

ADULT SMALL GROUP GUIDE

In The Beginning Was Jesus

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 01 · September 13, 2026

LEADER OVERVIEW

Big idea: Jesus is not part of the story – He is the One who started it. John 1:1–5 answers one question, “Who is Jesus?”, with four claims that are true whether or not anyone agrees.

Sermon outline: He is ETERNAL – He was before you (v.1a) · He is GOD – He is above you (vv.1b–2) · He is CREATOR – He made you (v.3) · He is LIGHT AND LIFE – He is the way out of the darkness (vv.4–5).

Scriptures used: John 1:1–5 · Genesis 1:1 · Hebrews 1:3 · Colossians 1:16–17 · John 20:31

Time: 60–75 minutes. Twelve questions are more than you need – choose what fits 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 harder questions arrive. Keep it light.

1. Think of something you own that you also built or assembled yourself. What is your honest confidence level in it compared to something built by a professional?
2. **Pastor named three common opinions about Jesus: good teacher, good man with bad followers, whoever you need Him to be. Which one did you hold longest – and what moved you off it, if anything has?**

HE IS ETERNAL (12 MIN)

Read John 1:1–2 and Genesis 1:1 aloud, back to back. John is opening his Gospel with the opening words of the Bible on purpose.

3. **What is John claiming about Jesus by starting where Genesis starts – before he makes a single argument?**

Leader: he is placing Jesus on the Creator side of the Creator/creature line before the reader has a chance to object. Everything in the next twenty-one chapters depends on it.

4. **Nobody knows what another person is thinking until they speak. John calls Jesus “the Word.” What does that title claim about how knowable God is – and how much guessing we are supposed to be doing?**

Leader: this is the pastoral payoff of the doctrine. If Jesus is God’s self-expression, you never have to reconstruct God’s character from your circumstances.

HE IS GOD (15 MIN)

Read John 1:1b–2 and Hebrews 1:3.

5. **The Word was WITH God, and the Word WAS God. What does each half protect? What goes wrong if a person keeps only one of them?**

Leader: without “with,” the Son collapses into the Father. Without “was God,” He becomes an exalted creature. John says both in one verse and then repeats it in verse 2 so no one can miss it.

6. Pastor said, “He was not lonely. He did not make you because something was missing.” If God did not create out of need, what did He create out of – and how does that change how you read your own life?

Leader: this is worth slowing down on. Many people carry a quiet suspicion that they exist to be useful to God. Verse 1 rules it out.

7. “A Jesus you create can never be bigger than you are. A Jesus built in your image dies the same day you do.” Where have you seen this in someone else’s faith? Where do you catch it in your own?

HE IS CREATOR (12 MIN)

Read John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16–17.

8. John says it positively and negatively – all things through Him, and not one thing without Him. Why do you think he closes the door twice?

9. His claim on your life is older than your opinion of Him. What does that do to the idea that faith is primarily a decision we make about Jesus?

Leader: the goal is not to minimize response – it is to reorder it. He is not waiting for a vote. He is inviting a return.

HE IS LIGHT AND LIFE (15 MIN)

Read John 1:4–5 aloud, then read verse 5 a second time slowly.

10. Life is IN Him, not merely from Him. What is the practical difference between receiving something from a person and it being located in that person?

Leader: he is not a supplier of a resource. He is the resource. That is why John 20:31 says “life in his name” and not “life because of him.”

11. The word John uses in verse 5 means both “understand” and “overpower.” The darkness could not figure the light out, and it could not put it out. Which of those two do you see more often in the people you love who are far from God?

Leader: this matters pastorally. Confusion and hostility look different but neither one is winning.

12. John writes “shines,” not “shined.” Present tense. What is the dark thing you brought in with you this year – and what would change if you actually believed the light was already in it?

CLOSING (5 MIN)

Four things were true before anyone in this room walked in: He was before you, He is above you, He made you, He is the light in whatever you carried in. None of it waited on our permission.

Close by praying through those four in order. Then give the week’s assignment: **read John 1:1–18 every day and ask God the same question every time – “Who do You say You are?”**

Memory verse: John 1:1. Next week: Week 2 · The Light of the World Rejected · John 1:6–13 · September 20, 2026