

LIFE GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

For the week of February 18, 2024

LEADER NOTES

MEETING NOTES

⇒ COVENANTS

Go over the Covenant with anyone who missed the first week. Remind anyone who hasn't signed the Covenant to do so. Email it to Pastor Brandon or Linda Cole (linda@springfieldfaithcenter.org), or drop it off at the office or at the Life Group Kiosk on church campus by Sunday, February 25.

⇒ SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT WEEK #3

People are still acclimating, especially any new people. Lead your group through the questions according to how well everyone knows each other. There are plenty of questions in this guide to take you deeper.

REMEMBER, as a leader 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**. If you have new people in your group, please make sure you go over this. **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

⇒ VISION NIGHT

Sunday, February 25th at 6:30 p.m. in SFC's Sanctuary. Join us for Vision Night 2024! We will gather to CELEBRATE what God has done this last year and dream about how we can ADVANCE forward in our vision of Encounter, Grow, and Love. Enjoy tasty desserts afterward! Register now online.

⇒ DISCOVER SFC

Sunday, March 10th at 12:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. Are you new to SFC? Or are you simply interested in getting to know us better? Then come join our Discover SFC class to delve into the heart of our church! We'll even provide lunch and childcare for your convenience. Register online or in the Connect Hub.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 6th | Annual Business Meeting

March 29th | Good Friday

March 31st | Easter

April 14th | Newcomer's Gathering

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.

LIFE GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

For the week of February 18, 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?

Leader Tip: Use this question in your personal study time before the meeting.

BE FRIENDLY

Have you ever been in a flood? If so, describe what it was like. If not, describe a flood you recall seeing on the news.

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: I can remember seeing news coverage of the flood of 1996 that hit Northern California, particularly in Sacramento, CA. There was live footage of helicopters circling neighborhoods where all you could see was rooftops, and I'll never forget seeing the people sitting on their roofs with pets, not knowing where to go or what to. The flood was so devastating to so many people.

This weekend's Bible text gave us a window into God's response to sin. What was your response to hearing that God grieves over the sin of humankind?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. The idea of this question is to get people to start seeing the God from this passage, not the "mean, genocidal maniac" description of God that sometimes comes from people after hearing about this story. God was grieved over the sin (evil, wickedness, violence, and corruption) of the people who were created in his image.

BE OPEN

#1 This weekend we saw that the flood is a sad story of chaos, destruction, and judgment, but at the same time, it is a story of God's grace. Read some excerpts from the flood story below.

Genesis 6:5-8, NIV

⁵ The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷ So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Genesis 6:17-18, NIV

¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.

Genesis 7:23-8:1, NIV

²³ Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

²⁴ The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. ¹But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

How is God's grace at work in this story?

Medium Risk. Some may not be comfortable to share in a larger setting. Try splitting the group into smaller groups of 2-3 people and have the smaller groups split-up the reading so that more people will answer the questions. Give everyone like 5-7 minutes and then come back together as a group and see what answers were given.

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. The grace of God is at work in this story, coincidentally, after the "buts" in the passages above. Each set of verses offers a statement of judgment BUT then follows up with a contrasting picture of God's grace for Noah and the animals. See underlined sections above.

- I will wipe away everything because of its wickedness, BUT Noah found favor
- Everything on the earth will perish in the water, BUT God will establish a relationship with Noah.
- Everything on the earth was wiped out; but God remembered Noah and the all the animals.

In this story, GRACE = "But God..."

Noah's story isn't perfect. In chapter 9 he gets drunk on wine, lays naked in front of his family, and ends up cursing his grandson. However, in spite of his imperfection, the Bible has great things to say about Noah. That's God's grace.

Here is a way to think about grace → "getting what we don't deserve."

What do these verses reveal about God's character?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary.

Here are some attributes of God on display which show something about his character:

- God is just, he punishes wickedness (this is a good thing)
- God is sovereign, by remembering Noah, his plan won't be thwarted by human failure
- God cares for Noah,
- God teaches Noah how to build Ark
- God is grieved, the sin of humanity brings him anger and anguish
- God remembers – Noah and his promise to all of humankind

#2 Someone once described Noah as being "odd for God." What he meant was that Noah served as a bright light for God in a dark world. As followers of Christ, we have also been called to be "children of light" (Ephesians 5:8) in a dark world. Read Ephesians 4:17-32 below.

Ephesians 4:17-32, NIV

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. ²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore 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, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone 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. ²⁹ Do 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. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

What are the contrasts you see regarding choices, attitudes, and actions between living as a light and living in darkness.

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. See this table below for some help.

Living in Light	Living in Darkness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New mind in Christ• truth• honest work• Talk that is helpful for building others up• kindness• compassionate• forgiving each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sensuality• impurity• greed• deceitful desires• stealing• unwholesome talk• falsehood• bitterness• rage and anger• brawling and slander• malice

Which of the attitudes or actions mentioned above is the most challenging for you to live out consistently?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. We can only live these out consistently by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says in the next chapter that we are to **be filled with the Holy Spirit**.

BE VULNERABLE

Discussion Tip: If you haven't tried this already, groups with co-ed members may want to split the group for the BE VULNERABLE section and from there, lead right into prayer.

We heard this weekend that we have the choice between following the culture or walking in obedience with God. What do you see as the next step in your continued pursuit of walking with God in obedience?

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

Leader Tip: *Answers will vary. Noah walked with God. Noah was righteous and blameless. When he is talked about, it says that Noah did just as God commanded him. This is in direct contrast to Cain, who walked away from the Lord and killed his brother, and Adam, who used to walk with God in the garden but was deceived and hid from God after falling into sin. Noah, therefore, is a model for walking with God. He chose to have faith in a God he couldn't see and a God who spoke to him about a future who would not have expected. How can we do the same?*

Are there any situations you need to avoid or navigate better in order to strengthen your walk with God?

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

Leader Tip: *Answers will vary. This could go easily with the other question. Use your discretion on how to couple these last two questions together.*

IF YOU HAVEN'T GONE OVER YOUR COVENANT WITH YOUR LIFE GROUP

Transition Statement to Covenant: *"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 Covenant is designed to serve as intentional guidelines to help us make the most of our time together."*

Pass out Covenants and go over them with your group. IF NEEDED USE THE LEADER'S GUIDE TO THE COVENANT FOUND IN YOUR TRAINING BINDER.

Close in prayer:

TOPICAL PRAYER: *Prayer is an amazing avenue God has given us to communicate with him and he with us. But we also come to it with a lot of different thoughts and feelings.*

TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in Life Group. 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.

Eat dessert: *Mingle with everyone.*

GRACE IN THE FACE OF CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION

Genesis 6-9

The Reasons for the Flood:

1. **Sin** of humankind – evil, violence, corruption
2. Crossing **boundaries** set by the Creator God

The Meaning of the Flood:

- **Cleanses** creation of its corruption to start **anew**

The Flood and Us:

- ❶ God's **grace**
- ❷ God's **faithfulness** to his promises
- ❸ Will we choose to follow the **culture** or walk in **obedience** with God?