

PERSEVERANCE

HOPE

WEEKLY GUIDE

MONTH 8, VOLUME 2



PERSEVERANCE

Help Week Leader Guide

Help Week: A time for student leaders to equip their peers with a leadership point, as they plan and pray for the month of campus ministry ahead.

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task: Select one student to lead this month's Help Week.

1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and grow in God. This week is Help Week, which is where we engage a leadership discussion that will help us grow in our ability to share the gospel. This month we are focusing on what it means to choose *Perseverance* for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Opening Prayer - List off any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

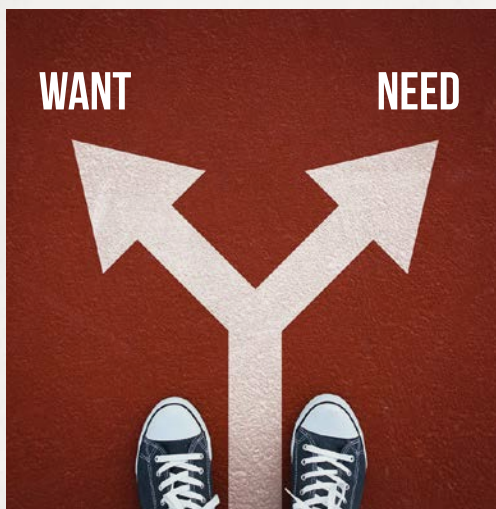
2. Introduce Student Leading Discussion

- Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about what it means to choose *Perseverance*.



LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION – Quitting is Easy

Life is full of daily tasks. Many of them are items that we did not put on our own to-do list. They are lists and agenda items that are in place because of the things we are drawn to or the environment we have been put in.



I bet more than once, like myself, you have looked at your to do's for the day ahead and thought, "I do not want to do any of this!" For someone who is trying to grow as a leader, there is a tension of the things we need to do vs. the things we want to do.

Frankly, in those moments the easiest thing would be to quit the items that we do not want to do. In fact, once you do, for a short time, you will even feel

like you have gained some time and space in your life for those things you really like to do. However, as days pass into weeks with this attitude, you will find that you are no longer growing into the very thing you hoped for.

Let me help you with an example. A saxophone player can want desperately to make the jazz band. However, their instructor has told you that those who make the band usually practice 1-2 hours a day on technique and notes, not on actually playing jazz music. As a person who wants to play in the jazz band, you choose to start learning all sorts of jazz music, and you stop working technique and notes. The problem arrives when you do not make this year's jazz band. Though you know a few jazz songs, the songs that you were asked to play for tryouts were not dependent on you knowing jazz music; they were dependent on you knowing how to play with the right technique and read the notes on the paper in front of you.

True leadership is about learning to persevere and own daily tasks that lay the ground work for accomplishing things we love.

PERSEVERANCE Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

Now you are back to where you started. You love the saxophone, but you don't get to play in jazz band. Quitting was too easy. True leadership is about learning to persevere and own daily tasks that lay the ground work for accomplishing things we love. The good news is that, in most cases, there is often someone in place to guide us who has also had to persevere and now has the perspective to help us.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

ROMANS 5: 3-5

So whatever it is you are drawn to grow in as a student this school year, as you get connected to the tasks, don't take the easy route, that is to quit. Instead, focus on working on the daily tasks, and persevere through the tough stuff. Whatever you do, don't take the easy route, it's a well-paved road with people who had lots of dreams, but never did the work to accomplish them.



PLANNING GUIDE

Help Week:

Host:

Leadership speaker:

Behind the scenes organizer:

Overcome week:

Host:

Leadership speaker:

Behind the scenes organizer:

Prepare week:

Host:

Faith story 1:

Faith story 2: (optional)

Faith story 3: (optional)

Behind the scenes organizer:

Engage week:

Host:

Activity Leader:

Gospel speaker:

Behind the scenes organizer:

Host: Welcomes, opens in prayer, introduces the week, introduces the speaker, makes announcements, talks through response cards, thanks everyone, and dismisses.

Behind the scenes organizer: Makes necessary arrangements for (but doesn't do it all him/herself) greeters (who also hand out response cards), food, decor, printing, music.

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Overcome Week Leader Guide

Overcome: It takes courage to stand out from the crowd. In today's culture, relativism is the norm, and absolute truth is the minority. This will be a training on the difference between the two, as well as a challenge to courageously dare to be different and follow Jesus without compromise.



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.
- Pray.
- List any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

2. Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- Student Leader Host – This month we are discussing the importance of *perseverance* as we live out the gospel on campus.
- 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 obstacles to the gospel.*

→ **This month, our theme is "Perseverance."** Last week we talked about the importance of persevering as a leader. This week I'd like to share about persevering through our doubts and the doubts of others, especially in relation to sharing the gospel.

Persevering is another way we overcome. In Jude 1:22, the author gives instructions to believers that they should be merciful toward those who are struggling with doubts. In Bible days, there were all kinds of reasons to feel confused about what you believed or even to consider whether the sacrifices you were making in your life were truly worth following Jesus for. What kind of reasons do you think people had to doubt God in Biblical times? (let students answer) As Christ-followers, we deal with many similar struggles today.

It's perfectly normal for believers to have questions about their faith. The character that the Lord is building in each of us does not appear overnight, and sometimes it comes by great struggle. The kind of doubt that sincerely seeks answers from God is something that can be referred to as "soft doubt." It isn't comfortable to have deep soul-searching questions unanswered for long periods of time, but struggles like these should cause us to seek God more. You should know that you aren't alone – in fact – most God-followers in Bible stories had some kind of doubt struggle to overcome! The answer to overcome your doubts is to persevere in your love for Jesus!

It is not helpful for any believer to doubt for doubt's sake. This kind of doubt can be referred to as "hard doubt." Unfortunately, it sometimes happens that a person becomes distant from God because of these doubts, but just as the author of Jude instructed, we should be merciful. Instead of alienating them for struggling with these questions, we should encourage them and be patient with them while we pray for them. Sometimes a period of doubt can turn into a rebellious attitude or a hard heart that is not actually interested in finding answers. Someone caught in this kind of trap may think that it is somehow better to not care than to seek something to have faith in. When a believing brother or sister has reached this point in doubt, it is important for someone who is close to them reach out and talk about the problem. Perhaps a major event has occurred such as the sudden death of a friend or relative that has caused this person to question God's goodness or justice. It is important to talk about problems and questions like these with another wise believer rather than deal with them (or not deal with them) on our own. When trying to help a believing friend overcome hard doubt, the answer is to persevere in love!

We should expect that those we share the gospel with will have fast and slow periods as they warm up to the message of Christ's love. For some who are not yet familiar with the claims of Christianity, there may be things that will make them skeptical and doubtful. This is normal. Just because a nonbelieving person is skeptical about Christ does not mean he or she is trying to be offensive. It just means that they need further explanation and demonstration for why they should believe such a thing. Even big setbacks are normal when sharing Christ with someone who is gaining interest in becoming a Christian. Your relationship and intentional conversations with that person in time can go a long way toward relieving those doubts, so the answer to overcoming the obstacles of doubt when sharing the gospel is again to persevere in love!

I challenge everyone here today to keep persevering in love for Jesus and others, especially through your doubts and the doubts of others.

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 your school, wisdom, protection, and for open hearts to receive the gospel.

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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.



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.
- Pray.
- List any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

2. Introduce Volunteer(s)

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- Student Leader Host – This month we are discussing the importance of *perseverance* as we live out the gospel on campus.
- 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

3. Share Testimonies

- › Student 1 Testimony = _____

- › Student 2 Testimony = _____

- › Student 3 Testimony = _____

- Leader Host: Thank you for sharing, <insert name>. Now lets 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.

4. Conclude

- Dismiss with a closing prayer.

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Engage Week Leader Guide

Engage Week: Student leaders inviting their peers to an on campus event to experience the gospel of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

- Ensure the student speaker is prepared to share the gospel using **Appendix B – Sample Gospel Presentation**, or another gospel presentation at <http://firstpriority.club/club-resources> 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 ready to hand out as students enter.

1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host: Welcome to First Priority club! 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: Count the Fingers
- Preparation: No preparation necessary. One student will be the “facilitator.”
- Play: This can be an up-front game with a few players, or an elimination game for the whole room. Players find a partner and face each other. Each player puts their hands behind their back. One the count of three both player put their hands in front of them with a number of fingers up. The first person to say the total number of finger (their own hands plus their partner’s) wins. Play as many rounds as you like! Prizes 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 him/her. Please listen respectfully, as it takes a lot of courage to speak in front of others.



GOSPEL TIME

4. Gospel, Invitation, and Response Cards

- Student Leader: Share the gospel and give a personal invitation using **Appendix B Sample Gospel Presentation** or another gospel presentation at <http://firstpriority.club/club-resources>.
- 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.

Conclude

- Student Leader: Thank 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!

STUDENT RESPONSE CARD

My response to the gospel message today
(please only check one):

- Today, I prayed to receive Christ
- I would like more information about the Gospel
- I have already prayed to receive Christ before today
- I am not interested

My name _____

Cell # _____

Church you Attend _____

Who invited you to First Priority today? _____

The information you put on this card will be given to a student leader to follow up with you. Your information will not be stored or given to anyone else.

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 publicly, 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..."*

Appendix A YOUR FAITH STORY *(continued)*

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 relation-

ship 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)

Appendix B SAMPLE GOSPEL PRESENTATION (continued)

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,

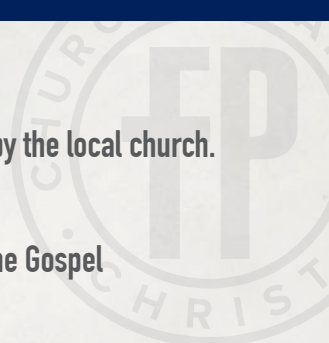
I know that I am broken, and I need your forgiveness. Jesus, I believe you died and were raised to life to redeem me. I want to turn away from my old life and toward a completely new life with You in your family. Right now I put my trust in you and invite you to come into my life and change it. In Jesus’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



FIRST PRIORITY

is a campus evangelism strategy implemented by the local church.

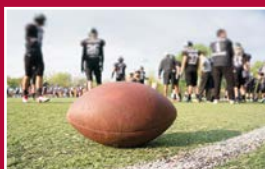
MISSION: To Unite The Local Body of Christ With
A Plan of Action To Influence The Schools With the Gospel



FIRST PRIORITY BUILDS NETWORKS OF SUPPORT



Students “The Players In the Game” Taking The Love & Message of Jesus Christ As Missionaries To Their School.



Parents “The Fans In The Stands” Praying For, Supporting & Discipling Their Children.



Churches “The Coaches On The Sidelines” Equipping, Encouraging and Empowering Students.



Educators “The Referees Of The Game” Providing Guidance and Direction.



Business / Community Leaders “The Owners Of The Team” Investing Leadership, Mentoring and Resources In Their Community.

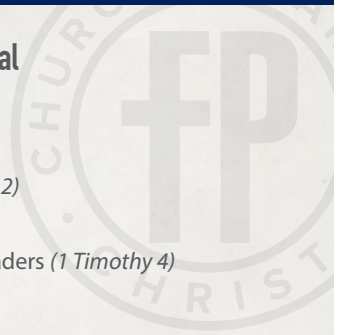


“First Priority is the most innovative way to reach a city for Christ. It unites our local churches together as one to make a difference.”

– Dr. Jay Strack, President of Student Leadership University

First Priority is Intentional, Innovative and Biblical

- The First Priority Campus Evangelism Strategy (*Mark 2*)
- Uniting Local Churches In Communities (*John 17*)
- Building Essential Networks of Support (*1 Corinthians 12*)
- Mobilization of Youth Leaders (*2 Timothy 2*)
- Equipping, Encouraging And Empowering Student Leaders (*1 Timothy 4*)
- Student Led & Initiated Evangelism Clubs (*Romans 10*)



The above data reflects the 2014 - 2015 school year

"I endorse First Priority. They know what's going on and they are training America's youth leaders and our youth, empowering them to change the very fabric of this next generation and restoring "hope" to America's future."

– Josh McDowell, Author and Speaker



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

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