

ADULT SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Introduction to John

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 00 · September 6, 2026

LEADER OVERVIEW

Big idea: John, the last living eyewitness, wrote his Gospel for people carrying real questions – so they could believe Jesus is the Son of God and have His life, not just a better version of their own.

Sermon outline: John allows us to see through his eyes (the evidence), into his mind (the conclusion), and into his heart (the motive).

Scriptures used: John 20:30–31 · 13:21–23 · 19:26 · 20:2 · 1:14 · 1:1 · Exodus 3:14 · John 3:16–17 · 10:10

Time: 60–75 minutes. Twelve questions are more than you need – choose the ones that fit your group and skip freely. Questions in bold are the ones not to skip.

OPENING (10 MIN)

The goal of the opener is to get every voice in the room once before the hard questions come. Keep it light.

1. When you've been on the receiving end of a secondhand story – a rumor, a game of telephone, a news report that got it wrong – what did it take for you to trust the account?
2. Pastor opened with three questions: Does my life matter? Is there anything worth believing in? Is Jesus really who everyone says He is? Without oversharing, which one has been closest to your own experience, and when?

WHY JOHN WROTE (10 MIN)

Read John 20:30–31 aloud. This is the only place in the four Gospels where the writer stops to tell you exactly why he wrote. John was writing between AD 80–95, roughly fifty years after the events, as the last of the twelve still alive.

3. **John admits in verse 30 that he left most of what he saw out of the book. What does it change about how you read a Gospel to know that every story was chosen on purpose?**

Leader: John is building a case, not keeping a diary. Every sign, every conversation, every "I AM" serves the two claims in verse 31.

4. Pastor said John wasn't writing a biography, because a biography answers "what happened" and John was writing for people asking "so what?" What are the "so what" questions you'd want an eyewitness to Jesus to answer?

THROUGH HIS EYES (15 MIN)

Read John 1:14 aloud. John was at the table (13:23), the cross (19:26), and the empty tomb (20:2). “We have seen His glory” is not poetry – it’s testimony.

5. “His glory” means that when John watched Jesus – touching lepers, weeping at a tomb, forgiving the men driving the nails – he was seeing God Himself. Where did your own picture of God come from, and how much of it came from watching Jesus?

Leader: many people’s picture of God comes from a parent, a church experience, or a disappointment. Let people name the source without judgment.

6. **The seven signs escalate – distance, time, lack, nature, the impossible, death. Which of those “can’t stop Him” lines do you most need to be true right now? Why?**

Leader: this is the question to slow down on. Someone in your group is facing one of these tonight.

7. “John does not argue for Jesus. He shows you Jesus and lets you decide.” How is that different from the way Christians often try to convince people? What would it look like for you to “show” rather than “argue” this year?

INTO HIS MIND (15 MIN)

Read John 1:1 and Exodus 3:14 aloud. No other Gospel opens in eternity. And when Jesus said “I AM,” He was taking the name from the burning bush – the crowd picked up stones because they understood Him perfectly (8:58–59).

8. Jesus didn’t just claim to be sent by God. He claimed to be the I AM. Why does it matter that He was heard correctly and not misunderstood? What does that do to the option of “Jesus was a good teacher”?

Leader: if He claimed to be God, He was either right, deceived, or deceiving. There is no fourth option – and the crowd knew it.

9. Jesus attached God’s name to human need: when nothing satisfies, I AM the Bread; when you can’t see the way, I AM the Light; when you’ve been shut out, I AM the Door; when you’re lost, I AM the Shepherd; when death comes, I AM the Resurrection; when you can’t get to God, I AM the Way; when you’re running dry, I AM the Vine. Which one names the need you actually have – not the one you think you should have?

INTO HIS HEART (15 MIN)

Read John 3:16–17 and John 10:10 aloud. In twenty-one chapters, John never uses his own name. Five times he is simply “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” His motive is God’s motive – a love that gives.

10. After fifty years, the only thing John said about himself was that Jesus loved him. What would it do to you to carry that as your primary identity for fifty years? What identities are you carrying instead?
11. **“Jesus didn’t come to fix your life. He came to give you His – and His life never ends, never fails, and starts the moment you believe.” Where have you been asking Jesus for a repair when He’s offering a replacement?**

Leader: this is the sermon’s central line. Give it room. If the group goes quiet, that’s not a problem.

12. Two kinds of people were in the room Sunday: some who already believe, and some who aren’t sure. Pastor said this is the safest place to bring your questions. Is this group that kind of place? What would make it one?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- John wrote as an eyewitness, on purpose, for people with real questions – including ours.
- Everything John shows us – the signs, the “I AM” statements, the cross – serves one claim: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- The life John offers is not an improved version of yours. It is Christ’s own life, given to the one who believes, beginning now.

APPLICATION – CHOOSE ONE

- **Name your question.** Write down the one question about Jesus you most want answered this year. Date it. Read it again on August 29, 2027.
- **Take one “I AM” with you.** Write the statement that names your need where you’ll see it every day this week.
- **Show, don’t argue.** Think of one person who has questions about Jesus. This week, don’t try to convince them of anything. Invite them to read John with you.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

John 3:16–17 is the whole book in two verses. God’s motive is love – for a world that was rejecting Him. His method is the Son – a person, not a program. His goal is salvation, not condemnation. And the only thing on our side of the equation is one word: believe. Not perform, not earn. Whoever believes will not perish but have eternal life – God’s own life, which has no end, given as a gift.

CLOSING PRAYER

“Father, thank You for John – that he didn’t keep it to himself, and that fifty years later he sat down and wrote it out so we could believe. Some of us in this room believe. Some of us aren’t sure. You wrote this book for both. Over the next year, show us who You are. Replace our pictures of You with Jesus. And give us Your life – not someday, but now. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

THIS WEEK

Daily devotional: thesummit.life – five days walking through Sunday’s message and preparing for John 1:1–5.

Before Sunday: Read John 1:1–5 three times. Ask God one question: “Who do You say You are?”

Next week: Week 1 · In The Beginning was Jesus · John 1:1–5 · September 13, 2026