

MONTH 3, VOLUME 4

HOPE

THE HOPE
OF CHRIST
IN EVERY
STUDENT

WEEKLY GUIDE



JOY

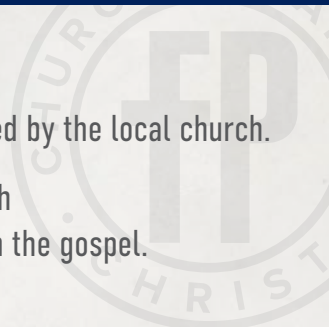
2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR



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.



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

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



“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

PLANNING GUIDE

Help Week:

Host:

Student speaker:

Behind the scenes organizer:

Overcome Week:

Host:

Student 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 presenter:

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.

JOY

Help Week Leader Guide

Help Week: A time for student leaders to equip their peers to become missionaries to their school, as they plan and pray for the month of campus ministry ahead.

PRE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Select one student to host this month's Help Week
- Remind students to post on social media and text friends reminding them about First Priority club

INTRODUCTION: 3 minutes

Welcome Students, Prayer and Introduction

- **Help Week Host:** "Welcome to First Priority! This week is Help Week, which is where we help each other become missionaries to our school. This year we're talking about the **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT**. Last month we talked about **LOVE**, and this month we're going to talk about **JOY**. God wants us to have joy!"
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Introduce Student Leading Discussion:** "Today, my friend, _____, is going to share with us about how our joy plays in our impact on the world."



GROUP TIME: True Joy (20 Minutes)

Student Speaker: Hello everyone! Today we're going to talk about joy. You know the kind of joy you get when you eat your favorite ice cream? How about when your best friend tells you they love you? What about when your parents give you an awesome gift? God's joy is like that....but even better. Here's one verse about it:

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace..." Galatians 5:22-23 NLT (emphasis added)

"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" -John 15:11 NLT



Joy is an amazing thing. Who has any type of law against joy? No one, because that would be ludicrous. Joy is just, good and it is always good. Christians are given joy through Christ.

Now, many out there in the world often think that Christians are a bunch of judgmental kill-joys. But if that were accurate, why would God ask Christians to be people who are overflowing with joy for others to see? Even though joy isn't always natural, it is something that Christians are given through Christ.

God asks us to radiate love. You know that glow a guy gets whenever the girl he is crushing on says "yes" to a dance? That glow is something uncontainable. The joy that God gives a Christian is uncontainable.

David, in the Bible, shows us this kind of joy. Life was pretty much the pits for David. He had people trying to kill him (2 Samuel 15). David even felt depressed at times (see Psalm 22, 42-43, 69, for just a glimpse of some of the depression David went through).

But David didn't let that stop him. Imagine this: you have a really hard test coming up. You study, study, and study some more. The test comes, but you couldn't feel any worse; you are anxious, worried, and depressed. And let's say this test is killer difficult. How do you feel? Pretty depressed. But if you studied, then you can get through it. The truth that you studied gets you through the emotions you are feeling while taking the test. In the same way, the truth that God's love us gets us through difficult emotions that come in life. This is what David's life was like.

JOY Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

David *reminded* himself of the truth: God's got our backs. This truth got him through depression. Even though he "walked through the valley of the shadow of death" he looked to the sunrise that was coming (Psalm 23).

This is what Jesus asks us to do. He asks us to look to Him, the one who saved us. He asks us to trust him. The truth is that *He wants to help us onto our feet.*

We hold onto God, even when we feel depressed.

As we hold onto God, he gives us *joy*. As we hold onto God, we can get through anything. As we hold onto God, we can have gladness that overflows into our friends, family, and the world.

Do you see God's joy in your life?

If so, that means you are holding onto God! Don't give up. Keep holding on.

If you don't, then maybe you need to hold onto God. You can trust Him. Even though life is hard (like in David's life) God never leaves you or forsakes you (Joshua 1:5).

Friends, you are more than the trials you have been through. You can have joy through the Spirit of God. I encourage you to take hold of the joy that God has in your life. [Can you talk to the students about areas of their lives where God wants to give them *more joy?*]. The joy of The Lord is consistent, even when our emotions are a roller coaster.

Even though joy isn't always natural, it is something that Christians are given through Christ.

Fruits
of the Spirit

JOY

APPLY IT:

Discussion Option 1: Why is finding joy so difficult? Talk about popular movies where the main character is depressed or songs where joy is hard to find. What makes joy attainable? (Hint, it comes from Jesus' way!)

Discussion Option 2: Talk about some of the "roadblocks" to joy. How do we get rid of them? Stress is bad! (Matthew 6:25-34)

Discussion Option 3: Talk about how it's impossible to do certain things simultaneously. Can you talk and listen at the same time? Can you run a marathon and eat a gallon of fettuccini alfredo at the same time (no throwing up allowed)? Can you cheat on a test and have integrity at the same time? (No...to all of these). Now, some anxiety is impossible to get rid of overnight. But connect the conversation about not being able to do two things at once, sometimes. It's difficult to have joy and worry, at the same time. This is tough! Talk about, even though it is difficult, letting go of worry. Holding onto Jesus removes doubt and fear!

ACTION CHALLENGE:

- **Group Challenge:** Love Challenge!
 - i. Be as joyful as you can, and capture on video or picture
 - ii. Post it on social media
 - iii. Tell others that your joy is the **fruit of the Spirit!** Hashtag #firstpriority if you can!
- **Share Challenge:** Share with someone this week how Christ gives you peace in your life.
- **Prayer Challenge:** Have someone close in prayer for your group to be messengers who bring the good news of the gospel.



WRAP UP: 2 minutes

- Share any FP Club announcements including that next week's meeting is Overcome Week.

JOY

Overcome Week Leader Guide

Overcome: A time for student leaders to encourage their peers to overcome their fears of sharing the Gospel.



PRE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Select one student to lead this month's Overcome Week
- Post to social media and text friends inviting them to First Priority Club

INTRODUCTION: 3 minutes

Welcome Students, Prayer and Introduction

- **Overcome Week Host:** "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a place to seek and grow in God. This month we are talking one fruit of the spirit: joy. We want to see from a character in the bible how it is better to overcome hate and choose love!"
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Introduce Student Leading Discussion:** Today, my friend, _____, is going to share about how true gives us the power to overcome and persevere.

GROUP TIME: Jesus is our Joy (20 minutes)

Student Speaker: Today we're going to talk about the Apostle Paul. Before we do, what are three examples of a movie or TV show where the hero not only loses but *epically loses* a fight? It's no fun to take a beating for what you believe in. But the Apostle Paul in scripture knows firsthand what it is like to deal with epic struggles and defeats, but he didn't let that steal his joy. How can we copy him and have joy even when life beats us down?

Paul, in general, lived a life of persecution (2 Corinthians 4:8-12)

- He had some sort of difficulty in his body (2 Corinthians 12:7-9, Galatians 4:13-15)
- Paul was arrested and mistreated in Jerusalem
- He had scars on his body that came because he was beaten up because He loved Jesus (Galatians 6:7)
- Paul had a two-year imprisonment in Jerusalem.
- Paul had a dangerous journey from Caesarea to Rome that included: *Another shipwreck and a snakebite*
- Paul's first Roman imprisonment (just for sharing the Gospel) was in Caesarea.
- Paul also had a "house arrest" imprisonment in Rome.
- Paul was imprisoned other times and was eventually killed for sharing the Gospel. (see 2 Cor 11, Acts 9, 13-28).



I'm sure it could have been worse. But let's be honest: it was pretty bad for Paul. Most of our bad days are not as bad as this list. Paul even eventually was executed simply because he told others about Jesus.

But he was always filled with *joy*, no matter what he was facing.

"But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus--the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God." (Acts 20:24 NLT)

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4:4-7 NLT)

"That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
(2 Corinthians 12:10 NLT)

JOY Overcome Week Leader Guide (continued)

How did Paul do it? Did he have amnesia? Did he distract himself from sorrow with alcohol or drugs? No – it was Paul's *joy of The Lord* that kept him strong. It was his love of God. It was the truth of God's love flowing through him that kept him going – even when he didn't *feel* like it.

How do you let God's joy radiate through you? When you just bombed a test, what is your response? When someone just yelled at you, what is your response? When you feel like you're not a good Christian, what is your response? If it's anything but *cling to Jesus, trust in Jesus, or focus on Jesus*, then you might be taking the wrong approach. Remember, you cannot do this on your own strength (Phil. 4:13). You need Christ's strength to take your tough circumstances and replace them with joy.

Where does your joy come from? If it is anywhere but Christ, or His blessings to us, or our belief in Him, it *might* be that your joy is coming from the wrong place. You see, *things* can go away. We can lose our car – so if our joy comes from our car, we can lose our joy. Money can go away. Even relationships, which are a very good thing, can go away. So where does your joy come from? *Ultimately*, the biggest cause for our joy must be Christ.

APPLY IT:

Discussion Option 1: Talk about when it is easy to have joy. (Maybe it's when you're watching your favorite movie or doing your favorite hobby, or after that girl or guy you like just gave you a compliment). But why is it difficult to have joy when we are low. What does it look like to choose joy? In other words, talk about the fact that even when life is tough we are still encouraged to pursue *the joy of The Lord*.

Discussion Option 2: What are some examples of giving joy to other people? Can we be a part of bringing joy to the people of God? Can we be a part of bringing joy to the world? What are some *practical ways* that we can encourage others to have joy?

ACTION CHALLENGES:

- **Group Challenge:** Think of 5 ways to encourage others to have joy. It could be washing their car. It could be helping them with their homework. It could be writing encouraging notes. But do it; report back to the First Priority GroupMe or Social Media!
- **Invite Challenge:** Text 5 friends and invite them to First Priority and ask them if you can pray for them this week about anything.
- **Prayer Challenge:** Lastly, get into groups of three or four and spread out. Take 2 minutes to pray as a group for those you will be texting in the Invite Challenge.

WRAP UP: 2 minutes

- Share any FP Club announcements including that next week's meeting is Prepare Week.

WHY IS TRAINING STUDENT LEADERS TO SHARE THE HOPE OF CHRIST SO IMPORTANT?

Last school year over 2,000 students were trained as leaders and 9,000 of their peers responded to the good news they shared in FP clubs.

#studentsreachstudents
#firstpriority

JOY

Prepare Week Leader Guide

Prepare Week: A time for students to learn how to share their story of what their life was like without Christ in contrast to their new life with Christ.



PRE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Select one student to lead this month's Prepare Week
- Post to social media and text friends inviting them to First Priority Club
- Print "Your Faith Story" (1 per student) if you want to have every student attending club working on their testimony at the same time. (Faculty sponsors can usually print these for you if given enough notice)

INTRODUCTION: 3 minutes

Welcome Students, Prayer and Explanation

- **Prepare Week Host:** "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a place to seek and grow in God. This week is Prepare week, which is where we practice sharing our personal story about how we came to know Jesus."
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Introduce Students Giving Testimonies:** "Today, my friend _____ is going to share their story. Please listen respectfully as it takes a lot of courage to speak in front of others. Afterward, we are going to give some positive feedback on how well they did and also ask questions. Let's welcome them as they share."

JOY Prepare Week Leader Guide (continued)

TESTIMONY TIME: (15 minutes)

Share Testimonies

1. Student Testimony = _____

2. Student Testimony = _____

3. Student Testimony = _____

TESTIMONY WRAP UP:

- **Prepare Week Host:** "Let's take the next couple of minutes to give positive feedback to those who shared about how they did and feel free to ask them questions about their story."

[**OPTIONAL**]: Pass out printed copies of "Your Faith Story" and read, explain, and practice each step in groups of 2 or 3.

Appendix A

YOUR FAITH STORY - HOW TO WRITE YOUR TESTIMONY

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 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	

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.

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.

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!



ACTION CHALLENGES:

- **Group Challenge:** GROUP SELFIE! Get everyone huddled together and take a photo and post it to social media with the hashtags: #firstpriority #fpjoy #FPprepareweek
- **Prayer Challenge:** Pray for the sharing of the Gospel next week. Pray that the hearts of those who come to Engage week but do not know Jesus would be receptive to the good news.
- **Invite Challenge:** Personally invite at least 5 students to Engage week next week.

WRAP UP: 2 minutes

- Share any FP Club announcements including that next week's meeting is Engage Week. Remind everyone to bring a guest because it will be a fun atmosphere with food and a game, as well as a student giving a gospel presentation.

JOY

Engage Week Leader Guide

Engage Week: A time for students to engage their school with the gospel.



PRE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Confirm your student guest speaker and remind them to be prepared to share the gospel and an invitation to accept Christ. More Gospel presentation options can be found at firstpriority.club
- Confirm that student follow up cards have been printed and will be ready to hand out to students as they enter your meeting space. Faculty sponsors can print for you if requested in advance.
- Confirm that arrangements for food for the club have been completed and that it is ready to serve just before club opening.

INTRODUCTION: 3 minutes

- Allow students to fellowship as student leaders prepare the group activity.

Welcome Students

- **Engage Week 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."

GROUP ACTIVITY TIME: 5 minutes

- Game: Oreo Head
- Preparation: Bring a bag of Oreos
- Play: 5-7 students stand in front of the club and place an Oreo cookie on their forehead with their head tilted back. Then, on the word “go”, they must try to get the cookie down to their mouth without using their hands. The first one to eat the Oreo wins.

GROUP TALK: Gospel, Invitation, and Response Cards – 15 minutes

Introduce Student Sharing the Gospel

- **Engage Week Host:** “Today, my friend, _____ 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. You all were given a student response card that looks like this (hold up a sample card) when you came in. Just hold on to them and we will explain what they are for later.”

Gospel

- **Gospel Presenter:** Begin the presentation by sharing a short version of your testimony.



GOSPEL PRESENTATION: R.O.C.K.



1. RECOGNIZE WHO GOD IS.

He is Holy, good, and Ruler of all things.

In **Revelation 4:8**, we see God's angels chanting,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty— the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come."

God is Holy, Almighty, Eternal and we have broken His laws.

2. OWN UP TO OUR SIN.

Not just listing the wrongs you've done but agreeing with God that you have lived in sin, committed wrongs against Him, and deserve the consequences.

Romans 3:10-12 says,

As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous- not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one."

You see if we are honest all of us have probably lied, spoken evil towards people, or yelled in anger at others. We have broken the commands and tried to do things our way. And that way leads to death.

So what can we do?

3. CONFESS YOUR NEED FOR FORGIVENESS AND MAKE JESUS LORD OF YOUR LIFE.

This means you confess your helplessness to God, ask for His mercy in forgiving you, and confess your desire to follow Jesus.

Romans 3:23-24 says,

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God freely and graciously declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins."

God has made a way for us to be saved through believing in His son, Jesus. All we have to do is talk to God, own up to our sins, and ask Jesus to be our Lord from this moment onward.

GOSPEL PRESENTATION (continued)

Romans 10:9 says,

“If you openly declare (confess) that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Once you’ve had that honest discussion with God (prayer) and acknowledged that Jesus is Lord, your past is erased and your future forever secure.

4. KNOW THAT JESUS WILL NEVER LET YOU GO.

This is important because if you are taking these steps to be a disciple/follower of Jesus you need to know that not everything you do will be right. You are still going to stumble and get tripped up, but God is at work within you to overcome all things. Keep moving forward. Keep your eyes on Christ the One who founded or started our faith and the one who finishes and perfects our faith. We are not alone in this, so don’t let doubts or mistakes keep you from the good things that God is doing in and through you.

Ephesians 4:30 says,

“And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.”

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 of living
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and was raised to life to save 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 so I could be saved. 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.

STUDENT RESPONSE CARDS: 5 minutes

Opportunity to connect

- If everyone would just take a minute and think about what was shared today. If you decided to follow Jesus today, then on your response card, simply let us know that you made that decision so that we can connect with you and answer any questions you may have to celebrate your new life in Jesus.
- If you have questions or would like us to help you find a local church youth group, mark that on your student card so we can connect with you and just listen to what you have to say. We would love to help you find what you are looking for.
- If you are not interested, that's okay to. No one here will judge you, we are just excited that you are hanging out with us today.

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.

WRAP UP & PRAYER: 2 minutes

- As we wrap up, I want to close in prayer, but first I wanted you to know that _____ is available to connect with you if you have questions today. Also, the response cards can be given to _____ and will only be used for follow up requests. Thank you for coming today and please join with me as I close us out in prayer thanking God for His love for all of us today.
- **Student Leader:** Thank you so much for coming today! Please turn in your card to _____ before you leave. We meet here every week at this time, so you are all invited to come back next week.

FOLLOW UP GUIDE

Following up with those who just committed their lives to Jesus or have questions is equally as important as sharing the Gospel! This guide will give you a few pointers on how to do follow up correctly. If your club chooses, you can put one student leader in charge of the follow-up process or delegate to a team of students. Remember, your main goal is to be **HELPFUL!**

SIX THINGS TO DO WHEN FOLLOWING UP

- 1. Determine how many and what kind of follow-up has been requested.** As soon as possible, read through the response cards after you have collected them and let your Campus Coach know how many people committed their lives to Christ and how many students have questions or want someone to follow up with them.
- 2. Organize the response card information.** Write down on the follow-up chart the names, response, and contact info of everyone who made decisions and requested to talk with someone.
- 3. Make contact within 24 hours with everyone who responded** to the Gospel on Engage Week. This can be done by text message, personal conversation at school or social media, just remember to check with your parents for permission before contacting someone you do not know. The initial message should be something like this: *"Hello _____! My name is _____ and I saw that you came to First Priority club this week! We are really excited you came and we hope you'll come back next week. I also noticed that you marked on your response card that you [prayed to begin a relationship with Christ] -or- [wanted to talk with someone about the Gospel] so I wanted to ask how I could help you."* If you have questions about their responses, you can contact your Campus Coach for guidance.
- 4. Invite them to church!** If they were invited by a friend to First Priority, ask that friend to invite them to youth group this week, since they are more likely to attend church with someone they know. If they plan to go to church for the first time, you can also ask your campus coach to notify the student pastor that they will be having a new guest this week! Make sure to discard any response cards that you will not be needing for follow-up.
- 5. Offer a free Bible to those who prayed to receive Christ** if Bibles are available through your First Priority club or church. Make sure one is available before you offer and make sure they receive it if they accept.
- 6. Share any cool stories of salvation and new local youth group** members with your Campus Coach! He or she will want to celebrate with you about what God is doing through your club!

ENGAGE WEEK FOLLOW UP

School: _____ Month: _____

Mtg: _____ Coordinator: _____

Student Name	Committed life to Christ	Wants to talk with someone	Wants info on a local church	Follow up dates and details
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Notes:

PRAY FOR 1

This month, as we focus on prayer, let's keep it simple.
Take time each day to pray for 1:

- 1 FRIEND WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW CHRIST
- 1 FAMILY MEMBER
- 1 TEACHER
- 1 MEMBER OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Keep it simple on your own or invite a few trusted friends
each day to join you to pray

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

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 www.firstpriority.club