

ADULT SMALL GROUP GUIDE

A Voice in the Wilderness

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 04 · October 4, 2026

LEADER OVERVIEW

Big idea: John wasn't the Christ, and neither are we. God sent a voice to wake people up so they would recognize Jesus, and He still sends voices. Our job isn't to save anyone. It's to point people to the One who saves.

Sermon outline: Who are you? (vv.19–21) · What do you have to say about yourself? (vv.22–23) · What right do you have to baptize? (vv.25–27).

Scriptures used: John 1:19–28 · Isaiah 40:3 · John 3:17 · John 1:16 · Malachi 3:1 · Luke 1:17 · John 3:30

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. Who is someone who introduced you to something that changed your life — a friend, a job, a spouse, a church?
2. **Pastor said, “You don’t recognize a person you’re not expecting.” When has God been at work in your life before you noticed Him?**

WHO ARE YOU? (15 MIN)

Read John 1:19–21 and 1:24.

3. The priests, Levites, and Pharisees represented the religious system of the day. Why would a man with no title, baptizing at a river 20 miles away, get their attention?

Leader: the priests controlled access to God through sacrifice, and John was calling people to repentance outside that system. The Bible Knowledge Commentary frames their question as: since you have no official title, why are you baptizing? The crowds left the temple for the river, and the temple noticed.

4. **John refused three titles: the Christ, Elijah, the Prophet. What would have been tempting about accepting one of them?**

Leader: if someone raises Matthew 11:14, where Jesus says John is Elijah, John is denying he is Elijah returned from heaven, as they expected. He came “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17), fulfilling Malachi 4:5.

5. John defined himself first by what he was not. What might change if you were more comfortable saying “I am not the Savior” — at work, at home, with the people you worry about?

WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT YOURSELF? (15 MIN)

Read John 1:22–23 and Isaiah 40:3.

6. **When they pressed him, John’s only self-description was a verse of Scripture: a voice. What does it look like to find your identity in what God says rather than what others want you to be?**

7. Leon Morris says John’s real function was to point people to Jesus. John later said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). Where do you tend to get in the way of Jesus being seen?

Leader: this is a humility question, not a guilt question. Parents, leaders, and pastors all feel the pull to be the point. John shows the freedom of not having to be.

WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE? (15 MIN)

Read John 1:25–28.

8. John said he wasn’t worthy to untie Jesus’ sandal strap, a slave’s job. How does seeing Jesus clearly change how we see ourselves?
9. **“Among you stands one you do not know.” Jesus was in the crowd, and the experts missed Him. How is it possible to be around church, Scripture, and Christians and still not know Jesus?**

Leader: be gentle here. Someone in your group may be standing in that crowd. Leave room for an honest answer.

10. **Pastor said, “It’s not your job to save anyone. We just point people to the One who saves.” Does that make sharing your faith feel lighter or heavier? What honestly holds you back?**

11. What is one thing Jesus has done in your life that you could tell someone this week in a sentence or two?

CLOSING (5 MIN)

Read John 1:23 together. John wasn’t the Christ, and neither are you. You don’t have to save anyone. You just have to point.

Give everyone a minute of silence to think of one person in their life who doesn’t know Jesus yet. Then pray together for those people, even if no one says the names out loud.

Then give the week’s assignment: pray for that person by name every day and take the bold step to share what Jesus has done in your life. Each day, answer one question honestly — “Who is one person God has put in my life that I can point to Jesus?”

Memory verse: John 1:23. Next week: Week 5 · Behold the Lamb of God · John 1:29–34 · October 11, 2026