

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of May 5, 2024

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

⇒ ELEMENTARY EXTRAVAGANZA: WILD WILD WEST

May 18th, 10 AM – 12 PM at SFC

Get set for a wild ride at our Elementary Extravaganza! These quarterly events are designed just for our kindergarten to fifth-grade crew. Come join the fun as we head out west with your best buddies! We've got snacks, games, goodies, and a quick gospel message to spice things up. It's a morning full of energy, laughs, and adventure. Don't miss out!!

⇒ DISCOVER SFC

May 19th, 12:30m – 2 PM at SFC

Are you new to SFC? Or just want to know more about us? Come join our Discover SFC class to learn about the heart of our church. Lunch and childcare will be provided.

⇒ PRAYER + WORSHIP CHAPEL

May 19th, 6 PM – 7 PM at SFC

We are dedicating the third Sunday of each month to gather for a night of prayer and worship! We invite the whole church to join us as we praise God and spend time in targeted prayer for our church and city. Families, bring your kids as we will teach our kids to pray and worship along with our adults. A light dessert will follow.

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 5, 2024

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 Who was the best roommate you can remember having? What sort of an impact did they have on you?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Try to keep things focused on good roommates, rather than the less good ones. Some roommate horror stories are probably fine, but we don't want it to turn into an opportunity to trash talk people from the past. The question is meant to get people talking about the positive benefits of "abiding" with someone.

BE OPEN

#2 John is the only New Testament writer to use the phrase "antichrist," and he uses it in this week's passage (and in 2 John as well). What does he mean when he uses it? What are John's criteria for being an "antichrist?"

Are John's concerns still relevant today? Based on his description, does the risk of being an "antichrist" still exist today?

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

Leader Tip: Do not let people turn this question into a conversation about the book series, "Left Behind", or any pet theories about a personal antichrist. As Pastor Brandon mentioned, that's not what John had in mind when he wrote this. Keep people focused on what John did mean when he used the term, and on how his cautions can still benefit us today.

#3 John also uses the word "abide." What does that word mean, and why do you think he uses it?

Jesus also used that word, in John's gospel, during the last supper:

John 15:9-11, ESV

⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

How do Jesus' words add to what John has been saying in this section?

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

Leader Tip: Spend some time defining the word "abide." It's not a word we use very often, but it's still rich with meaning. The NIV translates the word as "remain." Maybe mention that, and see if it broadens anyone's understanding of John's meaning.

#4 Like John, Paul has some things to say about what life should look like when the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Ephesians 4:20-32, NIV

²⁰That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Are there any parallels here to the things that John has been saying?

Do you feel that God has built any of these things in your life? Are there specific areas that He still wants to transform in you?

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

Leader Tip: Paul and John are both trying to describe the work that God's Holy Spirit does in guiding us into truth and righteousness. They also both affirm that God can do this for us without needing to receive "secret" knowledge

from other people, which was a problem in the church during John's day. Try to keep people talking about things that God has taught them, directly.

BE VULNERABLE

#5 John's hope for his audience is that they would "be confident and unashamed before him (Jesus) at his coming." Do you feel that to be true of you, or do you struggle with this confidence? Why is that?

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

Leader Tip: I assume this may be a hard question for some people. It's very common for Christians to feel a sense of guilt, or insecurity, for not being "good enough." The question is meant to get people talking about how they feel in this regard, and it will be sensitive territory for some folks; tread carefully, and keep your group safe.

#6 What are some of the pressures in your life that make it difficult for you to "abide" in Jesus, like John is describing?

How can your Life Group help you to overcome them?

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

Leader Tip: This is a slightly less vulnerable question, but also one that is easier to be constructive about. Get people talking about the hurdles and pressures that prevent them from "abiding" in Christ, and then ask them how the group can help.

However, be careful that this doesn't turn into a time when people try to "fix" each other. Help the group refrain from giving advice on those hurdles and pressures unless the person seems interested in hearing it. If advise too quickly you can run the risk of treating their pain dismissively, and that's almost always hurtful to a person.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

✓

✓

✓

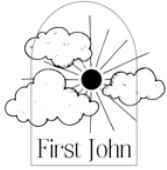
TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

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.



KEEPING THE FAITH

1 John 2:18-29

A Brief How To:

1 John 2:18-29

1. **Recognize** the marks of the end.
2. **Rejoice** in the benefits of being a believer.
3. **Remain** in Jesus until he returns.