

WALKING *with* JESUS

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

October 25-31, 2026 | Fall Week 5

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 FIFTH MEETING:

- We've passed over the halfway mark – already! These nine weeks always fly by so fast. Keep up your rhythms of connecting with your group, checking in on those who aren't so regular, and follow up week to week on those prayer requests.

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 one more night to fill up:

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	Unrau/SC	Pasta Salad, Dessert
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. What is one thing that you wish you would have known about life, before entering adulthood?

LEADER NOTE: This question is similar to questions we've asked before, "*what lessons would you like your teenage self to learn?*" or "*what would you change about your teen years?*" This one is a little different. As your members look back to their teen years, you are sure to hear stories of poor decisions and of youthful innocence – both scenarios leaving potential impact, for good or bad – on future adulthood. Enjoy the conversations, and learning about your members formative years.

2. What is something you've attempted that seemed initially way beyond your abilities, but were eventually able to do?

LEADER NOTE: This ice-breaker question dabbles into the story your group will encounter in Matthew 17. The disciples have been told that they're empowered to do great things, but yet, they find out that those great things don't always happen the way they've been expecting them too. Then as the gospels turn into Paul's letters, we discover that they rediscover the power that the Lord has granted them, and they go on to do many great things in the Lord's name. People today, may experience similar things – it might have been a hard aspect of their jobs, taking on a different set of responsibilities, it could be career path changes, to having more kids, or even not entering certain relationships. This could be another eye opening window into the lives of your members.

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. Pastor Jason shared that mountain-moving faith is always aligned with the will of God, as opposed to faith in our own strength and abilities, or even our personal hopes and desires. **Read John 15:1-11.** As we walk in faith before God, how does remaining (abiding) in Christ help us to be established in this type of faith?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus encourages His disciples, including us today, to cultivate a genuine faith that is founded wholly on Him. A key to that is to grow closer to Christ. Verse 5 spells it out plainly: "*I am the*

vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

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 17:14-23

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 Mark 9:14-29 & Luke 9:37-43. Mark and Luke record the same event as Matthew, but each author emphasizes different details. What do Mark and Luke want us to understand about this encounter?

LEADER NOTE: Seeing the four gospels work in tandem to all communicate truths of Christ, we see that they all tell the same story, but as this question suggests, they each have their different vantage points, as each of the gospel writers all had different reasons for recording the life and times of Jesus Christ. As a whole: Matthew desires to show that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills all Old Testament prophecies, that He is the King. Mark seeks to help his audience see that the Messiah will be the one who serves His people, but also suffers. Luke paints the whole picture that Jesus is the savior for all people. While John plans to make sure that the gentile community has access to understand that Jesus is the true Son of God.

In those overarching vantage points, three of the authors, all tell us this story of Jesus healing a boy with a demon, which tells us a few things – this moment was impactful for all the authors and found worthy to share, but more so, they saw different teaching moments within it. So they all capture the same moments

- The father pleads with Jesus to heal his boy,
- The disciples were unable to perform this task,
- Jesus rebukes the disciples,
- Jesus rebukes the demon,
- The boy was restored.

But then the authors capture differing moments, which show us the authors intent with their telling of these moments.

In Mark 9, Mark wants us to see that in and through Christs power, all our hardships and difficulties can be overcome. As well, Jesus doesn't perform these miracles for attention of the masses, but for life change in the recipients.

In Luke 9, Luke wants us to see Christ's greatness, as God's greatness being greater than the evils in this world.

- How do these perspectives help us better understand Matthew's emphasis?

LEADER NOTE: In Matthew 17, Matthew is drawing out the picture of Christ's authority, that as the fulfillment of all the prophecies of the OT, that He is God who can do all things, and is the One who will do all things. As well, Jesus desires His followers to keep their faith in Him, and in no one else, not even themselves. It's a theme that we've encountered a few times through these Gospel messages, particularly with the episode of Peter walking on the water, as long as his gaze was fixed on Christ. Matthew wants us to see that Christ is to be the supreme authority that our lives are based upon, and that our lives point to. He desires that we see Him as the foundation of our lives, and as the one who holds us fully and completely.

2. READ Matthew 10:1, 5-8, & 17:16-17. Jesus had previously given the disciples authority to drive out demons, yet here in ch.17, they were unable to help this boy. Why do you think they struggled to do what Jesus had empowered them to do?

LEADER NOTE: Your members might be quick to answer this question with the idea and notion that *"with more faith, the disciples could have completed their task, therefore, with more faith, I can face the challenges I've got."* But that would be a narrow and limited answer, leaning in the wrong direction. In Matthew 10, the disciples were given power from Christ to do His work in this world, but that gift did not mean that they could operate the use of those gifts outside of Jesus, they could not act independently of Jesus, that's what we're seeing the disciples try in Matthew 17. They tried to enact this healing moment, on their own assumed power that Christ gave them. That's why in Mark, it's recorded from Jesus, *"this kind can only come out by prayer"* (Mark 9:29). They removed Jesus from the equation, and thought that they could do it on their own. So it's not a question of having more faith, it's a question of who that faith fully and completely resides in.

- **READ Mark 6:7-13.** Mark tells us the disciples had successfully driven out demons earlier. What might explain the difference between their success and failure?

LEADER NOTE: While we're not given all the details of the differences through the passages of time, we can only surmise in our imaginations what the difference was between these moments of success in Mark 6, and moments of failure in Mark 9 and Matthew 17. We're reminded of a few things:

- **We humans are fallible.** We're prone to be wrong, more than we are to be right. While the authority came from Jesus, it always and only rests in Him, and not in us. We have access to His power, and are conduits of it, so that others might experience His healing abilities.
- **Past success doesn't guarantee present faithfulness.** Just because something worked well in the past, doesn't guarantee that it's going to work well again. Which, really, is attributed to same human fallibility. The disciples forgot that that power was the Lord's, and removed Christ from

their attempts, they made some pretty scary assumptions about how all this faith was going to work out, and it appears that they had more faith in themselves, than they did in Christ.

- **We are never self-sufficient.** They were never self-sufficient, and never will have been. As their confidence grew in their work and mission, so their self-confidence grew, and they lost their dependency on Christ.

All in here, we see that spiritual maturity isn't learning to need Jesus less; it's learning to depend to Him more deeply.

- What do these passages teach us about the relationship between the authority Christ gives us and our need to depend on Him?

LEADER NOTE: Where we find ourselves, in North America, in the 21st century – where life is more affluent and abundant than we could ever need, we squeeze out the need for God on a daily, if not, on an hourly basis. We think we can live without God's direction, and live life on our own terms, and in our own ways. However, this is out of balance of what Matthew is trying to teach us about life. This picture in Matthew 17 of Jesus, shows that while we can easily understand that Christ is the Messiah, we can easily miss out the reality of what that means. Mathew is pointing out to us that He is the author, perfecter, and sustainer of all things in our lives, and we need to place our full dependency upon Him and upon His desires for us. It's always Him first, and everything else second.

3. READ Matthew 14:28-31, 17:19-21. In Matthew 14, Peter has *little faith*, yet Jesus tenderly reaches out and saves him. In Matthew 17, Jesus rebukes His disciples for their *little faith* when they are unable to drive out a demon. What do these moments teach us about faith and who we place it? Why is this important for us today?

LEADER NOTE: The key difference in each of these stories is understanding where Jesus is at in relation to the activity. In Peter's salvation, Jesus was right there - ready to rescue. Peter called out to Him for help. However, in the demon casting episode, the disciples acted on their own accord, removing Jesus from the moment, trying to perform the task themselves. The power they received in Matthew 10, was access to Jesus' power, not power unto themselves.

Once again, we see that our faith is not about the strength of our belief, but about Who our faith rests in. This is why it's significant that Mark records the father's plea to Jesus with his suffering boy, "*I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!*" (Mark 9:24). The father had faith, but little faith. And Jesus essentially replies, "*I can work with that.*" Jesus doesn't need our faith to be perfect, full, or robust. He simply desires our eyes to be affixed upon Him, and no one else.

This is important for us to talk about today, because there are so many other things in our world that distract us, and compete for our believing hearts. And when we start putting our faith and trust in anything but Christ, we belittle Christ, and make elevate distractions to being idols. We need to consistently name those distractions, in order to grow in confidence to walk away from them.

- **READ Philippians 4:11-13, Ephesians 3:20-21.** In light of what Matthew teaches us about Christ's authority, what do Paul's words teach us about depending on Christ and trusting God's power at work within us? What might that look like in our daily rhythms and interactions?

LEADER NOTE: As Paul explores life through his own challenges, and through his blessings, he sees an underlying theme. It has only been in Christ's firm grip that he has been able to do anything at all. He

writes, “*I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.*” He also considers how the Lord empowers him to do all kinds of things, “*according to His power that is at work within us.*” Paul is articulately clear, that anything he has been able to do in this world for God’s good and His glory, is only because of what God has done in him. The disciples in Matthew 17 are learning this too, that they cannot go into this world, and do anything good for God, without Him.

TAKING IT HOME

READ Deuteronomy 32:4-5, 19-22, Matthew 17:17, Philippians 2:14-15. Moses describes a people who have forgotten the faithfulness of their God. Jesus confronts a generation marked by unbelief. Paul calls God’s people to live as shining stars in a darkened world. As we are called to “*shine*” our faith in this darkened world, what mountains have you seen God move? What mountains remain? Where have you seen God at work in and through you?

LEADER NOTE: On just about every page of the Old Testament there are moments where we see this to be true, that the nation, and its leaders consistently forgot about the loving and caring faithfulness of their Father in Heaven. From Adam and Eve’s first moment of sin, to Abraham’s laughter, to David’s lust, to the nations persistent grumbling against God. As the pages turn to the New Testament, the Jesus’ followers, namely His disciples, with Christ in front of them, consistently misplace their growing faith. They desire to protect their leader, and hope that He’ll still be the one who will eradicate the land of their enemies. Jesus’ frustration is rooted in their lack of ability to understand and see Him for who He really is. Paul picks up this theme as He reflects on the same words about the same community, a people who keep misplacing their faith, and keep missing the point of Who Jesus is. So, Paul challenges his audience and us today, to take on the picture of Jesus, and His shining splendor displayed on the Mount of Transfiguration, and share His radiance with all people and moments we encounter.

So, as we close this conversation around Matthew 17, we are reminded of God’s faithfulness, that He has answered prayers, and followed through with His promises to be our God and Father. We’ve overcome obstacles great and small, we’ve navigated challenges of health, relationships, and employment. We must look back and see how the Lord has continually held us in His hands, and has never let us go.

But, also, we know, perhaps all too well, that there are still more obstacles and barriers in front of us, there are still mountains that must be crossed. And it’s good for us to name these things, and to acknowledge that life can still be hard. As we name them, we might see more clearly how the Lord is already at work, preparing to guide 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 Psalm 78. This Psalm gives a historical glance at the relationship between God and the nation of Israel, where the nation perpetually failed, and how God provided a way for them through “*David His servant*” (v.70). As you look back upon your life, and see your own failures, how do you see God’s hand drawing you back to Himself? As you see moments of trust in God, do you see how He brought you there? How does reflecting back upon these past moments help assure you of His future guidance and faithfulness?