

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of May 3, 2026

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

⇒ NERF + NACHOS: CAMP FUNDRAISER

May 8th, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM at SFC

Enjoy a kid-free night while supporting our youth camp fundraiser! Drop off your kids for an evening full of food, games, and fun while you take a couple hours to celebrate Mother's Day. We'll keep them busy with nachos, Nerf battles, and plenty of laughs. We can't wait to hang out! This event is open for all kids (up to 5th grade). Register online.

⇒ **WORSHIP NIGHT**

May 15th, 6:30 – 7:30 PM

You're invited to a powerful night of worship and connection! Let's gather as one church to seek God and experience His presence through music, prayer, community, and communion. Don't miss it!

⇒ **WOMEN'S DAYTREAT: WHERE JOY BECOMES STRENGTH**

May 30th, 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM at SFC

At our Women's Daytreat we're not just talking about joy—we're discovering the pathway to it. Enjoy encouraging messages, fun games, meaningful connection, lunch, and a charming mini tea party. Together, we'll explore the pathway to true strength—found in His presence and the lasting joy only He can give. Invite a friend and come ready for a day full of joy, laughter, and encouragement—we can't wait to welcome you!

*8th grade and up are welcome to attend

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.

WEEKEND NOTES

LIFE GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

For the week of May 3, 2026

QUICK REVIEW

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

BE FRIENDLY

#1 If you were entering a high-stakes debate or a "battle of wits," which fictional character (from a book, movie, or TV show) would you want as your teammate, and why?

Thinking back to when you were a child, how would you approach a parent, family-member, teacher or coach with a request? What tactics would you use?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Give people a chance to describe the characters they choose, and why they would make good partners for the proposed battle of wits.

Expect colorful answers for the second part of the question. Children are notorious for learning to leverage the adults in their lives, so encourage your group to think back to memorable stories.

BE OPEN

#2 Mark tells us this woman was a “Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia.” To the Jewish audience of the day, she was the ultimate outsider. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like the outsider in the room? What was that experience like for you?

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

Leader Tip: This isn't the first time I've used a question like this, but it's appropriate. Try to get people to tell the stories, if they're comfortable with it. It's one thing to say that you felt like an outsider, but quite another to paint the picture so that the group can go through things with you.

#3 When you hear Jesus' initial response to the woman about the “children's bread” and the “dogs,” what is your honest first reaction? Do you find His response challenging, confusing, or something else?

In our own lives, how do we decide who gets our best energy and who gets the “crumbs”?

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

Leader Tip: It's normal for Jesus' interaction with this woman to be jarring and off-putting for many of us; there are even people who have called this an example of racism in the gospels. While I disagree with that assessment, his words can still be tough to grapple with. Give people permission to be honest as they respond to this. If they're still confused about the meaning of his words, and the interaction with the woman, point them toward Pastor Daniel or Pastor Brandon. We'd be happy to talk more with them.

The second question will be painfully vulnerable for some people. Many of us know that some folks get the best of us, while others don't, but we hardly ever admit it out loud. This is a chance to normalize that feeling.

#4 Jesus used bread as a metaphor constantly:

John 6:32-35, NIV

³²Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."

³⁵Then Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**"

How do the verses above change, or add to, your understanding of the story Pastor Brandon preached on?

In your opinion, what was the woman asking for when she said that, "even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs"?

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

Leader Tip: There's no real wrong answer to the first part, as long as people are trying to understand Jesus as the ultimate bread (source of sustenance). Give them a chance to try putting things in their own words, even if they struggle to phrase things.

Obviously, the woman wants her daughter to be healed, but her response to Jesus expresses something larger than that. Let the group explore the metaphor a bit, to see what conclusions they come to.

#5 The woman in the story seemed to know that the “dogs” were soon to be welcomed as children in God’s family as well:

Ephesians 2:17-20, NIV

¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹Consequently, **you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household,** ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

When you think about being a citizen or child of God’s kingdom, and a member of his household, do you feel like those things are true of you, or do you feel more like an outsider and a stranger? Why do you think that is?

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

Leader Tip: Similar to question 2, but aimed more at Believers who maybe feel like frauds in one way or another. It’s normal for people to attend church while secretly harboring the fear that God would reject them for their inadequacies. Don’t be afraid to ask some probing questions to draw those thoughts out. It’s normal to feel like an imposter, and the only way to fix it is by being honest.

BE VULNERABLE

#6 This woman was told “Not yet,” but her faith was so persistent that she stayed at Jesus’ feet anyway. Where in your life right now are you facing a closed door or even silence from God, and how does her example of persistent faith change the way you view that struggle?

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

Leader Tip: This is an awkward question, for a few reasons, so be delicate with it. Obviously, in her case, her persistence resulted in Jesus answering her prayer the way that she was hoping he would. That isn't always the case with us, and I don't want to give people the false promise that it will be.

Also, her persistence wasn't born from the sort of childish belligerence that tries to wear the parent down until they give in to the child's demands. As Pastor Brandon noted, her persistence was tempered with faith, humility, and discernment. This isn't an example of someone complaining until they get their way, but of a woman faithfully pursuing the heart of God.

#7 This woman's faith was fueled by her love for someone else (her daughter). Who is someone in your life—perhaps someone who feels far from God—that you need to be persistent on behalf of this week? What is one specific way you will pray for, or serve, them over the next seven days?

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

Leader Tip: Encourage people to have specific answers to both parts of this question: have them think of a person, and of a way to care for them. You might even challenge them to write the person's name on a 3x5 card (or, post-it), and put it somewhere that will catch their view throughout the week.

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.

MIRACLES: NO LONGER DEFILED

Mark 7:24-30

The Story:

- The Setting - defiled region
- The Encounter - a defiled woman
- The Miracle - a defiling spirit exorcised

Key Takeaways:

1. Jesus ministered with a commitment to mission and mercy.
2. Jesus erases the old taboo of “clean” and “unclean” people.

God's gift of salvation is open to all who believe.

3. The Syrophoenician woman becomes a model of discipleship:

→ *Faith*

→ *Humility*

→ *Understanding*