



LifeGroups Study Guide

Week #1, September 11, 2016

1. Check-in

Open your time together with a time of checking-in in which group members are invited to share highs and lows, joys and concerns, etc. Conclude this part of the meeting with prayer. Central to what LifeGroups is all about is being intentional about being a caring community for the sake of others, the community of Christ called to care for one another, grow in faith, and seek God's guidance together.

2. Embrace the Word

Read 1 Peter 3:13-17. Use different versions of the Bible to gain a broader sense of the reading. Share with each other what you hear in this reading – what catches your ear?

3. Engage the theme: Finding Faith at Ground Zero

(Copies of the sermon are available at the Information Center and at www.oslchurch.com.)

Share with each other what you heard in the sermon for the week. Did anything in particular grab your attention? Did anything surprise you? If you could ask the preacher anything about the sermon, what would it be?

4. Discuss

- What is the biggest question (most difficult or challenging) that people have about God?
- What has happened to you to make you search for God?
- Is it fair to blame God for the evil and suffering in the world? Why or why not?
- Have you ever talked in depth to someone who was struggling with issues related to the presence of pain and suffering and evil in the world? Share with each other what that experience was like.
- What can you do to be better prepared to help others who are struggling with these questions?

5. Take action

- Be a bearer of hope this week: try to encourage at least ten people, like waiters at a restaurant, coworkers, family members, etc.
- Read and study 1 Peter 2-3 and make a list of the instructions we receive for how we are to live as followers of Jesus.
- Reflect on the hope that is yours in Christ. Try to put it into words that you could use if someone ever asked you what you believe in.
- Before Week 3, watch the movie *God's Not Dead 2*.

6. **Wrap-up**

- Identify who will lead next week's discussion and where your group will meet.
- Pray as a group in a way that best fits the group's personality and preferences.
- Offer this blessing to each other (you may place your hand on their head or shoulder or trace the sign of the cross on their forehead as you share the words of blessing):

May God fill you with peace,
give you courage,
and empower you to witness to your faith
in word and deed.

Amen.