

STUDENT LEADER GUIDE



THE CONVERSATION: HELP WEEK

ENEMIES

WELCOME & OPEN PRAYER

[Host] Hey everybody! Welcome to First Priority. We're glad you're here. Today [insert speaker name] is going to talk about what it looks like to share Jesus with people we might not see eye to eye with. We all have those people, right? Maybe it's someone who's hurt us, left us out, or just rubs us the wrong way. But guess what? God's love is for them too and He wants to use us to show it. Let's pray!

Sample prayer: God, thank You for bringing us here today. You know the people in our lives who are hard to love. Help us to see them the way You do and to share Your love even when it's tough. In Jesus' name, amen.

THE CONVERSATION

[Speaker] Today this one's going to hit a little different. Over the next four weeks, we're talking about something that honestly feels kind of backwards: loving our enemies and even — wait for it — talking to them about Jesus.

You heard that right. Not ignoring them. Not trash-talking them back. Loving them.

So, let's start here: Who even are our enemies? For most of us, it's not like we've got supervillains chasing us around school. But an "enemy" could be that person who's always gossiping about you. Someone who's bullied you, lied about you, left you out, or just plain made life hard. You probably wouldn't call them an enemy out loud, but deep down, you know they're not for you.

And now we're saying we should love them? That's a big ask. But let's check out what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5 verse 44, "*But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*" He didn't say ignore them or just tolerate them. He said love and pray for them. And honestly, that's not something we can do on our own. It takes God helping us out through the Holy Spirit.

See, Jesus totally gets what it's like to be hated. People gossiped about Him, accused Him of stuff He didn't do, and literally nailed Him to a cross. And still He loved them. Even while He was dying, He said, in Luke chapter 23 verse 34, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

That's crazy. That's love. And that's our example.

When we pray for people who've hurt us, we're not just checking a box, we're asking God to help them, to change their hearts, and to save them. Like Paul said in Romans chapter 10 verse 1, "*Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.*"

That's what this week is all about. Letting God change our hearts so we can start praying for people we normally avoid, ignore, or even dislike. And not just once but with consistent, intentional prayer.

CONVERSATION STARTER – TAKE 5 CARD

[Speaker] Today we're using something simple to help us pray for those we consider our enemy. But before we do, let's talk about a few things first.

- Who comes to mind when you hear the word "enemy"? Not asking you to name names — but what kinds of people or situations?
- Have you ever tried praying for someone who wronged you? What was that like? Did it change anything — in you or them?

(Have student leaders pass out the TAKE 5 Cards.) Think about 1–5 people you'd honestly say are tough for you to love. They might be classmates, teammates, ex-friends, maybe even enemies. Write their first names down. No need to share them out loud. These are the people we are going to pray for every day this month — just 5 minutes a day.

On the back of the card is a sample prayer to help guide you. Start praying like Jesus did: “Father, help me to love them, forgive them, and show kindness to them.” You can use it word-for-word or put it into your own words. What do you hope will happen as you start praying for the names you write on your card? (This helps shift focus from “I have to” → “God might actually work through this.”)

Let’s take a few minutes right now to silently pray for the people on our card. Even if we’re not ready to talk to them or forgive them yet, this is a starting point. Praying for someone is the first step toward truly loving them like Jesus does.

(Allow students time to pray and then have the student host come back up and give the CHALLENGE and PRAY.)

CHALLENGE & PRAY

[Host] Our challenge for this week is to stop and pray for the people we wrote down on our card and ask God to give us His heart for them. If the opportunity comes up, say hi to them or even just smile. It’s a small start, but it’s a big step in loving like Jesus. Let’s Pray!

Sample prayer: God, today we admit this is hard. You know who we struggle with. The people who’ve hurt us or made life difficult. But You loved us when we didn’t deserve it, so help us do the same. Change our hearts. Help us pray for those we don’t understand, those we’re angry at, or even afraid of. Use us to show Your love, even in the hardest places. In Jesus’ name, amen.

GAME TIME – Optional

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