Jesus is the response for all of us, but that's a difficult response for a lot of people.

Be careful as people answer this, since you want to guard against anyone feeling like a "bad" Christian for their answer. Sometimes, the zealous among us can treat "wrong" answers as something to be ashamed of. I'd rather have honest answers than "right" answers, but many people won't feel comfortable giving honest answers. This is especially true if the group treats questions like this one flippantly (i.e. "Of course, everyone here wants to see more of Jesus. Who would start by asking God to change their circumstances? That's sinful, and I know none of you would do it.") Don't let people do that.

BE VULNERABLE

The sermon asked: "When facing storms, will I choose fear of circumstance or faith in Jesus?" Fear is often just faith in the wrong thing—faith that the

storm is bigger than the Savior. Is there an area of your life right now where you are "worshipping" the storm by giving it more of your attention and emotional energy than you are giving to Jesus?

What can you do this week to change your focus? How can your Life Group support you in that?

High Risk. A few people may want to answer this question.

Leader Tip: This is obviously a risky question for people to answer, but it also invites honesty. Fear never feels like having "faith in the wrong thing," but it often works out that way. Invite people to think about their fears, and to weigh their interactions with them. Encourage honesty as they reflect, and model safe vulnerability so that they know it's ok to have areas of growth that we're still working on.

With the second part of the question, don't be afraid to help them plan concrete follow-ups. Encourage phone calls or text messages.

LOOKING AHEAD

One of the key reasons we meet in Life Groups every week is to gain the encouragement and support we each need to honor God in all we do and keep our focus on Jesus. Before you go over the Life Group Commitment in your group, take a moment and write down your responses to the questions below:

What are you looking forward to in your Life Group this quarter?

Is there anything specific you need prayer for, or is there any other focus you would like to have in order to grow this first session?

High Risk. A few people may want to answer this question.

Leader Tip: Invite people to set some goals for their own spiritual growth. Some folks may find it intimidating, but many people find that it's an excellent way to cultivate gratitude toward God. If I can keep my eyes on the ways in which he has transformed my life, then it helps me remember his goodness.

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.

THE WINDS AND WAVES OBEY

Matthew 8:23-27

The Miracle on the Lake:

Matthew 8:23-27, Jonah 1-4, Psalm 65:5-7, Psalm 89:9-11, Psalm 93:3-4

- Miracle stories are all about Jesus.
- This miracle is a sign of Jesus' authority.
- This miracle reveals Jesus' identity.

Questions from the Story:

1. How do we regard Jesus?

2. When facing storms will I choose *fear* of circumstance or *faith* in Jesus?