

WALKING *with* JESUS

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

October 18-24, 2026 | Fall Week 4

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You're now all finding your rhythm in your groups! It's time to now enjoy the week-to-week engagements with your groups.

1. YOUR FOURTH MEETING:

- At this point, we are nearing the halfway point through this season of Life Groups. If you have members in your group that you haven't seen too much of yet, be sure to reach out to them – being careful to not make them feel guilty for not coming as much, but to express your care for them. Ask them how life is going, and if there's anything that you can be praying for as a group.

2. SERVE PROJECTS:

- There are few nights still open – if your group might be keen on this idea, you can [SIGN UP HERE](#).
- Below is what we've got so far... thanks so much to those of you who have signed up and have taken good care of our Alpha group!
 - We are told that the group has "*healthy*" appetites!! So, consider over preparing!
 - As well, please consider serving the meal and then interacting with the group over their ALPHA video while they eat, and then cleaning up afterwards.
 - Remember, if costs are prohibitive, let pastor Adam know, and our Life Groups budget will cover it.
 - Here's what we've got booked – just two more nights to go:

Week 6	Tuesday, October 20	Chantelle Arends	Chili & Buns with baking
Week 7	Tuesday, October 27	Dykshoorn/Arends	Burgers, Salad, baking
Week 8	Tuesday, November 3	Beerda/Ward rope	Chicken Spaghetti & Tacos
Week 9	Tuesday, November 10	Kiers/McNabb	
Week 10	Tuesday, November 17	open	
Week 11	Tuesday, November 24	open	

- As well, we have our [SERVE SHIRTS](#) ready for your members, so send your newest members to the HUB to get theirs, or if any of your members need a new one – they can feel free to grab one. We've got youth sizes XS-L, and adult sizes S-XXXL.

3. PICTURES:

- We love seeing what you're all up to! Take pictures of your group in your meeting spaces, gathered around the kitchen counter with their snacks and drinks, and your group out having fun, and serving together – then share them with Pastor Adam – via email or text.

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. If you could trade places with anyone, and live in their shoes for a single day, who would it be? Why?

LEADER NOTE: This question is simply a unique way for your group members to interact together in a fun way, talking about the people that they admire, who they might want to emulate, or who they'd just like to experience life like.

2. Are you one that automatically respects authority, or immediately pushes against it?

LEADER NOTE: As we begin to talk about this interaction between Jesus and His disciples, we see Peter both recognize Jesus' authority, but also challenges it. Perhaps, more often than not, we are like Peter, where we waffle between respecting and questioning authority.

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. One thing that we want to be clear as we approach this section, is that this isn't to be a time to evaluate the message or the one delivering it, but it's to be a time when we talk about what we have learned or how we've been challenged by God's Word.

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: Leaders, "*lead by example*" in your own use of these resources. Ahead of Sunday services, be sure to grab a guide in the lobby, fill it out during the message, scratch down extra thoughts and notes you might have, and bring it with you to your Life Group meetings.

2. This weekend, Pastor Justin noted the significance of the location (on the rock at Caesarea Philippi near a strip mall of pagan temples) for where Jesus made His declaration to Peter, "*I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.*" How does the location shape your imagination for what God is communicating to Peter, the disciples, and us today?

LEADER NOTE: n/a.

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: Aside from building relationships, reading scripture together is one of the most important practices in our Life Groups; so never shirk away from reading the following passage. Always make time to interact with the Word of God and its message for us.

READ Matthew 16:13-24

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 Matthew 16:13. Jesus asks His disciples, "*who do people say that I am?*" In your various communities, who do people say that Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: This question starts off our discussion as we begin to unpack Christ's authority and mission to grow His community of followers, in how society at large – outside of the church, perhaps – sees and understands who Jesus is. There's a twofold purpose in this question: (1) to know who society considers Jesus to be, and (2) to challenge our members that they are a part of how society will experience Him.

While this question drives at an understanding of "public opinion," it leaves us challenged to be better at representing Jesus to this world which is very much in need of both its Savior, and better communicators of Him.

- **READ Matthew 16:14-17.** The people have placed Jesus in the box of their own understanding; He must be a reincarnated prophet, or a new one. Why do you think Peter's response is significant?

LEADER NOTE: The disciples identify that the people have seen that Jesus is the reincarnation of John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or any one of the original prophets. As they do that, they're expressing their hope for the eventual return of the old great prophets, who communicated God's love, affection, and His showed His strength of care through discipline and firm guidance. They frame Jesus in the only way that they know how, by their knowledge of who has already been, and what they've already seen done. All which are fairly understandable *human* responses.

Jesus then zeros in His question, to ask the disciples who they know Him to be. And Peter, growing in awareness (as a result of a number of moments with Jesus – feeding of the 5000, healing of the sick, walking on water himself), is seeing Jesus as "*the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" It's a profound response that has moved in this text from a place of public opinion to a place of his own belief. He's also not adding another opinion, Peter is recognizing Jesus' true identity.

- **READ 1 Peter 2:9-12.** How might you show your community that Jesus isn't just a prophet, but the Living God? Who do you know, who does this well? What do they do?

LEADER NOTE: As disciples of Jesus now in the 21st century, it is still on us to continue to live into Peter's understanding of Jesus' role, His authority, and His nature of being the "*Son of the Living God*"

and not just “*some good guy who taught life principles long ago.*” We may need to be reminded on some level, that as God called His nation of Israel to follow Him amongst all the other nations, that they weren’t to just add Yahweh to the list of gods that they were getting to know about, but that they were to understand that Yahweh is the only one and true God. Today, people all around us, may be quick to add Jesus to a list of good people and good teachers who has some good insight. But as His followers, we’re to recognize Christ’s all supremacy and pre-eminence over all things. He’s the foundation of all things. He’s the paper that we write out priorities upon. He’s the framework for how all of life continues to be built.

There are certainly people in our lives who do this well, and have a good approach to exuding Christ to all. Consider how they reflect Christ’s character with their words, their actions, through their integrity, and examples of humility and shared love.

2. READ Matthew 16:18-19. Jesus declares three times His own activity, “*I tell you...*”, “*I will build...*”, & “*I will give...*” What do these declarations reveal about Jesus?

LEADER NOTE: The cadence of “*I tell ... I will*” gives us the greatest clue, in that this is Christ’s activity, and no one else.

No one else will rename Simon Peter. As much as the world and its people want to define who we are and what we do, we’re to find first, our identity, and value in Christ’s knowledge, affection, and purpose for us.

No one else will build His church. As much as Peter and the disciples might have thought that it was their responsibility to bring people to Christ, it is Christ who will build His following of believers. We are, however, His hands, and His feet, and even His voice as we go about His work. So, the responsibility of change is upon the Lord, and obedience to live in accordance with His purpose is on us.

No one else will give anyone the keys of the kingdom. The “keys” here refers to the proclaimed word of God, which is the gospel message manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it will only be from Jesus that this message of the kingdom will be proclaimed. Many others will come proclaiming their own messages, and their own opinions, but none of them will grant access to the kingdom of Heaven like Christ’s message will.

All in, these three statements point to Christ’s depth and scope of authority over all things related to His followers, to His church, and to how His people will experience salvation.

- **READ Colossians 1:15-18.** As Jesus demonstrates the depth of His authority, what does it mean for you, that Jesus would have all “*supremacy*” or be “*preeminent*”? For your Life Group? For your church?

LEADER NOTE: In our lives, Jesus desires to be Lord over all things, like we just talked about in the note above – that’s what His *supremacy* and *pre-eminence* are all about. Even, as highlighted earlier, Jesus desires to be the foundation that our lives are built upon, He desires to be the paper that our priorities are written upon. Then as a result of all that, we’re to reflect His authority and character to this world who needs to see and experience the fullness of Him.

In our Life Groups, it means that we’re seeking to follow His Word, and asking it to shape and form our lives, and our discussions around it.

For the church, it means that we're seeking to organize everything that we do around His instructions for us to love one another, and to gather together.

- **ADDITIONAL QUESTION: READ 1 Peter 3:15-18.** In what ways have you experienced the Lord lead you to moments where it feels like you're *walking on water*? In what ways do you feel like you are *sinking* spiritually?

LEADER NOTE: As we explore Christ's authority, and further call upon our lives, it's sometimes good to reflect back, and see how we've responded before to the Lord. While this question links back to last week's topic and message, we'll see that there are times when like Peter, we had the faith and courage to respond to Jesus, and it might have felt like we've overcome the impossible – *we've walked on water*. But there will also be times as we look back, and see ourselves getting distracted by simple and small things that have us take our eyes off Christ, and we *sink into the depths*.

Peter encourages his scattered first century audience, and therefore us today too, to do the work of *preparing our hearts*, to be doing our best to pay attention to the Lord's activity – in all the moments of life. He suggests that we need to also have a *clear conscience* where we can respond to others, and even ourselves, with grace.

3. READ Matthew 16:20. Jesus' words to the disciples, on the surface, appear to be counter intuitive. Why do you think Jesus instructed their silence?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus' instructions in v.20 are temporary; Peter knows Jesus is the Messiah, but he still doesn't quite understand what this means yet. Peter needs the cross and the resurrection to fully understand Jesus' identity. Prematurely proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, could reinforce their incorrect thinking that Jesus came simply to overthrow the Romans, and the rest of their earthly enemies.

We can see this by looking immediately beyond v.20, where Jesus begins to explain that He must suffer death on the cross. This verse is also repeated in **Matthew 17:9** "*Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.*" Then in **Matthew 28:18-20** the disciples, and us today, are told to respond to all that Jesus has done and to "*...go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*"

- **READ Matthew 16:21-22.** Jesus reveals that as the Messiah, He will suffer and will face death. As a stand-in for all believers, Peter struggles to accept all this. What is Peter missing? Do you struggle with why Jesus had to suffer for you? Why or why not?

LEADER NOTE: Once again, Peter has correctly identified who Jesus is – the Messiah, but has not yet fully understood what that is all going to mean for Jesus, and the disciples going forward. He won't fully understand, until after Christ's death, and resurrection. As well, we cannot see that the Cross of Christ's death as an unfortunate event, or something that occurred that shouldn't have, or something that would distract us from the rest of life. That coming moment of wood, nails, blood, and death, as hard as they are to comprehend and understand, they are central to the story of Christ's mission to seek and save the Lost. Peter included.

This can be a hard reality for many to grasp, as a very real death in the most tragic of ways, happened on our behalf and in our place. Christ had to suffer, so that we don't have to. Christ took on our pain and

misery, so we could grasp onto hope and assurance in Him and His Father. Christ face separation from the Father, so that we don't have to.

TAKING IT HOME

READ Matthew 16:24. Earlier, we saw who Jesus is: *the Messiah*. Now Jesus shows us what it means to follow Him: *denying ourselves and surrendering our lives to Him*. What might it look like this week to stop living for yourself, and instead trust and follow Christ? What habits need to stop? What patterns need to change?

LEADER NOTE: In the span of this text, we see Peter acknowledge Christ's majesty as the Messiah, but then sink to the depths of fear and uncertainty, with the desire to stop Him from going to the cross. Jesus articulates here in v.24 that the affliction He's going to face at the cross, will in a way, also be the affliction of those who follow Him. The truth does still remain that He's taken on the shame of the cross, so that we don't have to, the cross still exists for us today, in the sense that His followers will face adversity and affliction, and will have to give up everything earthly speaking, in order to obediently follow Him. It means His disciples will have to make some hard decisions about what they do for entertainment and vocation, or how they will associate with certain aspects of life, or how they'll pursue comforts and develop priorities. Surrendering to Christ is not just a one-time event, but a daily response to His invitation.

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 Psalm 127:1-2. As followers of Jesus, it's easy to think that building the church depends on our efforts, that its growth, expansion, and reach are ultimately up to us. Have you seen or felt that in your life at all? How do these words of Solomon (who actually got to build God's temple in Jerusalem instead of his father, David), help you reframe your understanding of what the Lord has called you to do?