



LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

September 28-October 4, 2025 | Fall Week 1

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Isn't this great, that we are now here!! After a number of weeks of preparation, planning, and growing – our groups are poised to begin meeting this very Sunday night. As it stands right now (there's ebb and flow each day), we've got 16 groups, with 201 adults within them – and a few more opportunities for final invites and pushes coming in the next few days.

Ahead of all that transpires in your homes and in your meetings over the next 9 weeks, I pray that the Lord would bless each of those moments richly, and that all who are present, will be absolutely blessed and encouraged by your leadership, by the deepening relationships, and through the study of God's Word!

Thank you – each of you for stepping forward this season to lead God's people in these directions.

1. YOUR FIRST MEETING:

- By now, you should have communicated with all your members about times and locations and details about your first meeting – if you haven't done that yet, please do so today – especially if your first meeting is this Sunday evening!
- In that communication, remind your members that our Sermon Guides are made available each week in the lobby, and online in the Digital Bulletin link under the Live Stream page.
- A couple goals of the first meeting:
 - Be sure you have enough chairs out for everyone, be prepared – let them know you've been expecting them!
 - Be sure that new members are welcomed and introduced.
 - Be sure to communicate your plans for how the group will be run. Do you rotate locations? Do you share the snack schedule?
 - Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak within the group setting – whether you run through the Life Group guide or play games – steer conversation to the ones who look nervous and are quiet.
 - Be sure to talk through the matters in the covenant (found [HERE](#) on page 9).

2. GATEWAY'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY:

- Have you registered for the Gateway's 75th Anniversary event on October 4th? Everyone is invited to join in the evening of celebration. [REGISTER HERE](#) – and invite your group to join you as well!

3. SERVE PROJECTS:

- We have curated a list of serve sites and opportunities across our city – have a look [HERE](#), for that last, and sign up for an event that grabs everyone's interest. Some dates are flexible; others are pre-booked – connect with pastor Adam to start planning your Serve event.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

LEADER NOTE: These are the lowest risk questions and are great ways to get everyone in your group talking – from those who love sharing stories, to those who feel a little uncomfortable in this new space. Low risk questions have their way of breaking the ice and getting everyone a little more comfortable sharing. It also gives a chance for everyone to share in an easy, approachable way.

1. On a flight, which seat are you booking: window or aisle?

LEADER NOTE: An option for getting these conversations going is to invite everyone to speak – by saying, “*Let’s go around the room.*” This early in the season, have fun with the extended stories that these questions are bound to inspire, and let everyone explain their rationale!

2. What was your favourite memory from the summer?

LEADER NOTE: While this question is good to get everyone talking – as most people love talking about their experiences of fun and adventure, it’s a harder question to invite “*Let’s go around the room.*” With this one, you can introduce it saying, “*we’d love to hear from you all, but go one at time.*” Then in your mind’s eye, keep track of who hasn’t shared, and then invite that quiet person to share when the time is right.

QUICK REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: These following two questions aim to have your group reflect upon Sunday’s message. The first question will always be the same, and the second one is provided from our teaching pastor from the service.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

LEADER NOTE: Use this question first as a teaching moment, observe your room, and see if there are anyone who doesn’t have the sermon guide, and be sure that they know where to find it. We say each season, “*Lead by example.*” In the services, be sure to grab a guide, fill it out, scratch down extra thoughts and notes, and have that with you at your Life Group meetings.

Also, with these questions, we want to be sure that we don’t make them about evaluating the message, but that we’re listening together, for what God is teaching us through them. Leaders, we leave this to you to help guide conversations towards productive, good, and wholesome conversation – that’s uplifting and encouraging for all in the room.

2. This weekend, Pastor Justin quoted Heidelberg Catechism Q&A#86. Review it again together and reflect on its implications as a group!

LEADER NOTE: The Heidelberg Catechism is a teaching document that our denomination, the Christian Reformed Church has used for centuries, since its inception in 1563. It was used as a tool to teach young people, used as a guide for preaching (the reason why its organized into 52 days), and forms a confessional unity amongst reformed protestant Christians.

A good online resource to navigate the Catechism can be found [HERE](#). But for ease, here is Q&A#86:

Q&A#86

- Q. Since we have been delivered
from our misery
by grace through Christ
without any merit of our own,
why then should we do good works?
- A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood,
is also restoring us by His Spirit into His image,
so that with our whole lives
we may show that we are thankful to God
for His benefits,¹
so that He may be praised through us,²
so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits,³
and so that by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.⁴

¹ [Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10](#)

² [Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)

³ [Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:10-11](#)

⁴ [Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1-2](#)

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: Reading scripture together is one of the most important practices in our Life Groups, so never shirk away from reading the following passage, always making time to interact with the Word of God and its message for us. As leaders, you can read the passage yourselves, invite others to read the whole text, or go around the room from paragraph to paragraph. Over time, as you lead, you'll see what works best. Always say "*thank-you*" to those who read out loud – it's not everyone's favourite thing to do.

These questions that follow, will be the same throughout the semester. And if you're familiar with the "*Triad Questions*" from over the years, these are changed up a bit – simplified, and with slightly different emphases.

READ Romans 15:14-24

1. How does this passage highlight God's presence in our world?
2. What does this passage say about our broken human condition?
3. How does this passage call me to make change in my life?

Another option with these questions, is to even more simply ask, once you've read the passage together, as in a general way, "*What strikes us about this passage?*"

DIGGING DEEPER

LEADERS NOTE: These discussion questions generally start simple and gradually become deeper and more complex. This progression follows natural discussion patterns, but as leaders, you know your group best. Use this guide flexibly; it is not necessary to cover every question. Focus on ensuring everyone is heard and has the opportunity to contribute and ask their questions.

1. READ Romans 15:1-7. Paul reminds the believers of their general calling to live for Christ. What do you notice about the strength Paul sees involved?

LEADER NOTE: The topic of living into God's Call upon our lives is often made more complex, and more specific than we need to. As we will have heard on Sunday morning, there's two ways that God calls us to live. The first call is for us to in a general way – to life for Him. To give our lives to Him, seeking to honor and glorify Him with everything we have. The second call is for us to live in particular or more specific ways. Asking along the way, *"what am I to do with my life? Has the Lord called me to build houses, milk cows, or parent my children?"*

As the Great Commission in Matthew articulates for us, we are to "Go" into the world, serving Him and doing everything we can in order to see that His kingdom grows. How we do that, in a specific way, will only flow out of our understanding that God has sent us into this world. And we can do that while building houses, milking cows, and parents our kids.

Now surely, not everyone is designed or has passions to build houses or milk cows. And it's a clear gift and privilege to live out our passions in professional ways. Consider the Lord's will in this way: Image the two ski mountains that make up one ski resort – Whistler and Blackcomb. They sit side by side and are both accessible to winter and summer activities. For this metaphor, consider one to be the Lord's will, and the other to be the Enemies will. Living into God's will, is more about being on the right mountain, than about what you're going to do on that mountain. Because you can on both mountains ski, snowboard, bike, or hike. And on both mountains, there are ski patrols, signposts directing the way, there are obstacles like trees and rocks. And in order to go down either mountain, you can pick and choose any way that your skill sets allow you to.

Paul articulates to his audience some key skills and mindsets that will highlight which mountain (or which will) you're living into. He writes about *"bearing with the failings of the weak."* About *"pleasing our neighbor."* About living into God's *"endurance and encouragement,"* and living into *"harmony with one another"* all which leads to God being glorified.

- **READ Romans 15:1-2.** In what ways might we feel tempted to *"please ourselves"* rather than remember our calling to *"please our neighbors"*?

LEADER NOTE: Sin and selfishness easily get the best of us, and our innate response to the needs in the world around us, is to think about ourselves, and our own orbits. We often pray on Sunday mornings in our Morning Prayer, that we seek the Lord's forgiveness when we think more of ourselves, than more of the Lord and His invitation to us.

When it comes to engaging in a conversation about our faith with our neighbor, we hide inside, or just simply wave, rather than engage.

When it comes to a piece of garbage on the sidewalk, we think that some else should pick it up, and we keep walking.

When it comes to the opportunity to bring a neighbor a meal, we think about the needs of our own family.

The list will be endless. But leaders, conversations here can be helpful only if they inspire actual change in our patterns. As our discussion guide will ultimately point out, godless chatter and deceptive tongues

do no good in our journey of faith. These conversations should inspire us and make us more aware of the opportunities that the Lord is always carrying in front of us.

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- **READ Philippians 2:3-4.** What do you think Paul meant by “*bear with the failings of the weak*” in Romans 15:1? Today, who are the weak amongst us?

LEADER NOTE: The imagery that Paul is using can be seen that the “*strong*” are those who believe in Christ and understand their call to serve Him, and that the “*weak*” are those who do not yet believe, and those who do not yet understand the call upon their lives. So, to bear with the failings, is believers being patient, being present, helpful, kind. It’s believers showing up and lending a helping hand. It’s mowing your neighbor’s lawn, shoveling their sidewalks, picking up the garbage. It’s placing the needs of our neighbor ahead of our own.

2. READ Romans 15:8-9a. Paul is reminding his Jewish audience of their purpose, both historically, and now here in Rome. In these words, and in the following four Old Testament references (15:9b-12), what do you understand to be central in their purpose?

LEADER NOTE: It becomes quite clear that God’s desire was always, since the beginning, for all people to love and follow Him. It was never just about the Jews – the chosen nation of Israel – it started with them, and God had intended to share His glory with all people – through them. Consider the moment when God called Abram (before he was called Abraham) in Genesis 12:1-3. God said to Moses, “*Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.*” Everything about Abram’s life here was about his people, and his own household – his own orbit. But the Lord had other ideas here, the Lord keeps talking:

²“*I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
³I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
**and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.**”*

Let that final line sit in your imagination for a moment and consider the difference in understanding that Abram had of “*all peoples*” and what the Lord was considering. Abram likely thought of just those around him, as he likely had no clue about the extent of all peoples on the earth, and maybe even Abram didn’t think about all the people to come, but only about the people who were presently there. God has this way of thinking about the entirety of everything. All people literally means all people. Every single human in the moment, and everyone to come.

So it’s never been just about Abram’s lineage, but about every person to walk on planet earth. So the central purpose of Paul’s Jewish audience, is to be this blessing for all people, to be the Light of God for the Gentiles.

- **READ Exodus 19:5-6 & Isaiah 42:6-7.** To the best of your knowledge, can you describe how the Israelites (the early Jews) lived, or did not live, out that purpose?

LEADER NOTE: We must remember that the nation of Israel was comprised of people. People like us today. Selfish. Broken. Distant from God. Motivated for personal gain. Forgetful. The passages in Exodus and Isaiah are God's commands for this nation to see that they were set apart for a special purpose – not for themselves, but as Isaiah clearly writes, *“to be a light for the Gentiles.”* However, there are countless instances throughout the Bible that highlight the ineffectiveness of this nation to be who God called them to be. **Exodus 32** writes about the Golden Calf who was molded and worshipped when Moses went up Mt. Sinai. **Numbers 11, 14, & 20**, all talk about how this nation grumbled and complained about God and rejecting His provision. **Judges 2** talks about how this nation was seeking to blend in with other nations, rather than be the light showing the way to the Lord. The whole book of **Jonah** highlights not just the one character, but the pulse of a nation who were quite despondent with their neighbors. The list, unfortunately, goes on.

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- As Gateway looks back over the last 75 years of being a church family, how might have we seen God encourage and equip us to live out that same purpose?

LEADER NOTE: While there might have been some selfish and broken moments along the way of Gateway's history, there is surely countless moments of the Lord's faithfulness and steadfast guidance within our community. While being aware, that Gateway's church family, like the nation of Israel are the same broken and selfish people, there are a lot of moments to celebrate and acknowledge. What are some of those moments? Think of the many missional trips, lives changed for Jesus near and far, families presenting their children for baptism, kids being taught in Sunday school, youth being mentored, seniors being visited, new believers being baptised. This list, fortunately, does go on!

3. READ Romans 15:18. Paul writes about being very intentional with not only his words, but also his actions. Why is it that we have such a hard time controlling our words and actions?

LEADER NOTE: There's a theme emerging in this discussion. People – even people of God – are fallen and broken. Sin's effects are far and wide, pervasive and deep. While there is not a square inch in this world that does not belong to God, there is not a human on this earth who is sinless. We have such a hard time controlling our words and actions, because we have such a hard time seeing past our own noses. We focus on self, and not on others. We think about what is in our wallets, and not about the needs of our neighbor. We think about our own wants and desires, more than the survival of another.

We read scripture and project its commands on our neighbors, and never in the mirror.

We talk more than we do.

We don't think before we talk.

We say whatever comes to mind.

We think it will be easier to ask for forgiveness, than for permission.

- **READ Ephesians 4:29, 2 Timothy 2:16, James 1:26.** Unwholesome talk, irreverent babble, & unbridled tongues have no place in the Christian faith. How can we help each other avoid these pitfalls?

LEADER NOTE: Remember the mountain metaphor? There are obstacles even on the mountain that symbolizes living into God's will. There are trees, holes, rocks that can stop us in our tracks, even on the best of days. The words other people say can be worse than any tree, hole, or rock. And those same words can even come from our own mouths. The authors of scripture here, Paul and James, are very articulate that these disparaging and unhelpful patterns have no place in the Christian journey. Consider too, the weight that Jesus places on this notion, "*if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell*" ([Matthew 5:30](#) | ESV). While Jesus was talking about our hands and lust, He's addressing the need for us to take abundantly seriously, the parts of ourselves that lead us to sin. Jesus might say here, "*if your mouth causes you to stumble, sew it shut.*"

TAKING IT HOME

READ Romans 15:22-23. There are a lot of societal, cultural, and circumstantial barriers that we encounter as we discern God's general, and specific, call upon our lives. How can we support each other – in our households, in our workplaces, in our Life Groups, etc. – to navigate and overcome these barriers?

LEADER NOTE: First, we need to begin to be a little more honest with ourselves about the tough points on our journeys, and name them for what they are. These barriers can be being fired, getting cancer, losing a friend, a broken relationship, lost passion, condescending words, mockery – and these moments and events are not of God. Not designed by God. But are products and effects of sin and brokenness in this world. Second, we need to be ready to discover how we might need to be realigned with God's first call on our lives – to love and serve Him and Him only! Then, to enter a time of discernment with people we love and trust, to be sure that our passions and skills line up with how we frame our days, and contribute positively, to the world around us.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

LEADER NOTE: This following question is completely optional and is intended for the participants' personal reflection. But do feel free to explore using the question within your groups meeting.

READ John 10:7-21. Jesus' words here caused division in the Jews as He told them that there were "*other sheep.*" The Jews understood these other sheep to be the Gentiles – who in their own minds, did not deserve to be welcomed into God's care. Today, where do we see similar divisions take shape in our own hearts? How can we this week practically "*welcome one another*" ([Rom 15:7](#)) when we disagree deeply?