

LIFE GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

For the week of September 22, 2024

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.

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://www.csmedia1.com/springfieldfaithcenter.org/life-group-leader-packet.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.

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.*

- Which do you prefer: Night out, or staying home and being cozy?
- What's your favorite movie that no one else seems to have seen?
- If you were suddenly blind for 3 days, like Saul was in our story, what's something that you would most miss seeing—or, what's something that you would secretly be glad to not have to see?

As we begin a new year, what are one or two things that you're hoping for God to do in 2025?
Great question to have everyone answer. You may want to have them answer the two questions in the "Looking Ahead" section also and then transition into going over the Commitment.

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

Be Open

Because of the meal and the Life Group Commitment Form, make sure you have enough time to spend on the "Looking Ahead" section. You may not have time to cover this question this week.

#1 Ananias played a critical role in the story this weekend. How hard would it have been to go and pray for Saul, if you were in Ananias' position? What were some of the barriers that he had to overcome in order to be obedient?

Encourage people to put themselves in Ananias' shoes, and to think about how they would have felt.

Be Vulnerable

#2 Acts 9:31 speaks of the early church continuing in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. How do you see those two ideas—reverence for God and comfort from Him—working together in your life or in our community? If you struggle to see them working together, what do you think makes it hard?

You may not have time to cover this question this week. Make sure you have enough time to spend on the “Looking Ahead” section.

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? *Use this question as an option if it flows well with your group*

Possible Goal Setting Question for this Fall Session: *Everyone may not have an answer, and you may not have time for everyone to answer. If there is enough time, these questions could be good to use as your theme and overall prayer request for this next quarter.*

Transition Statement to Commitment: *“It’s great to hear what each of you have said about what you want out of your time in the group. One of the great benefits of being in a Life Group is the opportunity to have help from others as we seek to be strategic and intentional about our spiritual growth. The Life Group Commitment is designed to serve as intentional guidelines to help us make the most of our time together.”*

Pass out Commitments and go over them with your group. IF NEEDED USE THE LEADER’S GUIDE TO THE COMMITMENT FOUND IN YOUR TRAINING BINDER.

Close in prayer: *Next week the Study Questions will include an introduction to praying in a group so if you have a new group or a lot of new members, it’s suggested that you wait until week two to do any group prayer.*

Eat dessert: *Mingle with everyone.*



SAUL ENCOUNTERS JESUS

Acts 9:1-30

The Text:

- Jesus **calls** Saul to follow him.
- Jesus **baptizes** Saul in and with the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus **sends** Saul to be an instrument to proclaim his name.

Face-to-Face with Jesus:

Every encounter with the risen Jesus is a **real**, radical experience.

1. Radical **grace**
2. Radical **transformation**
3. Radical **integration**



LIFE GROUP COVENANT & GUIDELINES

Leaders _____ Phone # _____

Hosts _____ Phone # _____

Life Groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

LIFE GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual growth through authentic Christian relationships and the study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs*.

SERVE

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the session, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to . . .

- ❶ Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).
- ❷ Accept one another (Romans 15:7).
- ❸ Take care of one another (John 13:34).
- ❹ Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
- ❺ Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).

GUIDELINES & COVENANT

Dates	We will meet _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this session will be on _____.
Time	We will arrive between _____ & _____, and begin the meeting at _____. We will spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing.
Children	Life Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group.
Study	Our studies will be based on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.
Prayer	We will commit to pray for one another.
Homework & Attendance	Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to <i>attend each week and do the homework ahead of time</i> . Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! If we cannot attend a meeting, we will call _____
Desserts	
Social & Service Projects	
Other	

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 16. _____ |