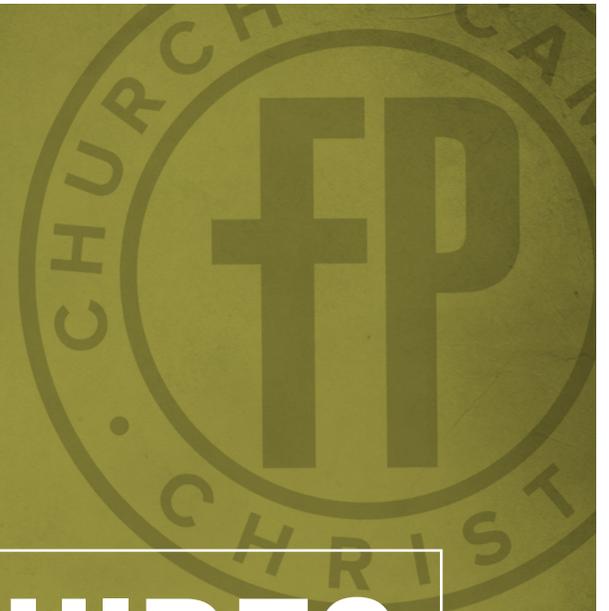


MARCH 2016

# HOPE

# WEEKLY GUIDES



# “I AM FALLEN”

## March 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 Fallen.’”
- 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 the Father.

### GOSPEL CONTENT

#### 1. Share the Gospel Content

- › **Ephesians 2:1-3** says, “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.” (NLT)
- › **What is the farthest distance you have ever run without stopping?** (Let students answer) Imagine you are about to run a marathon with no prior training. You must run 26.2 miles to the finish line. In fact, the entire race is a straight line – and going up a very steep hill - but the only catch is that you must stay on this line in order to win. You cannot stop or deviate even one centimeter. On either side of this path is every possible distraction you can think of, like maybe your favorite foods (list a few humorous examples). It would take a lot of discipline to resist the urge to stop, rest, enjoy, and

*continue on next page*

## "I AM FALLEN" March 2016: Help Week Leader Guide (continued)

*Share the Gospel Content (continued)*

maybe even quit. Now, what if the force of gravity suddenly doubled and you could only see ten feet in front of you? Sounds impossible, right? This is a picture of the sinful condition of every person. Each of us has no choice but to eventually face the reality of sin, and the consequences are more extreme than most of us realize..

➤ **Let's break this down:** What is sin and why is it a big deal?

### FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT SIN

#### 1. Sin is willful disobedience and rebellion.

The sins we commit are individual choices that we make. Sin is a failure to live up to what God expects of us. Each of us has desires that are good because they are given to us by God, but often we try to satisfy those desires without God by going outside of His boundaries. Sometimes we do things we ought not to do. Other times we neglect to do things we should do. In either case, we are personally responsible for our disobedience from the moment we choose to sin.

**2. Sinfulness is a condition we are born with as humans.** Sinfulness is a constant, inner tendency to go astray, disobey, and rebel. It is a powerful force that tempts each of us to choose anything other than God. We don't like to think of ourselves as bad, broken or evil people, but that is exactly what the Bible teaches that we are deep down. Although the condition of sinfulness does INFLUENCE you to sin, it cannot actually MAKE you sin. You are still responsible for the choices you make. Unfortunately, your life is not measured by whether or not your good choices outweigh your bad ones. It is measured by whether or not it contains ANY SIN AT ALL. If any sin is present, you have fallen short of God's standard.

**3. Sin causes guilt and separation.** God is a loving Father who longs for relationship with His estranged children. Sin is the reason that we are alienated and separated from God and His family. God doesn't cause sin – He is pure and perfect. He cannot have sin in His presence, which is a big problem for sinners, because they sin all the time! When you are separated from something that gives you life, the only thing you are left with is the opposite – death. It is difficult for two people to maintain a relationship when one person goes astray and rebelliously defies the other. To make things worse, sin causes the rebel to owe a huge debt that he or she cannot afford to pay. But one day that debt MUST be paid.

**4. The only true solution to the problem of sin is the cross of Christ.** What you know about a problem will determine whether or not you can solve it. If sin were just a matter of choosing the wrong things, then the solution would be simply to make right choices – but it isn't that simple at all. When it comes to sin, we don't have the resources to go back and fix what we've done, let alone who we are – sinners. No matter how hard we try, we still fall short of God's standard. We will never be able to earn our way out of debt and back into a relationship with God. That is why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to become human like us and pay the death penalty in our place on a cross. This is how God adopted us into His family.

#### Continue:

➤ Sin is a very serious subject and not to be taken lightly. The good news, however, is that Jesus did what we could not - He took care of the sin problem 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. How would you have defined sin before today? Did you learn anything new about what sin means?
2. How do you think most of the students in your school view sin? Do you think it is a big deal from their point of view? Do you think their view should change? Why?
3. Come up with a "top three worst problems about sin" list. Then come up with a "top three best reasons to follow Jesus" list. What is the connection between the lists?

#### Prayer points (for student handout)

Reflect on Ephesians 2:1-3 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 FALLEN”

## March 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. How would you have defined sin before today? Did you learn anything new about what sin means?
2. How do you think most of the students in your school view sin? Do you think it is a big deal from their point of view? Does their view need to change? Why?
3. Come up with a “top three worst problems about sin” list. Then come up with a “top three best reasons to follow Jesus” list. What is the connection between the lists?

### PRAY

Reflect on Ephesians 2:1-3 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 FALLEN"

## March 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 Fallen.'"
- 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 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 2:1-3 says,** "Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else." (NLT)

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- "Last week, we learned about the definition of sin. Sin can be defined as the wrong actions we commit and sinfulness can be defined as the condition that we are born with that inclines us to sin.
- **Question:** How does knowing the definition and consequences of sin help you overcome the fear of sharing the gospel message with others?

**First, it should cause us to care intensely about non-believers because they live every day without hope, whether they acknowledge it or not.** Sin is a common problem, but a serious one. Our verse this month in Ephesians describes our life before Christ. We were dead because of sin. We followed the powers of the unseen world and the distorted desires of our sinful nature, which led to rebellion against God. Maybe the circumstances of some of our lives were more intense than others, but we were all in fact in the same place before Christ. There is no such thing as a person who "was always saved" or "never really sinned." Although you might have been raised in church and trained to know the Bible and who God is, even if you tried to be as good as possible, these things still cannot save anyone. We are still sinners. We must ask Jesus to save us from our sin and make him our Lord in order to be saved.

**Second, it should give a attitude of urgency about sharing Jesus with others.** Apart from Christ, everyone must eventually pay the price for their sin. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. By the time each of us eventually dies physically, it will be too late for us to take God up on His offer. Consider this - if you passed up the opportunity to share Christ with a friend out of fear, and they unexpectedly passed away, how do you think you'd feel about that missed opportunity? This does not mean that we need to pressure people into becoming Christians, but it does mean we should be bold enough to speak up when the time is right. We ARE NOT called to impose our faith on others, but we ARE called to expose our faith to others.

- **We overcome fear by caring for others.** It is easy to dismiss someone as "not open to Christianity" because of how they present themselves publically, 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.

## 2. Open Discussion:

- 1. How does sin affect each person's life the same way and why should that give us compassion for non-believers?**  
(example: without Christ, we are dead in sin, we follow our own distorted desires, we are lost, etc.)
- 2. How does your personal testimony give witness to the power of God?**  
(example: He set us free from the power of sin, etc.)
- 3. How should talk about non-believers in light of the fact that we share so much in common with them?**  
(example: we are sinners just like they are, but we are forgiven)

## 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 yourself, family, and peers.
  - Pray for your school, wisdom, protection, and for open hearts to receive the gospel.

# “I AM FALLEN”

## March 2016: 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 Fallen.’”
- 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 FALLEN”

## March 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 and Pray

- 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: Laugh without smiling
- Preparation: No preparation needed.
- Play: Every student gets a partner. When the signal for round one is given, both partners take turns trying to laugh really loud without smiling. If either or both of them smiles when they laugh out loud, they must sit down – they are out. If one or both of them accomplishes the task, they find a new partner in the next round. Play as many rounds as it takes for only two people to remain and have them compete in front of the club. It is a VERY difficult and bizarre talent to master. Prizes are 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 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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