

ADULT SMALL GROUP GUIDE

The Light of the World Rejected

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 02 · September 20, 2026

LEADER OVERVIEW

Big idea: The light came to everyone and most would not receive Him — but everyone who does receive Him is born into God's family, and that birth is God's work, not ours.

Sermon outline: God sent a witness to prepare people for the light (vv.6–8) · The light came to everyone, and most would not receive Him (vv.9–11) · Those who receive Him are born into God's family (vv.12–13).

Scriptures used: John 1:6–13 · Mark 1:2–4 · John 3:3–8 · Acts 19:1–7

Time: 60–75 minutes. Eleven 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 have been close to for years without ever actually having it — a city you drive through, a job you almost took, a language you half-know.
2. **Pastor said, “Being near the light is not the same as walking in it.” Where have you watched that gap in somebody's life — all the proximity to church, none of the thing itself?**

A WITNESS, NOT THE LIGHT (12 MIN)

Read John 1:6–8 aloud.

3. **Verse 8 is emphatic in the Greek: he was NOT the light. Why would John need to say that at all — and who was it correcting?**

Leader: John the Baptist's movement outlived him. Acts 19 finds disciples decades later who knew only his baptism. The correction is pastoral, not historical trivia.

4. **John's whole assignment was to point away from himself. What does a role like that cost a person — and where are you tempted to be the light rather than the witness?**

Leader: several people in your group are worn out carrying a job that was never theirs — saving a child, fixing a marriage, winning an argument. Name it gently.

THE LIGHT CAME TO EVERYONE (15 MIN)

Read John 1:9–10.

5. **The commentary says the same light either saves a person or exposes his sin and coming judgment. How should that change the way you pray for people who “aren't interested”?**

Leader: nobody stands in the light neutrally. Disinterest is a response, not an absence of one.

6. **The world was made through Him and did not know Him. If the failure was not a lack of evidence, what was it?**

Leader: the commentary is blunt — human ignorance and blindness, caused by sin. Which means more information has never been the fix, for them or for us.

HE CAME TO HIS OWN (12 MIN)

Read John 1:11 twice, slowly.

7. **He came to His own home, and His own people would not take Him in. Who is harder to be refused by — a stranger or your own family? What does that tell you about what this verse actually costs?**
8. **The people who missed Him had every advantage: the prophets, the promises, a man in the wilderness pointing right at Him. We have more than they did. Does that make us safer or more accountable?**

Leader: this is the hinge of the sermon. Resist the urge to resolve the discomfort quickly.

RECEIVED, BELIEVED, GIVEN (15 MIN)

Read John 1:12–13.

9. **“Receive” implies a gift and a giver. What does accepting a gift say about your confidence in it — and how is that different from simply agreeing the gift exists?**
10. **Grammatically, God is the giver in verse 12; John just moves us to the front of the sentence. Why arrange it that way, and what would be lost if he hadn’t?**

Leader: the word order highlights us, the grammar reminds us it was never our doing. John holds both without apologizing for either.

11. **Verse 13 rules out blood, the will of the flesh, and the will of man. Which of those three do you most often catch yourself quietly relying on?**

Leader: watch for the third one. Performance is the respectable version of unbelief, and it is the one church people reach for.

CLOSING (5 MIN)

Read John 3:3–8 together. The second birth is as far outside your control as the first one was — and just as real. You did not pick either one.

Close by praying for two groups by name: the people in your circle who are near the light and not yet in it, and anyone in this room who has spent years around Jesus without ever receiving Him.

Then give the week’s assignment: **read John 1:6–13 every day and answer one question honestly — “Have I received Him, or do I only know about Him?”**

Memory verse: John 1:12. Next week: Week 3 · The Word Became Flesh · John 1:14–18 · September 27, 2026