

Studies

Investigating John

Leader's Guide

When you get together to hang out have everyone tell their name, hometown, major and year in school. Have them answer one strange question like, “What brand of toothpaste do you use?” or “What’s the funniest trick you ever played on your little brother?”

After everyone has had time to get to know each other tell them you’ll cover four different topics during the next four weeks.

Here’s the plan:

Discussion for **Week 1**: God’s Love and Plan.

Discussion for **Week 2**: Our Sin and Separation from God.

Discussion for **Week 3**: Jesus Christ—God’s Provision

Discussion for **Week 4**: Our Need to Receive Christ by Faith.

The study is based upon the Gospel of John, the fourth book of the New Testament. You might need to point out the difference between the gospel of John and the epistles of John. Just for fun you could tell everyone that the epistles were the wives of the apostles. Sometimes the joke works, sometimes it bombs. Use your discretion.

Suggest they read the book of John during the next few weeks. If they read a chapter each day they’ll finish the book by the end of the four-week investigative study. It should take three weeks to read all 21 chapters in this book. Reading the whole book helps everyone gain a greater understanding of the passages you’ll discuss during the next four weeks.

Be sure to take time to answer any questions from the reading or previous discussion and start and end each discussion with prayer.

This study will help students understand the basis for establishing a relationship with God. They’ll also develop an appreciation for God’s word as they complete a topical study of a book of the Bible.

The following pages are the leader’s guide. Some of the questions have explanatory notes. You, the leader, need to complete the study before you teach it to others.

Discussion One: God's Love and Plan

How can we be sure that God loves us? (3:16)

What has Jesus Christ done to help us understand what God is like? (1:18)

In Chapter 1, verse 1, the title "Word" is used to refer to Jesus Christ. Why do you think John uses this title?

Why did Christ say He came to earth? (10:10)

Name the objects that Jesus uses in the following verses to describe the abundant life He provides. Explain what each object illustrates about the abundant life in verses:

7:37,38 _____

6:35 _____

8:12 _____

In the following verses, what are some of the characteristics of the abundant life?

13:34,35 _____

15:11 _____

14:27 _____

Why did John write this book? Why did he record these details about Jesus? (20:30,31)

Discussion Two: Our Sin and Separation from God

Review

1. How can we be sure that God loves us? (3:16)
2. Why did Jesus come? (10:10)
3. According to these two verses, how does God view us?

To summarize the first discussion in one sentence—God loves us and offers a wonderful plan for our lives. Why are most people not experiencing God's love and plan?

In this discussion, we'll look at the Bible's answer to this question. We'll discuss man's sinfulness and imperfection and compare it with God's perfection.

Discussion

1. How do you define the word sin?
2. How does the Bible describe men who are separated from God by sin? (12:46, 8:12)
What's it like sitting in a dark room?
3. What effect does sin have on people who sin? (8:34)
4. Why do many people choose to remain in darkness? (3:19,20)
5. Jesus was a good man, why did the crowd hate him? (7:7)
6. How does Jesus relate to God's judgment against sin? (5:22-27) Why is this so?
7. On what basis can Jesus justly judge men? (2:24,25)
8. Man is spiritually dead and needs the Holy Spirit to impart spiritual life to him. How does Christ explain this need to the religious leader Nicodemus? (3:1-8)
9. What's your condition if you don't believe in the Son of God? (3:36)
10. What did Jesus say was the reason people did not have the life He came to give us? (5:39,40)

Conclude by drawing the diagram of the gulf from the second principle of the *Knowing God Personally* booklet.

The next discussion explains how to bridge the gulf separating us from God.

Discussion Three: Jesus Christ—God’s Provision!

Review

1. What did we learn from the first week?
2. Draw the diagram that we used to illustrate our conclusions from the second discussion?

In our first study we heard some good news—God loves us. In the second discussion, we heard some bad news—we’re sinful. Discussion three gives us more good news.

Discussion

What did Jesus claim about himself? (14:6)

What other things did Jesus say that backs up this verse?

Who did He say He was? _____ (10:30-33)

Where did He say He came from? _____ (16:28)

What did He say He always did? _____ (8:29)

How did some of the religious leaders react to some of Christ’s claims? (8:58,59)

Jesus called himself “I AM”. Compare this claim with Exodus 3:14. God tells Moses that His name is “I AM”. So Jesus was claiming He was God. The Jews, in verse 59, understood what Jesus was saying because they picked up stones to throw at Him. Stoning in those days was the punishment for blasphemy.

What five things verified that Jesus’ claims were true?

1. _____ (5:32,33)

2. _____ (5:36)

3. _____ (5:37,38)

4. _____ (5:39)

5. _____ (8:12-14,18)

What miracle did John the Baptist say Jesus would do? (1:29)

The Jewish people, whom John the Baptist was speaking to, were familiar with the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. If someone sinned, an unblemished animal was sacrificed as an innocent substitute to cover his sin. This sacrificial system pointed to the future when Christ would, once for all, sacrifice

Himself and pay the penalty for all the past, present and future sins of the human race.

Did Jesus have any sins of His own to pay for? (8:29)

What did the man who condemned Jesus to death state about Christ's guilt? (18:38)

What did Jesus say about His death? (10:11-18) Who are His sheep?

What kind of death did Jesus die? (12:32-34)

What is the significance of Jesus' dying words? (19:30)

"It is finished." is translated from the Greek word *tetelestai*. This word carries the idea of being paid in full. Our sins were paid for completely when Jesus died on the cross.

How does Christ's death relate to man's faith? (3:14-17)

In this passage, the reference to Moses raising the serpent recalls the historical event recorded in Numbers 21:5-9. During that time many Israelites were dying from snakebites. It was God's judgment of Israel's sin. God instructed Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole. When anyone who'd been bitten could look at the bronze serpent and live.

What are the consequences if we don't look to Christ to take away sins? (8:12)

Optional Illustration

Use a red clear plastic report cover (found in most bookstores) and a white sheet of paper with the word "SIN" written in large red letters on it to illustrate how Jesus erases our sins. Place the paper inside the report cover. "SIN" disappears. Christ's blood covers our sins.

Assignment for Next Discussion

During the next week ask five people the question, "In your opinion, how does a person become a Christian?" Write down their answers so you can discuss them at next week's gathering.

Discussion Four: Our Need to Receive Christ by Faith

Review

1. What can we conclude from the first three discussions?
2. Why do you think that Jesus had to die for us on the cross?

Ask,

“What did people say when you asked them how they thought someone becomes a Christian?”

Discussion

1. What was the miracle that convinced the disciples that Jesus' claims about Himself and His death were true? (20:19,20,24,29)
2. It's not enough just to know the facts about Jesus and His claims. What happens before someone is convinced about the truth of Jesus' claims? (7:16,17)
3. What is eternal life? (17:3) What does “know” mean in this passage?
4. What must happen before we're properly related to God? (3:6,7)
5. What two parallel ideas in 1:12,13 explain what must happen to be born of God?
6. When someone puts their faith in Christ what happens to them? (5:24)
7. What's true of us when we put our faith in Jesus? (11:25)
8. When we become one of the sheep of the Good Shepherd, what things are true of us?(10:27-30)
9. According to what we've studied, how do you think someone becomes a Christian?
10. Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ? Explain.

Note

Go through the *Knowing God Personally* booklet with each person during the next week and clear up any questions that remain. Ask students to place their trust in Christ if they haven't.