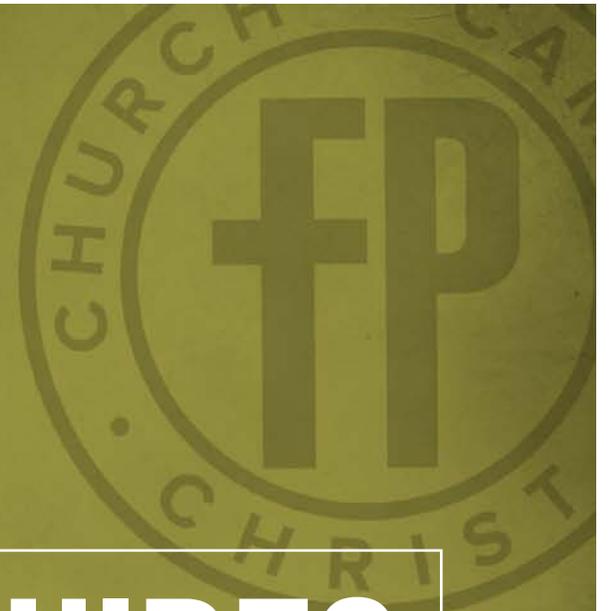


APRIL 2016

HOPE

WEEKLY GUIDES



"I AM FORGIVEN"

April 2016: Help Week Leader Guide

Help Week: Equips and empowers student leaders to share the love and message of Jesus to their friends who have questions about their faith.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

Select one volunteer to share from the Help Week Leader Guide

1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. This week is Help week, which is where we work together in learning about how to share the gospel. This month our theme is 'I am Forgiven.'"
- Pray.
- List off any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

2. Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- "Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about the cross of Christ.

GOSPEL CONTENT

1. Share the Gospel Content

- › **Ephesians 2:12-16** says, "In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death." (NLT)

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“I AM FORGIVEN” April 2016: Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

Share the Gospel Content (continued)

➤ **The most important message of Christianity is the message of the cross.** Without the cross, there would be no gospel, no salvation, and no hope of restoring the kind of life we were intended to live in relationship with the Father. Can you imagine what the gospel would sound like if you took away the cross? It would probably sound like “being a really good person” or fixing ourselves by “trying harder” to make God accept us. That, however, wouldn’t be good news at all, because without Christ, no one gets access to the Father. This is because our sin, no matter how small, will always separate us from God. When Jesus gave his life on the cross, He paid the penalty on our behalf. When we share the gospel with others, it is important that we remember to share about Christ on the cross, because without this detail, no one can come to an understanding of what God is actually offering here – and that is GRACE. Grace is not only forgiveness, but also undeserved reward. Grace, it turns out, is exactly how the Father saves people and brings them into His family.

➤ **Question:** What difference does the Cross of Christ make?

THREE THINGS THAT THE CROSS MEANS FOR US:

1. The wall of separation between the Father and us is demolished.

Receiving the grace of God means that trusting in Jesus’s work on the cross takes us from being outsiders to insiders. We are adopted from a family of darkness to a family of light. Our sin no longer keeps us from relationship with God and His family. Pretty much everything about where we stand with God changes. We even go from death to life!

2. The conflict between God and us is replaced with peace.

Even if we do not consider ourselves to be enemies of God before we are part of His family, our sin clearly shows which team we are on. The cross destroys this conflict and replaces it with peace. Only God is perfect, and only human death can pay for sin. To make matters more complicated, only a sinless person could die in the place of a guilty person. So, what did God do? He became human. Jesus, being fully God and fully man, is the only one who could ever shed His blood to create peace between God and us.

3. We are brought near to the Father and together with each other.

Because the wall of separation is demolished and the conflict between God and us is replaced with peace, we have access to God, but it gets even better. God actually wants to us be close to Him! He wants us to be as close with Him as a parent should be with their children or as the closest of friends. In fact, we can now enjoy a special closeness with others in God’s family because of what He has done!

Continue:

➤ The message of the cross is a game-changer, and we should never sell short the power of its message!

TRANSITION TO SMALL GROUPS

Student Leader Host: “Thank you <insert name> for sharing. Let’s break into small groups and use the Help Week Handout to spend a few minutes in discussion about what has just been shared.”

Small Groups Discussion Questions:

1. How would you explain the gospel without the cross? Why is the cross so important to its message?
2. In your own words, explain grace and come up with some personal examples of the grace of God.
3. In your own words, explain why Jesus Christ was the only one who could fix the problem of sin in man.

Prayer points (for student handout)

Reflect on Ephesians 2:12-16 upon entering prayer time.

- Pray for your peers, especially those who need Christ in their lives.
- Pray for the lost – that they may experience the incredible love of the Father.

“I AM FORGIVEN”

April 2016: Help Week Student Handout

Help Week: Equips and empowers student leaders to share the love and message of Jesus to their friends who have questions about their faith.

SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How would you explain the gospel without the cross? Why is the cross so important to its message?
2. In your own words, explain grace and come up with some personal examples of the grace of God.
3. In your own words, explain why Jesus Christ was the only one who could fix the problem of sin in man.

PRAY

Reflect on Ephesians 2:12-16 upon entering prayer time.

- Pray for your peers, especially those who need Christ in their lives.
- Pray for the lost – that they may experience the extravagant love of the Father.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Answer: The Father God adopting me.

FATHER GOD

God made all of creation. The first people in God's creation—Adam and Eve—had a perfect relationship with God. However, they sinned, turned away from God, and creation fell. That brokenness resulted in a separation from God and from a freedom that comes in fullness of life with the Father. God was deeply grieved over His creation.

“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth ... and it grieved Him to His heart.”

- Genesis 6:5-6 (ESV)

ADOPTING

God's heart was so hurt over His creations' brokenness that He sent His Son Jesus. God sent Jesus to pay the price (redemption) to restore our relationship back to the Father. Jesus sacrificed His own life on a cross in our place and was also raised back to life to end our alienation from God and bring us into a living relationship that lasts forever. Only because of Jesus can we be adopted as sons and daughters of God— part of His family, along with the benefits of being His children.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

- Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV)

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

- Romans 8:14-16 (ESV)

ME

You and I were born into the same experience, the inevitable realization that something is not right with the world or us. We discover that we are alienated, alone, and missing out on real life. Life without a relationship with God is a broken existence. The good news is that it can be restored by making the decision to follow Jesus and placing our trust in Him. Once this happens, we have a relationship with God and His family (fellow believers who follow Him)—a true belonging quite possibly for the first time. You, too, have the opportunity to follow Him and place your trust in Him to receive a living relationship that lasts forever.

“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

- John 1:12 (ESV)

"I AM FORGIVEN"

April 2016: Overcome Week Leader Guide

Overcome Week: Allows student leaders to be encouraged by a peer or an adult leader that they are "Called to Prayer" throughout their lives. Leaders are to use testimonies, teaching points, and Biblical encouragement during the teaching time.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

Select one volunteer to share from the Overcome Week Leader Guide.

1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. This week is Overcome week, which is where we work together in learning about how to overcome our fears of sharing the gospel. This month our theme is 'I am Forgiven!'"
- Pray
- List off any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

2. Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- "Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about overcoming our fears of sharing Jesus with others."

GUEST CONTENT

1. Teaching Time (10 minutes)

→ Introduction

- › Introduce yourself, who invited you to speak, and simple points about your life.
- › **For example:** "My name is Billy and I'm a ninth grader at Missionfield high school. Sally invited me to share with you today about how to overcome fear. I'd like to encourage and challenge you today."

Ephesians 2:12-16 says, "In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us."

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“I AM FORGIVEN” April 2016: Overcome Week Leader Guide (continued)

Guest Content (continued)

He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.” (NLT)

– Last week, we learned about the cross. It is the most important part of sharing the gospel message.

→ **Question:** How does the message of the cross help me be more confident in sharing the gospel with others?

First, it takes the pressure off of me to come up with something impactful, because the message of the cross is impactful all by itself. Even if my testimony or gospel presentation does not appear to be powerful or dramatic, I can trust that when I get to the part about Jesus sacrificing His own life on the cross to rescue me (which I could not do for myself), God will do His part to draw my hearers without me having to worry about trying too hard to convince anyone. I can simply emphasize what Christ has done on the cross and how I responded to His invitation to follow Him and receive grace, salvation, and a loving relationship that lasts forever.

Secondly, it is so simple that anyone can understand it. We do not have to have a theology degree in order to share the gospel with someone, but it is critical that we understand a few simple points. If we talk about who God is (loving and perfect Creator), why we need salvation (because sin separates us), how God achieved salvation (the cross), and how we can receive it (believe and follow Him), then we will arrive at the perfect opportunity to invite them to trust Him and begin a relationship with the Father through prayer.

Thirdly, if God can change me, He can change anyone. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, all those who follow Christ are a new creation. Jesus came to give us an entirely new life! A great way to share the gospel is to share all the ways you have changed that may or may not be noticeable to others unless they know you well. It is very important to describe these examples in attitudes, not just actions. Seeing God’s power change us from the inside out should give us confidence that He can do this for anyone

2. Open Discussion:

1. What part of the gospel message is most powerful and why? (example: the cross, because it is the solution to our sin and motivated by sacrificial love.)

2. What are the most basic parts of the gospel message? (example: Who God is, the problem of sin, why we need salvation, the cross, and how to respond to the gospel)

3. How would you describe one way that God has changed you in one sentence?

CONCLUDE

- Follow up the teaching time by thanking the guest speaker. Remind the students of next week’s meeting, Prepare Week.
- Dismiss with a closing prayer, reminding the students of the prayer points from last week as well as the prayer points below.
 - Pray for yourself, family, and peers.
 - Pray for your school, wisdom, protection, and for open hearts to receive the gospel.

“I AM FORGIVEN”

April 2016: Prepare Week Leader Guide

Prepare Week: Allows Student leaders to share their story of what their life was like without Christ as opposed to the fullness of their new life with Christ.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

- Ensure selected 3 student leaders are prepared to share their testimony with “Appendix A – Your faith Story”.
- (Optional) Print “Appendix A – Your Faith Story” (1 per student) if you want to have every student attending club working on their testimony at the same time (recommended at least once a semester).

1 Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - “Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. This week is Prepare week, which is where we practice sharing our personal story about how we came to know Jesus. This month our theme is ‘I am Forgiven.’”
- Pray
- List off any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

2. Introduce Volunteer(s)

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- “Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share their story. Please listen respectfully as it takes a lot of courage to speak in front of others. At the end we are going to give some positive feedback on how well they did and also ask questions. Let’s welcome them as they share.

TESTIMONY TIME

1. Share Testimonies

- › Student 1 Testimony = _____
- › Student 2 Testimony = _____
- › Student 3 Testimony = _____

• Leader Host: “Thank you for sharing, <insert name>. Now let’s take a minute to share some positive feedback about how they did. Also, feel free to ask them questions about their story.

- (Optional) If you are working on testimonies collectively, pass out “Appendix A – Your Faith Story” and read/explain/discuss each step.

2. Conclude

- Dismiss with a closing prayer.
- Inform students of the upcoming Engage Week and any other First Priority reminders.

“I AM FORGIVEN”

April 2016: Engage Week Leader Guide

Engage Week: Trains student leaders choosing to impact their classmates with the gospel of Jesus.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

- Ensure the student speaker is prepared to share the gospel using “Appendix B – Sample Gospel Presentation,” and follow with invitation.
- Confirm that arrangements for food for the club have been completed and that it is ready to serve just before club opening.
- Confirm that enough response cards will be at the club and ready to hand out as students enter.

1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - “Welcome to First Priority! Today we are going to start with a game to get to know one another. There is food for everyone here, so please feel free to grab a bite to eat while we get started.”
- Allow students to fellowship as student leaders prepare the gathering activity.

2. Activity

- Game: Top Secret Handshake
- Preparation: No preparation needed.
- Play: Every student gets a partner. When the signal is given, every pair will have one minute to come up with a super secret handshake. At the end of the minute the game leader will announce that 3 judges (club leaders) will be coming around to judge their secret handshake. Each judge chooses a favorite and the pairs will demonstrate their secret handshake in front of the club. At this point, take a vote to determine who will win. Prizes are optional.

3. Introduce Volunteer(s)

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- “Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about something that is very important to them. Please listen respectfully as it takes a lot of courage to speak in front of others.”

GOSPEL TIME

1. Gospel, Invitation, and Response Cards

- Student Leader: Share the gospel and give a personal invitation using “Appendix B “Sample Gospel Presentation”.
- After invitation prayer, call attention to the response cards and direct students to fill out their information and respond by checking the appropriate box. It may also be helpful to announce that this information is only used if follow up is requested.

2. Conclude

- Student Leader: Thanks you so much for coming today! Please turn in your card to <insert name of student leader> before you leave. We meet here every week at this time, so you are all invited to come back next week!

Need more information about leading your club?

Check out www.firstpriority.club/club-resources

Is your club registered and reporting?

Check out www.firstpriority.club/register

Do you have a question about what your legal role in the school is?

Check out www.firstpriority.club/roles

Just want to see your club online?

Check out www.firstpriority.club/clubfinder



Connecting the Church to the Campus for Christ

Appendix A

YOUR FAITH STORY

Your story is one of the most important tools you have been given by God to share the gospel with the world around you! Finding the power in your story will depend on how you learn to tell it. The first step to being able to tell a powerful story is to **WRITE IT DOWN**. This will give you the ability to edit the specifics and memorize. The second is to **PRACTICE OUT LOUD** with a close friend or parent so that they can give you useful feedback. The third is to **SPEND TIME IN PRAYER AND IN THE SCRIPTURE** to ask God to speak through you before you share your story publically, because God can do more in others through you than you can do by yourself!

1. START WITH A KEYWORD

The first step in writing down your faith story is choosing what keywords describe your life before Christ. Below is a list of emotions. Circle two or three that adequately describe how you felt as a result of a problem you faced without Christ in your life. You are not limited to this list, so feel free to choose a keyword of your own! This part helps keep your story compelling and on track.

KEYWORDS

alienated	bitter	fearful	hurt	rejected
alone	confused	frustrated	insecure	uncertain
angry	depressed	guilty	lonely	unforgiving
apathetic	distrusting	heartbroken	lost	unloved
ashamed	doubtful	hopeless	prideful	worthless

2. SET UP THE BACKGROUND

Now describe the situation in which you came to face this problem and why your keyword describes the way you felt. It is more important to be honest than dramatic. This helps people to relate with your story personally and understand why we need God in our lives. If you need more space, continue on the back.

EXAMPLE: *"my parents divorced when I was younger... I blamed myself and began to feel unworthy of relationships... so I become isolated and alone because I was afraid of being rejected for being unworthy..."*

3. SHARE HOW JESUS ENTERED YOUR STORY

Now describe how you came to know Jesus. Be sure to describe that moment (or that process) if you can with adjectives that show how meaningful and impactful it was for you. Try to describe how Jesus touched your heart, and how you responded (such as asking Him to be your Lord and Savior). This part challenges people's idea of what God is like.

EXAMPLE: *"One summer I attended church camp with my youth group and we talked about new identity in Christ and being loved as God's children. God began to speak to my heart and to my issues of unworthiness and fear of rejection. One evening I experienced the love of God and realized that Christ died for my sin, so that I could have a loving relationship with God. So I asked Him to save me and forgive me of my sin. The impact of that moment changed everything."*

4. STATE THE IMPACT OF CHRIST ON YOUR LIFE

Now describe how Christ impacted your problem and your life. Use the emotion opposite of your keyword and share how Christ either reversed your problem or is continually giving you the power to overcome. This is the part that inspires your hearers to place their hope in Christ!

EXAMPLE: *"What changed after that was my view of myself. I began to trust that God really did love me and want me to be in relationship with Him. I had once been unworthy, but now I was given worth. I was once alone, but now I see myself as wanted, loved, and together with God and His family. I was once afraid of rejection, but now I know that I am fully accepted by Him, and He is giving me the faith and the strength to overcome the attitudes of the past."*

Appendix B

SAMPLE GOSPEL PRESENTATION

Begin the presentation by sharing a short version of your testimony. For example: *"I was raised in church. I'd never really thought of my story as being powerful, but when I think about how Christ died for me, a sinner, I am very grateful that Jesus did for me something I could not do for myself. This fact is powerful enough all by itself. I love to serve God because of all that He has done for me."*

What Is the Gospel?

• Answer: The Father God Adopting Me.

FATHER GOD

God made all of creation. The first people in God's creation—Adam and Eve—had a perfect relationship with the Father. However, they turned away from Him and creation fell into sin and brokenness. This resulted in separation from God and the free and full life we were intended to experience. God was deeply grieved over His creation.

"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth ... and it grieved Him to His heart." - Genesis 6:5-6 (ESV)

ADOPTING

God's heart was so hurt over His creations' brokenness that He sent His Son Jesus. God sent Jesus to pay the price (redemption) to restore our relationship back to the Father. Jesus sacrificed His own life on a cross in our place and was also raised back to life to end our alienation from God and bring us into a loving relationship that lasts forever. Only because of Jesus can we be adopted as sons and daughters of God—part of His family, along with the benefits of being His children.

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." - Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV)

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." - Romans 8:14-16 (ESV)

ME

You and I were born into the same experience, the inevitable realization that something is not right with the world or us. We discover that we are alienated, alone, and missing out on real life. Life without a relationship with God is a broken existence. The good news is that it can be restored by making the decision to follow Jesus and placing our trust in Him. Once this happens, we have a relationship with God and His family (fellow believers who follow Him)—a true belonging quite possibly for the first time. You, too, have the opportunity to follow Him and place your trust in Him to receive a loving relationship that lasts forever.

"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." - John 1:12 (ESV)

HOW TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR

1. Confess your need (I am broken and in sin)
2. Change your direction in life, knowing that God's way of living is better than our way living
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and was raised to life to redeem you and restore your relationship to God
4. Receive through prayer the free gift of salvation and begin your journey as part of the family of God.

WHAT TO PRAY

Father God,

I know that I am broken and I need your forgiveness. Jesus, I believe you died and were raised to life to redeem me. I want to turn away from my old life and toward a completely new life with You in your family. Right now I put my trust in you and invite you to come into my life and change it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We believe in the impossible:
THE HOPE OF CHRIST
IN EVERY STUDENT
at your school.



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