

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of April 26, 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

⇒ DISCOVER SFC

May 3rd, 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM at SFC

New to SFC or just want to check us out? Join our Discover SFC class for a fun, laid-back way to learn what we're all about! We've got lunch and childcare covered. Sign up online or in the Connect Hub—we can't wait to meet you! Register online.

⇒ NERF + NACHOS: CAMP FUNDRAISER

May 3rd, 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!

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 April 26, 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 could have a "sign" that it was going to be a perfect, smooth-sailing day, what would that look like? (e.g., getting every green light on your way to work, seeing a sunny sky, or finding a perfect parking spot)

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: People do not need to answer this in any sort of religious way. Encourage them to be personal, and even a little bit silly.

BE OPEN

#2 Can you think of a time in your life when you were so focused on a specific outcome you wanted, that you completely missed some other good thing that was happening instead?

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

Leader Tip: Again, the answers don't need to be religious. Depending on the makeup of your group, it may even be better to start by answering this in a non-religious way. The following questions will lead things back toward our walk with God, so there's no need to force things there early.

This is also a good chance to follow up by asking people why they were so focused on the thing in question, or even asking what they think they missed out on.

#3 The Pharisees wanted a sign from heaven, but Jesus refused because their hearts were hard. Why do you think it's so easy for us to demand that God work in ways that match our desires?

Why is it so hard to set our desires aside long enough to see what God might actually be doing?

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

Leader Tip: I tried balancing the vulnerability of this question, but the first part may be too much for some people. Don't be afraid to lean more heavily on the second part, if people struggle to engage with the first part. They're both getting at the same thing.

#4 Psalm 95 references Exodus 17, where the Israelites complain that God isn't providing for them in exactly the way they would like:

Psalm 95:7-9, NIV

⁷for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, **if only you would hear his voice,** ⁸**“Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,** ⁹**where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did.**

Why is it that we can be in the middle of a blessing and still have a heart that is stiff or resistant? Is there anything that softens your heart in those moments?

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

Leader Tip: You're welcome to go back to Exodus 17, and read the story to people, but it's also not necessary for answering the question. They should be neutral enough that full knowledge of the context isn't required.

I would encourage you to lean heavily on the second question. Hard-heartedness is not an “if” issue, but a “when” issue. Having an idea of how to recover from those moments can be crucial to our health.

#5 As Pastor Daniel said in the message, hard hearts make terrible bread:

Matthew 7:9-12, NIV

⁹**“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.**

If you had to be honest, what have the people around you been tasting recently? What sort of bread have you been giving away?

Why do you think that is? What has been affecting the flavor of your “bread?”

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

Leader Tip: This question can go in many different directions, and that's ok. People can talk about the influences in their lives, their recent emotional ups and downs, or even just the impact that life's anxiety has had on them. Keep people coming back to the questions, but know that you'll get a wide variety of answers.

BE VULNERABLE

#6 Part of Jesus' warning to the disciples was about what they were feeding themselves. He warned them not to adopt the attitude, heart, or teachings of the Pharisees. How would you describe the influences that you have been feeding yourself with, recently? What have you been reading, watching, or listening to, and what is it producing in you?

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

Leader Tip: Parts of this may get addressed in the previous question, but don't be afraid to broaden this to include people who didn't talk about their recent influences in question 5. Be cautious about passing judgement on the influences that people share. Instead, ask them what impact those things have been having. How have those influences affected the “bread” they've been offering. Give people a chance to pass judgement on themselves.

Obviously, that doesn't apply if someone shares something that is well and truly outside the bounds of health. It's ok advise caution (or even alarm) in extreme cases.

#7 Moving forward this week, we don't want to just have a soft heart, but also a *productive* one. What is one way you can change the "recipe" of how you respond to stress or conflict, so that you are offering others the bread of the Kingdom rather than the leaven of the Pharisees?

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

Leader Tip: Try to keep answers focused on this one. I used the word "productive" on purpose, but I don't want people to get hung up on it. The goal of productivity isn't to earn a sense of value, but to be aware of what we're offering to the world around us. We're always giving something away, with every interaction we have; the hope is that those interactions, and what we offer in them, can be led by the Lord.

Also, bring people back to the goal of identifying one specific thing they could change for this week. We're not after lists of resolutions, or big, sweeping changes; keep the scope small.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

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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: FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

Mark 8:1-21

The Feeding:

Mark 8:1-9, Matthew 15:32-38, Exodus 16:1-21

1. Signs always *point* to something more *important* than themselves.

The Questioning:

Mark 8:10-13, Matthew 16:1-4, Jonah

2. A *hard* heart will *blind* us to good signs, and what they point to.

The Confusion:

Mark 8:14-21, Matthew 16:5-12, Matthew 13:33

3. Hard hearts make *terrible bread*.

Conclusion:

- ⇒ What sort of *bread* am I *giving* away?