

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)**Lesson Plan:** Introduction to John**Learning Goals:** Students should understand the audience, provenance, circumstances, and basic features of the Gospel of John.**Question:** Which painting do you prefer and why? (project onto the board of realist/impressionist Van Gogh picture and realist/cubist Picasso)

Prayer.

Discuss question on board. (5 minutes)

John is the most straightforward and the most complicated gospel. (One scholar said it was “shallow enough for a child to wade in and deep enough for an elephant to swim in.”) It is often suggested as the first book for a new Christian to read. It is also the gospel most often contemplated by theologians. John had a knack for demonstrating the simplicity and the vastness of the gospel message.

Purpose:

1. Evangelism
John 1:7, “So that we may believe that Jesus is the Son of God.”
2. Discipleship
John focuses on Jesus’ private ministry to his disciples in chapters 13-17. This glimpse into the daily ministry of Jesus with his disciples is unique to the gospel.

Outline of John:

1. Public Ministry of Jesus (1-12)
2. Private Ministry of Jesus (13-17)
3. Passion Ministry of Jesus (18-19)
4. Resurrection Ministry of Jesus (20-21)

John’s method in conveying the life of Christ is centered around 7 signs (miracles), 7 statements (ex. “I am the bread of life”), and 7 speeches (or sermons).

Authorship:

Strictly speaking, the gospel is anonymous. However, all evidence points to John, the disciple of Jesus, as author.

The evidence for John’s authorship is the following:

1. It seems to be written by an eyewitness.
2. The author seems to know and understand Jewish customs.
3. The author seems to be a native Palestinian due to his knowledge of the geography of the area.
4. He appears to be a disciple.

Date:

John wrote his gospel prior to 90-100 CE. (John seems unaware of the existence of the synoptic gospels, which is why his gospel is so different).

Provenance:

John is most likely writing from Ephesus

Audience:

John is writing to a Jewish Christian audience that is probably experiencing conflict with the Jewish synagogue. Throughout the gospel, we see tensions between Jesus and his followers and the traditional Jewish leaders of his day (even more so than in the Synoptics)

Compare/Contrast John and the Gospels:

1. John's gospel begins with a cosmic scope, beginning with the words "in the beginning" (parallel with Genesis), while the synoptics start with Jesus' earthly life.
2. John presents Jesus' Judean ministry, while the synoptics focus on his Galilean ministry
3. John records three Passover celebrations, while the synoptics record only one.
4. John tells of three visits to Jerusalem, while the synoptics only tell of one.
5. John describes a few complicated allegories and the synoptics describe simple parables.
6. John focuses on the theme of eternal life, while the synoptics focus on the theme of the Kingdom of God.
7. John gives long, complex discourses of Jesus, while the synoptics provide short pungent statements.
8. Only two events are shared between John and the synoptics before Passion Week: feeding the 5,000 and walking on water.
9. John's gospel has a unique focus on the theme of light (versus darkness).

Maybe a good comparison of the synoptics to John is to compare a similar subject from realist painters and impressionist painters

"San Giorgio Maggiore"

"Parliament Building"

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Know distinctive features