

# STUDENT LEADER GUIDE



## THE CONVERSATION: ENCOUNTER WEEK

## ENEMIES

### WELCOME & OPEN PRAYER

[Host] Welcome to First Priority! We're really glad you're here. Today [insert name] is going to share the plan God has had all along so that we can have a real relationship with Him. It's not just about going to church or being a good person, it's about knowing Jesus and understanding what He's done for us. Before we start, let's take a minute to pray and ask God to help us listen and understand what He wants to say to us today. Let's Pray.

Sample prayer: God, thank You for bringing each of us here today. We know it's not by accident. Help us open our hearts to what You want to teach us. Speak through [insert name] and help us understand the plan You have for our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GOSPEL MESSAGE

[Speaker] Over the past few weeks, we've talked a lot about loving our enemies: how to pray for them, greet them, show them kindness, and even share Jesus with them. But here's something important to remember: We can't do any of that well without a relationship with Jesus. He's the one who gives us the strength to love people who hurt us or don't treat us right.

But maybe you are sitting here thinking, "How do I get that kind of relationship with Jesus?" Or maybe you've realized that, deep down, you're still at odds with God. The truth is, we all were, at one point.

Let's look at Romans chapter 5 verses 8 and 10. *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us... For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

The word "reconcile" means to fix or restore a broken friendship. In order for a friendship to be

restored, we had to be enemies. You see, we were all once enemies of God and He sent His Son, Jesus, to restore our relationship with Him. He died in our place so that we could be forgiven and have a relationship with God again.

And here's the best part: Jesus didn't stay dead. He rose from the grave, defeating sin and death so that we could not only have a new life here but also the promise of forever in Heaven with Him. That's real hope. That's what makes the Gospel Good news.

Maybe today you realize that you've been trying to be a good person or trying to handle things on your own, but deep down, you're still not sure if you have a relationship with God. Maybe you're still on the outside looking in. That doesn't have to be the end of your story.

Romans chapter 10 verses 9 and 10 tell us: *"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. For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."*

This verse is all about how we can be saved. It's not about being perfect or doing everything right. It's about believing in your heart that Jesus is alive and saying it out loud that He's Lord. When we believe and confess that, we're choosing to follow Him and that's where real life begins.

If you're ready to stop being an enemy of God and start walking in a real relationship with Him, today is your day. It begins with a simple conversation.

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 of the card fill out your name, grade, who invited you, and what church you go to. Here's what the **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:** While collecting cards, if you see that a student checked the top box, follow up with them right away 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 that 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, we celebrate your decision! If you already have a relationship with Jesus, your challenge is to take this message to someone on your **TAKE 5** card this week. Share what Jesus did for you. Let the Gospel speak. Let's pray!

Sample prayer: God, thank You for loving us even when we were far from You. Thank You for sending Jesus to take our place so that we could be made right with You. Help those of us who already know You to never forget the grace You've shown us and to share it boldly. And for those that said yes to You, give them the courage to tell someone. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GAME TIME – Optional

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