

DECEMBER 2015

HOPE

WEEKLY GUIDES



COACHES CORNER

December 2015
Born To Give

“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name
Jesus, “for he will save his people from their sins.”
Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

December can be a very full month for students. Many student leaders are involved in activities that surround the Christmas season or only happen towards the end of the semester. This means it is a perfect time to take a moment to pause and remind the student leaders of the simple gospel message they share each month, but especially this one. During your time of planning with Student Leaders, keep in mind it may be difficult to slow your leaders down, but it is crucial.

Using the HOPE Strategy weekly format, we have provided you with a very clear plan to help students take the words of Matthew 1:12 and apply them to their campus. As their Campus Coach, it is your job to walk the student leadership team through the month ahead and help them plan out each week.

Please print out a few copies of the entire December Guide to share with your leadership team during training (2-3 copies minimum, copies for all leadership team members welcome). Schedule your planning meeting approximately one week before your Help week meeting for this month. Often the Saturday morning after your Engage Week Club Meeting from the week before is a great time for planning the month to come and follow up on decisions made when the gospel was shared.

Finally, before meeting with the team, please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with this month's 4 week plan. Pray for wisdom and grace for both you and those you are serving. The theme, team members and expectations are very purposeful. Your ability to lead this discussion well will keep your monthly FP Leadership Meeting to 1 hour.

1 HOUR MEETING AGENDA (SUGGESTED)

- Welcome and Catch up (5 minutes)
- Time of Prayer (5 minutes)
- Help Week - Planning time (15 minutes)
 - *Follow up on students who made decisions; salvation, recommitment or leadership*
 - *General reminder of the FAMILY Gospel presentation*
- Overcome Week - Planning time (10 minutes)
- Prepare Week - Planning time (10 minutes)
- Engage Week - Planning time (15 minutes)

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Each Weekly Guide has a space to assign student leaders to serve, please use those spaces to plug them in to specific leadership roles.
- Help to ensure that along with the main speaking time each week that things like hospitality, food and team work are discussed as well.
- Though you will have made a great plan during this meeting, it is crucial that you communicate to your leadership team on a regular basis throughout the month. Encouraging them after a meeting, reminding them of their responsibilities coming and adjusting the plan due to opportunities at the school are key to a successful month.

REPORTING

Please use firstpriority.club/report to communicate your schools club outcomes each week. These reports are used by local and national staff for future planning for communities across the U.S. Your feedback is crucial.

BORN TO GIVE

December 2015: 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.

Please fill out the report online at firstpriority.club/report. Be sure to include the following information:

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

Select one volunteer to share about the message of Jesus.

1 Welcome Students

- State: "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. We seek to Help, Overcome, Prepare, and Engage each student in sharing the gospel... otherwise known as HOPE. This week is our Help Week where we will work together in learning about how to share the gospel. This month we will learn what it means to 'Live to Serve' through Christ Jesus."
- Pray.
- List off any reminders for the students as they begin First Priority.

2 Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- Encourage: "Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share what it means to serve others to share the message of Jesus."

GOSPEL CONTENT

3 Share the Gospel Content

- Context:
 - Read aloud Matthew 1:21. "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus," for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (ESV)
 - State: These are actually the words of an angel to a man named Joseph about why his fiancé, Mary, was pregnant with a baby not his own and why this crazy situation was actually orchestrated by God Himself. God was in the process of fulfilling thousands of years of prophecies concerning the Messiah (meaning the chosen one who would deliver his people).



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BORN TO GIVE December 2015: Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

3 - Share the Gospel Content (continued)

* Continue: Christmas is the special day dedicated to the celebration of the arrival of this Messiah, Jesus Christ. Today in the USA, Christmas culturally focuses on many things that have little to do with the birth of Jesus (just as the actual date of December 25th was originally associated with another holiday and also had different focus). Nevertheless, early followers of Jesus intended this season to be a time of celebrating the miracle of the birth of Jesus and the significance of God putting on skin just like you and I have.

• Breakdown:

So what does the REAL Christmas have to do with the REAL gospel?

3 Reasons We Would Not Have the Gospel Without Christmas

- › In order for Jesus to save people from their sin, he had to sacrifice his body on the cross. Since Jesus was fully God, that meant that He had to have a body just like you and me in order to make that sacrifice on our behalf. Thus, he was born as a baby. He literally left His own glory in Heaven to enter the world He had made, not to mention entering it as a human. He did this because of love.
- › Jesus had to be born of a virgin because in order to make us righteous, he had to personally have a perfect righteousness to offer us (that is - to be completely without sin). All people inherit a sin nature from the first person, Adam. Therefore, it was important that Jesus have no literal earthly father, otherwise He would have been just an ordinary sinful man.
- › If any of the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament had been even slightly off, then we wouldn't be 100 percent sure it was necessary for this man to die for our sins. The Old Testament foretold among other things of a messiah who would be born in the City of David (Bethlehem) to a virgin (Mary). The Old Testament was completely accurate about all its predictions concerning Jesus.

* Continue: Our theme for the month of December is "Born to Give" and as we can see, Christmas is actually about the gospel. For many, this season is about giving, but usually in the very materialistic sense that often stems from selfishness – and I'm not even talking about children on Christmas morning, I mean shoppers on the day after Thanksgiving! For followers of Jesus, this should not be the case! Christmas should remind us that God is extremely giving, gracious, and generous – so much that He would give His own son for us, and that kind of love should fill and change our hearts and lifestyles. It should result in US being the kindest, most loving, and most generous people on the planet. That is how the family of God should be described. Can that be said of You? Your church? Your youth group? This First Priority club?

4 Transition to Small Groups

- State: "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 Before today, how would you have described the purpose of Christmas and the Christmas season?
2. What are some of the ways the culture you live in celebrates Christmas and how would you evaluate that in light of the true meaning of Christmas?
3. What is one way you plan to demonstrate the love of God this month through giving?
4. How could you use the subject of Christmas to share the gospel with someone?

5 Conclude

- Review small group questions and open a discussion about group answers as time allows.
- Reread Matthew 1:21

Please fill out the club report online at firstpriority.club/report.

BORN TO GIVE

December 2015: 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. Before today, how would you have described the purpose of Christmas and the Christmas season?
2. What are some of the ways the culture you live in celebrates Christmas and how would you evaluate that in light of the true meaning of Christmas?
3. What is one way you plan to demonstrate the love of God this month through giving?
4. How could you use the subject of Christmas to share the gospel with someone?

PRAY

- Reflect on Matthew 1:21 upon entering prayer time.
 - Pray for your peers, especially those who may feel unnoticed or unloved.
 - Pray for the lost – that they may experience the extravagant love of the Father.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Answer: The Father God adopting me.

FATHER GOD

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

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

- Genesis 6:5-6 (ESV)

ADOPTING

God's heart was so hurt over His creations' choice that He sent His Son Jesus. God sent Jesus to pay the price (redemption) to restore our relationship back to the Father. Jesus' death on the cross in our place satisfied all sin, but Jesus' resurrection ended our separation from God and restored us to a full and free relationship with God. 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

All people were born into sin, starting with me. Therefore, when we find something is not right with us, the world, or those around us, we discover we are missing out on God's desire for our life. Being without a relationship with God is a broken existence. The good news is that we can restore it by making the decision to follow Jesus and placing our trust in Him. Once this happens, we have a relationship with God and become part of His family. Being seen by God as a son or daughter of His creates 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)

BORN TO GIVE

December 2015: 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.

Please fill out the report online at firstpriority.club/report. Be sure to include the following information:

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

- Select 3 student leaders to prepare to share their testimony in the upcoming Prepare Week.
- Print “Appendix A - Your Faith Story” (1 per student).

1 Welcome Students

- Welcome the students and remind them of the theme “Born to Give.”
- Reread Matthew 1:21 (ESV) “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, “for he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (ESV)
- Use key points from the Gospel Content: Help Week to refresh the students on what it means to live “Born to Give.”
- State: “In today’s session, we will focus our attention on what it means to overcome (to succeed, to defeat, to overpower). As well, we will hear an example of how someone overcame some of the obstacles in his life.”

2 Opening Prayer

- Ensure each student has access to “Appendix A—Your Faith Story” (via printout or by visiting www.firstpriority.club/YourFaithStory on their smart phone or tablet).
- Signal the student leader host to introduce the speaker and pray.

GUEST CONTENT

Beforehand Task:

- Encourage the speaker to use the following information as a simple outline for the First Priority: Overcome Week.
- Inform the speaker that his purpose is to encourage and inspire students to be “on mission” on their campus by using Scripture and Personal Testimony in a 12-15 minute time frame.

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3 Teaching Time (12–15 minutes)

- Introduction
 - › Introduce yourself, who invited you to speak, and simple points about your life.
 - › Ensure the students fully understand the purpose of what you are about to share.
- Appoint a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 1:21.
 - State: “Last week, we saw how God had a plan even in the craziness of the situation between Mary and Joseph. We also saw how the original intent of Christmas was to celebrate the miracle of the birth of Jesus and why this event was vital to the gospel. Finally, we saw how the idea behind Christmas is a great launching point for sharing the gospel with others.”
- Share a Personal Testimony or Story › Share a story either you have experienced or heard. › Share a Personal Testimony or Story › Relate the story to this text.
 - Resume: “It can be very difficult to know God’s plan and timing when everything seems chaotic in our lives and the lives of those whose salvation we are praying for. At times it can feel like we are blind to God’s plan. The important thing to remember in that process is to remain in an attitude of trust toward God. If you are trusting God for something great in your life or the life of a friend or even a lost person, I encourage you to pray and allow God to help you overcome your doubts and fears and keep believing. I also encourage you to think, speak, and act as if the certainty of God’s goodness and ultimate plan is a fact – just as if it is already done. This is the attitude of faith - which doesn’t discredit the way things seem to be in the moment, but it places its trust in a much greater reality, the reality of God’s ultimate plan. Christmas time is a reminder of just that – that the accomplishment of God’s great plan was and is inevitable – and that should give us confidence.

Close

→ Conclude: “So if you haven’t come up with an answer this question from last week, we’ll ask it again. Knowing that Jesus gave up his glory to be born and give His life, how do you plan to exemplify the giving and selfless love of God toward others this month in hopes that they will come closer to knowing God? Think for a moment about how you would answer that question and as we conclude with prayer, begin to pray for God to help you overcome doubt and fear to accomplish what you have decided.

Prayer

→ Close the teaching time in prayer. Include a blessing over the students as they share the gospel and a request for peace and joy in their lives.

4 Conclude

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

Please fill out the club report online at firstpriority.club/report.

BORN TO GIVE

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.

Please fill out the report online at firstpriority.club/report. Be sure to include the following information:

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.
- Print “Appendix A— Your Faith Story” (1 per student).

1 Welcome Students and Pray

- Welcome the students and remind them of the theme “Unite as One.”
- Pray.

TESTIMONY TIME

2 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 = _____

- Ensure each student has access to “Appendix A — Your Faith Story.”
- Draw attention to the sample student testimonies.
 - › Example 1: Two years ago, I came to a First Priority meeting. It was more like a party. During that, the friend who invited me shared about their faith in God, and gave me a chance to make a choice to have that faith too. Since that moment, life has been harder than ever. I have lost friends, experienced tragedy and more. But, I have peace and trust in God that has helped me through it all in ways I could never explain. I am learning every day that God is good, period.
 - › Example 2: As long as I have been raised, I have gone to church. Last fall my family took a trip to a place in West Virginia that was very, very poor. I did not totally understand my dad’s choice for this spot as a vacation, but soon learned that we were going there to serve families with very little hope. For 10 days, we did everything we could to bring hope to that community through living for Jesus. It was amazing and life changing. It has totally changed the way I live here in our community.

3 Conclude

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

Please fill out the club report online at firstpriority.club/report.

BORN TO GIVE

December 2015: Engage Week Leader Guide

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

Please fill out the report online at firstpriority.club/report. Be sure to include the following information:

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

1 Welcome Students

- State: "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

- Preparation: Ask everyone in the room to pair up with another person to be their first opponent and introduce themselves.
- Guide: "We are going to have the rock-paper-scissors world championship. You will be facing off in a best out of three match with your opponent. That means first person with two wins moves on to the next round."
- The leader of the game, now calls off three rock-paper-scissors matches.
- Guide: "Please raise your hand if you won that match, ok those who won best of three please stay in the middle of the room, those who lost please go to the outside wall."

- Continue the matches until there is just one person left. Then invite all the people who lost in the very first round back into the middle of the room.
- With this group, run a few rounds of one game matches. As the group gets smaller you should end up with a final match between the first winner from the best of three group and the second winner of the single elimination rounds.
- Guide: "We are going to finish with the world championship, best of five, or first to three, wins the championship between these two group winners."
- Finish with the final match and then proclaim your world champion.
- State: "I hope you enjoyed that serious match and getting to know some new friends through First Priority."
- Select volunteers to pass out cards and welcome the prepared student leader to share in Testimony Time.

TESTIMONY TIME

- Follow the testimony format below as you share your story.
 - › Introduce yourself, tell about your background, your family, and your connection to the First Priority family.

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- › Share with your peers about a time in your life when you were not living the way God wanted you to live. Whether you were living in sin or experiencing brokenness for a time, share what life was like without a clear understanding of the freedom you now have in Jesus.

Key Verse: *Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.* Ephesians 2:12-13 (ESV)

- Share a Scripture and an application.

"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)

* Read aloud the verse.

* Apply.

- › Provide details of how you heard about Jesus—through others or some other experience.
- › Fact: Jesus chose to come to earth to live and to die. He did all that for you—so you could be restored to a relationship with the Father. Share how your encounter allowed you to begin to understand what Jesus did for you.

"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

* Read aloud the verse.

* Apply.

- › Tell about the moment that you chose to verbally confess with your mouth and believe in your heart (accepting) that Jesus was Lord. (Romans 10:9-10)
- › Consider the questions:
 - › Who shared the gospel with you?
 - › What did it mean for you to know that because of Jesus, the Father saw you as an adopted son or daughter?
 - › Where did it happen? (a home, an event, your church, etc.)
 - › How did you feel?

- Ask rhetorically: "What is God doing in your life now?"
- Allow a time of reflection.
- Break the silence by providing examples of what it means to live every day with a sense of belonging to the Family of God.

4 Wrap Up Time

- State: "Thanks <insert name> for being willing to share your God Story with us."
- Follow up: "The relationship with Jesus <insert name> discussed is available to everyone. If you are here today and want to make a decision to put your trust in Jesus, we want to give you that opportunity right now."

5 Prayer and Close

- State: "Let's take a moment to pray. If you have never made the decision to make Jesus your Lord by confessing your sins, admitting your need for Jesus, and believing what Jesus did for you, we are going to give you that chance now."
- Pray aloud, either using the Example Prayer below or another form of Prayer for Salvation.
- › Example Prayer: Jesus, all of us have sinned, which separates us from You. However, You came to Earth—to live and die for us, and to then be raised again to new life. You defeated death so that we may live forever. You have changed our lives by adopting us into your family. If there is anyone here today that needs to make the decision to put their trust in You, I pray that they do that right now. Help them find their place to belong with You for eternity. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.
- Conclude: "I am so thankful all of you were here today. Please finish filling out the card (step 2) and turn them in as you leave."
- Continue: "We at First Priority club want you to know that we are here to further discuss with you the plan of salvation or anything else you may have questions about. Please know, you are always welcome here each week to be part of this family."

6 Conclude

- Collect cards from everyone as they leave; be sure to invite everyone back for First Priority club next week!

Please fill out the club report online at firstpriority.club/report.

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. (EXAMPLE: "My parents divorced when I was younger... I blamed myself and began to feel unworthy of relationships... so I became 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 isolated and 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 daily giving me the faith and the strength to overcome those attitudes of the past.")

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



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