

introducing Jesus



life-changing encounters
from John's Gospel

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Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, mums and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That’s why we’ve designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let’s take a look at what is included:

- ↻ **Talkabout:** most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here’s the question that will do that. It’s designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** the Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. **The Leader’s Guide** contains **guidance on questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- 🔍 **Explore more (optional):** these questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw.
- ➔ **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you’ll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. 🗒️ **Getting personal**, is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God’s word—in line with His concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader’s Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God’s word.



Why study *Introducing Jesus*?

It's only when you sit down and talk with someone that you start to discover what they are really like.

What would it be like to have an intimate conversation with Jesus? What would you ask Him? What might He say to you?

In his Gospel, John records for us a series of conversations that Jesus had with different people. They include a confused minister and a desperate woman; a lifelong loser and an anxious politician.

From each conversation there emerges something new about Jesus—who He is, what He came to do and what His priorities and concerns are. And each time we also hear Jesus speaking directly to us. He addresses our doubts and our desires, our fears and our failings, our sorrows and setbacks, and challenges us to think differently about God, life and eternity.

John's Gospel is unique in that it records long and detailed conversations that Jesus had, not just with the crowds and the religious authorities, but also with individuals. We begin to see more clearly the compassion of the Lord Jesus for the many different kinds of people He gave His time to.

But we also see more clearly that He had an agenda for them. He wanted them to see beyond their own horizons—which were limited and lacked perspective—to the greater things that God has in store for those who follow Him.

And Jesus wants to lead us down the same path. To see that there is more to life than is immediately obvious, that death is not the end, and that the key to fulfilment now, and eternal life forever, is found in Him alone.

Use these studies to deepen your understanding of Jesus Christ, or perhaps even to be introduced to Him for the first time.





John 3

A CONFUSED MINISTER

talkabout

1. What reasons do people give for ignoring or rejecting Jesus?

investigate

Read John 3 v 1-10

Nicodemus was a leading member of the religious establishment and a member of the super-religious group, the Pharisees. Today he might be a vicar—"Nick the Vic". Jesus calls him "Israel's teacher". But what he sees in Jesus confuses him.

2. What is the question behind the statement by Nicodemus in verse 2?

3. How is verse 3 a "reply" to verse 2?

4. What do you need in order to see and enter God's kingdom?



optional

explore more

In verse 10 Jesus says Nicodemus ought to know about Spirit-transformation because he is a Bible teacher. In other words, he should know that this was promised in the Old Testament. Read **Ezekiel 36 v 25-27**. How does the promise in Ezekiel match the words of Jesus to Nicodemus? How will the promise in Ezekiel be fulfilled?



apply

5. What does “born again” mean in our society?

6. What does Jesus mean by being “born again”?



investigate

▶ Read John 3 v 10-18

Jesus can speak of “heavenly things” (v 12) like Spirit-transformation because He “came from heaven” (v 11, 13). But Nicodemus can’t even understand everyday pictures (“earthly things” in v 12). When it comes to recognising God’s kingdom (v 2-3) that’s a big problem. It’s a big problem because God’s King doesn’t look anything like what we might expect.

7. Nicodemus is part of the political and religious establishment. What do you think he might expect God’s King to be like?



8. We expect a king to be exalted or “lifted up” and God’s King will be “lifted up”. But what does Jesus mean when He says God’s King will be lifted up? (See John 12 v 32-33.)

9. Turn to **Numbers 21 v 6-9** to discover the background to verse 14. Why will God’s King be exalted or “lifted up” on a cross?

10. What must we do to be saved by God’s King?

The reason we don’t recognise the crucified King is not just that this is not what we expect an exalted king to look like. It is also what the cross reveals about us: that we are evil people who need a Saviour.

➤ **Read John 3 v 19-21**

11. See 1 v 1-9. When did God’s light come into the world?

12. What stops people “seeing” and coming into God’s kingdom?

13. When does this conversation take place and why?



14. How does Jesus interpret the setting that Nicodemus chose for his chat with Jesus?

Nicodemus comes by night and asks: “Why can’t I see?”! He is a picture of his own question. Underlying all the reasons we give for not knowing God is the fact that we won’t admit our need or submit our lives. And so we need God’s Spirit to recognise God’s King because we hide our need for a crucified King.

➔ **apply**

15. What does this conversation suggest Christians must do if they want to know God better?

16. What are the implications for our evangelism?

🗨️ **getting personal**

Is there an issue in your life that you are hiding from God? Is there an issue about which you are reluctant to pray? It will stop you enjoying God. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139 v 23-24).

⬆️ **pray**

Read **Psalm 32**. Invite people to take a verse or two at a time and turn it into prayer.

