

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE
November 1-7, 2026 | Fall Week 6

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You're all in the groove!! Now we keep up the rhythms of connections, and strive to deepen the relationships we're caring for.

1. **YOUR SIXTH MEETING:**
   - Keep it all up!!
   - And don't forget to follow through with those attendance emails!
   - As your group matures, you can start working through less of the getting to know you questions, and getting into the biblical material quicker, which allows for more time to be immersed in The Word together.

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 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. Can you think of a time when you were in an unfamiliar group, and a small gesture made you feel welcome?

LEADER NOTE: This is what we strive to model in our Life Group ministry, that we make small welcoming gestures for those who are new in our groups. We can keep making the gestures and connections as we continue to deepen our relationships. This question dips its toes into our theme in Matthew 18, where Jesus calls the children to come to Him – it's a welcoming and invitational gesture that the disciples didn't understand, but as they look back, they can see clearly what the Lord was doing.

2. Have you ever been forgiven any debt of any kind? What was that like?

LEADER NOTE: This question fully takes us into the theme of extending mercy to all those who the Lord would have us extend it to. However, rather than starting off asking about who we have to extend mercy to, we're going to start on a lighter note, with a positive tone, asking about how we have been recipients of it.

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 defined forgiveness as "*Giving to others what God has already given to us/me.*" What are some of the variables that keep us from wanting to forgive our neighbor, and how can we grow in this area?

LEADER NOTE: This question does have a sense of being repeated into question #1 in digging deeper. So, watch for overlap, and use that to the benefit of your discussion.

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: In addition to 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 18:1-5, 21-35

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 18:1-5. Up until now, how have you understood this metaphor that Jesus uses for His followers to "*become like little children*"? Has that understanding been challenged? How so?

LEADER NOTE: We have often seen the image of this text in story books and on church nursery walls, generally communicating that Jesus doesn't just love the adults that are in pursuit of Himself, but also, that He loves the little children. In this, we have misunderstood the point of Jesus inviting the children to Himself, and how He told His disciples that they were to become like those children. We have seen this moment calling us to be quiet children, humble children, or even to approach Jesus with a simple and child-like faith, perhaps even, we're to be seen and not heard. While those notions get our thoughts going, they don't quite point to what Jesus is really teaching. He is pressing the idea that children are fully *dependent* upon their parents and guardians – for everything.

Consider a newborn infant – they can only cry and coo to communicate their needs, and yet are fully incapable of doing anything for themselves. They need to be changed, cleaned, fed, held, and cuddled. Consider a toddler – while they're developing some independence, they cannot provide for themselves to pay the rent, or to make a meal to put on their table.

The picture we have, is Jesus is calling us to recognize our full dependence upon Him and His Father. As outside of Him, we're incapable of doing anything good in this world, or for ourselves. Additionally, as we see the story as a whole, we see Jesus redefining how His disciples understand "*greatness*." Greatness isn't being significant, independent, or personally successful. It's quite the opposite, being great in the kingdom of Heaven, is living into our insignificance, and recognizing our dependence upon the Lord.

- **READ Matthew 18:3.** As Jesus indicates that we must "*change*" or "*turn*" to be like little children, what is He observing about our lives?

LEADER NOTE: It becomes abundantly clear that Jesus knows the ways of humanity, that we are totally depraved and fully prone to sin. We are by our nature, selfish, and set in our autonomous ways. That's why Jesus is very explicit with His words, "*unless you change*…" (NIV) or "*unless you turn* …" (ESV), and more, He tells us that we must embrace a "*lowly position*." This appears to be a counter-intuitive ask, as we typically want what the disciples want: honor, prestige, glory. We want to be noticed, to be seen, and to be acknowledged. This of course is no surprise to Jesus. He's spent the last few thousand years observing humanity from His lofty position, the nature of the Israelites lived out, in all their grumbling and complaining, but also in their desires to be independent, and like the other nations. He saw their desire to want their own glorified place in this world. Now He sees this in His disciples, and He sees it in our lives as we live today.

- How in your life do you resist this change that Jesus is asking for?

LEADER NOTE: This personal question might have your members squirm a little in their seats, and you might experience some quite moments. Honor that quiet. Let it sit for a moment, as your members consider the nature of sin and selfishness in their lives.

We resist these changes in an infinite number of ways, but it starts most often with our own posture of thinking more of ourselves, than more of the Lord and His desire for us. Like Paul admits in Romans 7:18, "*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."* But just because we know and are aware of our sinful nature, it doesn't leave us with permission to keep living this way. Like Paul, we need to perpetually reorient ourselves to Christ, through "*delighting in the law of God*." As well, just naming our struggle with change, isn't enough. We need to commit to the change that the Lord calls us to.

2. READ Matthew 18:24–27. The servant has no way to repay this enormous debt, yet the master takes pity, and completely cancels it. What does the master stand to lose by forgiving the debt owed him? How might their relationship change?

LEADER NOTE: We first need to recognize the debt that was owed. This servant had racked up in a modern sense, millions of dollars in debt. Ten Thousand Talents (bags of gold) would be the ancient equivalent of 20 years wages for the average worker. Consider what this servant has gotten themselves into, in order to be this much in debt. There is no way, in these ancient times, that this servant could ever repay this debt. The master, even sees the only way for repayment, is taking ownership of this household and selling them all into slavery – which by no means would cover their debt, but punishment would have been served.

As the servant pleads for mercy, it is granted. The king lives into Christ's command to forgive, "*seventy-seven times.*" Perfectly forgive. To never keep count. To always forgive again.

This man is not only not freed of the debt, but they're granted a new lease on life, with no punishment either. As we consider what got into this situation in the first place, we have to recognize the absolute gift that this moment was for him.

So, the master, loses out on great wealth, now completely lost. There is always a cost when it comes to forgiving someone. It's a hard decision, pains have to be acknowledged and remembered, accounts have to be zeroed.

But as well, what the master stood to gain, was a new wholesome and transactionally free relationship, one of new respect, one of new trust, one of a deepened affirmation, and honest gratitude. The servants heart should be impacted and forever changed.

- **READ Luke 18:9-14, & Philippians 2:3-8.** Jesus challenges His disciples' desire for greatness, calling them to humility. What do Luke and Paul teach us, those who have received such grace, about the posture of humility?

LEADER NOTE: Both Luke and Paul help us further understand what posture of life we are called to live. We may not as easily identify ourselves with the master in our Matthew 18 story, but we might more easily, identify with the tax collector or pharisee in the Luke 18 story. We may not be able to picture ourselves forgiving the debt of millions of dollars, but we may understand the posture of looking down upon someone else, or recognizing that we're completely helpless in front of Jesus.

In both accounts, we're seeing the call of the Lord to embrace humble postures in this life. But we need to see that this humility, is not a call for us to think less of ourselves, or to come across as insignificant in this world – we can thinking much of ourselves, we can see ourselves as significant, because we're image bearers of God who created us, and who breathes life into us.

Humility, on the other hand, is to point us to our need for grace, like how the tax collector postures himself in the temple, at the back, afraid to approach the front – where he understood that his sin, kept him at a distance from the Lord, and that only God's mercy, would be adequate for him to carry on.

Paul then uses the same picture to have us place all others ahead of ourselves, not because we're not special, but because everyone else around us, is just as special as we are. They too, are made in God's image, and breathe the breath that He has given them.

Humility isn't thinking we're worthless; it's recognizing that everything we have is a gift of grace. We are to be utterly dependent on God. In remembering our unpayable debt, we were shown mercy. This is the model the Master gives to his servant, and it is the model God gives us in Jesus.

3. READ Matthew 18:3-5, 28-30. Jesus calls His disciples to become like little children, and this servant responds with *immaturity*, rather than *dependency*. How does this behavior challenge or deepen our understanding of what Jesus means by *"becoming like a child"*?

LEADER NOTE: Often our picture of children, is that they are immature, they lack an ability to discern what is good behavior, and how to appropriately respond to situations around them. While this is true, and is the role of the household and the broad community to lead our children to places of maturity, Christ's purpose in putting the child in front of the disciples, is for them to see a child's dependence upon others for all things life and health related.

Then as we continue to read the parable of this master and servant, the servant responses like we would expect a child to: immaturely. Unwilling to practice what has been modelled. Unwilling to show patience, compassion. The servant insists that he is paid what he is owed. And comparatively, this new servant's debt, pails in comparison to the first servant. A hundred silver coins is a hundred day's wages, so a few thousand dollars in modern terms. It's still a fair-sized debt, humanly speaking, it's payable.

The servant's problem isn't simply that he behaves badly; it's that his behaviour exposes how little he has understood the mercy he's received, he hasn't understood the place in the relationship that he is in with

the master. Just like how often, we misunderstand our place in our relationship with God the Father. We place our needs as the most significant, to the point where nothing else matters.

- **READ 1 Peter 2:9-10.** Peter connects God's judgment of Israel in Hosea 1 with the mercy we received in Christ. How does this help us understand what it means to belong fully to Him, not because of who we are, but because of what He has done for us?

LEADER NOTE: In Hosea 1, we have that image of Hosea being told to marry the prostitute, Gomer. They have children, and God names one child, "*Lo-Ruhama*," which means "*no mercy*." In so doing, God tells the nation of Israel He's done with their faithfulness, and lack of ability to show their commitment to follow Him. Another child is born to this happy couple, "*Lo-Ammi*." And we get even a deeper chastisement, as this child is called, "*Not my people*." God is clearly frustrated by the Israelites selfishness and ignorance. They're acting like the little children that we'd expect. They're acting like this first servant, who was granted new freedom, but turned around and fought only for themselves.

Peter, who is one of the disciples that Jesus is speaking to, who was told, *"become like this child,"* who walked on water, but sank; who called Jesus the Messiah, but was filled with selfishness and sought to protect Jesus' earthly presence, this Peter connects the dots between God's chastisement of the nation of Israel, Jesus' plea for them to keep learning about His call for them to live humbly, and Christ's death and resurrection.

And Peter writes to his audience, a people scattered now across lands not their own, in foreign places, with foreign people, that they are God's "*chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession … once you were not a people, but now you are God's people, once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy*."

Peter ultimately says to his audience, "*now that you understand all that has happened with Christ's death and resurrection, you get the picture, now go and live like it*."

TAKING IT HOME

READ Matthew 18:32-35, & 1 Corinthians 12:22-26. While we are the *"little ones"* who Jesus is calling to Himself, who else are the *"little ones"* that Jesus desires us to extend His mercy to? Who might we be overlooking? Who might we label as undeserving? What must we do this week, now with this deeper understanding?

LEADER NOTE: We arrive now at the conclusion of the parable, and it doesn't go well for the first servant. It's been reported back to the master of his behavior and lack of understanding when it comes to the gift of mercy that he was shown. Then, we once again find the parallel in these two episodes, of the children metaphor, and the master's mercy, and we're left with the call that we're to treat all people with the mercy that this master has shown, all the while, understanding that we're those little children, that God has shown abundant mercy.

So, we are now to explore, who else in our circles and scope of life, are also the little ones whom the Lord is calling to Himself, who are also in need of His love and His grace, given to them, through 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 Deuteronomy 24:10-22, 1 Peter 4:8-11, & James 1:27. What gifts have you been given that you can use for the body of Christ within the church community? Outside the church in your neighborhood? In your workplace or school? How might you extend the grace and mercy you have received in these specific places?