

# STUDENT LEADER GUIDE



## THE CONVERSATION: ENCOUNTER WEEK

## FAMILY

### WELCOME & OPEN PRAYER

[Host] Welcome to First Priority! We're so glad you decided to join us today. Whether you've been here before or this is your first time, you belong here. Today [insert name] is going to share the plan God made so that each of us could have a real relationship with Him. It's not about being perfect or checking off boxes. It's about knowing Jesus and understanding how much He loves us. Before we get started, let's take a moment to pray.

Sample prayer: God, thank You for bringing us together today. Help us to listen and be open to what You want to show us. Speak through [insert name] and remind us how much You care about every person in this room. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GOSPEL MESSAGE

[Speaker] Over the last couple of weeks, we have talked about how a lot of us have people in our families who don't know Jesus. And we said that we want to be bold and share our faith with them, but let's be honest, we can't share a story we don't actually have.

So, today I want to talk to anyone who's maybe not sure where they stand with God. Maybe you've never started a relationship with Jesus, or maybe you've heard about Him but just haven't made it personal yet. I want to share the Gospel, the Good News, with you. Because this isn't just some story, this could be your story too.

(Hold up your thumb.)

First, the Good News — God loves you. He really loves you! The Creator of everything wants a real relationship with You. That's what we learned in the Hand Gospel. God made us to know Him and live close to Him. That was the original plan. But then...

(Hold up your pointer finger.)

There's one big problem: sin. Sin is anytime we go

our own way instead of God's. And we've all done it. Romans chapter 3 verse 23 says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* That means every single one of us has messed up. Sin leaves us broken, empty, and separated from God.

Has anyone ever made a choice that left you feeling guilty, empty, or straight-up alone? I know I have. We try to fix ourselves, be better, do better but it doesn't work. The truth is, we can't fix it on our own.

Remember the middle finger in the Hand Gospel? This one reminds us of the solution. Even though we were still messing up, God didn't give up on us. Romans chapter 5 verse 8 says, *"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth, lived a perfect life, died on the cross to pay for our sins, and then rose from the dead to give us new life. He did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

Here's what that means: We don't have to stay broken. We don't have to keep trying to earn our way to God. We just need to turn away from our sin and turn to Jesus. That's what the Bible calls "repent." It means changing directions.

No matter how far we've drifted, no matter what mistakes we've made, God is right here, ready to welcome us. We don't have to clean ourselves up first. We don't have to figure it all out. We just have to say "YES."

Now for the ring finger. This is where it gets personal. Romans chapter 10 verses 9 and 10 says, *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* That's it. It's not about being perfect — it's about trusting the One who is.

And finally, the pinky finger. Even if your faith feels small, like barely, that's enough. It only

takes a little faith to say YES to Jesus. If you want to start a relationship with Jesus today, you can. This can be the beginning of your story. A new one, with Jesus as the hero.

I want to ask everyone to bow your head and close your eyes. Just take a quiet moment between you and God. No distractions, no pressure. If today you realize that you want to begin a relationship with Jesus, to trust Him and follow Him, you can talk to God right now. I'm going to lead you in a prayer to help with the words but just know it's not a perfect prayer that saves you. It's the heart behind it that God sees and responds to.

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 and meant it, that's the most important decision you'll ever make. We want to celebrate with you and help you take your next steps in following Jesus.

### 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 said yes to Jesus today or if you're still thinking about it, tell someone. Don't keep it to yourself. Share it with a friend, a leader, or someone you trust. And if you already have a relationship with Jesus, your challenge is to ask God to show you who in your family needs to hear about it. Let's pray!

Sample prayer: God, thank You for loving us even when we didn't deserve it. Thank You for giving us a way back through Jesus. For anyone who said yes to You today, remind them that they're not alone. For those of us already following You, give us the boldness to live it out loud, especially at home. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GAME TIME – Optional

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