

# User-Friendly Guide to John

# **USER FRIENDLY GUIDE TO JOHN**

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## User Friendly Tips

1. God wants us to know him...he came and lived among people. 'The Word became a human being', John tells us in John 1:14. We can know him because he laid down his life for us. Reading John's Gospel is not like reading any other book...it is reading what God has to say to us, **so** make sure you read the passage. Hear what God is saying.
2. Ask God to speak to you as a group and individually - do that as you prepare and when you meet together.
3. Yes you do need to prepare - read the passage yourself - make sure you understand the outline - ask for any help if you need it. Check out these two books:  
Read Mark Learn John's Gospel, published by Zondervan.  
Bible Speaks Today, John by Bruce Milne, published by IVP.
4. These notes use the New International Version.
5. The KEY VERSE is there to help you focus on the passage. As a CU, you could try using these as memory verses.
6. The WAY IN is to get you started. If people are a bit late they can join in when they arrive which is why . . .
7. The READ bit comes after this so hopefully no one will miss it.
8. The QUESTIONS and APPLICATION should fit together so that you not only understand what you have been reading, but can also put it into practice.
9. You could do these sessions in two parts: 1-5 and 6-10
10. If you have any questions or need help, contact us on [www.festive.org.uk](http://www.festive.org.uk). We'd be more than happy to assist you!

**Those Who Will Believe**  
**THE REASON FOR THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**Pray**

Ask God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 20:31**

'But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'

**Way in**


When someone tells you about an event or a meeting that they claim has taken place, how do you decide whether they are telling you the truth?


**Read John 20:24-31**

**Questions to Answer**

1. 'Seeing is believing' - in what way does this sum up Thomas' attitude?
  
2. What does Jesus say is the opposite to belief? What does this mean?
  
3. We can't see Jesus as Thomas did (see 20:29). How and what can we believe about Jesus?
  
4. John says that those who believe have life. Talk about what this life is like (check out John 3:16 and 17:3).

**Application**

 Look at 20:29 and 31 again and thank God that those who believe without seeing Jesus are blessed and that this Gospel was written by John to help us and our friends believe and be blessed.

 Pray for your friends and talk about how as a CU you can get people at your college to read John's gospel and the rest of the Bible.

**Something for next time**

Think of someone you could talk to Jesus about and pray for the opportunity to do so this week.

**The Word Became Flesh  
WHO IS JESUS?**

**Pray**

Ask God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 1:14**

'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

**Way in**

If you went round college, asking people "Who is Jesus?", what kind of answers might you get?

**Read John 1:1-14**

**Questions to Answer**

1. You have just read lots of descriptions of Jesus in words and pictures. Together, make a list of all of them. Take your time...there's lots and lots. The first one is done for you. When you've finished,

**Verse(s) Description of Jesus What it teaches us about Jesus**

1 The Word He is God's communication to us, bringing us God's message.

Etc. Etc. Etc.

Now praise God for who Jesus is!

2. John is claiming in these verses that Jesus reveals God. Look at the list you have just made. Why should we believe John's claim?

3. Re-read verses 10-13. Pick out the different responses to Jesus which John records here. How does this compare with people's responses today?

**Application**

Pray for your friends who don't know Jesus.

Pray for each another, that, like John the Baptist, people might believe because of your testimony to Jesus.

**Something for next time**

Read the rest of this chapter and chapter 2 before next time.

**New Birth**  
**JESUS AND NICODEMUS: PART 1**

**Pray**

Ask God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 3:3**

'In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

**Way in**

If you were asked the question, "How do you get to heaven?", how would you answer it? How might your friends answer it?

**Read John 3:1-13**





**Introduction**

The end of the last chapter tells us that many people were convinced Jesus was the Messiah...possibly Nicodemus as well.

**Questions to Answer**

1. What do we learn about Nicodemus here?
  
2. Help one another to understand what the idea of being 'born again' means.
  
3. Think about who Nicodemus was. What would a new start mean for him and why would he need it?
  
4. What authority has Jesus for talking about how to enter the Kingdom of heaven (3:10-13)?

**Application**

-  When we accept Jesus' offer of new birth (we will see how this works out next week) the slate is clean. The old has gone, the new has come.
-  Share with one another what this means to you. If you are a Christian, explain how and when you became one.
-  Praise God for his offer of new birth.
-  Pray for your friends who need to be born again.

**New Birth**  
**JESUS AND NICODEMUS: PART 2**

**Pray**

Ask God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 3:16**

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

**Way in**

What would the world be like without God taking care of it... and with evil triumphing?

**Read John 3:13-21**


**Introduction**


Make sure you know what happened in the wilderness. Read Numbers 21:4-9

**Questions to Answer**

1. Having read Numbers 21:4-9, identify and share together what the **sin**, the **judgement** and the **remedy** were. What did the people need to do?
  
2. Now looking at the whole passage you read from John's Gospel, what does Jesus outline as:  
the sin?  
the judgement?  
the remedy?  
what people have to do?

**Application**

 Pray for each other...for those who believe and for any who are still not believers.

 Talk some more about how great the offer is that Jesus makes. Could you explain it to a friend?

**Something for next time**

Try to read the next chapter before you all meet again.

**Living Water**  
**THE WOMAN AT THE WELL**

**Pray**

To God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 4:10**

'Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'"

Today you will need to read the passage before you look at the Way In question!

Read John 4:4-30 and 39-45


**Way In**


There are some pretty huge differences between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Compare what we saw about Nicodemus with this Samaritan woman and draw up a list of the differences.

**Questions to Answer**

1. Jesus says: "if you knew..." (4:10). Looking over the passage, describe the way the woman changes her idea about who Jesus is.
2. When Jesus reveals that he knows all about the Samaritan woman's sinful life (4:17-18), she suddenly raises a subject that was controversial for Jews and Samaritans (4:19-20). What do you think might be her reasons for doing this?
3. In John 4:29, the Samaritan woman wonders if Jesus can be the Messiah. What does she do with what she's heard from Jesus? What impact does it have?

**Application**

 How many of your friends have wrong ideas about Jesus? How can they get to know him better?

 Many people you will meet around college will either be a bit like Nicodemus, thinking they are good enough as they are, or like the woman, thinking they are far too bad for God. How would Jesus respond to them? Is anyone too good or bad for him?

**Something for next time**

We are going to pick up the Gospel story in John 10 next time. How about reading the chapters in-between before then?

**Known By Jesus**  
**“I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD”**

**Pray**

To God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 10:17**

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again.”

**Way In**



We don't meet too many shepherds these days! What is a shepherd's job like? What would make a good shepherd?

**Read John 10:14-21**

**Questions to Answer**

1. How does Jesus explain what he means when he claims to be the Good Shepherd?
2. In what way does the idea of a shepherd dying for the sheep seem back to front?
3. This is amazing stuff...Jesus is our Good Shepherd (10:16). Take time together to thank him for what this means.
4. Read verses 19-21. Look at the reactions to Jesus - what is going on here?

**Application**

-  Are these the sort of reactions people have today?
-  Pray for your friends...and for an opportunity for each of you to read this passage with them - so they might have the chance to know Jesus, the Good Shepherd who died that they might be forgiven.

**Something for next time**

Read the next two chapters for yourselves. These give an account of the raising of Lazarus and how the leaders grow to hate Jesus, and then of the woman who shows amazing love.

**Loved by Jesus**  
**WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET**

**Pray**

To God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 13:8**

'Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'"

**Way In**


In the film *Bruce Almighty*, Bruce is given God's power to do almost anything he wants. If you were given such power, how would you use it?

**Read John 13:1-17**


**Questions to Answer**


1. What does Jesus use his Father's power and authority for (13:2, 4-5)?
2. Think about the difference between bathing and washing feet. What point is Jesus making?
3. Why doesn't Peter want Jesus to wash his feet and why does Jesus insist on washing him?

**Application**

 Because Jesus loves us he wants us to be clean - only clean people belong to Jesus. Some of the group may never have been made completely clean.

Ask Jesus to cleanse them from the sin that cuts them off from a relationship with him. Others may find it hard to let Jesus forgive them for things they have done since becoming a Christian. Help one another now to get right with God.

 In what ways have you experienced or come into contact with Christians who have 'washed your feet' (in other words, refreshed you by their service)?

 Jesus says if we want to be like him then we must be prepared to serve one another like this. Encourage one another by thinking of ways you could demonstrate this kind of sacrificial love and service in your college.

**Jesus' Good Plan**  
**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Pray**

To God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 15:26**

"When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me."

**Way In**


Imagine you are trekking through a dense and dangerous jungle with a guide leading the way. Without him you are clueless! Suddenly he says, "I'll be leaving you very, very soon." What kind of thoughts would race through your mind?

**Read John 15:26 – 16:15****Questions to Answer**

1. How are the disciples feeling? Think about why they feel this way.
2. What warnings does Jesus give to his disciples about what will happen when they tell others about him?
3. Jesus insists it will be good if he goes because then the Holy Spirit will come. List all the things Jesus says the Spirit will do for his disciples:

VERSE(S)	THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ACTIONS
15:26	
16:7-8	
16:13	
16:14	
16:15	

**Application**

 Recap why Jesus says it will be good that he has gone to the Father. The Bible tells us that everyone who believes in Jesus has the promise of the Holy Spirit. Thank God for this promise. Pray for any among you who are having a hard time at the moment because they are open about their Christian faith.

✍ Did you know: more people were martyred for the gospel last century than at the time of the Roman Empire? Pray for those who are persecuted around the world. Find out more about Christians suffering for their faith - maybe organise a special CU meeting.

✍ Look again at 16:8-11. How will the Holy Spirit help you in the task of evangelism in college? Take courage and ask him to do the things he has promised.

### Something for next time

How much do you actually know about what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit? Why not read over chapters 14-16 and learn from the expert.

**The Crucified King**  
**THE DEATH OF JESUS**

**Pray**

To God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 1:29**

'The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"'

(Note: this is not from today's passage but from the beginning of the Gospel where John the Baptist gives testimony to who Jesus is.)

**Way In**

"You Christians are weird. You wear a symbol of death around your necks!"  
Have you become so used to the cross that you forget how awful and shocking it is?

**Read John 19:16-37**

**Questions to Answer**

1. Pilate was responsible for handing Jesus over to be crucified, but how does the sign he's written emphasise that God's plan is being worked out?
2. Look at the many references to Scripture being fulfilled. How does this point to God's plan being worked out?
3. See how Jesus cares for his mother. How does this show God's hand at work?
4. Jesus dies on the Jewish feast of Passover (v. 31). Passover was an Old Testament ritual that centred on a sacrifice of a lamb as a substitute for the life of a person doomed to die under God's judgement. How does this help us to understand God's plan of salvation at work?

**Application**

✍ Thinking about what you have read and talked about, thank God for his great plan of salvation and the way it is so amazingly worked out at the cross.

✍ John says he has written this eyewitness account so people might believe. How can you use what he has recorded to help our friends believe in Jesus?

### Something for next time

We have only touched on part of the events surrounding Jesus' death. Go back to chapter 17 and read for yourself right through to the Resurrection.

**“... your Father ... and your God”  
THE CERTAINTY OF ETERNAL LIFE**

**Pray**

To God the Father for the Holy Spirit's power to help us understand who Jesus is and apply what God is saying to us.

**Key Verse: John 20:18**

'Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"'

**Way In**

How certain are you about what happens to you at the end of your life? How would you explain this to your friends?

**Read John 20:1-23**

**Questions to Answer**

1. Last time we saw how Jesus' death was not a random event but was planned by God for our salvation. However, the disciples haven't understood this yet. Look for clues of how the disciples were feeling before they understood that Jesus had risen.


2. What changes everything for:

- 'the other disciple'? (This is how John, the author, refers to himself)
- Mary Magdalene?
- The 10 disciples?
- (you could also include Thomas whom you looked at in the first study!)

3. Think about what Jesus' resurrection means for us. What are the implications, for example, that:

- He is not in a tomb but is with God the Father right now
- He can give us peace
- He can ask us to tell others about him in the power of the Holy Spirit

**Application**

 According to Church history, every one of the 12 disciples (except Judas Iscariot who hanged himself) went to their deaths proclaiming that Jesus is alive. Would you??

- ✍ The force of John 20:17-18 and 21-23 is: 'Don't keep this great news to yourself! Others need to hear!' What can you do as a CU to:
- equip one another to know what to say about Jesus?
  - create opportunities to tell other students about Jesus?
- ✍ Pray for confidence in Jesus and for opportunities to talk about him.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version.

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