

# STUDENT LEADER GUIDE



## THE CONVERSATION: ENCOUNTER WEEK

## FRIENDS

### WELCOME & OPEN PRAYER

[Host] Hey everyone! Welcome to First Priority. We're so glad you're here! Today [insert name] is going to share the plan God made so we could have a relationship with Him. And not just knowing about Him but really know Him. It's a big deal, and it's for all of us. Let's take a minute to pray and get our hearts ready. Let's pray!

Sample prayer: God, thank You for making a way for us to know You. Help us listen with open hearts today and understand what it means to have a relationship with You. Speak through [insert name] and help us take a step closer to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GOSPEL MESSAGE

[Speaker] Over the past few weeks, we've talked a lot about how to start Gospel conversations with our friends, using tools like the Life/Death card, the Salvation Bracelet, or even sharing our AHA Moment. And maybe you've wondered, "What exactly is the Gospel? Like, what are we actually sharing?"

Well, today I want to read you something that puts the Gospel in a real and relatable way. It's a conversation style of Ephesians chapter 2. As I read it, I want you to listen to where you fit into this story. Because this isn't just a Bible thing, this is a you and me thing. (Take a deep breath and read slowly and confidently.)

It wasn't so long ago that we were stuck in that old life of sin. We let the world, who doesn't know how to live, tell us how to live. We breathed in all the wrong stuff and exhaled it in our choices. We all did it, every single one of us just doing whatever we felt like doing.

Honestly, it's wild that God didn't just give up on us. But instead of losing His patience, He showed us massive mercy. He loved us anyway. He looked at our sin-dead hearts and made us alive in Jesus. He did **ALL** of it with no help from us. Then He

lifted us up and gave us a place with Jesus.

Now we're right where God wants us: living in His grace, surrounded by His kindness. Salvation? That was His idea. He did the saving; we just trusted Him enough to say yes. And let's be real, we can't take the credit. It's all God.

God created us in Jesus to join Him in the good stuff He's doing. He's got work ready for us. Good, life-changing stuff and we get to be a part of it.

But don't forget there was a time when we didn't get any of this. We didn't understand who Jesus was. We didn't see how God was working. But now, because of Jesus, because of the cross, because of His resurrection, we get to be part of the family. We're in.

So what does all this mean for you and me? That even though we've all messed up and sinned, God didn't give up on us. Instead, He made a way for us to be close to Him again. That way is Jesus. Jesus took the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross. He didn't stay dead; He rose again to prove that sin and death don't win. Because of what Jesus did, we get to have a relationship with God that starts now and lasts forever.

But here's the deal — it's a gift. And just like any gift, we have to choose to accept it. We don't earn it, and we don't have to be perfect to receive it. We just have to say "yes" to Jesus. That means admitting we need Him, believing He died and rose again, and deciding to follow Him with our life.

This choice changes everything. It's not just about going to Heaven one day, though that's awesome! It's also about living differently right now. We don't have to walk through life alone. We have a Savior who knows us, loves us, and is with us every step of the way.

So, here's the big question: Will you keep looking to the world for hope, or will you accept the

hope Jesus offers? God is inviting us into something real. Something lasting. It's not about religion, it's about a relationship. And we can say yes today. Are you ready to have a conversation with God?

I want to ask everyone to bow your head and close your eyes. If today you've realized that you want to begin a relationship with Jesus, by trusting Him and following Him, you can have a real conversation with God right now. I'll help lead you in a prayer but know it's not the exact words that save you. God sees the heart behind the choice.

Repeat after me (pause after each line):

God, thank You for loving me — and making a way for me — to have a relationship with You. — I confess that I am a sinner. — I believe that Jesus had to die on the cross — in my place — and that He rose from the dead — so that I could have a relationship with You. — I choose to trust and follow Jesus — as Lord of my life today. — Amen.

If you prayed that, welcome to God's family! That's the best decision you could ever make.

### RESPONSE TIME

[Speaker] Take a moment to think about the decision you just made. You'll get a response card now. (Have FOLLOW-UP TEAM pass out Response Cards.) At the top fill out your name, grade, who invited you, and what church you go to. Here's what **My Response Today** means:

- If you just said **YES** to Jesus, check that top box. We want to celebrate with you.
- If you're not sure yet, that's okay, check the "not interested" box.
- If you already follow Jesus, check that box, and tell us when you made that decision.
- Don't have a church or a Bible? Mark those boxes and we will help you with that.

Take a minute to fill out the card and then raise it in the air when you're done so someone can come grab it.

**(FOLLOW-UP TEAM:** If you see that a student checked the top box, follow up with them before they leave and give them a **NEXT STEPS** card. Also, if they want to get plugged into a church, take a moment to find out who invited them and see what church you can plug them into. If they checked that they need a Bible, have them available.)

(Make sure you give the cards to the club mentor so they can put the information on the Follow-up Form.)

(Have student host come back up to give the CHALLENGE and PRAY.)

### CHALLENGE & PRAY

[Host] If you just gave your life to Jesus, we celebrate that with you! And don't stop here, get plugged into a church. We can help with that. If you already follow Jesus, your challenge is to share the Gospel with someone. Use your AHA Moment, your faith story, or the Salvation Bracelet. Someone in your life needs the hope you carry. Let's pray!

Sample prayer: God, thank You for the Gospel, the Good News, that You didn't give up on us. Thank You for sending Jesus so we could be forgiven of our sins and brought into Your family. Help us be bold this week. Give us eyes to see who needs to hear about You. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GAME TIME – Optional

[Host & Mentor] (See the Game Time tab for options.)