

Leader's Guide

Jesus: Now Do You Believe?

John 11:38-44, John 20:24-31

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Main Idea

Belief in Jesus is more than agreeing with truth. It's embracing it so fully that it changes how we live. True belief leads to participation.

Key Scriptures

- Gospel of John 11:38–45 (Lazarus)
 - Gospel of John 20:24–29 (Thomas)
 - Gospel of John 13:34–35 (Love one another)
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Leader Preparation

Before your group meets, take a few minutes to reflect:

- Where is God inviting *you* to move from belief into participation?
 - Be ready to share a simple, honest example from your own life.
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Opening

- *What's something you've said you believed in but struggled to follow through on? (light/fun examples welcome - knowing that working out is good for you, but never actually going to the gym, etc.)*
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Discussion Questions

1. Understanding the Message

The sermon reframed “believe” as more than mental agreement. It's *embracing truth with participation*. Where have you typically thought of belief as just intellectual, and how does this deeper definition challenge that?

Follow-ups:

- What shaped that understanding for you?
- How does this deeper definition feel – challenging, freeing, or both?

2. Seeing Yourself in the Story

In the stories of Lazarus and Thomas, people responded to Jesus with both belief and doubt. Which response do you relate to most right now and why?

Follow-ups:

- What questions or doubts feel most real to you right now?
- How have you seen God meet you in those moments before?

3. Personal Reflection

Where in your life might there be a gap between *saying* you believe in Jesus and *living* like it's true? (Think about relationships, priorities, time, or decisions.)

Leader Notes:

- This is a key turning point. Give space and don't rush silence.
- Model vulnerability first if needed.

Follow-ups:

- What makes that area hard to surrender or trust God with?
- What might change if you fully trusted Jesus there?

4. Moving Toward Action

Jesus calls us not just to believe, but to participate, especially in loving others (John 13:34–35). What is one specific way you can intentionally live that out this week?

Follow-ups:

- Who specifically is God putting on your heart?
- What might it cost you to love in that way?

5. Building a New Habit

What is one simple, repeatable step you can take daily this week to grow from belief into participation? (Examples: a short daily prayer of surrender, reading a Gospel passage, reaching out to encourage someone, or inviting accountability from someone in this group.)

Follow-ups:

- When will you do this each day?
 - Who in this group can help you stay accountable?
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Closing Encouragement

Remind the group:

- Jesus isn't looking for perfect faith. He's inviting active trust.
- Growth happens in small, consistent steps.
- We need each other to live this out.

Optional Scripture to Close:

- Gospel of John 13:35 — *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*