

1 John 1–2

Memory Verse: *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin* (1 John 1:7 NIV).

Background Helps:

The Gospel of John was written to bring its readers to faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, so that they might have eternal life (John 20:30-31). Its key word is *believe*. The epistle of 1 John is written to those who have already believed in Christ. Its purpose is to lead its readers to an *assurance* of eternal life (1 John 5:13). Its key word is *know*.

Written by the apostle John, probably in his old age from Ephesus, the letter presents three marks or tests of a born again Christian:

1. **Belief.** A born again Christian believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who came in the flesh (1:1-4; 2:18-27; 3:23; 4:1-6, 15; 5:5-13).
2. **Righteousness.** A born again Christian practices righteous living and does not make a practice of sin (1:5–2:6; 2:28–3:10; 5:1-3).
3. **Love.** A born again Christian loves his fellow Christians (2:7-11; 3:11-18, 23; 4:7-21).

Lesson Helps:

One approach to teaching this book over the next three weeks: Take up one of these marks each week, each time using passages (as listed above) from the entire book without regard to whether or not they are part of that week's readings in the home. For example, on week one teach the mark of *belief* drawing from the material in 1:1-4; 2:18-27; 3:23; 4:1-6, 15; and 5:5-13, even though the weekly reading covers only chapters one and two. On week two, teach the theme of righteousness and on week three, love.

A possible lesson aim for the entire three week period: My students will learn three marks of a born again Christian, so that they will determine to exhibit each of these marks in their own lives, thus strengthening their assurance of new birth.


Or, you may decide to take each week's reading and write an individual lesson aim based on all or some of the material in each section. For example:

Week one – 1 John 1:5–2:2. My students will learn how to receive forgiveness of sins, so that they will take steps to experience this forgiveness in their own lives. This lesson could be slanted toward Christians or non-Christians or both. The memory verse fits well with this aim.

Methods: Bring some Monopoly money and some real money to class. How can you distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit bills? 1 John helps us to distinguish between genuine and counterfeit Christians by the three marks given above.

Assignment:

 Read 1 John 3:1–4:6.

 Memorize 1 John 3:8b.