

GOSPEL OF JOHN OVERVIEW

JOHN'S MAIN THING



TEACH IT HIGH SCHOOL 2 SESSION 1

ONE WEEK OUT

You may want to send out reminder notes to the students who will be in your group. Let them know the date and time of the first session, and encourage them to be a part of every session. You may also want to challenge them to read the Gospel of John on their own to get a feel for this book. (The students will be able to read each chapter in 15 minutes or less.)

As you prepare for the first session, remember to allow time for reproducing Scripture sheets and journal pages and for gathering the materials needed (see the *Materials* step below).

Most importantly, recruit a prayer team to pray specifically for this Bible study. Supply the team with helpful specifics, such as names of students, when you're meeting, and the subject matter you're covering.

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 1 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 1
- a notebook in which to keep his or her Scripture sheets and journal pages over the course of the study
- his or her own Bible and a pen

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least two colors per student)
- a favorite book (one you read recently or as a teenager; it doesn't have to be a Christian book)

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 1

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover John's purpose in writing his Gospel.
- be introduced to the connection between *true belief* and a changed life.
- be challenged to become a "sign" that will point others to belief in Jesus.

PRAYER

After your students have gathered, congratulate them on deciding to be a part of this study. Share that whenever you set out to dig deeper into God's Word, you can expect to grow closer to God. But you can also expect the enemy to try to knock you off course. Spend some time praying with the group, that students will stand firm in the Lord's will throughout this study and experience personal change through the power of his Word.

OPEN

Book Background

Begin the session by asking students to share about a favorite book of theirs. Then share about your favorite book, using these points as a guide:

- Show students your book and ask if any are familiar with it.
- Describe when you read it and why you liked it so much.
- Explain the purpose of the book. (Why did the author write it?)
- Make a connection between the author's purpose and why the book was meaningful to you.
- If the book changed you in any way (big or little), share that change with the group.

Transition by saying something like this:

The Bible is made up of a lot of books, 66 total. Each has a specific purpose and makes a unique contribution to the big picture of God. The Gospel of John, which we're going to spend some time with for the next few weeks, is one of these books.

Lead your group in a brainstorm discussion about the Gospel of John. Use these questions to get things rolling:

What do you know about John's Gospel? (By the way, a "Gospel" is a Bible book that covers the life and teachings of Jesus.)

Why do you think we should study a book of the Bible?

Is it important to study a book that covers the life and teachings of Jesus, or do you guys pretty much have that info covered?

This is an important question for students who've been around church a long time. Play devil's advocate and suggest that it might be more profitable to simply meet and talk about what everybody wants to talk about.

Let the discussion be free-flowing, but share a few of these points:

-John wrote his Gospel within a hundred years of Jesus' ministry. Compared with all of history, this time span is about the equivalent of a live play-by-play!

-All of Jesus' exclusive "I am" statements (such as "I am the way and the truth and the life" in John 14:6) come from the Gospel of John. Apparently, John was encountering moral relativism in his culture (the belief that individuals or the culture can determine truth), much as we encounter it today.

-John actually walked with Jesus!

You could use this opportunity to point out the following info:

-Of the Bible's 66 books, only four cover the life of Jesus. These books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are called "Gospels."

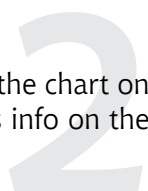
-Matthew, Mark, and Luke include similar material and for the most part cover events in chronological order. The Gospel of John stands alone because it contains events and teachings not found in the other Gospels.

3. Digging In

Purpose Statement

Explain to your group that the best way to understand a book of the Bible is to find out why the author wrote it. Why did God put this book in the Bible? Why did he move someone to write things down for us today? Some authors of Bible books tell you right up front why they wrote them; others make you dig for it. John just lays it out there for us!

Ask students to read the following passages silently from their Bibles. Have them note *who* did *what* in the chart on their journal pages. After a few minutes, discuss each passage, asking who did what and recording this info on the whiteboard (similar to below).



	Who...	did what?
John 2:22	Disciples...	recalled what Jesus said, believed the Scripture and words of Jesus.
John 4:39	Many Samaritans...	believed in Jesus.
John 9:35-38	A man thrown out...	believed in Jesus and worshiped him.
John 11:23-27	Martha...	believed Jesus to be the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God.

Ask any volunteers to share what these passages have in common. Focus the discussion on the common action of believing.

Now call your students' attention to John 20:30-31, which is printed on their Scripture sheets. Have them find and mark the following using their colored pencils:

1. Circle the reason why “these” things are written.

These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ (v. 31).

2. Underline to whom “these” things are written.

They are written to John’s readers, “you” (v. 31).

3. Draw a box around what John wants us to believe.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (v. 31).

4. Draw fireworks  around what happens when we believe.

We have life in his name (v. 31).

After discussing what the students found and marked, ask a few questions:

Going by this verse and a certain word you see repeated in it, what seems to be the key word in the Gospel of John?

The key word seems to be “believe”.

Who is the “you” in John 20:31?

“You” refers to readers of this book, then and now (i.e., us!).

Going by this verse, what was John’s main thing?

Draw out conclusions that reflect these points:

- John believed that by reading about Jesus, people would believe in him.*
- John believed that this belief would give people life in Jesus’ name.*
- We’re going to see how this works as we study this Gospel.*

4. Digging Deeper

True Belief

Share with the group the Insight from Prep It regarding the Greek word for *believe*. Point out the connection between true belief and a person’s behavior. You may want to illustrate this connection through the following questions:

How do we demonstrate our belief in aerodynamics?

We fly in an airplane.

How do we demonstrate our belief in a substance such as rubber?

We bungee jump or ride in a car (rubber tires).

How do we demonstrate our belief that exercise will keep us healthy?

We play sports or participate in gym class.


How do we demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah? What do you do on a daily basis that is a direct result of your belief in Jesus?

It might be easy for students to give a simple answer to this question, such as “go to church.” Hover on this question and press students to get beyond obvious answers. Help them process how belief in Jesus as the Son of God can impact every aspect of their lives. This is what helps students see that the gospel message is relevant to their lives.

Say something like:

If believing in Jesus hasn’t really changed your behavior, how would anybody know that you actually believe? Now that we’re armed with a little info about the word *believe*, let’s dig deeper into the theme of John’s Gospel.

Ask your students to read silently some words from Jesus, John 3:11-18, printed on their Scripture sheets. As they read, ask them to—

1. Draw a light bulb  over the word *believe* and any other forms of this word.

2. Mark any benefits of believing with a “smiley” face  .

3. Mark any consequences for not believing with a “frowny” face  .

After a few minutes, use these questions to prompt a discussion about the benefits and consequences of believing or not believing:

Based on Jesus’ words in John 3, what’s the main benefit of believing?

The main benefit is salvation/eternal life (v. 16).

What’s the main consequence of not believing?

The main consequence is condemnation/death (v. 18).

So what? Does the concept of eternal life mean anything to you right now?

Let this be an open-ended discussion on whether the prospect of living forever (spiritually, of course) is actually enough motivation to follow Jesus.

5. Taking It Inward



Eternal Life. So What?

For this next exercise, ask students to move to places of solitude in the room. Before they disperse, explain:

1. Find places of solitude where you can have a mini-retreat with God. You’re going to spend some time praying and meditating on the things we’ve just uncovered in Scripture.
2. You’ll need your journal pages and pens.
3. Once you’re alone with God, prayerfully respond to the Taking It Inward exercise on your journal pages.

Encourage students to be honest with themselves in the exercise. Point out that they won't have to share with the rest of the group if they don't want to.

6. Wrapping It Up

T-Shirt Theology

After several minutes, call the group back together. Ask volunteers to share any convictions or challenging thoughts from their solitude time. (You may want to draw their attention to the "big time" questions.)

After some have shared, ask the group to create a pithy phrase (short, powerful, and concise) that would summarize this session. Encourage them to think along the lines of a phrase worthy of a T-shirt. If you need to prime the pump, give one or two of these suggestions:

Do the Truth!

DR 2 BLV!

Belief Is Relief!

Be the Truth!

Believing Is Doing!

When they've agreed on a phrase, ask them to write it on their journal pages—and then commit to re-creating it in such a way that they'll see it several times a day. (They may want to create a text message or make a screen saver for their computer.) If you'd like to ramp it up a notch, ask for a volunteer to champion getting the phrase printed on T-shirts. They can create T-shirts online rather inexpensively (it's more cost-effective to include all the students in your student ministry).

Close by praying for the belief level of your students—that their belief in Jesus as the Christ will affect their lifestyle every day.