

LIFE GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

For the week of March 10, 2024

LEADER NOTES

MEETING NOTES

⇒NEW SERIES

The Bible tells one large story about the promises of God spoken to unsuspecting people, and the grace of God finding people right where they are. As we approach Easter Sunday, join us for a short series we're calling **"Grace All The Way To Jesus."** We will see how God's promises and God's grace intertwine in the lives of three of the most important characters in the Old Testament. Pastor Brandon will start our series looking at Abraham.

⇒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

⇒ GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday, March 29th at 6:30 p.m. Please join us for our Good Friday service as we reflect upon the sacrificial death of Jesus, our Crucified King. The night will include short sermons, acoustic music, and a time of reflective communion. Childcare will be available for infant to 5 years old

⇒ EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday, March 31st at 9:30 a.m. + 11:00 a.m. Join us as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus! Easter is a great time for people to explore faith, encounter God, and hear an encouraging message about Jesus. Invite your friends and family to one of our 2 Easter services. We can't wait to see you there!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 17th | One Church One Day: Prayer Gathering @6pm

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 March 10, 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 Thinking back to when you were a child, where did you want to live when you grew up?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Let the introverts and those who are more cautious in sharing have fun with this one. Did anyone in the group want to live in Springfield/Eugene/Lane County?

#2 When have you seen someone demonstrate great faith, despite his or her circumstances?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Let the introverts and those who are more cautious in sharing have fun with this one.

Additional Questions:

Who is the person (besides God and family) that you trust the most? Why?

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "grace"?

BE OPEN

#3 In this weekend's text, God calls Abram (or Abraham) to leave his social security blanket behind for an unknown land promised by God: "go from your *country*, your *people* and your *father's household* to the land I will show you" (Genesis 12:1, NIV). In effect, Abram is asked to forsake everything he holds dear and have faith in the simple Word of God. The call of the gospel is much like the call of Abram. Read the passages below and answer the questions that follow.

Mark 8:34-38, NIV

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Luke 9:57-62, NIV

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

What does this phrase mean to you? – "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Luke 9:34, NIV).

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary.

"deny yourself" – suggests humility, i.e. laying down one's pride, will, rights, and selfish ambitions.

"take up your cross" – suggests willingness to follow until death. People carried their cross to their death.

"follow me" – suggests allegiance only to Jesus, no half-hearted following

GOING ALL-IN

How is the demand in Jesus' explanation similar to the call of Abram? How is it different?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. Abram's call doesn't say that he needs to be willing to die to follow the Lord, but he is called to forsake all things that serve as his security, meaning he is to leave any and all sense of comfort to go to the Land the Lord will show him. There is a sense in which both of these texts suggest that the future is unknown though obedience and commitment is required.

Why do you think Jesus is so demanding?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. Jesus wants people who are fully devoted to him, not those who have divided hearts or who will run when things don't go their way. Also, his death was costly, so he wants people who are willing to throw it all in on him and the kingdom of God.

#4 Abraham's story reminds us to never forget the power of God's Word. How do the following verses reinforce the power of God's Word and the importance of listening to it or doing what it says?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. See highlights below.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Psalm 119:11, NIV

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 33:4-6, NIV

⁴ For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. ⁵ The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. ⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

Romans 15:4, NIV

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

John 12:44-50, NIV

⁴⁴ Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵ When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. ⁴⁷ "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. ⁴⁹ For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

- The Word of God is breathed by God.
- The Word of God is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.
- The Word of God equips believers for every good work.
- The Word of God is right and true.
- The Word of God teaches us so that we might have hope.
- The Word of God helps us not to sin.

#5 This weekend we saw that God's grace continued to find Abraham, in spite of Abraham's failure of trust, skepticism, impatience, doubt, and desire to take matters into his own hands. Perhaps it was this gift of grace upon grace over the years that brought Abraham to the point of saying "here I am" in response to the Lord near the end of his life (see Genesis 22). As you read the passage below, make note of how the grace of God can help us grow in our faithfulness to the Lord.

Titus 2:11-14, NIV

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

How does this passage add to your understanding of the power of God's grace?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. A lot of times we (rightfully) think about grace in the context of salvation, like “we are saved by grace through faith.” And this aspect of grace is present in the verse above. However, we as Christians tend to think less about grace in the context of sanctification, in that grace also helps us persevere in our salvation as we learn to live more self-controlled lives.

How can we accept God’s grace during life’s storms? How can we show those who are suffering that same grace, without being cliché or simplistic?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. Abraham’s story helps us see that other humans (especially Biblical people, chosen people) fail, mistrust, take matters into their own hands, doubt, and are impatient. Yet, this story also shows us that God will show up in grace upon grace. This should give us the confidence that in our failure God is still faithful. And then, we can extend grace knowing that we have received it as well.

BE VULNERABLE

#6 By the end of his life, Abraham finally got to the point where he could live out the definition of faith found in Hebrews 11:1—“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (NIV). What holds you back from living out this level of faith? If you feel like you’re at a place where you do embody this definition of faith, then what circumstances have you overcome in your faith journey to get there?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. This question holds the potential to be very vulnerable as it could expose sensitive areas in people’s lives. As a leader, make sure you don’t ask those who aren’t ready to be this vulnerable. You may want to lead into with question with the option for people to be vague in their answers if necessary.

#7 In what area of your life is God currently calling you to trust him? What is one thing you can do this week to trust him more? What can your Life Group do to support you?

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

Leader Tip: Answers will vary. This question is really about faith, especially if we understand faith as a math equation (faith = belief + trust + obedience). Abraham believes God a few times before he really starts to trust him. Maybe the question is asking us – how do we get beyond belief to trust, which then will lead to obedience? If you choose this question, lean in and ask people to answer honestly.

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

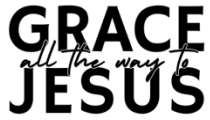
Prayer is an important part of being in Life Group. Group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

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 FOUND ABRAHAM

Genesis 12:1-9

God's Grace to Abra(ha)m:

- ❶ Call to leave the old life behind and walk in obedience
- ❷ Three promises – descendants, land, and blessing
- ❸ God's faithfulness during a long development of faith

Final Thoughts: