

# Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

## The Light (Advent): The Call to Worship (John 1:1–5)

### Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Are you a morning person or a night person? Do you like sunrises or sunsets?
- What’s the darkest place you’ve ever been? What was that like?
- Describe the beginning of a book or movie that made an impression on you. What made it memorable?

### Dig

After reading John 1:1–5 together, discuss these questions.

1. John begins his story of Jesus with words that echo the first words of Genesis, “In the beginning.” Why do you think that was important? How does the beginning of creation help frame the story of Jesus for you?
2. For Greeks, the “Word” could be a principle that brings things into existence or brings order to things. In Israel’s Scriptures, God creates and accomplishes his will by his “Word.” How do those perspectives help you understand why John refers to Christ as “the Word”? What extra element does he bring to this idea?
3. From verses 1–3, what do you understand to be true about “the Word”? What do you find confusing? (Group members may struggle to understand how the Word can be “with God” and also be God. This is the paradox of the Trinity: Christ the Son is fully God yet loves and submits to God the Father, as the Father is fully God and loves and sends the Son. We observe both these truths in the Scriptures, and we affirm both by faith, but we can never quite grasp how these two truths can be compatible because God in his triunity is not like anything else that exists. As Pastor Bryan said, the Father and Son (and Spirit) are indistinguishable in essence yet distinct in person. This realization evokes wonder and praise from the faithful.)
4. Light and life also are prominent in Genesis 1. How does mentioning them here add to the picture of the Word? What do those seem to promise that the Word brings to humanity?
5. In verse 5, John uses a deliberately ambiguous expression. The last clause can be understood to mean “the darkness has not understood it” or “the darkness has not overcome it.” How do those statements describe the story of Jesus as you know it? What assurance or warning do they give?

*Summary:* This text puts the story of Jesus in cosmic, eternal perspective. Christ, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, exists eternally and creates all else that exists. He is the source of life and light—all that is true and good. He comes into our world to make it right again, and he won’t be defeated.

## Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- This text shows us a God who created a good world for human habitation and who remains profoundly engaged with it at every moment. How does that reality affect you?
- Light and darkness are in conflict in our text. How do you experience that conflict? How does it affect you to know that the light of Christ triumphs over darkness?
- Pastor Bryan quoted C. S. Lewis as follows: “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” How has faith in Jesus helped you to “see everything else”? What do you see that you would otherwise miss?
- What is a step you need to take to live in the light of Christ and overcome the darkness?

## Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What have you learned or been reminded of in this text for which we can praise Christ?
- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- Where do you need God’s light to shine? What darkness do you recognize that needs to be overcome?