ADULT SMALL GROUP GUIDE

The Love That Saves

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 10 · November 15, 2026

LEADER OVERVIEW

Big idea: Why did God provide a Savior in His Son? Because He loves people, because without a Savior people face eternity apart from Him, and because people love the darkness and need the Light. God loved and God gave; those are finished. What's left is ours: believe and receive. And whoever believes is not condemned, present tense, which means a person can know.

Sermon outline: God loves people (3:16) · God knows that without a Savior, people face eternity apart from Him (3:17–18) · God knows people love the darkness and need the Light (3:19–21).

Scriptures used: John 3:16–21 · Romans 5:8 · 1 Peter 2:24 · Ephesians 2:8–9 · John 3:36 · John 19:39

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. John 3:16 may be the most famous verse in the Bible. Where do you remember seeing or hearing it first?
2. **Pastor Tom opened with a question: "Can a person know that they are forgiven and will spend eternity with God?" Before Sunday, how would you have answered? What made you uncertain, if you were?**

GOD LOVED, GOD GAVE (20 MIN)

Read John 3:16, then Romans 5:6–8.

3. **Pastor Tom built the first point on four verbs: God loved, God gave, we believe, we receive. Which of the four do you think people most often get wrong, and how?**
   Leader: many treat "believe" as a work to perform or "receive" as something to earn. The first two are finished; the last two are the open hand.
4. "God so loved" means "in this way," pointing back to the Son of Man lifted up (vv. 14–15). Romans 5:8 says Christ died for us "while we were still sinners." How does it change your picture of God's love to know it was aimed at a world in rebellion, not a world that deserved it?
5. Pastor Tom said God's love "led Him to action, not just a feeling of love for us." Read 1 Peter 2:24. Where are you tempted to settle for a feeling of love toward God without any action behind it?
6. **The Expositor's commentary says belief is "accepting something, not doing something." Read Ephesians 2:8–9. Why does God insist that salvation be a gift? What does boasting have to do with it?**

Leader: if we contributed even a little, we would get a little of the credit. A gift leaves all the credit with the Giver.

NOT CONDEMNED (15 MIN)

Read John 3:17–18, then John 3:36.

7. Jesus says the one who does not believe is "condemned already." Last week Pastor Jeff reminded us the Israelites were bitten and dying before the bronze serpent was lifted up. What does that tell us about where every person starts, and about why Jesus came?
   Leader: no one starts neutral. Jesus didn't bring the condemnation; He came into it to save.

8. Pastor Tom said, "There is no middle ground here." Why do people want a middle ground? What does it cost a person to give it up?

9. **Verse 18 says the believer "is not condemned." Present tense. Pastor Tom said, "This is how you can know today." Why do so many Christians live without that certainty, and what do they tend to base their confidence on instead?**
   Leader: feelings, performance, comparison with others. Assurance rests on God's promise to whoever believes, not on how the week went.

INTO THE LIGHT (15 MIN)

Read John 3:19–21, then John 19:38–39.

10. Jesus says people reject the Light because they love the darkness, not because the evidence is weak. The series asks, "Why should I believe?" How does this passage reframe why people don't?
    Leader: the barrier is usually moral, not intellectual. That should shape how we pray for and talk with unbelieving friends.

11. **Nicodemus came by night and is last seen in daylight, openly honoring Jesus at His burial. Pastor Tom said, "Don't let love for your sin keep you from the God who loves you." What is one thing you would rather keep in the dark than bring to Jesus? What would coming into the light look like for you this week?**
    Leader: give people room. Some may need to confess; some may realize they have believed but never gone public. Baptism is coming up at Summit in a few weeks.

CLOSING (5 MIN)

Read John 3:16 together. God loved. God gave. Those are finished. What's left is ours: believe and receive. And whoever believes is not condemned.

If someone in your group realizes they have never believed, or has believed and never been baptized, don't rush past it. Pray with them. Then point them to a pastor this week. Baptism doesn't save; believing in Jesus does. But baptism is how faith goes public.

Then give the week's assignment: Memorize John 3:16. Each time you say it, put your own name in place of "the world" and "whoever."

Memory verse: John 3:16. Next week: Week 11 · He Must Increase · John 3:22–36 · November 22, 2026