

JANUARY 2016

HOPE

WEEKLY GUIDES



“I AM: FATHER”

January 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: Father’”
- Pray.
- List off any reminders for the club as First Priority begins.

2. Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about God the Father”

GOSPEL CONTENT

1. Share the Gospel Content

- › **Ephesians 1:3-5** says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.” (ESV)
- › **Picture this:** Imagine you are surveying a group of randomly selected people about who God is or what God is like. What kind of responses do you think you would get? They would probably be as numerous and as random as the people you asked. Think about your own view. Who or what has informed your idea of God? Most people’s idea of God is based on life experiences or the testimony of another person. Neither of these methods are

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“I AM: FATHER” January 2016: Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

Share the Gospel Content (continued)

totally wrong, but apart from how God has chosen to make Himself known, we may get the wrong idea about who He is because our idea may not be based on truth. That is - truth that is true regardless of what anyone thinks. This is one of the major purposes of the Bible – to give us an accurate picture of what God is like.

› **Let’s break this down:** Who IS God and what IS He like?

TWO IMPORTANT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD

1. God is Creator.

The book of Genesis tells us how our world began, revealing to us who started the whole thing. We call Him God. God created every thing that exists, taking great pleasure in His work. God’s love for His creation was deep, especially for humans. God loved Adam and Eve (the first two humans) more than all of creation because they were made in His image for deep relationship with Him, and everything He created was good.

2. God is a Father who longs to have relationship with His children.

God made all things and all people; so He is the Father of all creation. He made all people in His image, which generally speaking makes all people His children. However, because of sin our resemblance to God our Father is mostly unrecognizable and we are literally separated from His family. Even so, God loved us. This is why the Father longs for relationship with His estranged children and why He provided adoption in Christ, so that we could once again be where we belong, in God’s family, having relationship with the Father.

Continue:

› Certainly God has many more characteristics than what I’ve shared here today, but I want to challenge you to allow the Bible to form your view of God, particularly when it describes God as a Father who longs for relationship with His children.

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.”

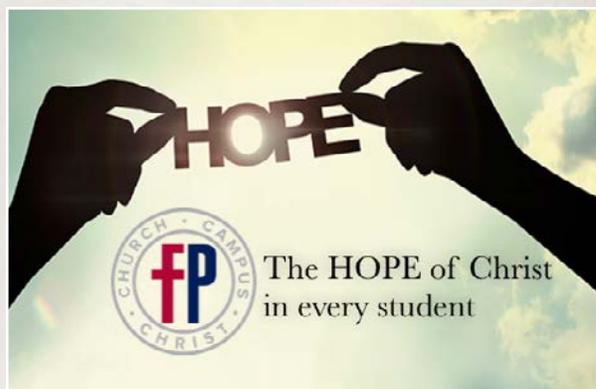
Small Groups Discussion Questions:

- 1 What are some things you’ve heard from others about what God is like? How do these ideas compare with what you know about the Bible?
2. Using today’s scripture reading (Ephesians 1:3-5), describe God’s plan for you as his child.
3. How do you think God feels about people at your school who are lost? How does that compare with how YOU feel about them?
4. How does knowing God as a loving Father help you to better understand the gospel and share it with others?

Prayer points (for student handout)

Reflect on Ephesians 1:3-5 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: FATHER”

January 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. What are some things you've heard from others about what God is like? How do these ideas compare with what you know about the Bible?
2. Using today's scripture reading (Ephesians 1:3-5), describe God's plan for you as his child.
3. How do you think God feels about people at your school who are lost? How does that compare with how YOU feel about them?
4. How does knowing God as a loving Father help you to better understand the gospel share it better with others?

PRAY

Reflect on Ephesians 1:3-5 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: 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: FATHER”

January 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: Father’”
- Pray
- List off any reminders for the club as First Priority begins.

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 1:3-5 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.” (ESV)

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“I AM: FATHER” January 2016: Overcome Week Leader Guide (continued)

- “Last week, we saw how the Bible tells us a lot about what God is like. He is a Father who longs for relationship with His children. (Share a personal testimony or story and relate the story to this text.)
- **Question:** How does knowing God as Father help you overcome the fear of sharing His message with others?

First, it is apparent from these few verses in Ephesians that God has a much bigger plan at work than we can even imagine. Even at the foundation of the world, in the beginning God had a plan for each of us. He planned that we would be blessed, chosen, holy and blameless, loved, adopted, and full of purpose. It should encourage us that the Father who created all things not only loves us, but provides us with everything we need to accomplish His purpose for us. To share His message with others is a huge opportunity to live for something much greater than ourselves! His love for me should cause me to have the same love for others who do not know him. Even when I am nervous about sharing the gospel, I can just think about how much he loves that person, and how much He wants to have relationship with them!

Second, any good father basically does three things for His children. He protects, provides and guides. In the same way, God does all three of these things even better than any earthly father. Psalm 23:4,5 (NLT) gives us a better look at how God does this. “Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies, you honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.”

Open Discussion:

1. How does God protect us as his children and His witnesses?

(example: protects us from fear, from the Enemy)

2. How does God provide for us?

(example: provides blessing to bless others, equips us to accomplish our calling)

3. How does God guide us?

(example: Gave us His Word, He disciplines us, gives us teachers)

2. Close

- Conclusion: “So then, knowing God as Father should help me to overcome my fear of sharing His message with others because He loves me, and He also loves them. He also protects, provides and guides me. I challenge you to give that some thought today. Think about how much God loves you and then think about how much God loves those at this school who do not know Him.”

CONCLUDE

- Follow up the teaching time by thanking the guest speaker. Remind the students of next weeks 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.

HELPFUL LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING REMINDERS

- Have your monthly leadership meeting between Engage and Help Week. This way you can spend time ensuring proper follow up with new believers after Engage Week and plan for the coming HOPE cycle.
- Each Weekly Guide has a space to assign student leaders to serve, please use those spaces to plug students into those leadership roles.
- Along with the main speaking time, make sure that the leadership meeting has time to talk through things like hospitality, food and other roles.
- Though you will have made a great plan during this meeting, it is crucial that communication among the leadership team happens throughout the month. Encouragement is motivating. Reminders help all of us exceed our responsibilities. Teamwork is key to a successful month.

“I AM: FATHER”

December 2015: 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: Father’”
- Pray
- List off any reminders for the club as First Priority begins

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

- Continue: “Today we are going to hear the Faith Stories from some of our peers. As each one finishes, feel free to ask questions about their story or to encourage them in what God has done in their lives. Please welcome <insert name>, our first person to give his testimony.”

› 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: FATHER”

January 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

- 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: Shuffle the Deck
- Preparation: This game can be played with 20 -100+ people. You will need one deck of cards for 52 people or less.
- Play: Give each person 1 card. During the game, call out different combinations that they have to form a group with. Example: Four of a kind, a flush, two pairs, etc. Continue calling out combinations until everyone has a group.
- Once they get in their group, have them answer some preplanned questions. For example:
 - o What is your name?
 - o What grade are you in?
 - o What is your favorite TV show?
 - o What do you like to do for fun?
 - o Do you have any unusual talents?
- Option: If anyone has a truly unusual and noteworthy talent, by all means let them do it in front of the club.

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“I AM: FATHER” January 2016: Engage Week Leader Guide (continued)

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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