

CHARACTER

HOPE

WEEKLY GUIDE

MONTH 7, VOLUME 2



CHARACTER

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 have *Character* 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 have *Character*.



LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION – Little Things Mean a Lot

Have you ever been to a middle or high school band concert and as the band begins to play there is an awkward moment where something is just not right? Everyone is playing, but there are one or more people that have not caught up with the rest of the group. The band is filled with lots of well intending players, but the music does not start out pleasant to the ears.

When I sit through a situation like that, I have to ask myself, why? Why, were a few of those players off? Did they just forget when to start? Is this the first time they



have played in public, so their nerves got the best of them? Or did they not practice, or put in the time working on the song that the rest of the band did?

Often, the way we live our life in the midst of our school is a very similar discussion, especially when it comes to character.

Character is something that grows out of your

daily habits, and is often defined by what you practice when no one is around.

Though we live in a world that sensationalizes the big moment or 15 minutes of fame. For the vast majority of us, the little choices we make every day defines who we are and what we are known for on our school campus, our character.

When the bible talks about character, it defines it this way “do not swear by either heaven or earth, or any oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no. This text found in James 5 looks each of us in the eye and says, whether good news or bad, tell the truth. Don’t exaggerate, don’t undersell, just let the truth come out of your mouth when you speak. I know this is easier said and done, but for a leader it is possible.

For the vast majority of us, the little choices we make every day defines who we are and what we are known for on our school campus, our character.

CHARACTER Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

Which brings me back to the band we heard in the beginning. Often in those situations, after a few moments of adjustment, the band begins to find it's flow and the music becomes much more pleasing to the ears. Those playing, begin to remember all the time they put in practicing the individual notes of the song, and then the time they worked together and they find a rhythm and thus the song takes form.

Like that song, character is not something to be perfected. Character is something to be practiced. Both in your quiet places and in the noise of daily life. None of us will ever master character, instead, we must both offer grace to others as they learn to walk in character and accept grace as we do the same. It's the little things that mean a lot, especially when it comes to having character.

“But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

JAMES 5:12 ESV



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.

CHARACTER

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 *character* when using our influence for Christ.
- 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.*

→ **This month, our theme is "Character."** Last week we talked the character qualities a spiritual leader must have to be effective. Today I'd like to share about how these character qualities impact the way we share the gospel.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:12 that each followers of his should treat others in the same way that they would want to be treated, and that this pretty much sums up God's teaching on how we relate to each other. Unfortunately, it can be hard to recognize when we are making a double standard for ourselves when engaging non-believers with the truth of the gospel, but we must consider that our ultimate goal is not to simply win an argument, but to expose others to the life changing truth and love of Jesus Christ.

When we talk with others about the gospel, we must consider what that person will conclude about our character after the conversation is over. Did we become arrogant or insensitive? Did we become too defensive and refuse to listen to their case? Did we become timid and not communicate a commitment to a particular view out of fear? One thing that intelligent people of character know is they can still respect another person of character even when they disagree with their viewpoint. Debates can be lost on your part and friendship can still continue, but once your character is perceived to be bad, that bridge could potentially be burned with non-believers. And with it goes the opportunity to lead them to Christ.

CHARACTER Overcome Week Leader Guide (continued)

It is good to gently challenge another person's viewpoint, but it is not okay to "win" an argument by any means necessary. Character AND truth, go together in a way that more accurately portrays God to the world. Some may ask, How do you KNOW God is real? How do you KNOW the Bible is true? In this situation, the following reply would probably be a bad idea: (say this obnoxiously)

I'm surprised you didn't know this. The answer to BOTH of your questions is in the BIBLE. Exodus 3:14 and 2 Timothy 3:16 specifically says God exists and the Bible is true.

Do you see the problem here? Not only is the attitude off-putting, but the reply is also appealing to a source or standard that the other person may not view as credible, plus you are breaking the rules of logic by using something called "circular reasoning," meaning that you can't claim the Bible must be true because it says it is true. Character must be shown in both what we say and how we say it. Responding to someone in a wrong attitude or with an illogical case tells the world that either we don't care about others or we don't care to have reasons to support our beliefs. If you expect others to have integrity when they are engaging you, you should have the same integrity when engaging them.

Even though we have good reasons to be confident in what we believe, we must remember that our own ability to know and understand the truth is not perfect.

That is because we aren't perfect as humans, and no one should pretend to be, especially Christians. God knows everything, but we cannot. This is why we can show a humble confidence to world regard our belief in the gospel. A famous evangelist, D. T. Niles once said, "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." Is your character up to the challenge of evangelism?.

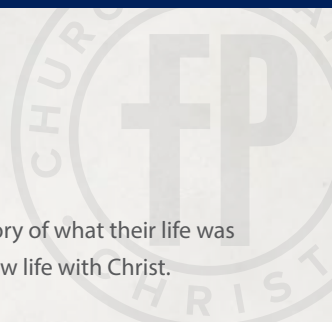
CONCLUDE

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

CHARACTER

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.



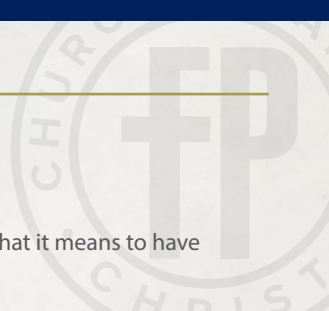
INTRODUCTION

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 what it means to have *Character* as we share the gospel.
- 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.

CHARACTER

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 is it 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: Quarters Up
- Preparation: Only one quarter is necessary for gameplay – one student will lead the game and be the “facilitator”.
- Play: Students must try to predict whether the quarter will land on heads or tails. Players who think it will land on heads must place their hands on top of their heads. Players who believe it will land on tails place their hands on their waist. The facilitator flips the coin and announces the side that wins and players who chose the wrong side must sit down while those who chose the correct side remain standing. Standing players then make their decision for the next flip. The facilitator flips the quarter and those that were wrong that round must have a seat. This continues until there is one winner. Prize 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: 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!



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 chose 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,

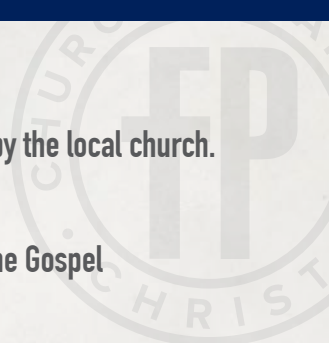
I know that I am broken, and I need your forgiveness. Jesus, I believe you died and were raised to life to redeem me. I want to turn away from my old life and toward a completely new life with You in your family. Right now I put my trust in you and invite you to come into my life and change it. In Jesus'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



FIRST PRIORITY

is a campus evangelism strategy implemented by the local church.

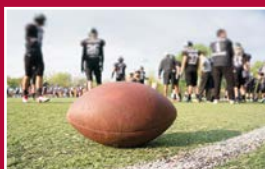
MISSION: To Unite The Local Body of Christ With
A Plan of Action To Influence The Schools With the Gospel



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.

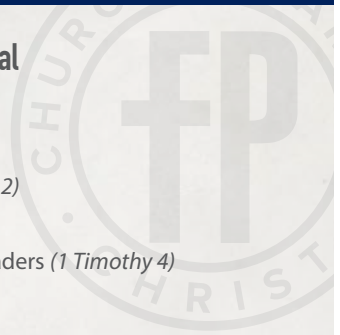


“First Priority is the most innovative way to reach a city for Christ. It unites our local churches together as one to make a difference.”

– 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*)



37
Networks

880
First Priority
Clubs

47,000
Students Attend
Engage Week Month

798
Youth Leaders
Networked

7,506
Commitments
To Christ

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.

© 2017 The information found in this and other guides provided by First Priority of America, Inc. are the property of (FPOA) and require a covenant relationship with (FPOA) to use the content, name, and logo(s). For more information about starting a First Priority movement in your community, contact (FPOA) at one of the locations below:




First Priority of America
115 Penn Warren Drive Suite 300-205
Nashville, TN 37027
888-808-FPOA (3762)

 /fpofamerica

 /fpofamerica

 /fpofamerica

 www.firstpriority.club