

FEBRUARY 2016

# HOPE

# WEEKLY GUIDES



# “I AM FAMILY”

## February 2016: Help Week Leader Guide

**Help Week:** Equips and empowers student leaders to share the love and message of Jesus to their friends who have questions about their faith.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

Select one volunteer to share from the Help Week Leader Guide

#### 1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - “Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. This week is Help week, which is where we work together in learning about how to share the gospel. This month our theme is “I am Family”
- Pray.
- List off any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

#### 2. Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- “Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about God’s family.

### GOSPEL CONTENT

#### 1. Share the Gospel Content

- › **Ephesians 1:4-7** says, “God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace that he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins.” (NLT)
- › **What is adoption?** (let students answer) Adoption is the word we use to describe the process by which a child is brought into a different family legally and relationally. Just like some children are born into a situation where they cannot grow up healthy (physically, emotionally, and socially), so we are also spiritually born into a bad situation. Spiritually, we cannot grow without God. Though we were made to have relationship with God the Father, we are born with the problem of sin, a problem we are responsible for from the first time

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## “I AM FAMILY” February 2016: Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

*Share the Gospel Content (continued)*

we choose to do wrong. Sin separates us from God’s family. Everyone who is old enough to know the difference between right and wrong has at some point chosen to do wrong. The only solution to our separation from God is adoption, and the good news is that God has chosen to adopt all who receive His son, Jesus Christ.

› **Let’s break this down:** What does adoption into God’s family have to do with me?

### THREE TRUTHS ABOUT BEING ADOPTED INTO GOD’S FAMILY

#### 1. Adoption is free for us, but very costly for God.

This is another way of saying that being accepted by God is not something we can earn or deserve, but it is something we can receive. No one can be good enough for God, and yet God loves everyone equally, so He made the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus. Adoption is a completely free gift. No adopted child has anything to offer the new parents to deserve to be adopted. It is made possible by the parents alone. It doesn’t cost anything for the child, but it is usually very expensive for the parents. The same is true about being adopted by God. He paid the price because of His great love for you.

#### 2. Adoption is offered to everyone, but not everyone takes God up on His offer.

This means that spiritual adoption does not happen automatically. We must make the choice to receive it. Some people struggle with whether or not they want to be adopted by God because accepting His offer of rescue also comes with His authority. This means that Jesus is not only our Savior, but also our Lord. A good father is loving and protective, but he must also be obeyed. This is why some people are not sure if they want God to be in charge of their lives, because they are not comfortable with trusting God that much. To them it feels like a loss of freedom. Actually, it is in being obedient to God that we find true freedom.

#### 3. You were created for a purpose, which begins with adoption.

You were not born by accident, nor were you a mistake. You actually have a great purpose that cannot be achieved without a relationship with God and being a part of His family. God carefully designed you with this in mind. God loves you exactly as you are, regardless of what you’ve done or whether you choose Him or not. He also fully knows your purpose, and He knows you even better than you know yourself. Today’s scripture verse in Ephesians tells us that His purpose for you begins by bringing you into relationship with Him as a full-fledged member of His family.

#### Continue:

› Finally, we learned last month that God is a loving Father. He also has a loving family made up of people who have chosen to follow Him. Each of us belongs in that family, whether we are in it yet or not. There is a spot saved for each of us. I hope this helps you to better understand why we need to be in God’s family and how God made this possible for us.

### TRANSITION TO SMALL GROUPS

Student Leader Host: “Thank you <insert name> for sharing. Let’s break into small groups and use the Help Week Handout to spend a few minutes in discussion about what has just been shared.”

#### Small Groups Discussion Questions:

1. What parallels can you draw between legal and spiritual adoption?
2. How was God’s sacrifice to make adoption possible very costly to Himself? What do you think motivated God to do this?
3. What do you think prevents most people from becoming followers of Jesus?
4. If you are a follower of Jesus, what have you learned so far about God’s purpose for you?

#### Prayer points (for student handout)

Reflect on Ephesians 1:3-5 upon entering prayer time.

- › Pray for your peers, especially those who need Christ in their lives.
- › Pray for the lost – that they may experience the incredible love of the Father.

# “I AM FAMILY”

## February 2016: Help Week Student Handout

**Help Week:** Equips and empowers student leaders to share the love and message of Jesus to their friends who have questions about their faith.

### SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What parallels can you draw between legal adoption and spiritual adoption?
2. How was God’s sacrifice to make adoption possible very costly to Himself? What do you think motivated God to do this?
3. What do you think prevents most people from becoming followers of Jesus?
4. If you are a follower of Jesus, what have you learned so far about God’s purpose for you?

### PRAY

Reflect on Ephesians 1:4-7 upon entering prayer time.

- › Pray for your peers, especially those who need Christ in their lives.
- › Pray for the lost – that they may experience the extravagant love of the Father..

### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

**Answer:** 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’ brokenness that He sent His Son Jesus. God sent Jesus to pay the price (redemption) to restore our relationship back to the Father. Jesus sacrificed His own life on a cross in our place and was also raised back to life to end our alienation from God and bring us into a living relationship that lasts forever. Only because of Jesus can we be adopted as sons and daughters of God— part of His family, along with the benefits of being His children.

*“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”*

- Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV)

*“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”*

- Romans 8:14-16 (ESV)

### ME

You and I were born into the same experience, the inevitable realization that something is not right with the world or us. We discover that we are alienated, alone, and missing out on real life. Life without a relationship with God is a broken existence. The good news is that it can be restored by making the decision to follow Jesus and placing our trust in Him. Once this happens, we have a relationship with God and His family (fellow believers who follow Him)—a true belonging quite possibly for the first time. You, too, have the opportunity to follow Him and place your trust in Him to receive a living relationship that lasts forever.

*“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”*

- John 1:12 (ESV)

# "I AM FAMILY"

## February 2016: Overcome Week Leader Guide

**Overcome Week:** Allows student leaders to be encouraged by a peer or an adult leader that they are "Called to Prayer" throughout their lives. Leaders are to use testimonies, teaching points, and Biblical encouragement during the teaching time.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

Select one volunteer to share from the Overcome Week Leader Guide.

#### 1. Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - "Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. This week is Overcome week, which is where we work together in learning about how to overcome our fears of sharing the gospel. This month our theme is 'I am Family.'"
- Pray
- List off any reminders for the club as First Priority begins.

#### 2. Introduce Volunteer

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- "Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about overcoming our fears of sharing Jesus with others.

### GUEST CONTENT

#### 1. Teaching Time (10 minutes)

→ Introduction

- › Introduce yourself, who invited you to speak, and simple points about your life.
- › **For example:** "My name is Billy and I'm a ninth grader at Missionfield high school. Sally invited me to share with you today about how to overcome fear. I'd like to encourage and challenge you today."

**Ephesians 1:4-7 says,** "God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace that he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins." (NLT)

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– “Last week, we saw how the Bible tells us about God’s desire to adopt everyone into His family. (If you would like to, share a personal story related to this text.)

→ **Question:** Knowing God’s heart for spiritual adoption, how can we overcome the fear of sharing our faith and become more confident when engaging people with the gospel? Here are three ways we can do this:

– **We overcome fear by seeing others as God sees them.**

This means that every person we come into contact with is either a member of God’s family or potentially a member of God’s family. We can’t write people off or reject others simply because we do not like them. Sometimes our fear is really a cleverly disguised apathy – an unwillingness to care about what God cares about. It is common for a group of people to establish a social order that clarifies where people do and do not fit in. But instead of seeing others from the world’s point of view, we should see people from God’s. Each person is valuable enough to God to give up Jesus on a cross for his or her adoption. In fact, 1 John 4:18 says, *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”* (ESV)

– **We overcome fear by praying for the lost.** If we were seriously concerned about the problem our lost friends are facing, we would be taking that concern to God regularly. To share Christ effectively, we must first pray for the long-range goal of that person’s adoption (salvation). It may take days, weeks, months or even years for them to accept Christ, but we should be relentless in prayer. Secondly, we should also pray for the step-by-step progress of that person towards Christ. Sometimes we think if we do not “close the deal” then we fail at sharing the gospel, but really it is still a win if we help that person come one step closer to knowing Christ personally. Thirdly, we need to pray that God would help us do what He has asked us to do – to share Jesus with the world. Praying in these three ways will help us to become bolder in our witness.

– **We overcome fear by caring for others.** It is easy to dismiss someone as “not open to Christianity” because of how they present themselves publicly, but everyone has needs that can only be filled by a loving Father in Heaven. Most people will never know about these needs because they are covered with a “mask”. Showing genuine concern for others and serving them not only allows them to let down their defenses to share their real story with you, but it also allows you the ability to reflect the love of Christ to them. Caring for and serving others gives you the opportunity to not only **GIVE** them the gospel, but to **BE** the gospel. It is very important that we witness through our words **AND** our actions. Jesus wants to touch the lives of others through you.

### **Open Discussion:**

- 1. How could we compare the way the world sees people (of high and low social status) to the way God sees them?**
- 2. If everyone whose salvation you prayed for last month accepted Christ right now, how many people would be saved? Do you think prayer is important when sharing Jesus? Why or why not?**
- 3. Why are actions just as important as words in witnessing? Can you do one and not the other? Why or why not?**

### **2. Close**

→ Conclusion: “So then, knowing God’s heart for spiritual adoption helps us to overcome our fear of sharing Jesus with others because it causes us to see others as God sees them. It also causes us to take action and get involved in lives of others so that we may reflect the love of Christ to them.

### **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.

# “I AM FAMILY”

## February 2015: Prepare Week Leader Guide

**Prepare Week:** Allows Student leaders to share their story of what their life was like without Christ as opposed to the fullness of their new life with Christ.

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

- Ensure selected 3 student leaders are prepared to share their testimony with “Appendix A – Your faith Story”.
- (Optional) Print “Appendix A – Your Faith Story” (1 per student) if you want to have every student attending club working on their testimony at the same time (recommended at least once a semester).

#### 1 Welcome Students and Pray

- Student Leader Host - “Welcome to First Priority! This club is a safe place to seek and share God. This week is Prepare week, which is where we practice sharing our personal story about how we came to know Jesus. This month our theme is ‘I am Family.’”
- Pray
- List off any reminders for the club as they begin First Priority.

#### 2. Introduce Volunteer(s)

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- “Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share their story. Please listen respectfully as it takes a lot of courage to speak in front of others. At the end we are going to give some positive feedback on how well they did and also ask questions. Let’s welcome them as they share.

### TESTIMONY TIME

#### 1. Share Testimonies

- › Student 1 Testimony = \_\_\_\_\_
- › Student 2 Testimony = \_\_\_\_\_
- › Student 3 Testimony = \_\_\_\_\_

• Leader Host: “Thank you for sharing, <insert name>. Now let’s take a minute to share some positive feedback about how they did. Also, feel free to ask them questions about their story.

- (Optional) If you are working on testimonies collectively, pass out “Appendix A – Your Faith Story” and read/explain/discuss each step.

#### 2. Conclude

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

# “I AM FAMILY”

## February 2016: Engage Week Leader Guide

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

Date:

Team Leader/Welcome

Club Reporter

Greeters

Opening Prayer

Reminders

Trainer Host

Trainer

Closing Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

Beforehand Task:

- Ensure the student speaker is prepared to share the gospel using “Appendix B – Sample Gospel Presentation,” and follow with invitation.
- Confirm that arrangements for food for the club have been completed and that it is ready to serve just before club opening.
- Confirm that enough response cards will be at the club and ready to hand out as students enter.

### 1. Welcome Students

- Student Leader Host - “Welcome to First Priority! Today we are going to start with a game to get to know one another. There is food for everyone here, so please feel free to grab a bite to eat while we get started.”
- Allow students to fellowship as student leaders prepare the gathering activity.

### 2. Activity

- Game: Dollar Surprise
- Preparation: You will need 1 dollar and a secretly selected volunteer for each round secured prior to the club meeting. (You can also substitute the dollar with a more substantial prize if you like. It is also helpful to have music playing during each round.)
- Play: Begin the game by holding the dollar or prize in the air and explaining that when you say “GO”, everyone has to high five 10 people and answer the following question. After 60 seconds, time will be called for that round and a secretly selected person will introduce to the club the person they thought had the best or weirdest response. The person they introduce will win the dollar or prize.

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## “I AM FAMILY” February 2016: Engage Week Leader Guide (continued)

*Activity (continued)*

- Each round has a different question:
  - o If you were a superhero, what super power would you choose? (bonus for a good superhero name)
  - o What are 3 things you'd take with you if you had to live alone on a desert island?
  - o What is your favorite food?
  - o If you could replace your middle name, what would it be?
  - o How many times did you see Star Wars The Force Awakens and what did you think of it?

### 3. Introduce Volunteer(s)

- Signal volunteer to join the leaders.
- “Today, my friend <insert name> is going to share about something that is very important to them. Please listen respectfully as it takes a lot of courage to speak in front of others.”

## GOSPEL TIME

### 1. Gospel, Invitation, and Response Cards

- Student Leader: Share the gospel and give a personal invitation using “Appendix B “Sample Gospel Presentation”.
- After invitation prayer, call attention to the response cards and direct students to fill out their information and respond by checking the appropriate box. It may also be helpful to announce that this information is only used if follow up is requested.

### 2. Conclude

- Student Leader: Thanks you so much for coming today! Please turn in your card to <insert name of student leader> before you leave. We meet here every week at this time, so you are all invited to come back next week!

**Need more information about leading your club?**

Check out [www.firstpriority.club/club-resources](http://www.firstpriority.club/club-resources)

**Is your club registered and reporting?**

Check out [www.firstpriority.club/register](http://www.firstpriority.club/register)

**Do you have a question about what your legal role in the school is?**

Check out [www.firstpriority.club/roles](http://www.firstpriority.club/roles)

**Just want to see your club online?**

Check out [www.firstpriority.club/clubfinder](http://www.firstpriority.club/clubfinder)



**Connecting the Church to the Campus for Christ**

## Appendix A

# YOUR FAITH STORY

Your story is one of the most important tools you have been given by God to share the gospel with the world around you! Finding the power in your story will depend on how you learn to tell it. The first step to being able to tell a powerful story is to **WRITE IT DOWN**. This will give you the ability to edit the specifics and memorize. The second is to **PRACTICE OUT LOUD** with a close friend or parent so that they can give you useful feedback. The third is to **SPEND TIME IN PRAYER AND IN THE SCRIPTURE** to ask God to speak through you before you share your story publically, because God can do more in others through you than you can do by yourself!

### 1. START WITH A KEYWORD

The first step in writing down your faith story is choosing what keywords describe your life before Christ. Below is a list of emotions. Circle two or three that adequately describe how you felt as a result of a problem you faced without Christ in your life. You are not limited to this list, so feel free to choose a keyword of your own! This part helps keep your story compelling and on track.

#### KEYWORDS

alienated	bitter	fearful	hurt	rejected
alone	confused	frustrated	insecure	uncertain
angry	depressed	guilty	lonely	unforgiving
apathetic	distrusting	heartbroken	lost	unloved
ashamed	doubtful	hopeless	prideful	worthless

### 2. SET UP THE BACKGROUND

Now describe the situation in which you came to face this problem and why your keyword describes the way you felt. It is more important to be honest than dramatic. This helps people to relate with your story personally and understand why we need God in our lives. If you need more space, continue on the back.

**EXAMPLE:** *"my parents divorced when I was younger... I blamed myself and began to feel unworthy of relationships... so I become isolated and alone because I was afraid of being rejected for being unworthy..."*

### 3. SHARE HOW JESUS ENTERED YOUR STORY

Now describe how you came to know Jesus. Be sure to describe that moment (or that process) if you can with adjectives that show how meaningful and impactful it was for you. Try to describe how Jesus touched your heart, and how you responded (such as asking Him to be your Lord and Savior). This part challenges people's idea of what God is like.

**EXAMPLE:** *"One summer I attended church camp with my youth group and we talked about new identity in Christ and being loved as God's children. God began to speak to my heart and to my issues of unworthiness and fear of rejection. One evening I experienced the love of God and realized that Christ died for my sin, so that I could have a loving relationship with God. So I asked Him to save me and forgive me of my sin. The impact of that moment changed everything."*

### 4. STATE THE IMPACT OF CHRIST ON YOUR LIFE

Now describe how Christ impacted your problem and your life. Use the emotion opposite of your keyword and share how Christ either reversed your problem or is continually giving you the power to overcome. This is the part that inspires your hearers to place their hope in Christ!

**EXAMPLE:** *"What changed after that was my view of myself. I began to trust that God really did love me and want me to be in relationship with Him. I had once been unworthy, but now I was given worth. I was once alone, but now I see myself as wanted, loved, and together with God and His family. I was once afraid of rejection, but now I know that I am fully accepted by Him, and He is giving me the faith and the strength to overcome the attitudes of the past."*

## Appendix B

# SAMPLE GOSPEL PRESENTATION

**Begin the presentation by sharing a short version of your testimony. For example:** *"I was raised in church. I'd never really thought of my story as being powerful, but when I think about how Christ died for me, a sinner, I am very grateful that Jesus did for me something I could not do for myself. This fact is powerful enough all by itself. I love to serve God because of all that He has done for me."*

### What Is the Gospel?

• Answer: The Father God Adopting Me.

### FATHER GOD

God made all of creation. The first people in God's creation—Adam and Eve—had a perfect relationship with the Father. However, they turned away from Him and creation fell into sin and brokenness. This resulted in separation from God and the free and full life we were intended to experience. God was deeply grieved over His creation.

*"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth ... and it grieved Him to His heart."* - Genesis 6:5-6 (ESV)

### ADOPTING

God's heart was so hurt over His creations' brokenness that He sent His Son Jesus. God sent Jesus to pay the price (redemption) to restore our relationship back to the Father. Jesus sacrificed His own life on a cross in our place and was also raised back to life to end our alienation from God and bring us into a loving relationship that lasts forever. Only because of Jesus can we be adopted as sons and daughters of God—part of His family, along with the benefits of being His children.

*"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."* - Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV)

*"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."* - Romans 8:14-16 (ESV)

### ME

You and I were born into the same experience, the inevitable realization that something is not right with the world or us. We discover that we are alienated, alone, and missing out on real life. Life without a relationship with God is a broken existence. The good news is that it can be restored by making the decision to follow Jesus and placing our trust in Him. Once this happens, we have a relationship with God and His family (fellow believers who follow Him)—a true belonging quite possibly for the first time. You, too, have the opportunity to follow Him and place your trust in Him to receive a loving relationship that lasts forever.

*"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."* - John 1:12 (ESV)

### HOW TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR

1. Confess your need (I am broken and in sin)
2. Change your direction in life, knowing that God's way of living is better than our way living
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and was raised to life to redeem you and restore your relationship to God
4. Receive through prayer the free gift of salvation and begin your journey as part of the family of God.

### WHAT TO PRAY

Father God,

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

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



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